



PHL 358

Metaphysics

S2 Day 2014

Philosophy

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General Information

Unit convenor and teaching staff

Elizabeth Schier

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by appointment

Credit points

3

Prerequisites

39cp or admission to GDipArts

Corequisites

Co-badged status

Unit description

This unit examines some traditional questions in metaphysics, focusing on questions about the fundamental nature of reality. The first half of the unit is structured around a discussion of time travel. It addresses questions such as: What is the nature of time? Does time flow or is it static? What is causation? Is time travel possible? The second half of the unit is devoted to a critical examination of the metaphysical theory of materialism, which states that everything is ultimately physical in nature. We examine this theory's explanations of colour, consciousness, free will, and value. The unit concludes with a discussion of whether there is, indeed, a single, ultimate reality, or whether a pluralistic view makes more sense.

Important Academic Dates

Information about important academic dates including deadlines for withdrawing from units are available at <https://www.mq.edu.au/study/calendar-of-dates>

Learning Outcomes

On successful completion of this unit, you will be able to:

Demonstrate an awareness of central problems in Metaphysics

Understand and analyse arguments in the relevant literature

Critically evaluate these theories and arguments

Develop your own view or perspective through consideration and analysis of the views and arguments presented in the unit, and to present your own views with clarity and rigour

Develop clarity of thought; clarity of verbal expression; clarity of written expression and

exposition.

General Assessment Information

Late outlines and papers will, absent an extension from me, lose 2% of the total score per calendar day, to a maximum of 20%. If you need an extension, you *must* request one by email *before* the due date. The short paper and the final paper *must* both be completed to pass the unit.

Quizzes & Tutorials (for Internal Students) and Lecture Summaries & Forum Participation (for External Students) cannot be made up if missed except in exceptional circumstances.

I take academic honesty very seriously. Misrepresenting other's work as your own will be grounds for a zero on the assignment in question and, if severe enough, referral to the Faculty Disciplinary Committee. If you have questions about how to properly cite work or how to credit sources, please talk to me and see also the Academic Honesty Policy http://mq.edu.au/policy/docs/academic_honesty/policy.html

Assessment Tasks

Name	Weighting	Due
Tutorial Participation	20%	Each week 2-13
Argument Reconstruction	10%	9/26/14
Short Essay	20%	3/10/14
Paper Outline	15%	5/11/14
Final Paper	35%	19/11/14

Tutorial Participation

Due: **Each week 2-13**

Weighting: **20%**

Students should be active and participate during tutorials. That means students need to study the weekly readings, be prepared to ask questions about the readings, and respond to other students' questions. Tutorial attendance and preparation is compulsory. Half of the participation mark will come from discussion participation. The other half will come from producing a one page summary of the argument of the set readings.

On successful completion you will be able to:

- Demonstrate an awareness of central problems in Metaphysics
- Understand and analyse arguments in the relevant literature
- Critically evaluate these theories and arguments

- Develop your own view or perspective through consideration and analysis of the views and arguments presented in the unit, and to present your own views with clarity and rigour
- Develop clarity of thought; clarity of verbal expression; clarity of written expression and exposition.

Argument Reconstruction

Due: **9/26/14**

Weighting: **10%**

You will write a short (~500word, 2pg) paper summarising and explaining one argument from one of the readings. Details will be given in class by Tuesday 8/19 (week 3) and the assignment will be due by noon on 9/26 (week 4).

On successful completion you will be able to:

- Demonstrate an awareness of central problems in Metaphysics
- Understand and analyse arguments in the relevant literature
- Develop your own view or perspective through consideration and analysis of the views and arguments presented in the unit, and to present your own views with clarity and rigour
- Develop clarity of thought; clarity of verbal expression; clarity of written expression and exposition.

Short Essay

Due: **3/10/14**

Weighting: **20%**

You will write a short 1500 word essay on the first half of the course (colour and time). In it you will It is due 5pm on 3/10

On successful completion you will be able to:

- Demonstrate an awareness of central problems in Metaphysics
- Understand and analyse arguments in the relevant literature
- Critically evaluate these theories and arguments
- Develop your own view or perspective through consideration and analysis of the views and arguments presented in the unit, and to present your own views with clarity and rigour
- Develop clarity of thought; clarity of verbal expression; clarity of written expression and exposition.

Paper Outline

Due: **5/11/14**

Weighting: **15%**

You will write an outline for the final paper. This will consist of a detailed hierarchical outline of the final paper, as well as a list of sources that you plan to use. The outline will be due by 5pm on 5/11/14.

On successful completion you will be able to:

- Demonstrate an awareness of central problems in Metaphysics
- Understand and analyse arguments in the relevant literature
- Critically evaluate these theories and arguments
- Develop your own view or perspective through consideration and analysis of the views and arguments presented in the unit, and to present your own views with clarity and rigour
- Develop clarity of thought; clarity of verbal expression; clarity of written expression and exposition.

Final Paper

Due: **19/11/14**

Weighting: **35%**

You will write a 2500-word (~10pp) research paper on a topic of your choosing arising from the course. The paper will explore a particular argument or thesis, and give you a chance to make your own arguments. The paper will be due by 5pm on 19/11/14.

On successful completion you will be able to:

- Demonstrate an awareness of central problems in Metaphysics
- Understand and analyse arguments in the relevant literature
- Critically evaluate these theories and arguments
- Develop your own view or perspective through consideration and analysis of the views and arguments presented in the unit, and to present your own views with clarity and rigour
- Develop clarity of thought; clarity of verbal expression; clarity of written expression and exposition.

Delivery and Resources

CLASSES

Internal students will attend two lectures and one tutorial each week. At time of publication, the lectures are on at:

Tuesday 12-1pm in W6B 320, and Thursday 10-11am in C5C 236 You are expected to attend both lectures. You also need to register for and attend one tutorial each week, on either:

Tuesday 2-3pm or Thursday 11-12pm, in in W5C 334.

Check the timetable at <https://timetables.mq.edu.au> just before classes begin in case there are any late changes.

READING

The week's readings are listed on this unit guide and will also be listed each week on iLearn. You should either print out the readings or bring them in electronic form to both class and tutorial. Readings should be done before the first lecture of the week.

WEBSITE

The unit website is available through iLearn (<http://ilearn.mq.edu.au>). It contains essential resources for the unit, and you are expected to log in on a regular basis. I will communicate with the course as a whole using the iLearn announcement function, so please check your Macquarie email regularly.

Unit Schedule

The 2014 S2 offering of Metaphysics looks at four phenomena that puzzle metaphysicians: time, colours, free will and the mind. The first part of the course will examine the nature of time and whether time travel is possible. The second part of the course will examine the metaphysics of colours: what are colours; are colours in the head or in the world? The third part of the course will look at free will: is freedom compatible with a deterministic materialistic world; what light can the psychology of action control shed on this issue? The final part of the course will focus on the metaphysics of the mind: is it possible to fit a mind that is somehow more than the brain in a physical world?

Week 1: The Nature of Time
Week 2: Time Travel
Week 3: The Science of Colours
Week 4: The Metaphysics of Colours
Week 5: The Metaphysics of Colours
Week 6: Free Will: Introduction
Week 7: Free Will The Data
Week 8: Free Will The Data
Week 9: Free Will: Case studies

Week 10: The Irreducibility of the Mind

Week 11: The Problem of Mental Causation

Week 12: Responses to the Problem

Week 13: Review and Paper Preparation

Policies and Procedures

Macquarie University policies and procedures are accessible from [Policy Central](#). Students should be aware of the following policies in particular with regard to Learning and Teaching:

Academic Honesty Policy http://mq.edu.au/policy/docs/academic_honesty/policy.html

Assessment Policy <http://mq.edu.au/policy/docs/assessment/policy.html>

Grading Policy <http://mq.edu.au/policy/docs/grading/policy.html>

Grade Appeal Policy <http://mq.edu.au/policy/docs/gradeappeal/policy.html>

Grievance Management Policy http://mq.edu.au/policy/docs/grievance_management/policy.html

Disruption to Studies Policy http://www.mq.edu.au/policy/docs/disruption_studies/policy.html *The Disruption to Studies Policy is effective from March 3 2014 and replaces the Special Consideration Policy.*

In addition, a number of other policies can be found in the [Learning and Teaching Category](#) of Policy Central.

Student Code of Conduct

Macquarie University students have a responsibility to be familiar with the Student Code of Conduct: https://students.mq.edu.au/support/student_conduct/

Student Support

Macquarie University provides a range of support services for students. For details, visit <http://students.mq.edu.au/support/>

Learning Skills

Learning Skills (mq.edu.au/learningskills) provides academic writing resources and study strategies to improve your marks and take control of your study.

- [Workshops](#)

- [StudyWise](#)
- [Academic Integrity Module for Students](#)
- [Ask a Learning Adviser](#)

Student Services and Support

Students with a disability are encouraged to contact the [Disability Service](#) who can provide appropriate help with any issues that arise during their studies.

Student Enquiries

For all student enquiries, visit Student Connect at ask.mq.edu.au

IT Help

For help with University computer systems and technology, visit <http://informatics.mq.edu.au/help/>.

When using the University's IT, you must adhere to the [Acceptable Use Policy](#). The policy applies to all who connect to the MQ network including students.

Graduate Capabilities

Capable of Professional and Personal Judgement and Initiative

We want our graduates to have emotional intelligence and sound interpersonal skills and to demonstrate discernment and common sense in their professional and personal judgement. They will exercise initiative as needed. They will be capable of risk assessment, and be able to handle ambiguity and complexity, enabling them to be adaptable in diverse and changing environments.

This graduate capability is supported by:

Learning outcomes

- Develop your own view or perspective through consideration and analysis of the views and arguments presented in the unit, and to present your own views with clarity and rigour
- Develop clarity of thought; clarity of verbal expression; clarity of written expression and exposition.

Assessment tasks

- Short Essay
- Paper Outline
- Final Paper

Commitment to Continuous Learning

Our graduates will have enquiring minds and a literate curiosity which will lead them to pursue knowledge for its own sake. They will continue to pursue learning in their careers and as they participate in the world. They will be capable of reflecting on their experiences and relationships with others and the environment, learning from them, and growing - personally, professionally and socially.

This graduate capability is supported by:

Assessment task

- Tutorial Participation

Discipline Specific Knowledge and Skills

Our graduates will take with them the intellectual development, depth and breadth of knowledge, scholarly understanding, and specific subject content in their chosen fields to make them competent and confident in their subject or profession. They will be able to demonstrate, where relevant, professional technical competence and meet professional standards. They will be able to articulate the structure of knowledge of their discipline, be able to adapt discipline-specific knowledge to novel situations, and be able to contribute from their discipline to inter-disciplinary solutions to problems.

This graduate capability is supported by:

Learning outcomes

- Demonstrate an awareness of central problems in Metaphysics
- Understand and analyse arguments in the relevant literature
- Critically evaluate these theories and arguments
- Develop your own view or perspective through consideration and analysis of the views and arguments presented in the unit, and to present your own views with clarity and rigour

Assessment tasks

- Tutorial Participation
- Argument Reconstruction
- Short Essay
- Paper Outline
- Final Paper

Critical, Analytical and Integrative Thinking

We want our graduates to be capable of reasoning, questioning and analysing, and to integrate and synthesise learning and knowledge from a range of sources and environments; to be able to

critique constraints, assumptions and limitations; to be able to think independently and systemically in relation to scholarly activity, in the workplace, and in the world. We want them to have a level of scientific and information technology literacy.

This graduate capability is supported by:

Learning outcomes

- Demonstrate an awareness of central problems in Metaphysics
- Understand and analyse arguments in the relevant literature
- Critically evaluate these theories and arguments
- Develop your own view or perspective through consideration and analysis of the views and arguments presented in the unit, and to present your own views with clarity and rigour
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Assessment tasks

- Tutorial Participation
- Argument Reconstruction
- Short Essay
- Paper Outline
- Final Paper

Problem Solving and Research Capability

Our graduates should be capable of researching; of analysing, and interpreting and assessing data and information in various forms; of drawing connections across fields of knowledge; and they should be able to relate their knowledge to complex situations at work or in the world, in order to diagnose and solve problems. We want them to have the confidence to take the initiative in doing so, within an awareness of their own limitations.

This graduate capability is supported by:

Learning outcomes

- Demonstrate an awareness of central problems in Metaphysics
- Understand and analyse arguments in the relevant literature
- Critically evaluate these theories and arguments
- Develop your own view or perspective through consideration and analysis of the views and arguments presented in the unit, and to present your own views with clarity and rigour
- Develop clarity of thought; clarity of verbal expression; clarity of written expression and exposition.

Assessment tasks

- Tutorial Participation
- Argument Reconstruction
- Short Essay
- Paper Outline
- Final Paper

Creative and Innovative

Our graduates will also be capable of creative thinking and of creating knowledge. They will be imaginative and open to experience and capable of innovation at work and in the community. We want them to be engaged in applying their critical, creative thinking.

This graduate capability is supported by:

Learning outcomes

- Understand and analyse arguments in the relevant literature
- Critically evaluate these theories and arguments
- Develop your own view or perspective through consideration and analysis of the views and arguments presented in the unit, and to present your own views with clarity and rigour
- Develop clarity of thought; clarity of verbal expression; clarity of written expression and exposition.

Assessment tasks

- Tutorial Participation
- Short Essay
- Paper Outline
- Final Paper

Effective Communication

We want to develop in our students the ability to communicate and convey their views in forms effective with different audiences. We want our graduates to take with them the capability to read, listen, question, gather and evaluate information resources in a variety of formats, assess, write clearly, speak effectively, and to use visual communication and communication technologies as appropriate.

This graduate capability is supported by:

Learning outcomes

- Understand and analyse arguments in the relevant literature

- Critically evaluate these theories and arguments
- Develop your own view or perspective through consideration and analysis of the views and arguments presented in the unit, and to present your own views with clarity and rigour
- Develop clarity of thought; clarity of verbal expression; clarity of written expression and exposition.

Assessment tasks

- Tutorial Participation
- Argument Reconstruction
- Short Essay
- Paper Outline
- Final Paper

Changes since First Published

Date	Description
29/07/2014	The assessment structure and unit outline have been updated due to change in teaching staff