PHL 358
Metaphysics
S1 Day 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](http://mq.edu.au/policy/docs/academic_honesty/policy.html).

**Assessment Tasks**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Name</th>
<th>Weighting</th>
<th>Due</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Reading summary &amp; discussion</td>
<td>35%</td>
<td>Each week 2-13</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Short Essay</td>
<td>20%</td>
<td>18/4/16</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Essay Plan</td>
<td>10%</td>
<td>30/5/16</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Essay Response</td>
<td>10%</td>
<td>13/6/16</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Final Essay</td>
<td>25%</td>
<td>16/6/16</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lecture Attendance</td>
<td>0%</td>
<td>Continuous</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**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 **before the start** 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 attend and engage in the tutorial discussion for each week. If you do not attend your summary will not be counted.

Summaries should be submitted via the link provided on ilearn.

On successful completion you will be able to:

https://unitguides.mq.edu.au/unit_offerings/62571/unit_guide/print
**Unit guide** PHL 358 Metaphysics

- 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

[https://unitguides.mq.edu.au/unit_offerings/62571/unit_guide/print](https://unitguides.mq.edu.au/unit_offerings/62571/unit_guide/print)
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: Continuous
Weighting: 0%

You need to attend 75% i.e. 18/24 of the lectures. If you have a *demonstrated* clash you need to have listened to the recording by the end of the week that the lecture was given. You will be penalized 2 marks for each missed lecture.

Please contact Liz if you have a clash.

On successful completion you will be able to:

• Demonstrate an awareness of central problems in Metaphysics
• Understand and analyse arguments in the relevant literature
Delivery and Resources

CLASSES
There are 2 lectures and 1 tutorial per week. As of publishing these were scheduled for:

Lecture 1: Monday 3-4pm E4B 316
Lecture 2: Thursday 12-1pm Y3A 211
Tutorial: Thursday 2-3pm C5A 404

Please check the timetable for any late changes.

Students are expected to attend the lectures and participate in the tutorial discussion.

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


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

**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**

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

- Reading summary & discussion
- 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
• 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

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