



PHL 358

Metaphysics

S1 External 2016

Dept of 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
Reading summary & discussion	35%	Each week 2-13
Short Essay	20%	18/4/16
Essay Plan	10%	30/5/16
Essay Response	10%	13/6/16
Final Essay	25%	16/6/16
Lecture Attendance	0%	ongoing

Reading summary & discussion

Due: **Each week 2-13**

Weighting: **35%**

You need to submit a summary of the reading for **7 of the 10** tutorials. It is due Sunday 11.59pm of the week of the tutorial. Late submissions will not be marked. Each week is worth 5 marks and if you submit more than 7 the best 7 will count. You also need to engage in the discussion board for each week, again by the Sunday of the week. This means posting and engaging with other student's posts. If you do not post before the due date your summary will not be counted.

Summaries should be submitted via the link provided on ilearn.

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

Short Essay

Due: **18/4/16**

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
- 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.

Essay Plan

Due: **30/5/16**

Weighting: **10%**

You will write a short, 1-2 page plan of your final essay focusing on communicating the structure of your argument

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.

Essay Response

Due: **13/6/16**

Weighting: **10%**

You will write a response to the comments on your first essay detailing the mistakes you made and the effort you went to in the second essay to fix those mistakes

On successful completion you will be able to:

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

Final Essay

Due: **16/6/16**

Weighting: **25%**

A longer 2500 word essay on the second half of the course.

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.

Lecture Attendance

Due: **ongoing**

Weighting: **0%**

You will need to listen to 75% (18/24) of the lectures during the week of the lecture i.e. before midnight Sunday. For each missed lecture you will **lose 2 marks**.

On successful completion you will be able to:

- Demonstrate an awareness of central problems in Metaphysics

Delivery and Resources

CLASSES

External students are expected to listen to the lectures the week they are given and participate in

the discussion board and submit their summaries by the end of the week for that tutorial.

READING

The readings are listed each week on iLearn. 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.

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

New Assessment Policy in effect from Session 2 2016 http://mq.edu.au/policy/docs/assessment/policy_2016.html. For more information visit http://students.mq.edu.au/events/2016/07/19/new_assessment_policy_in_place_from_session_2/

Assessment Policy prior to Session 2 2016 <http://mq.edu.au/policy/docs/assessment/policy.html>

Grading Policy prior to Session 2 2016 <http://mq.edu.au/policy/docs/grading/policy.html>

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

Complaint Management Procedure for Students and Members of the Public http://www.mq.edu.au/policy/docs/complaint_management/procedure.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://www.mq.edu.au/about_us/offices_and_units/information_technology/help/.

When using the University's IT, you must adhere to the [Acceptable Use of IT Resources 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 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

- Reading summary & discussion
- Short Essay
- Essay Response
- Final Essay

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
- Essay Response
- Final Essay
- Lecture Attendance

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:

Learning outcome

- 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

- Reading summary & discussion
- Essay Response
- Final Essay
- Lecture Attendance

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

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- Short Essay
- Essay Plan
- Essay Response
- Final Essay
- Lecture Attendance

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

Assessment tasks

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- Short Essay
- Essay Plan
- Essay Response
- Final 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

- 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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- Short Essay
- Essay Plan
- Essay Response
- Final Essay

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

- Reading summary & discussion
- Short Essay
- Essay Plan
- Essay Response
- Final Essay