



FACULTY OF HUMANITIES AND SOCIAL SCIENCES

SCHOOL OF HISTORY, PHILOSOPHY, POLITICAL SCIENCE AND INTERNATIONAL RELATIONS

PHILOSOPHY PROGRAMME
PHIL 403: Metaphysics and Epistemology

TRIMESTER 1 AND 2 2013
4 March to 17 November 2013

Trimester dates

Trimester dates: 4 March to 17 November 2013
Teaching dates: 4 March to 18 October 2013
Easter break: 28 March to 3 April 2013
Mid-trimester break 1/3: 22–28 April 2013
Mid-year break: 4–14 July 2013
Mid-trimester break 2/3: 26 August to 8 September 2013
Last piece of assessment due: 25 October
Study week: 21–25 October 2013
Examination/Assessment Period: 25 October to 16 November 2013

Withdrawal dates

Information on withdrawals and refunds may be found at
www.victoria.ac.nz/home/admisenrol/payments/withdrawalsrefunds

Names and contact details

Course Coordinator: Professor Edwin Mares
Room No.: MY 618
Email: Edwin.Mares@vuw.ac.nz
Office hours: by appointment

Lecturer: Professor Max Cresswell
Room No.: MY 721
Email: Max.Cresswell@vuw.ac.nz
Office hours: 1.00 – 2.00 pm Thursday

Lecturer: Associate Professor Simon Keller
Room No.: MY 720
Email: simon.keller@vuw.ac.nz
Office hours: TBA

Class times and locations

Can be found on the Victoria website at:

<http://www.victoria.ac.nz/home/study/subjects/coursecatalogue>

It is advisable to check the above for any changes to the timetable programme.

Seminar Time: Tues 1.00 - 3.00 pm

Seminar Venue: Murphy (MY)617

Teaching/learning summary

Teaching will be done in a lecture-style format but student discussion is encouraged.

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 seminar programme will be advised by email, announced in lectures, and posted on the PHIL 403 Blackboard site.

Course prescription

This course examines several topics in contemporary metaphysics and epistemology. These may include the problem of universals, the nature of time, free will, causation and possibility.

Course Content

The course is divided into three sections.

- In the first section, taught by Max Cresswell, the subject will be the metaphysics of logical atomism. In this section, students will read Bertand Russell's *Lectures on Logical Atomism* and Ludwig Wittgenstein's *Tractatus Logico Philosophicus*.
- The second section, taught by Ed Mares, will be about the realist-anti-realist debate in metaphysics. In this section, we will ask about certain sorts of purported entities whether they exist and, if they do, whether they are dependent for the existence on our thoughts or opinions.
- The topic of the third section, taught by Simon Keller, is the "ethics of belief". This part of the course will consider questions about how we should form and manage our beliefs, especially under non-ideal conditions. We will ask questions like, "Who should we believe when experts disagree?", "Should our beliefs be sensitive only to the evidence?", and "Can we legitimately be praised and blamed for our beliefs?".

Learning objectives

Students who pass this course should be able to:

1. Understand the content and presuppositions of the central debates in each of these three areas.
2. Think critically about the central issues in each of these three areas.

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 the Faculty Guidelines, this course has been constructed on the assumption that students will devote a total of 300 hours to PHIL 403, including two hours of seminars per fortnight. Over the 24 teaching weeks of the academic year, that is an average of 12.5 hours per week.

Readings

Set texts:

Most of the course readings will be made available by the lecturers, but for the second section of the course the following book is required:

Stuart Brock and Edwin Mares, *Realism and Antirealism*, Durham: Acumen, 2007 (available at VicBooks)

All undergraduate textbooks and student notes will be sold from the Memorial Theatre Foyer from 11 February to 15 March 2013, while postgraduate textbooks and student notes will be available from vicbooks' new store, Ground Floor Easterfield Building, Kelburn Parade. After week two of the trimester all undergraduate textbooks and student notes will be sold from vicbooks, Easterfield 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.

Assessment requirements

There are three essays for the course, each worth one third of the final grade. You must write one essay on each section of the course. Essays are to be between 3000 and 3500 words long. Essay topics will be provided by the lecturers.

Due dates:

- Essay 1 is due 6 June
- Essay 2 is due 6 August
- Essay 3 is due 25 October

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

There are no mandatory course requirements.

Submission of work

ALL ESSAYS will be submitted both in electronic form to Turnitin.com through Blackboard and in hard copy to the school office 518 Murphy.

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.

You can find out more information on Class Representatives on the [VUWSA website](#).

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>

Use of Turnitin

Student work provided for assessment in this course may be checked for academic integrity by the electronic search engine <http://www.turnitin.com>. Turnitin is an online plagiarism prevention tool which compares submitted work with a very large database of existing material. At the discretion of the Head of School, handwritten work may be copy-typed by the School and subject to checking by Turnitin. Turnitin will retain a copy of submitted material on behalf of the University for detection of future plagiarism, but access to the full text of submissions is not made available to any other party.

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 www.victoria.ac.nz/home/study/academic-progress. 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 (See Section C).

Other useful information for students may be found at the Academic Office website, at www.victoria.ac.nz/home/about/avcademic.