



PHL 358

Metaphysics

S2 External 2014

Philosophy

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General Information

Unit convenor and teaching staff

Convenor

Elizabeth Schier

elizabeth.schier@mq.edu.au

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
Online Forum Participation	20%	Each week 2-13
Argument Reconstruction	10%	9/26/14
Short Essay	20%	3/10/14
Paper Outline	15%	4/10/14
Final Paper	35%	14/11/14

Online Forum Participation

Due: **Each week 2-13**

Weighting: **20%**

External students must contribute weekly to the online discussion forums. They are required to post on the discussion board for at least 75% of the tutorials. This can be the argument summary or another general point. If not posted on the board the argument summary should be emailed to Liz (elizabeth.schier@mq.edu.au). They should also provide courteous and relevant feedback on at least one other post in 8 weeks of the semester. The course convenor will also participate in these discussions from time to time, mainly in a facilitating and moderating role. Primary participation for the week must be completed before noon on Tuesday of the next week of classes. Participation after that time is encouraged, but will not affect your grade. Each week of participation will be worth 2 points, for a total of 20 points (this allows for one missed week).

On successful completion you will be able to:

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- 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:

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- Develop clarity of thought; clarity of verbal expression; clarity of written expression and exposition.

Short Essay

Due: **3/10/14**

Weighting: **20%**

A short (1500 word) essay on the first part of the course (time and colours).

On successful completion you will be able to:

- Demonstrate an awareness of central problems in Metaphysics
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- 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: **4/10/14**

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 14/10/14.

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: **14/11/14**

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 14/11/14.

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 will focus on the Metaphysics of Mind. We will examine the causal exclusion argument and the many different areas of metaphysics that drive it.

Week 1: Introduction to the Causal Exclusion Argument
Week 2: Nonreductive Physicalism
Week 3: Anomalous Monism
Week 4: Multiple Realizability
Week 5: Program Explanation
Week 6: Causation & Counterfactuals
Week 7: Causation & Proportionality
Week 8: Reductionism
Week 9: Reduction and Levels
Week 10: Physicalism and Hempel's Dilemma

Week 11: What do Physicalists Need?

Week 12: A Return to Causal Exclusion

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

- Online Forum 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

- Online Forum 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

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- 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
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- Argument Reconstruction

- Short Essay
- Paper Outline
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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

- Online Forum 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

- Online Forum Participation
- Argument Reconstruction
- Short Essay
- Paper Outline
- Final Paper

Changes since First Published

Date	Description
29/07/2014	The assessment schedule and content have been updated due to a change in teaching staff