PHIL3056

Contemporary Topics in Philosophy

Session 2, Online-scheduled-weekday 2022

Department of Philosophy

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General Information

Unit convenor and teaching staff
Convenor, Lecturer, and Tutor
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By appointment

Lecturer and Tutor
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Credit points
10

Prerequisites
130cp at 1000 level or above

Corequisites

Co-badged status

Unit description
This unit provides students with the opportunity to engage with cutting edge areas of research in contemporary Philosophy. Topics and readings will be carefully curated by leading researchers in the department. You will have the opportunity to enhance your skills of argument and critical reflection as you are guided through these exciting areas of research. Topics might include: The Philosophy of Race, Work and the Good Life, Pragmatism, Embodied Cognition, Virtue Theory, Artificial intelligence, Film and Philosophy, and Contemporary Critical Theory.

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: Identify and critically evaluate core philosophical concepts from the readings.

ULO2: Produce arguments and analysis of philosophical positions across the readings.

ULO3: Use your research skills to deepen your knowledge and understanding of the topics.

ULO4: Express yourself clearly and precisely when communicating your argument and analysis.

General Assessment Information

Submission of Assessments

All assessment pieces are to be submitted via Turnitin portals that will be made available the unit's iLearn site. Written assessment pieces will be run through the Turnitin software system which detects unoriginal work.

Special Consideration Extensions and Penalties

All work must be submitted on time unless an extension has been granted. Requests for extensions (Special Consideration) will only be considered on serious grounds and with appropriate evidence (e.g., medical certificates, counsellor's letters). See this link for policy details: https://students.mq.edu.au/study/assessment-exams/special-consideration. Please note that work due concurrently in other subjects is NOT an exceptional circumstance and does not constitute a legitimate reason for an extension.

Late Assessment Penalty

> *Unless a Special Consideration request has been submitted and approved,* ***a 5% penalty (of the total possible mark) will be applied each day a written assessment is not submitted****, up until the 7th day (including weekends). After the 7th day, a mark of '0' (zero) will be awarded even if the assessment is submitted. Submission time for all written assessments is set at 11.55pm. A 1-hour grace period is provided to students who experience a technical issue. This late penalty will apply to written reports and recordings only.* ***Late submission of time sensitive tasks*** *(such as tests/exams, performance assessments/presentations, scheduled practical assessments/ labs* ***will be addressed by the unit convenor in a Special consideration application****.*

Special Consideration Policy

The University classifies a disruption warranting special consideration as serious and unavoidable if it:

• could not have reasonably been anticipated, avoided or guarded against by the student; and

• was beyond the student's control; and

• caused substantial disruption to the student's capacity for effective study and/or completion of required work; and

• occurred during an event critical study period and was at least three (3) consecutive days duration, and / or

• prevented completion of a final examination.

Students with a pre-existing disability/health condition or prolonged adverse circumstances may be eligible for ongoing assistance and support. Such support is governed by other policies and may be sought and coordinated through Campus Wellbeing and Support Services.

How to submit a Special Consideration Notification

A Special Consideration Notification must be completed and submitted online through www.ask.mq.edu.au within five (5) working days of the commencement of the disruption.

Applying for Special Consideration:

1. Log in at ask.mq

2. Click 'Special Consideration' from the 'Submit' menu on the left

3. Fill in the required fields as prompted.

Once you have completed filling out the information, please click on 'Submit'.

Assessment Tasks

Name	Weighting	Hurdle	Due
Quiz	20%	No	23:55 Sundays, Fortnightly from Week 3
Participation and engagement	20%	No	Ongoing throughout semester
Reflective writing tasks	20%	No	23:55 09/09/2022 Week 7
Philosophical Essay	40%	No	23:55 06/11/2022 Week 13

Quiz

Assessment Type [1]: Quiz/Test
Indicative Time on Task [2]: 15 hours
Due: **23:55 Sundays, Fortnightly from Week 3**
Weighting: **20%**

Weekly quizzes testing knowledge of key concepts and arguments

On successful completion you will be able to:

- Identify and critically evaluate core philosophical concepts from the readings.

Participation and engagement

Assessment Type [1]: Participatory task
Indicative Time on Task [2]: 15 hours
Due: **Ongoing throughout semester**
Weighting: **20%**

Contribution to class discussion and engagement in on-campus or online tutorial activities. Students are expected to be well-prepared and make a constructive contribution.

On successful completion you will be able to:

- Identify and critically evaluate core philosophical concepts from the readings.
- Produce arguments and analysis of philosophical positions across the readings.
- Express yourself clearly and precisely when communicating your argument and analysis.

Reflective writing tasks

Assessment Type [1]: Reflective Writing
Indicative Time on Task [2]: 15 hours
Due: **23:55 09/09/2022 Week 7**
Weighting: **20%**

Reflective writing tasks

On successful completion you will be able to:

- Identify and critically evaluate core philosophical concepts from the readings.
- Produce arguments and analysis of philosophical positions across the readings.
- Use your research skills to deepen your knowledge and understanding of the topics.
- Express yourself clearly and precisely when communicating your argument and analysis.

Philosophical Essay

Assessment Type [1]: Essay
Indicative Time on Task [2]: 30 hours
Due: **23:55 06/11/2022 Week 13**
Weighting: **40%**

Philosophical Essay

On successful completion you will be able to:

- Identify and critically evaluate core philosophical concepts from the readings.
- Produce arguments and analysis of philosophical positions across the readings.
- Use your research skills to deepen your knowledge and understanding of the topics.
- Express yourself clearly and precisely when communicating your argument and analysis.

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[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

This unit uses an iLearn website and Echo360 lecture recordings (https://ilearn.mq.edu.au/login/MQ/). The website contains links to the reading material, lecture notes, lecture recordings, and other learning materials such as video clips, weblinks, and images. Students will therefore require access to a computer and a good internet connection in order to access all the material and participate in the unit effectively. PHIL/PHIX3056 will be delivered using a combination of lectures (livestream and recorded via Echo360) and tutorial classes. Lectures are organised around key texts in which fundamental concepts and arguments are introduced and explained. The fortnightly quizzes are designed to practise the various skills required in philosophical writing. They will be scaffolded to help students in the preparation for tackling Assessment tasks. External students will engage in these activities online via dedicated iLearn discussion forums. For lecture times and classrooms please consult the MQ Timetable website:

http://www.timetables.mq.edu.au.

This website will display up-to-date information on your classes and classroom locations.

Lectures:

Lectures will take place on Fridays 11am-1pm (11 Wally's Walk, Tutorial Room 120) and will be both livestreamed on the day and recorded; these lectures will be available via Echo360 shortly afterwards.

Tutorials:

Weekly tutorial classes (both on-campus and online) will be conducted on Fridays commencing from Week 2 (on-campus tutorials held at 11 Wally's Walk, Tutorial Room 120; Zoom tutorial class for internal students on Fridays 2-3pm via the dedicated Zoom link on iLearn). Week 1 will be an Introductory session where students introduce themselves to each other and we discuss any issues relevant to studying this unit. Weekly Tutorial Discussion Questions will be posted after the lecture recordings have been posted. Students are required to respond to the Tutorial Discussion Questions and engage each other in discussion responding to issues raised in these responses. N.B.: Weekly tutorials will begin in WEEK 2 and will continue until WEEK 12 (Week 13 tutorial will be kept free or may involve a voluntary online peer review session for the Essay).

Required and Recommended Texts and/or Materials

PHIL3056 Contemporary Topics in Philosophy will be using electronically available readings available via Leganto on the iLearn website. For Part I, my book will also be a valuable resource and is a recommended background reading: Robert Sinnerbrink, *New Philosophies of Film: Thinking Images* (Continuum/Bloomsbury, 2011) or *New Philosophies of Film: An Introduction to Cinema as a Way of Thinking*, Second Edition (Bloomsbury, 2022). Textbooks for this unit can be purchased online from Booktopia https://www.booktopia.com.au/coop

Unit Schedule

PHIL3056 Contemporary Topics in Philosophy comprises two parts, spanning cutting-edge debates in aesthetics/philosophy of film and in philosophy of race. In Part I, ‘Film as Philosophy’ we will examine recent debates in the philosophy of film, focusing on the idea of ‘film as philosophy’ and the question whether film can contribute to philosophical understanding via cinematic means. As part of this debate we will explore particular case studies/films in depth that focus on emotion, empathy, and the idea of cinematic ethics (using cinema as a medium of ethical experience). In Part II, ‘Philosophy of Race,’ we will examine the debate about the existence of human biological races from a philosophical perspective.

Part I 'Film as Philosophy'

Week 1: What is Philosophy of Film/Film-Philosophy?

What is “philosophy of film”? Can films “philosophise”? The distinction between philosophy of film and ‘film as philosophy’ or ‘film-philosophy’.

- Thomas E. Wartenberg, ‘Philosophy of Film’, *Stanford Encyclopaedia of Philosophy*: htt

p://plato.stanford.edu/entries/film

- Robert Sinnerbrink, 'Film-Philosophy', in Edward Branigan and Warren Buckland (eds), *The Routledge Encyclopedia of Film Theory* (London/New York: Routledge, 2014), 207-213.

Week 2: Ontologies of the Moving Image

What are 'moving images'? Is the movement we see real or apparent? Andre Bazin's 'ontology of the cinematographic image'. Noel Carroll's critique and alternative definition of moving images. What about digital images? Do these undermine any claims that movimg images can depict reality faithfully?

- Andre Bazin, 'The Ontology of the Photographic Image', *What is Cinema? Volume 1*, trans. Hugh Gray (Berkeley and Los Angeles: University of California Press, 1967/2005), pp. 9-16.
- Noël Carroll, "Defining the Moving Image" in *Theorizing the Moving Image* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1996), pp. 49-74:
- Rafe McGregor, 'A New/Old Ontology of Film', *Film-Philosophy*, vol. 17, no. 1 (2013), 265-280.

Week 3: Understanding Film Narrative

How and why do movies makes sense? Cognitivist theories of narrative and narrative comprehension. Carroll's 'erotetic' model of narrative. Critical questions from an aesthetic and phenomenological point of view. Are films just about narrative content?

- Noël Carroll, 'The Power of Movies', *Daedalus*, Vol. 114, No. 4, The Moving Image (Fall, 1985), pp. 79-103.
- Katherine Thompson-Jones, 'The Thinking Viewer', in K. Thompson-Jones, *Aesthetics and Film* (London/New York: Continuum, 2008), pp. 99-114.

Week 4: Cognitivism Goes to the Movies

The 'cognitivist turn' in film theory. What can cognitivist theories offer to philosophy of film? The challenge to cognitivist approaches presented by art cinema. Critical questions for cognitivism and recent cognitivist responses to these critiques. Lars von Trier's films as case study.

- Ted Nannicelli and Paul Taberham, 'Introduction: Contemporary Cognitive Media Theory', in T. Nannicelli and P. Taberham (eds), Cognitive Media Theory (Routledge, 2014).
- Torben Grodal: 'Frozen Style and Strong Emotions of Panic and Separation: Trier's Prologues to *Antichrist* and *Melancholia*', *Journal of Scandinavian Cinema*, vol. 2, no. 1 (2012): 47-53.

Week 5: Affect and Emotion in Cinema

Theories of Affect and Emotion in Cinema. Empathy, sympathy and 'emotional contagion'. The expressive power of the close-up. Emotional contagion and empathy/sympathy/antipathy in *Silence of the Lambs*.

- Jane Stadler, ‘Empathy in Film’, *Routledge Handbook of the Philosophy of Empathy* (Routledge, 2016).
- Noël Carroll, ‘The Ties that Bind: Characters, the Emotions, and Popular Fictions’, in *Minerva’s Night Out (Wiley Blackwell, 2013),* 40-63.
- Amy Coplan, ‘Catching Characters’ Emotions: Emotional Contagion Responses to Narrative Fiction Film’, *Film Studies*, Issue 8, 2006, pp. 26-38.
- Carl Plantinga, ‘Facing Others: Close-ups of faces in narrative film and in *The Silence of the Lambs’*, in Lisa Zunshine (ed.), *The Oxford Handbook of Cognitive Literary Studies* (Oxford, 2015), Chapter 14.

Week 6: Cinematic Ethics

Film as a medium of ethical experience. Emotion, sympathy, and moral evaluation in and of movies. Cinematic ethics in *The Diving Bell and the Butterfly* (2007).

- Noël Carroll, ‘Movies, the Moral Emotions, and Sympathy’, *Midwest Studies in Philosophy* XXXIV (2010): 1-34.
- Carl Plantinga, ‘Moralities and Characters as Moral Agents’, in C. Plantinga, *Screen Stories: Emotion and the Ethics of Engagement* (Oxford, 2018), Chapter 7, 135-156.
- Jane Stadler, ‘Cinema’s Compassionate Gaze: Empathy, Affect, and Aesthetics in *The Diving Bell and the Butterfly*‘, in Jinhee Choi and Mattias Frey (eds), *Cine-Ethics: Ethical Dimensions of Film Theory*, *Practice and Spectatorship* (London and New York: Routledge, 2014), 27-42.

Week 7: Cinematic Ethics Case Study: *Get Out* (Jordan Peele, 2016)

Exploring experiences of racism and the problem of complicity through horror movies: the case of *Get Out* (Peele, 2016)

- Mary K. Bloodsworth-Lugo, 'Race, Bodies and Lived Realities in *Get Out* and *Black Panther*', in Christina Rawls, Diana Neiva, and Steven S. Gouveia (eds), *Philosophy and Film: Bridging Divides* (Routledge, 2019),
- 'Lewis R. Gordon, 'What is the Fear of Black Consciousness?' The Religion and Ethics report, with Stan Grant: https://www.abc.net.au/radionational/programs/religionandethicsreport/what-is-the-fear-of-black-consciousness-philosopher-lewis-gordon/13869872
- Lewis R. Gordon, 'Black Issues in Philosophy: A Conversation on *Get Out*', April 3, 2018: https://blog.apaonline.org/2018/04/03/black-issues-in-philosophy-a-conversation-

on-get-out/

[Mid-semester break]

Part II: 'Philosophy of Race'

Week 8: Race as Subspecies, and the Flight to Reference

In the second half of the unit, we explore the debate about the existence of human biological races from a philosophical perspective. The closest thing to a scientific synonym for ‘race’ is *subspecies.* We begin by examining theoretical and empirical issues with applying subspecies classification to humans, using Robin Andreasen’s work as an example. If there are no human subspecies, as is generally accepted, then either there are no races or race needs to be defined differently. In the second half of the lecture, we turn to the philosophy of language for resources to help us evaluate the other definitions of race we consider in this unit.

Week 9: Race as Population

This week we consider 20th century biologist Theodosius Dobzhansky’s definition of race as ‘genetic population’. Did Dobzhansky, in attempting to define races as populations, actually offer an alternative to the concept of race? In the second half of the lecture, we turn our attention away from genetics and toward morphological differences. Some have argued that forensic anthropologists, who routinely classify human bodily remains according to “race”, prove that race is biologically real. Are they right?

Week 10: Race as Genetic Cluster

The biological race debate was reignited in the early 21st century after new findings were published, using new genetic clustering techniques, that many interpreted as showing that race is biologically real. We will look closely at this study, which does not mention ‘race’ once, to determine whether it really supports biological racial realism.

Week 11: Race as a Folk Category

Quayshawn Spencer and Michael Hardimon, two of the most influential biological race realists, argue that if we want to know what race is, and whether it is real, we should not look to scientists, but to ordinary people: the folk. These philosophers argue that race, as understood by the folk, is biologically real. This week we will evaluate their arguments. Who gets to define race?

Week 12: Other Contemporary Approaches

The philosopher Philip Kitcher once argued that races are “inbred lineages”: populations between which interbreeding is low. He later revised his view and now defends a pragmatist approach to race, according to which the reality of race is relative to its usefulness. We will evaluate his inbred lineage approach, as well as his pragmatist arguments for and against biological racial realism. Finally, we will consider one last version of biological racial realism: race as ecotype.

Week 13 (optional): Essay Peer Review Session

Policies and Procedures

Macquarie University policies and procedures are accessible from Policy Central (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
- Assessment Procedure
- Complaints Resolution 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). 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) 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

Academic Integrity

At Macquarie, we believe academic integrity – honesty, respect, trust, responsibility, fairness and courage – is at the core of learning, teaching and research. We recognise that meeting the expectations required to complete your assessments can be challenging. So, we offer you a range of resources and services to help you reach your potential, including free online writing and maths support, academic skills development and wellbeing consultations.

Student Support

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

The Writing Centre

The Writing Centre provides resources to develop your English language proficiency, academic writing, and communication skills.

- Workshops
- Chat with a WriteWISE peer writing leader
- Access StudyWISE
- Upload an assignment to Studiosity
- Complete the 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

Macquarie University offers a range of Student Support Services including:

- IT Support
- Accessibility and disability support with study
- Mental health support
- Safety support to respond to bullying, harassment, sexual harassment and sexual assault
- Social support including information about finances, tenancy and legal issues

Student Enquiries

Got a question? Ask us via AskMQ, or contact Service Connect.

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 from Previous Offering

This unit includes new material for Part II on Philosophy of Race, focusing on the biological aspects of 'race', and new content for Week 7 of Part I, a case study of the film *Get Out* (Peele, 2016)