



FACULTY OF HUMANITIES AND SOCIAL SCIENCES

SCHOOL OF HISTORY, PHILOSOPHY, POLITICAL SCIENCE AND INTERNATIONAL RELATIONS

PHILOSOPHY PROGRAMME

PHIL 325: Metaphysics

TRIMESTER 2 2012

16 July to 17 November 2012

Trimester dates

Teaching dates:	16 July to 19 October 2012
Mid-trimester break:	27 August to 9 September 2012
Study week:	22–26 October 2012
Examination/Assessment Period:	26 October to 17 November 2012

Note: *Students who enrol in courses with examinations must be able to attend an examination at the University at any time during the scheduled examination period above.*

Withdrawal dates

Information on withdrawals and refunds may be found at
<http://www.victoria.ac.nz/home/admisenrol/payments/withdrawalsrefunds.aspx>

Names and contact details

Course Coordinator:	Dr Cei Maslen
Room No.:	Murphy (MY) 707
Email:	cei.maslen@vuw.ac.nz
Office hours:	Tuesdays 1-2pm during trimester time and by appointment.

Class times and locations

Can be found on the Victoria website at:
<http://www.victoria.ac.nz/home/study/subjects/coursecatalogue.aspx>
It is advisable to check the above for any changes to the timetable programme.

Lecture Time:	Monday, Friday, 11.00 – 12.50 am
Lecture Venue:	Alan McDiarmid (AM) LT105

Teaching learning summary

PHIL 325 is taught in two two-hour lectures per week. Students are encouraged to take part in discussion.

Communication of additional information

This course uses Blackboard and presumes that all enrolled students have valid myvuw.ac.nz addresses. Please check that this account is active and you have organised email forwarding. Additional information and any changes to the timetable or lecture and tutorial programme will be advised by email, announced in lectures, and posted on the PHIL 325 Blackboard site.

Course prescription

An introduction to some central problems in metaphysics, focusing on issues in the philosophy of time.

Course content

PHIL 325 is an introduction to central problems in metaphysics. The aim is to answer some fundamental questions about the nature of time, space, and free will, such as the following: What are space and time? Do the past and future exist or does only the present exist? Are time and space real? Is there a fourth dimension of space? Does time really flow? Could time go backwards? Did time have a beginning? Can we have free will and control over our actions, even if there is inherent randomness in the world?

Learning objectives

Students who pass this course will have:

- become familiar with most central topics of metaphysics.
- acquired detailed knowledge of the Relational and Substantial theories of time, the Eternalism vs. Presentism debate, Kant's lone hand argument, McTaggart's argument, Zeno's paradox, the Fatalist argument, the Dilemma of Divine Foreknowledge, the Consequence Argument for the incompatibility of free will and determinism, Kane's account of free will, Frankfurt's account of free will, and recent discussions of the Principle of Alternate Possibilities
- strengthened their skills in argumentation, logical analysis, writing, and individual research.

Graduate attributes

As with all Philosophy courses, learning objectives of this course contribute to the attainment of specific attributes in the areas of logical and critical thinking, conceptual analysis and rational and ethical decision-making. For more details please consult our website <http://www.victoria.ac.nz/hppi/about/overview-of-the-school/phil-overview#grad-attributes>

Expected workload

In accordance with Faculty Guidelines, this course has been constructed on the assumption that students will devote 200 hours to PHIL 325 throughout the trimester. This includes weekly attendance at lectures, completion of all set weekly readings and research and writing for set assessment tasks.

Readings

Set texts:

- Robin Le Poidevin, *Travels in Four Dimensions: The Enigmas of Space and Time*, Oxford University Press, 2003.
- PHIL 225/325 Course reader available from VicBooks, Student Union Building.

All undergraduate textbooks and student notes will be sold from the Memorial Theatre foyer from 9–27 July 2012, while postgraduate textbooks and student notes will be available from the top floor of vicbooks in the Student Union Building, Kelburn Campus. After week two of the trimester all undergraduate textbooks and student notes will be sold from vicbooks on Level 4 of the Student Union Building.

Customers can order textbooks and student notes online at www.vicbooks.co.nz or can email an order or enquiry to enquiries@vicbooks.co.nz. Books can be couriered to customers or they can be picked up from nominated collection points at each campus. Customers will be contacted when they are available.

Opening hours are 8.00 am – 6.00 pm, Monday – Friday during term time (closing at 5.00 pm in the holidays). Phone: 463 5515.

Recommended reading: See separate handout entitled ‘Reading List and Course Outline’.

Assessment requirements

The assessment will be based on one essay, six in-class quizzes, and a final examination, as shown below.

- (a) **One essay, around 3,000 words**, worth 35% of total course mark. The first is due by **4pm, 28 September 2012**.

WHERE TO HAND IN YOUR ESSAY: You must submit your essay electronically via *Blackboard*. Please consult *Blackboard* for instructions). This electronic version will be sent to turnitin.com, an anti-plagiarism website, and is the version that will be graded. However, as a back-up you must also submit a paper copy of your essay to me in class or to the School office (MY 518), prior to the due-date.

ESSAY TOPICS will be handed out in class at least 2 weeks prior to the due date.

HOW TO WRITE YOUR ESSAY: If you get stuck, or don’t know how to begin then come to see me in my office hours or make an appointment to meet with me at your convenience. I am also happy to look at rough drafts, provided that you give me some advance notice. See the handout “Assessment criteria” (at the front of your course reader) for general advice on writing a philosophy paper. Model papers written by previous students in my classes are also available on request. I highly recommend P. Martinich, *Philosophical Writing*, Blackwell, 1996.

HOW I MARK YOUR ESSAY: See the handout “Assessment Criteria...” (at the front of your course reader) for a summary of the criteria that I use in marking essays.

- (b) **In-class quizzes**, together worth 25% of total course marks. These are short-answer tests, taking the first 20 minutes of class time, every second Monday of class (i.e. July 23, August 6th, August 20th, September 17th, October 1st, October 15th). There will be six quizzes, but

only your best five quiz marks will count towards your final mark. The quizzes will be on material from the previous lectures and you will be given review questions in advance

- (c) **A Final Exam**, worth 40% of total course marks, during exam period. This will be a three-hour, closed book, registry-administered examination. There will be a short-answer section and a short-essay section, and review questions will be handed out in class prior to the examination.

Relationship between assessment and objectives

The essay will help students to gain in-depth knowledge of some of the course material and also provide opportunity for strengthening skills in argumentation, logical analysis, writing, and individual research. Preparing for the quizzes and the examination will help students to gain a solid understanding of the course material.

Examination dates for the second trimester 2012 are Friday 26 October to Saturday 17 November 2012 – see also Trimester Dates above.

Method of Submission

All essays must be submitted digitally via “Blackboard”; select ‘assignments’ icon in the course menu. Make sure you save your file as a Microsoft Word document. If you have trouble using this function, make sure you see the course coordinator *before the due date*.

Electronic Submissions

All essays must be submitted digitally via “Blackboard”; select ‘assignments’ icon in the course menu. Make sure you save your file as a Microsoft Word document. The title of your file should follow the following format: last name, underscore, first name, underscore, dot, doc (for example: frodo_baggins.doc). If you have trouble using this function, make sure you see the course coordinator *before the due date*.

Penalties

Philosophy Programme policy stipulates that late submission of essays is penalised. For each week or part thereof of lateness, a late assignment gets a 5 point penalty, up to three weeks, after which the assignment will get a zero mark. (i.e. 1-7 days late a loss of 5%; 8-14 days late a loss of 10 %; 15-21 days late a loss of 15%, and after that a zero mark.) Extensions may be granted in exceptional circumstances, but **all extensions require the student to provide documentation**. If granted an extension, students must agree to a new due date. Contact your lecturer as soon as a problem emerges. Extension forms are available in the School office.

Mandatory course requirements

Each PHIL 325 student must:

- Submit the essay, on or by the specified date (subject to such provisions as are stated for late submission of work)
- Sit the final examination.

Return of marked course work

Essays and tests will be returned at times to be advised. If students fail to attend these times, they may collect their essay from the School Office, Room 518, Murphy Building between the hours of 2.00 and 3.00 pm from Monday to Friday and must show their Student ID card before collection.

Class representative

A class representative will be elected in the first week, and that person's name and contact details will be available to VUWSA, the Course Coordinator and the class. The class representative provides a communication channel to liaise with the Course Coordinator on behalf of students.

Academic integrity and plagiarism

Academic integrity means that university staff and students, in their teaching and learning are expected to treat others honestly, fairly and with respect at all times. It is not acceptable to mistreat academic, intellectual or creative work that has been done by other people by representing it as your own original work.

Academic integrity is important because it is the core value on which the University's learning, teaching and research activities are based. Victoria University's reputation for academic integrity adds value to your qualification.

The University defines plagiarism as presenting someone else's work as if it were your own, whether you mean to or not. 'Someone else's work' means anything that is not your own idea. Even if it is presented in your own style, you must acknowledge your sources fully and appropriately. This includes:

- Material from books, journals or any other printed source
- The work of other students or staff
- Information from the internet
- Software programs and other electronic material
- Designs and ideas
- The organisation or structuring of any such material

Find out more about plagiarism, how to avoid it and penalties, on the University's website:

<http://www.victoria.ac.nz/home/study/plagiarism.aspx>

Where to find more detailed information

Find key dates, explanations of grades and other useful information at www.victoria.ac.nz/home/study. Find out how academic progress is monitored and how enrolment can be restricted at <http://www.victoria.ac.nz/home/study/academic-progress.aspx>. Most statutes and policies are available at www.victoria.ac.nz/home/about/policy, except qualification statutes, which are available via the *Calendar* webpage at www.victoria.ac.nz/home/study/calendar.aspx (See Section C).

Other useful information for students may be found at the Academic Office website, at

www.victoria.ac.nz/home/about_victoria/avcacademic.