# PHIX358

## Metaphysics

S2 OUA 2019

*Dept of Philosophy*

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# General Information

Unit convenor and teaching staff
OUA Convenor
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OUA Tutor
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Prerequisites

Corequisites

Co-badged status

Unit description
This unit examines both traditional topics in metaphysics as well as metaphysical topics in other areas in philosophy. The first half of the unit is structured around traditional topics such as causation, free will, laws of nature, personal identity, mental states, and time. Some of the questions we will look at are: Do we have free will or are our actions determined by the laws of nature? How does the mind relate to the brain? Will my personal identity persist over time? What is the nature of time? Does time flow or is it static? The second half of the unit is devoted to a critical examination of metaphysical topics in other areas in philosophy such as philosophy of art, philosophy of technology, and philosophy of religion. Some of the questions we will look at are: What defines a work of art? How can we distinguish between a work of art and an artifact? What is the nature of virtual entities and how do they differ from physical entities? Does god exist?

## Important Academic Dates

Information about important academic dates including deadlines for withdrawing from units are available at https://www.open.edu.au/student-admin-and-support/key-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 written expression and exposition.

# General Assessment Information

Assessments are to be submitted through Turnitin, and will be marked and returned via Grademark. For information about these tools, see:

http://www.mq.edu.au/iLearn/student_info/assignments.htm

**Special Consideration**

Requests for extensions should be submitted via a Special Consideration request, which is available in the http://ask.mq.edu.au portal. Your request should be accompanied by appropriate documentation, such as a medical certificate. Please see the Special Consideration policy in the list of policies at the end of this document for further details.

Read the policy closely as your request may be turned down if you have not followed procedure, or if you have not submitted a request in a timely manner.

**Late Submission Penalty**

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.

**Academic Honesty**

In Philosophy, academic honesty is taken very seriously. Misrepresenting someone else's work as your own may be grounds for referral to the Faculty Disciplinary Committee. If you have questions about how to properly cite work or how to credit sources, please talk to one of the teaching staff and see also Academic Integrity Policy (see the Policies and Procedures section below).

Please note that the policy also prohibits resubmitting work you have already submitted in another unit or unit offering. This counts as **self-plagiarism**. To avoid self-plagiarism, if you have done this unit previously, you should write on another topic this time. If this presents you with any problems, please contact the unit covenor as soon as possible.

**For information about extensions, late penalties and special consideration, see *Policies and Procedures* section below.**

**Note that all times mentioned in due dates are Sydney time.**

# Assessment Tasks

| Name | Weighting | Hurdle | Due |
|---|---|---|---|
| Short quiz 1 | 5% | No | Mon-Sun Week 5 |
| Short Essay | 30% | No | Sun 22/9 (in mid-term break) |
| Short quiz 2 | 5% | No | Mon-Sun Week 9 |
| Final essay | 40% | No | Sun 10/11 (Wk 13) |
| Short quiz 3 | 5% | No | Mon-Sun Week 13 |
| Participation | 15% | No | Weekly |

## Short quiz 1

Due: **Mon-Sun Week 5**
Weighting: **5%**

Short quiz covering material from weeks 1-4. 1 attempt is allowed and you have one hour to complete the quiz once you begin.

The criterion for assessment will be understanding of the unit content, as demonstrated by the correct selection of answers in a multiple choice quiz.

See the General Assessment Information section for information about Special Consideration and penalties for lateness.

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 written expression and exposition.

## Short Essay

Due: **Sun 22/9 (in mid-term break)**
Weighting: **30%**

You will write a short 1500 word essay on one of the topics discussed during the first half of the

course. These topics include causation, free will, laws of nature, personal identity, mental states, and time. Your essay should be submitted online via Turnitin. Assessment criteria are: Focus, Structure, Exposition, Argument. A rubric will be available in iLearn.

The short essay is due in the mid-term break, which is a two week break occurring between week 7 and week 8.

See the General Assessment Information section for information about Special Consideration and penalties for lateness.

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 written expression and exposition.

## Short quiz 2

Due: **Mon-Sun Week 9**
Weighting: **5%**

Short quiz covering material from weeks 5-8. 1 attempt is allowed and you have one hour to complete the quiz once you begin.

The criterion for assessment will be understanding of the unit content, as demonstrated by the correct selection of answers in a multiple choice quiz.

See the General Assessment Information section for information about Special Consideration and penalties for lateness.

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 written expression and exposition.

## Final essay

Due: **Sun 10/11 (Wk 13)**
Weighting: **40%**

You will write a 2000 word essay on one of the topics discussed during the second half of the course. These topics include material objects, artifacts, art, virtual reality, and religion. Your essay should be submitted online via Turnitin. You will be assessed on: Focus, Structure, Exposition, Argument. A rubric will be available in iLearn.

See the General Assessment Information section for information about Special Consideration and penalties for lateness.

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 written expression and exposition.

## Short quiz 3

Due: **Mon-Sun Week 13**
Weighting: **5%**

Short quiz covering material from weeks 9-12. 1 attempt is allowed and you have one hour to complete the quiz once you begin.

The criterion for assessment will be understanding of the unit content, as demonstrated by the correct selection of answers in a multiple choice quiz.

See the General Assessment Information section for information about Special Consideration and penalties for lateness.

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 written expression and exposition.

## Participation

Due: **Weekly**
Weighting: **15%**

Participation marks will be based on engagement in online forums. Your participation will be assessed based on your willingness to engage and the quality of your engagement. Assessment criteria will be engagement with the learning community, engagement with content, and consistency and commitment. A rubric will be provided in iLearn. Note that posts that are not made in a timely fashion may not be counted.

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 written expression and exposition.

# Delivery and Resources

For the first half of this course, we'll use the following textbook. Please buy this book before the course begins. (http://coop-bookshop.com.au)

John W. Carroll and Ned Markosian. (2010). *Introduction to Metaphysics.* Cambridge University Press.

For the second half, we'll use selected articles which will be available electronically through the Macquarie University Library, with links from iLearn.

Online units can be accessed at: http://ilearn.mq.edu.au/. Unit resources include video lecture recordings, quizzes, written content, discussion forums and assignment submission.

PC and Internet access are required. Basic computer skills (e.g., internet browsing) and skills in word processing are also a requirement. A reliable internet connection is required throughout semester.

# Unit Schedule

**Important schedule information:** Please note that OUA units offered by Macquarie University now follow Macquarie Sessions rather than OUA Study Periods. This will include a mid-session

break of two weeks. You will find the Session dates below:

**Week Topics**

1 (week beginning 29/7) Course intro, what is metaphysics?

Essential reading: Ch. 1 of Carroll & Markosian (19 pages)

2 (week beginning 5/8) Causation

Essential reading: Ch. 2 of Carroll & Markosian (24 pages)

3 (week beginning 12/8) Free will

Essential reading: Ch. 3 of Carroll & Markosian (33 pages)

4 (week beginning 19/8) Laws of nature

Essential reading: Ch. 4 of Carroll & Markosian (23 pages)

5 (week beginning 26/8) Personal identity

Essential reading: Ch. 5 of Carroll & Markosian (29 pages)

6 (week beginning 2/9) Mental states

Essential reading: Ch. 6 of Carroll & Markosian (25 pages)

7 (week beginning 9/9) Time

Essential reading: Ch. 7 of Carroll & Markosian (24 pages)

**Mid-session break (2 weeks: 16/9-29/9)**

8 (week beginning 30/9) Material objects

Essential reading: Ch. 8 of Carroll & Markosian (42 pages)

9 (week beginning 7/10) Art

Essential reading: Davies, S. (2005). The ontology of art. In J. Levinson (ed.), *The Oxford handbook of aesthetics* (pp. 156-180). Oxford University Press.

10 (week beginning 14/10) Artifacts

Essential reading:

- Houkes, W.N. & Vermaas, P. (2009). Artefacts in analytic metaphysics. *Techne*, 13(2), 74-81.
- Kroes, P. & Meijers, A. (2006). The dual-nature of technical artifacts. *Studies in History and Philosophy of Science Part A*, 37(1), 1-4.

- Heersmink, R. (2014). The metaphysics of cognitive artefacts. *Philosophical Explorations.* DOI: 10.1080/13869795.2014.910310

11 (week beginning 21/10) Virtual reality

Essential reading:

- Brey, P. (2014). The physical and social reality of virtual reality. In M. Grimshaw (ed.), *Oxford handbook of virtuality*, (pp. 42-54). Oxford University Press.
- Mooradian, N. (2006). Virtual reality, ontology, and value. *Metaphilosophy*, 37(5), 673-690.

12 (week beginning 28/10) Religion

Essential reading:

- Wainwright, W. (2012). Concepts of god. In *Stanford Encyclopedia of Philosophy*.
- Himma, K. (2015). Anselm: Ontological argument for god's existence. In *Internet Encyclopedia of Philosophy.*

13 (week beginning 4/11) Review and assessment

# Policies and Procedures

## Late Submission - applies unless otherwise stated elsewhere in the unit guide

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.

## Extension Request

### Special Consideration Policy and Procedure (https://staff.mq.edu.au/work/strategy-planning-and-governance/university-policies-and-procedures/policies/special-consideration)

The University recognises that students may experience events or conditions that adversely affect their academic performance. If you experience serious and unavoidable difficulties at exam time or when assessment tasks are due, you can consider applying for Special Consideration.

You need to show that the circumstances:

1. were serious, unexpected and unavoidable
2. were beyond your control
3. caused substantial disruption to your academic work
4. substantially interfered with your otherwise satisfactory fulfilment of the unit requirements
5. lasted at least three consecutive days or a total of 5 days within the teaching period and prevented completion of an assessment task scheduled for a specific date.

If you feel that your studies have been impacted submit an application as follows:

1. Visit Ask MQ and use your OneID to log in
2. Fill in your relevant details
3. Attach supporting documents by clicking 'Add a reply', click 'Browse' and navigating to the files you want to attach, then click 'Submit Form' to send your notification and supporting documents
4. Please keep copies of your original documents, as they may be requested in the future as part of the assessment process

**Outcome**

Once your submission is assessed, an appropriate outcome will be organised.

# OUA Specific Policies and Procedures

## Withdrawal from a unit after the census date

You can withdraw from your subjects prior to the census date (last day to withdraw). If you successfully withdraw before the census date, you won't need to apply for Special Circumstances. If you find yourself unable to withdraw from your subjects before the census date - you might be able to apply for Special Circumstances. If you're eligible, we can refund your fees and overturn your fail grade.

If you're studying Single Subjects using FEE-HELP or paying up front, you can apply online.

If you're studying a degree using HECS-HELP, you'll need to apply directly to Macquarie University.

Macquarie University policies and procedures are accessible from Policy Central (https://staff.mq.edu.au/work/strategy-planning-and-governance/university-policies-and-procedures/policy-central). 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 *(**Note:** The Special Consideration Policy is effective from 4 December 2017 and replaces the Disruption to Studies Policy.)*

Undergraduate students seeking more policy resources can visit the Student Policy Gateway (https://students.mq.edu.au/support/study/student-policy-gateway). It is your one-stop-shop for the key policies you need to know about throughout your undergraduate student journey.

If you would like to see all the policies relevant to Learning and Teaching visit Policy Central (https://staff.mq.edu.au/work/strategy-planning-and-governance/university-policies-and-procedures/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/study/getting-started/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 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

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.

# 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 written expression and exposition.

### Assessment tasks

- Short quiz 1
- Short Essay
- Short quiz 2
- Final essay
- Short quiz 3
- Participation

## 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 written expression and exposition.

### Assessment tasks

- Short Essay
- Final essay
- Participation

## 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 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 written expression and exposition.

### Assessment tasks

- Short Essay
- Final essay
- Participation

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

### Assessment tasks

- Short quiz 1
- Short Essay
- Short quiz 2
- Final essay
- Short quiz 3
- Participation

## 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 written expression and exposition.

## Assessment tasks

- Short quiz 1
- Short Essay
- Short quiz 2
- Final essay
- Short quiz 3
- Participation

# 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 written expression and exposition.

## Assessment tasks

- Short quiz 1
- Short Essay
- Short quiz 2
- Final essay
- Short quiz 3
- Participation

# 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 outcome

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

## Assessment tasks

- Short quiz 1
- Short Essay
- Short quiz 2
- Final essay
- Short quiz 3
- Participation