



PHIL7000

Research Topics in Philosophy I

Session 1, Fully online/virtual 2021

Department of Philosophy

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Notice

As part of [Phase 3 of our return to campus plan](#), most units will now run tutorials, seminars and other small group activities on campus, and most will keep an online version available to those students unable to return or those who choose to continue their studies online.

To check the availability of face-to-face activities for your unit, please go to [timetable viewer](#). To check detailed information on unit assessments visit your unit's iLearn space or consult your unit convenor.

General Information

Unit convenor and teaching staff

Convenor, seminar facilitator

Mianna Lotz

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Contact via Email

By appointment

Seminar facilitator

Paul Formosa

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Seminar facilitator

Robert Sinnerbrink

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By appointment

Credit points

10

Prerequisites

Admission to MRes

Corequisites

Co-badged status

Unit description

This unit will explore various theoretical and practical issues raised by a single important recent theme in philosophy, such as the nature of the self or the impacts of technology. The unit will explore this theme from a variety of perspectives by looking at the relevant metaphysical and epistemological, ethical and moral, and political and social issues it raises. The unit's topics and themes may differ from year to year but will not replicate those covered in Research Topics in Philosophy II. Students will be exposed to important philosophical debates so that they are able to begin to pursue their own research projects.

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:

ULO1: understand issues discussed in the contemporary philosophical literature

ULO3: evaluate philosophical arguments

ULO2: analyse philosophical arguments

ULO4: communicate clearly your own perspective on the philosophical issues examined in this unit

General Assessment Information

Unless a Special Consideration request has been submitted and approved, (a) a penalty for lateness will apply – two (2) marks out of 100 will be deducted per day for assignments submitted after the due date – and (b) no assignment will be accepted more than seven (7) days (incl. weekends) after the original submission deadline. No late submissions will be accepted for timed assessments – e.g. quizzes, online tests.

Assessment Tasks

Name	Weighting	Hurdle	Due
Participation in discussion	20%	No	Continuous
Essay Plan	30%	No	Plans to be presented in class in Weeks 11 & 12
Essay	50%	No	Submissions open 11.59pm Fri 4 June 2021

Participation in discussion

Assessment Type ¹: Participatory task

Indicative Time on Task ²: 18 hours

Due: **Continuous**

Weighting: **20%**

Participation in discussion

On successful completion you will be able to:

- understand issues discussed in the contemporary philosophical literature

- evaluate philosophical arguments
- analyse philosophical arguments
- communicate clearly your own perspective on the philosophical issues examined in this unit

Essay Plan

Assessment Type ¹: Plan

Indicative Time on Task ²: 20 hours

Due: **Plans to be presented in class in Weeks 11 & 12**

Weighting: **30%**

Essay Plan

On successful completion you will be able to:

- understand issues discussed in the contemporary philosophical literature
- evaluate philosophical arguments
- analyse philosophical arguments
- communicate clearly your own perspective on the philosophical issues examined in this unit

Essay

Assessment Type ¹: Essay

Indicative Time on Task ²: 38 hours

Due: **Submissions open 11.59pm Fri 4 June 2021**

Weighting: **50%**

Research essay

On successful completion you will be able to:

- understand issues discussed in the contemporary philosophical literature
- evaluate philosophical arguments
- analyse philosophical arguments
- communicate clearly your own perspective on the philosophical issues examined in this unit

¹ If you need help with your assignment, please contact:

- the academic teaching staff in your unit for guidance in understanding or completing this type of assessment
- the [Writing Centre](#) for academic skills support.

² Indicative time-on-task is an estimate of the time required for completion of the assessment task and is subject to individual variation

Delivery and Resources

Weekly 2 hour seminar. This will be either on-campus, via zoom, or both – to be confirmed with students.

Required readings are available in iLearn under each seminar.

Students must complete **both** readings before the seminar and come prepared with questions to discuss.

Further readings are suggested – these are optional only. Students may use these or others they have selected themselves for their essays.

Unit Schedule

PART I (WEEKS 1-4): ARTIFICIAL INTELLIGENCE (AI) AND AUTONOMY (Paul Formosa)

Seminar 1: Introduction to unit, topics, and assessment

Seminar 2: Relational Autonomy, Authenticity and Technology

Readings:

1. Walker, Mary Jean, and Catriona Mackenzie. “Neurotechnologies, Relational Autonomy, and Authenticity.” *IJFAB: International Journal of Feminist Approaches to Bioethics* 13, no. 1 (March 2020): 98–119. <https://doi.org/10.3138/ijfab.13.1.06>.
2. Brown, Timothy. “Building Intricate Partnerships with Neurotechnology: Deep Brain Stimulation and Relational Agency.” *IJFAB: International Journal of Feminist Approaches to Bioethics* 13, no. 1 (March 2020): 134–54. <https://doi.org/10.3138/ijfab.13.1.09>.

Further reading:

Response papers in the same volume of the above journal.

Seminar 3: Manipulation, Autonomy and Technology

Reading:

1. Susser, Daniel, Beate Roessler, and Helen Nissenbaum. “Technology, Autonomy, and

Manipulation.” *Internet Policy Review* 8, no. 2 (June 30, 2019). <https://doi.org/10.14763/2019.2.1410>.

2. Nissenbaum, Helen. “A Contextual Approach to Privacy Online.” *Daedalus* 140, no. 4 (2011): 32–48.

Further reading:

Molitorisz, Sacha. *Net Privacy*. NewSouth Publishing, 2020. OR

Molitorisz, Sacha. ‘Privacy in Panopticon 2.0’. Macquarie University, 2017. <http://hdl.handle.net/1959.14/1273332>.

Seminar 4: Autonomous Technologies

Reading:

1. Sparrow, Robert. “Robots and Respect: Assessing the Case Against Autonomous Weapon Systems.” *Ethics and International Affairs* 30, no. 1 (2016): 93–116. <https://doi.org/10.1017/S0892679415000647>.

2. Roff, Heather M., and David Danks. “‘Trust but Verify’: The Difficulty of Trusting Autonomous Weapons Systems.” *Journal of Military Ethics* 17, no. 1 (January 2, 2018): 2–20. <https://doi.org/10.1080/15027570.2018.1481907>.

Further reading:

Formosa, Paul, and Malcolm Ryan. ‘Making Moral Machines: Why We Need Artificial Moral Agents’. *AI & SOCIETY*, 3 November 2020. <https://doi.org/10.1007/s00146-020-01089-6>.

PART II (WEEKS 5-7) PHILOSOPHICAL ISSUES IN CHILDHOOD AND PARENTING (Mianna Lotz)

Seminar 5: The Nature and value of Childhood

Reading:

1. Schapiro, T. (1999) What Is A Child? *Ethics* , 109 (4): 715-738.

2. Hanan, S. (2018) Why Childhood Is Bad for Children. *Journal of Applied Philosophy* 35 (S1): 11-28.

Further Reading:

Tomlin, P. (2018) ‘Saplings or Caterpillars? Trying to Understand Children's Wellbeing’. *Journal of Applied Philosophy* 35 (S1): 29-46.

Weinstock, D. (2018): ‘On the Complementarity of the Ages of Life’. *Journal of Applied Philosophy* 35 (S1): 47-59.

Schapiro, T. (2003). 'Childhood and personhood', *Arizona Law Review* 45: 575-94.

Lotz, M. 2018. 'The Vulnerable Child'. In A. Gheaus, G. Calder, J. De Wispelaere (eds). *The Routledge Handbook of the Philosophy of Childhood and Children*. (New York, Routledge).
<https://www.routledgehandbooks.com/doi/10.4324/9781351055987-28>

Seminar 6: The Nature and Limits of the Child's Right to an Open Future

Reading:

1. Feinberg, J. (1980) 'The Child's Right to an Open Future' in *Whose Child? Children's Rights, Parental Authority and State Power*, eds. William Aiken and Hugh La Follette (Totowa, NJ: Rowman and Littlefield): 124–53.

2. Mills, C. (2003): 'The Child's Right to an Open Future?' *Journal of Social Philosophy* 34(4): 499-509.

Further Reading:

Mullin, Amy. 2014. 'Children, Paternalism and the Development of Autonomy'. *Ethical Theory and Moral Practice* 17: 413–426.

Bou-Habib, P., & Olsaretti, S. 2015. 'Autonomy and children's well-being'. In A. Bagattini & C. Macleod (eds.), *The nature of children's well-being. Theory and practice* (Dordrecht: Springer): 15–34.

Richards, N. 2018. 'Raising a Child with Respect'. *Journal of Applied Philosophy*, 35 (S1): 90-104.

Seminar 7: Parents, the State, and the Child's Right to an Open Future

Reading:

1. Lotz, M. (2006): 'Feinberg, Mills, and the Child's Right to an Open Future'. *Journal of Social Philosophy* 37(4): 537–551.

2. Dietrich, F. (2020) 'Liberalism, Neutrality, and the Child's Right to an Open Future'. *Journal of social philosophy*, 2020, Vol.51 (1), p.104-128

Further Reading:

Clayton, M. (2015). 'Anti-perfectionist childrearing'. In A. Bagattini & C. Macleod (Eds.), *The nature of children's well-being. Theory and practice* (Dordrecht: Springer): 123–140.

Lotz, M. (2017). 'Liberalism and the Status of Family-making'. In J. Ahlberg & M. Cholbi (eds.) *Procreation, parenthood, and educational rights: ethical and philosophical issues*. (New York: Routledge): 113-136.

PART III (WEEKS 8-11) DOCUMENTARY ETHICS/CINEMATIC ETHICS (Robert Sinnerbrink)

Seminar 8: Captive Animals: Use or Exploitation?

Film:

Blackfish (Cowperthwaite, 2013)

Reading:

1. Tzachi Zamir, 'Recreational Use' in *A Speciesist Argument for Animal Liberation* Princeton University Press, (2007). pp 125-133.
2. Jason Sperb (2016) From Nihilism to Nostalgia: *Blackfish* (2013) and the Contradictions of the Nature Documentary, *Journal of Popular Film and Television*, 44:4, 206-219.

Further viewing and reading:

Chrulaw, M. "Managing Love and Death at the Zoo: The Biopolitics of Endangered Species Preservation," *Australian Humanities Review* 50 (2011): 137-157.

Hickman, D. 'Blackfish: proof that documentary can be a powerful force for change', *The Conversation*, Nov 12, 2015.

D'Addario, D. "Blackfish" director: "Using animals for entertainment is the bottom of the ethical totem pole", Salon.com, July 20, 2013.

Seminar 9: Animals in Research: Use or Exploitation?

Film:

Project Nim (Marsh, 2011)

Reading:

1. Kantin, H and Wendler, D Is there a role for assent or dissent in animal research? *Cambridge Quarterly of Healthcare Ethics* 2015, 24, 459-72.
2. Smuts B. 'Encounters with Animal Minds', *Journal of Consciousness Studies*, 8, No. 5–7, 2001, pp. 293–309.

Further Reading:

1. Johnson, J (2013) 'Vulnerable Subjects? The Case of Nonhuman Animals in Experimentation', *Journal of Bioethical Inquiry* 10: 497-504.
2. Norris, C. 'Almost Human: James Marsh, *Project Nim*, and the Monkey in the Middle', *Film Comment*, July-August 2011: 34-37.
3. Lucia, C and Lybarger, D. 'Of Chimps and Humans: An Interview with James Marsh', *Cineaste* (Summer 2011): 6-9.

Seminar 10: Documentary Ethics: Trauma, Memory and Reenactment

Film:

The Act of Killing (Oppenheimer and Anonymous, 2012)

Reading:

1. Thomas Wartenberg, 'Providing Evidence for a Philosophical Claim: *The Act of Killing* and the Banality of Evil', *Necsus: European Journal of Media Studies*(Autumn 2017): <https://necsus-ejms.org/providing-evidence-philosophical-claim-act-killing-banality-evil/>
2. R. Sinnerbrink, 'Gangster Film: Cinematic Ethics in *The Act of Killing*', in R. Sinnerbrink, *Cinematic Ethics: Exploring Ethical Experience through Film* (London and New York: Routledge, 2016), 165-184.
3. Leshu Torchin, 'Chronicle of a Quest: Silence after Killing', *Film-Quarterly* 69.2 (2015): 25-35.

Further Viewing and Reading:

The Look of Silence (Oppenheimer and Anonymous, 2014)

Interview extracts from Southeast Asia Globe, Malay Mail, and Inside Indonesia: 'The Act of Killing and the Ethics of Filming', *International Boulevard* (August 2013): <https://www.internationalboulevard.com/the-act-of-killing-and-the-ethics-of-filming>

Mehlis Behlil, 'The Look of Silence: An Interview with Joshua Oppenheimer and Adi Rukun', *Cineaste* (Summer 2015): 26-31.

R. Sinnerbrink 2017. 'The Act of Witnessing: Cinematic Ethics in *The Look of Silence*'. *Post-Script: Essays in Film and the Humanities*. Special Issue on Documentary Ethics. ed. Dan Geva and Yvonne Kozlovsky-Golan, Volume 36, Nos. 2&3 (Winter/Spring & Summer 2017): 30-44.

Seminar 11: Essay Plan Presentation Week I

Students to submit and present their essay plans for discussion and feedback.

Seminar 12: Essay Plan Presentation Week II

Students to submit and present their essay plans for discussion and feedback.

ESSAY SUBMISSION: 11.59pm Friday 4 June –11.59pm Friday 11 June 2021

Policies and Procedures

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

- [Academic Appeals Policy](#)
- [Academic Integrity Policy](#)

- [Academic Progression Policy](#)
- [Assessment Policy](#)
- [Fitness to Practice Procedure](#)
- [Grade Appeal Policy](#)
- [Complaint Management Procedure for Students and Members of the Public](#)
- [Special Consideration Policy](#)

Students seeking more policy resources can visit [Student Policies](https://students.mq.edu.au/support/study/policies) (<https://students.mq.edu.au/support/study/policies>). It is your one-stop-shop for the key policies you need to know about throughout your undergraduate student journey.

To find other policies relating to Teaching and Learning, visit [Policy Central](https://policies.mq.edu.au) (<https://policies.mq.edu.au>) and use the [search tool](#).

Student Code of Conduct

Macquarie University students have a responsibility to be familiar with the Student Code of Conduct: <https://students.mq.edu.au/admin/other-resources/student-conduct>

Results

Results published on platform other than [eStudent](#), (eg. iLearn, Coursera etc.) 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 or if you are a Global MBA student contact globalmba.support@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 help you improve your marks and take control of your study.

- [Getting help with your assignment](#)
- [Workshops](#)
- [StudyWise](#)
- [Academic Integrity Module](#)

The Library provides online and face to face support to help you find and use relevant information resources.

- [Subject and Research Guides](#)
- [Ask a Librarian](#)

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

If you are a Global MBA student contact globalmba.support@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.

Changes since First Published

Date	Description
08/02/2021	no changes made (apologies Richard, I thought I was convening this but its already sorted).