



PHL 356

Work and the Good Life

S2 Day 2015

Dept of Philosophy

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General Information

Unit convenor and teaching staff

Unit Convenor

Nicholas Smith

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W6A 735

To be confirmed

Credit points

3

Prerequisites

39cp or admission to GDipArts

Corequisites

Co-badged status

Unit description

Reflection on the nature and value of work is an important, but often neglected, feature of the Western philosophical tradition. What is work and how should it be distinguished from other forms of activity? What contribution, if any, does work make to the good life? How does work affect our identity? Should the availability of work be left to the job market? Or does the state have responsibilities to provide employment? Is there a right to work? Or is there an obligation to work? Questions like these have puzzled philosophers from the ancient to the most recent times, and their reflections continue to be a source of rich insight and provocation. This unit provides an introduction to the philosophy of work, drawing on key texts by Plato, Aristotle, John Locke, Adam Smith, Karl Marx, and Hannah Arendt, as well as a range of contemporary authors.

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:

Articulate clearly and coherently philosophical arguments about the meaning of work.

Acquire knowledge of the history of the philosophy of work.

Develop a philosophical understanding of contemporary social issues around work

Analyse and critically evaluate philosophical arguments

Assessment Tasks

Name	Weighting	Due
Short written exercises	30%	Weekly
Essay	35%	18/09/2015
Reflective Portfolio	35%	06/11/2015

Short written exercises

Due: **Weekly**

Weighting: **30%**

Weekly exercises on tutorial topics written during tutorials or on discussion board.

On successful completion you will be able to:

- Acquire knowledge of the history of the philosophy of work.

Essay

Due: **18/09/2015**

Weighting: **35%**

2000 word essay on a specified topic

On successful completion you will be able to:

- Articulate clearly and coherently philosophical arguments about the meaning of work.
- Analyse and critically evaluate philosophical arguments

Reflective Portfolio

Due: **06/11/2015**

Weighting: **35%**

Portfolio of reflections on the topic of work and the good life.

On successful completion you will be able to:

- Develop a philosophical understanding of contemporary social issues around work

Delivery and Resources

The unit will be delivered by way of weekly lectures and tutorials.

Recorded lectures, lecture slides, readings, and other information can be accessed from the PHL356 i-learn site.

Unit Schedule

Week 1 27/07	Introduction to the philosophy of work
Part 1: Classical Problems in Philosophy of Work	
Week 2 03/03	Who should do what job? Justice and work in Plato's Republic.
Week 3 10/03	Work, the state of nature, and providence: John Locke and workmanship ideal
Week 4 17/03	Adam Smith on the division of labour, the growth of wealth, and its hidden costs
Week 5 24/03	GWF Hegel on the need for work
Week 6 31/03	Karl Marx on alienated labour
Week 7 07/08	Hannah Arendt on the 'active life' and the place of work in the human condition
Part 2: Modern Worries about Work	
Week 8 28/09	Fear of unemployment
Week 9 05/10	Precarious work and the demise of the 'proper job'
Week 10 12/10	Work–life imbalance: what does it really mean?
Week 11 19/10	Varieties of disrespect at work

Week 12 26/10	Meaningless work
Week 13 02/11	Wrap up

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/

Results

Results shown in *iLearn*, or released directly by your Unit Convenor, are not confirmed as they are subject to final approval by the University. Once approved, final results will be sent to your student email address and will be made available in [eStudent](#). For more information visit ask.mq.edu.au.

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

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 outcome

- Analyse and critically evaluate philosophical arguments

Assessment task

- Reflective Portfolio

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 outcome

- Develop a philosophical understanding of contemporary social issues around work

Assessment task

- Essay

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 outcome

- Acquire knowledge of the history of the philosophy of work.

Assessment task

- Short written exercises

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 outcome

- Articulate clearly and coherently philosophical arguments about the meaning of work.

Assessment task

- Essay

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

- Articulate clearly and coherently philosophical arguments about the meaning of work.
- Analyse and critically evaluate philosophical arguments

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 outcome

- Analyse and critically evaluate philosophical arguments

Assessment task

- Essay

Engaged and Ethical Local and Global citizens

As local citizens our graduates will be aware of indigenous perspectives and of the nation's historical context. They will be engaged with the challenges of contemporary society and with knowledge and ideas. We want our graduates to have respect for diversity, to be open-minded, sensitive to others and inclusive, and to be open to other cultures and perspectives: they should have a level of cultural literacy. Our graduates should be aware of disadvantage and social justice, and be willing to participate to help create a wiser and better society.

This graduate capability is supported by:

Learning outcome

- Develop a philosophical understanding of contemporary social issues around work

Assessment task

- Reflective Portfolio

Socially and Environmentally Active and Responsible

We want our graduates to be aware of and have respect for self and others; to be able to work with others as a leader and a team player; to have a sense of connectedness with others and country; and to have a sense of mutual obligation. Our graduates should be informed and active participants in moving society towards sustainability.

This graduate capability is supported by:

Learning outcomes

- Acquire knowledge of the history of the philosophy of work.
- Develop a philosophical understanding of contemporary social issues around work

Assessment task

- Reflective Portfolio