



PHIL7000

Research Topics in Philosophy I

Session 1, In person-scheduled-weekday, North Ryde 2023

Department of Philosophy

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General Information

Unit convenor and teaching staff

Convenor; Lecturer

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By appointment

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

ULO2: analyse philosophical arguments

ULO3: evaluate 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 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 non-timed sensitive assessment (incl essays, reports, posters, portfolios, journals, recordings etc). Late submission of time sensitive tasks (such as tests/exams, performance assessments/presentations, scheduled practical assessments/labs etc) will only be addressed by the unit convenor in a Special consideration application. Special Consideration outcome may result in a new question or topic.

Assessment Tasks

Name	Weighting	Hurdle	Due
Participation	20%	No	On-going
Essay Plan	30%	No	Sunday, 21st of May (11:55pm)
Essay	50%	No	Sunday, 4th of June (11:55pm)

Participation

Assessment Type ¹: Participatory task

Indicative Time on Task ²: 18 hours

Due: **On-going**

Weighting: **20%**

Participation in discussion and associated activities

On successful completion you will be able to:

- understand issues discussed in the contemporary philosophical literature
- analyse philosophical arguments
- evaluate 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: **Sunday, 21st of May (11:55pm)**

Weighting: **30%**

Essay Plan

On successful completion you will be able to:

- understand issues discussed in the contemporary philosophical literature
- analyse philosophical arguments
- evaluate 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: **Sunday, 4th of June (11:55pm)**

Weighting: **50%**

Research essay

On successful completion you will be able to:

- understand issues discussed in the contemporary philosophical literature
- analyse philosophical arguments
- evaluate 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

READINGS

Required and recommended readings will be made available on Leganto and as advised by lecturers during seminars.

SEMINARS

There will be a weekly seminar.

UNIT WEBPAGES AND E-RESOURCES

Much of this unit (assessment instructions, additional reading material, etc.) is delivered online through iLearn (<http://ilearn.mq.edu.au>). PC and Internet access are required. Basic computer skills (e.g., internet browsing) and skills in word processing are also a requirement. Please consult teaching staff for any further, more specific requirements.

Unit Schedule

Weeks: 1 - 6 New Directions in Philosophical Methodology: Conceptual Engineering

With Dr. Paul-Mikhail Catapang Podosky

Synopsis: The question of what is contained within the proper bounds of philosophy is contested. In recent history, philosophy was considered, at least for the most part, to be simply *conceptual analysis*. There are different ways to spell out what this kind of analysis involves, ranging from consulting one's intuitions about the meaning of terms to quasi-empirical investigation into the vagaries of ordinary linguistic usage within a community. In this section of the course, we will explore an emerging form of conceptual analysis that does not strictly concern itself with *descriptive* questions about the meaning of terms or the content of concepts. It instead asks: What concepts *should* we have? This way of doing philosophy has been dubbed *conceptual engineering*. Specifically, we'll examine how conceptual engineering has been used to grapple with core justice-related questions concerning race, gender, sexual orientation, disability, animal ethics, and so forth. We shall also look at how we can implement conceptual innovations in our everyday thinking and speaking practices, and related to the next section, how cinema might play a key role in this process.

- Week 1: What is Conceptual Engineering?
- Week 2: Political Conceptual Engineering
- Week 3: Engineering Gender
- Week 4: Engineering Race

- Week 5: Engineering Sexual Orientation, Disability, and Animals
- Week 6: The Implementation Challenge

Weeks: 7 - 12 Visible Arguments: Documentary as Philosophy

With Associate Professor Robert Sinnerbrink

Synopsis: In this section of the course we will look at recent philosophical approaches to cinema and the idea of cinematic ethics: cinema as a medium of ethical experience. We commence by examining philosophical and ethical perspectives on documentary before turning to explore a range of contemporary documentaries. We shall focus on a range of philosophical, ethical, political, and ecological topics, problems, and issues through a combination of philosophical readings and film viewings, examining the ways in which non-fictional/documentary films can contribute to philosophical and ethical understanding via cinematic means.

- Week 7: What is Documentary? Philosophical and Ethical Perspectives
- Week 8: Philosophical Documentaries
- Week 9: Animals on Film I
- Week 10: Animals on Film II
- Week 11: Visible Arguments: Hypernormalisation
- Week 12: Ecocritical Cinema: Ecological Threats and the Anthropocene

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](#)
- [Assessment Procedure](#)
- [Complaints Resolution Procedure for Students and Members of the Public](#)
- [Special Consideration Policy](#)

Students seeking more policy resources can visit [Student Policies \(https://students.mq.edu.au/support/study/policies\)](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)

[du.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 Advocacy](#) provides independent advice on MQ policies, procedures, and processes

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.