PHIL 3020 - METAPHYSICS
Course Outline

Course Co-ordinator: John Wright
Room: MC113
Ph: 49 21 5182
Fax: 49 21 6933
Email: John.Wright@newcastle.edu.au
Consultation hours: Tuesdays 3,00pm to 5.00pm.
Semester: Semester 1 - 2006
Unit Weighting: 20
Teaching Methods: Lecture

Course Overview
Brief Course Description
Metaphysics is one of the main branches of philosophy. This course surveys the main problems and areas of metaphysics.

Contact Hours
Lecture for 3 Hours per Week for the Full Term
For particular dates and times refer to course guide available from school office.

Learning Materials/Texts

Course Objectives
(1) Impart to students familiarity with, and knowledge of, the main issues addressed and approaches taken by philosophers, specifically in the area of metaphysics.
(2) Impart to students critical skills to deal with these issues and employ these approaches in their assessment of their own culture and societal life, and in thinking about their own personal lives.

Course Outline issued and Correct as at: Week 1 Semester 1 2006-02-07

CTS Download Date: 3/2/06
(3) Develop high level written and oral skills in analyzing and presenting philosophical issues.
(4) Develop a capacity to appreciate the philosophical positions involved in how people approach ways of living and in their stance to the world around them.

Course Content
The course covers topics including Realism, the existence of material objects, causation, philosophical problems of space and time, problems of the self, other minds and the nature and existence of moral properties.

Assessment Items

| Essays / Written Assignments | 2 x 3,500 word essays. |

Assumed Knowledge
10 units of PHIL courses at 1000 level, or 40 units of any courses at any level.

Callaghan Campus Timetable
PHIL 3020
METAPHYSICS
Enquiries: School of Humanities and Social Science
Semester 1 – 2006
Lecture Monday 10:00 - 13:00 [MC110]

Plagiarism
University policy prohibits students plagiarising any material under any circumstances. A student plagiarises if he or she presents the thoughts or works of another as one's own. Without limiting the generality of this definition, it may include:

- copying or paraphrasing material from any source without due acknowledgment;
- using another's ideas without due acknowledgment;
- working with others without permission and presenting the resulting work as though it was completed independently.

Plagiarism is not only related to written works, but also to material such as data, images, music, formulae, websites and computer programs.

Aiding another student to plagiarise is also a violation of the Plagiarism Policy and may invoke a penalty.

For further information on the University policy on plagiarism, please refer to the Policy on Student Academic Integrity at the following link -


The University has established a software plagiarism detection system called Turnitin. When you submit assessment items please be aware that for the purpose of assessing any assessment item the University may -
• Reproduce this assessment item and provide a copy to another member of the University; and/or
• Communicate a copy of this assessment item to a plagiarism checking service (which may then retain a copy of the item on its database for the purpose of future plagiarism checking).
• Submit the assessment item to other forms of plagiarism checking

Written Assessment Items
Students may be required to provide written assessment items in electronic form as well as hard copy.

Extension of Time for Assessment Items, Deferred Assessment and Special Consideration for Assessment Items or Formal Written Examinations
Students are required to submit assessment items by the due date, as advised in the Course Outline, unless the Course Coordinator approves an extension of time for submission of the item. University policy is that an assessment item submitted after the due date, without an approved extension, will be penalised.

Any student:
1. who is applying for an extension of time for submission of an assessment item on the basis of medical, compassionate, hardship/trauma or unavoidable commitment; or
2. whose attendance at or performance in an assessment item or formal written examination has been or will be affected by medical, compassionate, hardship/trauma or unavoidable commitment;
must report the circumstances, with supporting documentation, to the appropriate officer on the prescribed form.

Please go to the Policy and the on-line form for further information, particularly for information on the options available to you, at:


Changing your Enrolment
The last dates to withdraw without financial or academic penalty (called the HECS Census Dates) are:

For semester 1 courses: 31 March 2006
For semester 2 courses: 31 August 2006
For Trimester 1 courses: 18 February 2006
For Trimester 2 courses: 10 June 2006

Students may withdraw from a course without academic penalty on or before the last day of semester and prior to the commencement of the formal exam period. Any withdrawal from a course after the last day of semester will result in a fail grade.
Students cannot enrol in a new course after the second week of semester/trimester, except under exceptional circumstances. Any application to add a course after the second week of semester/trimester must be on the appropriate form, and should be discussed with the School Office.

To change your enrolment online, please refer to

http://www.newcastle.edu.au/study/enrolment/change-enrol.html

Contact Details
Faculty Student Service Offices

The Faculty of Education and Arts
Room: GP1-22 (General Purpose Building)
Phone: 0249 215 314

The Dean of Students
Dr Jennifer Archer
Phone: 492 15806
Fax: 492 17151
resolutionprecinct@newcastle.edu.au

Various services are offered by the University Student Support Unit:

Alteration of this Course Outline
No change to this course outline will be permitted after the end of the second week of the term except in exceptional circumstances and with Head of School approval. Students will be notified in advance of any approved changes to this outline.

Web Address for Rules Governing Undergraduate Academic Awards

Web Address for Rules Governing Postgraduate Academic Awards

STUDENTS WITH A DISABILITY OR CHRONIC ILLNESS
The University is committed to providing a range of support services for students with a disability or chronic illness.

If you have a disability or chronic illness which you feel may impact on your studies, please feel free to discuss your support needs with your lecturer or course coordinator.
Disability Support may also be provided by the Student Support Service (Disability). Students must be registered to receive this type of support. To register please contact the Disability Liaison Officer on 49 21 5766, or via email at: student-disability@newcastle.edu.au

As some forms of support can take a few weeks to implement it is extremely important that you discuss your needs with your lecturer, course coordinator or Student Support Service staff at the beginning of each semester.

For more information related to confidentiality and documentation please visit the Student Support Service (Disability) website at:

www.newcastle.edu.au/services/disability

Assessment for this course will be by means of two essays. Both essays will be 3,500 words long. Essay topics for the first essay will be given out early in semester. The list of topics will also include recommended reading to be used in preparing the essay.

Attendance at lectures is recommended but not compulsory. Students will not lose marks for not attending lectures.

There are no tutorials for this subject. However, students will be given the opportunity to seek clarification and ask questions within the lectures.

Studentmail and Blackboard: www.blackboard.newcastle.edu.au/
This course uses Blackboard and studentmail to contact students, so you are advised to keep your email accounts within the quota to ensure you receive essential messages. To receive an expedited response to queries, post questions on the Blackboard discussion forum if there is one, or if emailing staff directly use the course code in the subject line of your email. Students are advised to check their studentmail and the course Blackboard site on a weekly basis.

Written Assignment Presentation and Submission Details

Students are required to submit assessment items by the due date. Late assignments will be subject to the penalties described below.

Hard copy submission:
Type your assignments: All work must be typewritten in 11 or 12 point black font. Leave a wide margin for marker’s comments, use 1.5 or double spacing, and include page numbers.
Word length: The word limit of all assessment items should be strictly followed – 10% above or below is acceptable, otherwise penalties may apply.
Proof read your work because spelling, grammatical and referencing mistakes will be penalised.
Staple the pages of your assignment together (do not use pins or paper clips).
University coversheet: All assignments must be submitted with the University coversheet: www.newcastle.edu.au/policy/academic/general/assess_coversheet.pdf
Assignments are to be deposited in the relevant discipline assignment box:
Callaghan students: School of Humanities and Social Science Office, Level 1, McMullin Building, MC127
Ourimbah students: Room H01.43
Do not fax or email assignments: Only hard copies of assignments will be considered for assessment. Inability to physically submit a hard copy of an
assignment by the deadline due to other commitments or distance from campus is an unacceptable excuse. Assignments mailed to Schools are accepted from the date posted.

**Keep a copy of all assignments:** All assignments are date-stamped and recorded upon receipt, however it is the student’s responsibility to produce a copy of their work if the assignment goes astray after submission. Keep updated back-ups in hard copy and on disk.

**Online copy submission to Turnitin**
In addition to hard copy submission, students are required to submit an electronic version of the following assignments to Turnitin via the course Blackboard website:
- First essay: 3,500 words. (Worth 50%)
- Second essay: 3,500 words. (Worth 50%)

Prior to final submission, all students have the opportunity to submit one draft of their assignment to Turnitin to self-check their referencing.

Assignments will not be marked until both hard copy and online versions have been submitted. Marks may be deducted for late submission of either version.

**Special Consideration/Extension of Time Applications**
Students wishing to apply for Special Consideration or Extension of Time should obtain the appropriate form from the Student HUBS.

**No Assignment Re-submission**
Students who have failed an assignment are not permitted to revise and resubmit it in this course. However, students are always welcome to contact their Tutor, Lecturer or Course Coordinator to make a consultation time to receive individual feedback on their assignments.

**Remarks**
Students can request to have their work re-marked by the Course Coordinator or Discipline Convenor (or their delegate); three outcomes are possible: the same grade, a lower grade, or a higher grade being awarded. Students may also appeal against their final result for a course. Please consult the University policy at: [www.newcastle.edu.au/policy/academic/adm_prog/procedures_appeals_finalresult.pdf](http://www.newcastle.edu.au/policy/academic/adm_prog/procedures_appeals_finalresult.pdf)

**Return of Assignments**
Where possible, assignments will be marked within 3 weeks and returned to students in class. At the end of semester, students can collect assignments from the Student HUBS during office hours.

**Preferred Referencing Style**
In this course, any in-text style of referencing is acceptable, provided it is clear and consistent.

An in-text citation names the author of the source, gives the date of publication, and for a direct quote includes a page number, in parentheses. At the end of the paper, a list of references provides publication information about the source; the list is alphabetised by authors’ last names (or by titles for works without authors). Further information on referencing and general study skills can be obtained from: Infoskills: [www.newcastle.edu.au/services/library/tutorials/infoskills/index.html](http://www.newcastle.edu.au/services/library/tutorials/infoskills/index.html)
Student Representatives
We are very interested in your feedback and suggestions for improvement. Student Representatives are the channel of communication between students and the School Board. Contact details of Student Representatives can be found on the School website.

Student Communication
Students should discuss any course related matters with their Tutor, Lecturer, or Course Coordinator in the first instance and then the relevant Discipline or Program Convenor. If this proves unsatisfactory, they should then contact the Head of School if required. Contact details can be found on the School website.

Essential Online Information for Students
Information on Class and Exam Timetables, Tutorial Online Registration, Learning Support, Campus Maps, Careers information, Counselling, the Health Service and a range of free Student Support Services can be found at:

Schedule of lectures for Metaphysics
(This is this intended schedule of lectures, although some departure from this schedule may arise due to unforeseen circumstances)

Week one: What is Metaphysics?
*Historical origins of term “metaphysics”?
*Metaphysics as most general system of classification.
*Ontology and Metaphysics.

Empiricism and Rationalism.
*Definition of empiricism
*Definition of rationalism
*The case for empiricism
*The case for rationalism

Week two: The existence of material objects – Locke and Berkeley.
*Locke’s empiricism
*Locke’s conception of material objects
*Primary qualities and secondary qualities
*Berkeley’s criticisms of Locke
*Berkeley’s conception of material objects.

Week three: Berkeley’s idealism and Hume’s scepticism
*Berkeley’s arguments for idealism
*Berkeley’s argument for the existence of God.
*Criticisms of Berkeley
*Hume’s arguments for scepticism about the external world
*Hume on induction
*Hume’s scepticism
*G. E. Moore’s response to the position of scepticism
**Week four:** Philosophical Problems of Causation

- Hume’s constant conjunction view of causation
- Criticisms of Hume
- The “energy flow” theory of causation
- Causes and INUS conditions
- Counterfactual analyses of causation
- The distinction between “a” cause and “the” cause
- Causation as an unanalysed primitive

**Week five:** Introduction to the ideas of Kant

- Why Kant believed in the existence of synthetic a priori statements
- Kant’s answer to the question: “How is synthetic a priori knowledge possible?”
- Kant on “categories” and “intuitions”.
- The phenomenal world and the noumenal world

**Week six:** Philosophical Problems of Space

- The absolute conception of space versus the relational conception of space
- Relationism about space clarified
- Kant’s “handedness” argument for absolute space
- Critical evaluation of Kant’s argument
- Nerlich’s knees
- Nerlich on the explanatory role of the shape of space
- Critical evaluation of Nerlich’s views
Week seven: Philosophical Problems of Time – I

* Is the present moving along the time line?
* Absolute versus relational conceptions of time
* Can there be time without change? Shoemaker’s argument
* Newton-Smith on the possibility of time without change

Week eight: Philosophical Problems of Time – II

* The existence of the past and the future
* Williams and the “Myth of Passage”
* Determinism, freewill, and our knowledge of the future
* The Einstein/Mellor argument for the existence of the past and future

Week nine: The Existence of Persons – I

* Do persons exist? Descartes’ perspective
* Locke on personal identity
* Hume’s scepticism about persons
* The fission problem

Week ten: The Existence of persons – II

* Responses to the fission problem
* Swinburne, Descartes and Kripke on dualism and materialism
* The issue of consciousness

Week eleven: The existence and status of moral properties - I

* The basic problem: the status of moral claims
* The explanatory role of moral properties. Harman’s argument
**Week twelve:** The existence and status of morality - II

*Mackie’s sceptical arguments*

*Bambrough and the case for moral realism*

*Evaluation of Mackie and Bambrough*

**Week thirteen:** The Realism/anti-Realism debate

*What is the Realism/anti-Realism debate?*

*Existence not the central issue*

*The notion of “independent” existence. What is meant by “independence”?*

*Verificationism, relativism, “internal realism”.

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**Grading Guide**

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<th>Grade Range</th>
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<th>Description</th>
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<td>49% or less</td>
<td>Fail (FF)</td>
<td>An unacceptable effort, including non-completion. The student has not understood the basic principles of the subject matter and/or has been unable to express their understanding in a comprehensible way. Deficient in terms of answering the question, research, referencing and correct presentation (spelling, grammar etc). May include extensive plagiarism.</td>
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<td>50% to 64%</td>
<td>Pass (P)</td>
<td>The work demonstrates a reasonable attempt to answer the question, shows some grasp of the basic principles of the subject matter and a basic knowledge of the required readings, is comprehensible, accurate and adequately referenced.</td>
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<td>65% to 74%</td>
<td>Credit (C)</td>
<td>The work demonstrates a clear understanding of the question, a capacity to integrate research into the discussion, and a critical appreciation of a range of different theoretical perspectives. A deficiency in any of the above may be compensated by evidence of independent thought. The work is coherent and accurate.</td>
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<td>75% to 84%</td>
<td>Distinction (D)</td>
<td>Evidence of substantial additional reading and/or research, and evidence of the ability to generalise from the theoretical content to develop an argument in an informed and original manner. The work is well organised, clearly expressed and shows a capacity for critical analysis.</td>
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<td>85% upwards</td>
<td>High Distinction (HD)</td>
<td>All of the above, plus a thorough understanding of the subject matter based on substantial additional reading and/or research. The work shows a high level of independent thought, presents informed and insightful discussion of the topic, particularly the theoretical issues involved, and demonstrates a well-developed capacity for critical analysis.</td>
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*Note: Good Friday Holiday*

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*Queen's Birthday Public Holiday: Monday 12 June*

*Examination period: Tuesday 13 June - Friday 30 June*