Faculty of Education and Arts
School of Humanities & Social Science
http://www.newcastle.edu.au/school/hss/

Newcastle Campus
University Drive,
Callaghan 2308
Room: MC127 McMullin Building
Phone: 4921 5213
Office hours: 9:00am – 5:00pm
Fax: +61 4921 6933
Email: Humanities-SocialScience@newcastle.edu.au
Web: http://www.newcastle.edu.au/school/hss/

PHIL3020 - METAPHYSICS
Course Outline

Course Co-ordinator: John Wright
Room: MC113
Ph: (02) 49 21 5182
Fax: (02) 49 21 6933
Email: John.Wright@newcastle.edu.au
Consultation hours: tba

Course Overview
Semester Semester 1 - 2008
Unit Weighting 20
Teaching Methods Lecture

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

Learning Materials/Texts
All required material will be either placed on short loans, or placed on blackboard

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.
(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 Outline Issued and Correct as at: Week 1, Semester 1 - 2008

CTS Download Date: 28.1.2008
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
PHIL3020
METAPHYSICS
Enquiries: School of Humanities and Social Science
Semester 1 – 2008
Lecture Monday 10:00 - 13:00 [PG12]

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 following the instructions provided in the Special Circumstances Affecting Assessment Procedure - Policy 000641.

Note: different procedures apply for minor and major assessment tasks.

Please go to the Policy at [http://www.newcastle.edu.au/policylibrary/000641.html](http://www.newcastle.edu.au/policylibrary/000641.html) for further information, particularly for information on the options available to you.

Students should be aware of the following important deadlines:

- **Requests for Special Consideration** must be lodged no later than 3 working days after the due date of submission or examination.

- **Requests for Extensions of Time on Assessment Items** must be lodged no later than the due date of the item.

- **Requests for Rescheduling Exams** must be received in the Student Hub no later than ten working days prior the first date of the examination period

Your application may not be accepted if it is received after the deadline. Students who are unable to meet the above deadlines due to extenuating circumstances should speak to their Program Officer in the first instance.

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 2008

For semester 2 courses: 31 August 2008

For Trimester 1 courses: 18 February 2008

For Trimester 2 courses: 9 June 2008

For Trimester 3 courses: 22 September 2008

For Trimester 1 Singapore courses: 3 February 2008

For Trimester 2 Singapore courses: 25 May 2008


Students may withdraw from a course without academic penalty on or before the last day of semester. 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 staff in the Student Hubs.

To check or change your enrolment online, please refer to myHub - Self Service for Students

https://myhub.newcastle.edu.au

Faculty Information

The Student Hubs are a one-stop shop for the delivery of student related services and are the first point of contact for students on campus.

The four Student Hubs are located at:

**Callaghan campus**

- Shortland Hub: Level 3, Shortland Union Building
- Hunter Hub: Student Services Centre, Hunter side of campus

**City Precinct**

- City Hub & Information Common: University House, ground floor in combination with an Information Common for the City Precinct

**Ourimbah campus**

- Ourimbah Hub: Administration Building

Faculty websites

**Faculty of Business and Law**


**Faculty of Education and Arts**

http://www.newcastle.edu.au/faculty/education-arts/

**Faculty of Engineering and Built Environment**

http://www.newcastle.edu.au/faculty/engineering/

**Faculty of Health**

http://www.newcastle.edu.au/faculty/health/

**Faculty of Science and Information Technology**

http://www.newcastle.edu.au/faculty/science-it/

Contact details

**Callaghan, City and Port Macquarie**

Phone: 02 4921 5000

Email: EnquiryCentre@newcastle.edu.au

**Ourimbah**

Phone: 02 4348 4030

Email: EnquiryCentre@newcastle.edu.au
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

Web Address for Rules Governing Professional Doctorate 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 02 4921 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

Studentmail and Blackboard: Refer - 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.
Faculty of Education and Arts
School of Humanities & Social Science

PHIL 3020 Metaphysics

Important Additional Information

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 Assessment Item Coversheet**: All assignments must be submitted with the University coversheet available at: [http://www.newcastle.edu.au/study/forms/](http://www.newcastle.edu.au/study/forms/)
- **By arrangement with the relevant lecturer, assignments may be submitted at any Student Hub located at**:
  - Level 3, Shortland Union, Callaghan
  - Level 2, Student Services Centre, Callaghan
  - Ground Floor, University House, City
  - Opposite Café Central, Ourimbah
- **Date-stamping assignments**: All students must date-stamp their own assignments using the machine provided at each Student Hub. If mailing an assignment, this should be address to the relevant School. Mailed assignments are accepted from the date posted, confirmed by a Post Office date-stamp; they are also date-stamped upon receipt by Schools.

**NB: Not all of these services may apply to the Port Macquarie Campus.**

- **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.
- **Keep a copy of all assignments**: It is the student’s responsibility to produce a copy of their work if the assignment goes astray after submission. Students are advised to keep updated back-ups in electronic and hard copy formats.

**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 available @ [www.blackboard.newcastle.edu.au](http://www.blackboard.newcastle.edu.au/)

- **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.

**Penalties for Late Assignments**

Assignments submitted after the due date, without an approved extension of time will be penalised by the reduction of 5% of the possible maximum mark for the assessment item for each day or part day that the item is late. Weekends count as one day in determining the penalty. Assessment items submitted more than ten days after the due date will be awarded zero marks.


Refer - ‘Rules Governing the Administration of Assessment Items - Rule 000113’ available @ http://www.newcastle.edu.au/policylibrary/000113.html (section 18)

**Special Circumstances**

Students wishing to apply for Special Circumstances or Extension of Time should apply online. Refer - ‘Special Circumstances Affecting Assessment Items - Procedure 000641’ available @ http://www.newcastle.edu.au/policylibrary/000641.html

**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.

**Re-marks & Moderations**

A student may only request a re-mark of an assessment item before the final result - in the course to which the assessment item contributes - has been posted. If a final result in the course has been posted, the student must apply under ‘Procedures for Appeal Against a Final Result’ (Refer - http://www.newcastle.edu.au/study/forms/).

Students concerned at the mark given for an assessment item should first discuss the matter with the Course Coordinator. If subsequently requesting a re-mark, students should be aware that as a result of a re-mark the original mark may be increased or reduced. The case for a re-mark should be outlined in writing and submitted to the Course Coordinator, who determines whether a re-mark should be granted, taking into consideration all of the following:

1. whether the student had discussed the matter with the Course Coordinator
2. the case put forward by the student for a re-mark
3. the weighting of the assessment item and its potential impact on the student’s final mark or grade
4. the time required to undertake the re-mark
5. the number of original markers, that is,
   a) whether there was a single marker, or
   b) if there was more than one marker whether there was agreement or disagreement on the marks awarded.

A re-mark may also be initiated at the request of the Course Coordinator, the Head of School, the School Assessment Committee, the Faculty Progress and Appeals Committee or the Pro Vice-Chancellor. Re-marks may be undertaken by:

1. the original marker; or
2. an alternate internal marker; or
3. an alternate external marker (usually as a consequence of a grievance procedure).

Moderation may be applied when there is a major discrepancy (or perceived discrepancy) between: 
1. the content of the course as against the content or nature of the assessment item(s)
2. the content or nature of the assessment item(s) as against those set out in the Course Outline
3. the marks given by a particular examiner and those given by another in the same course
4. the results in a particular course and the results in other courses undertaken by the same students.

For further detail on this University policy refer - ‘Re-marks and Moderations - Procedure 000769’ available @ http://www.newcastle.edu.au/policylibrary/000769.html

Return of Assignments

Students can collect assignments from a nominated Student Hub during office hours. Students will be informed during class which Hub to go to and the earliest date that assignments will be available for collection. Students must present their student identification card to collect their assignment.


Preferred Referencing Style

Any referencing style 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). For further information on referencing and general study skills refer - ‘Infoskills’ available @ www.newcastle.edu.au/services/library/tutorials/infoskills/index.html

Student Representatives

Student Representatives are a major channel of communication between students and the School. Contact details of Student Representatives can be found on School websites.

Refer - ‘Information for Student Representatives on Committees’ available @ http://www.newcastle.edu.au/service/committees/student_reps/index.html

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 is available @ http://www.newcastle.edu.au/currentstudents/index.html

Essay topics, suggested readings and due dates for essays will be made available through blackboard.
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Grading guide</th>
<th>Mark Range</th>
<th>Grade</th>
<th>Description</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>49% or less</td>
<td>Fail (FF)</td>
<td></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>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>50% to 64%</td>
<td>Pass (P)</td>
<td></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>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>65% to 74%</td>
<td>Credit (C)</td>
<td></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>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>75% to 84%</td>
<td>Distinction (D)</td>
<td></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>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>85% upwards</td>
<td>High Distinction (HD)</td>
<td></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>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Details about the following topics are available on your course Blackboard site (where relevant). Refer - [www.blackboard.newcastle.edu.au/](http://www.blackboard.newcastle.edu.au/)

Essay topics, readings and due dates
Notes for selected parts of the course

(Additional information)

Schedule of Lectures

**Week 1.**
*What is metaphysics?*
*Historical background and origins of term.*
*Metaphysics and ontology*
Metaphysics as giving us the most general account of reality.

Empiricism and Rationalism
The case for empiricism
The case for rationalism
Unresolved issues

**Week 2.**
The Existence of Material Objects.
Locke’s Empiricism
Locke on our knowledge of the external world
Primary and secondary qualities
Berkeley’s criticisms of Locke.
Berkeley’s conception of objects
Berkeley’s argument for idealism.
Week 3.
Berkeleyian idealism
Berkeley’s argument for the existence of God.
Criticisms of Berkeley.
G. E. Moore’s argument for an external world.
David Hume on our knowledge of an external world
Hume’s scepticism
Hume on induction.

Week 4.
Problems of causation.
Hume on causal connection.
Alternative accounts of causation:
The “energy flow” account of causation
The counterfactual analysis of causation
Causation and INUS conditions
Causation and explanation. “A” cause and “the” cause.
Causation as an unanalysed primitive

Week 5.
An Introduction to Kant
Why Kant believed in synthetic a priori knowledge
Kant’s answer to the question: “How is synthetic a priori knowledge possible?”
Categories and intuitions
The phenomenal world and the noumenal world
Criticisms of Kant

Week 6.
Philosophical Problems of Space
Absolute versus relational conceptions of space
Relationism about space clarified
Kant’s handedness argument for absolute space
Criticisms of Kant
Nerlich’s knees
The explanatory role of the shape of space.

Week 7.
Philosophical Problems of Time
Is the present moving along the time line?
Absolute versus relational conceptions of time
Can there be time without change?
Shoemaker and Newton-Smith on time without change

Week 8.
The existence of the past and future
Williams on the Myth of Passage
Determinism, free-will and our knowledge of the future
The Einstein/Mellor argument for the existence of the past.

Week 9.
Personal Identity
Descartes’ conception of a person
Locke on personal identity. The role of memory
Criticisms of Locke
Hume's scepticism about personal identity
The fission problem
Parfit's response to the fission problem

Week 10.
Personal identity and consciousness
Swinburne on consciousness and personal identity
Swinburne and Kripke
Consciousness based accounts of personal identity

Week 11.
The Status of Morality. Do Moral Properties Exist?
Harman on the role of moral properties in observation
Mackie's five sceptical arguments
- The argument from relativity

Week 12.
Mackie's sceptical arguments – continued
- The argument from queerness
- The argument from supervenience
- The epistemological argument
- The argument from the fact that people would believe in moral properties even if they did not exist.
Bambrough on the case for the existence of moral properties
Objectivity without existence

Week 13
Realism and anti-Realism
What is Realism?
Existence not the central issue
The notion of independent existence
Constructivism
Relativism
“Irrealism”