



**FACULTY OF HUMANITIES AND SOCIAL SCIENCES**

**SCHOOL OF HISTORY, PHILOSOPHY, POLITICAL SCIENCE AND INTERNATIONAL RELATIONS**

**PHILOSOPHY PROGRAMME  
PHIL 403: METAPHYSICS AND EPISTEMOLOGY  
30 POINTS**

**TRIMESTERS 1 and 2, 2015**

**Important Dates**

**Trimester dates:** 2 March to 15 November 2015

**Teaching dates:** 1 March to 17 October 2015

**Mid-trimester breaks:** 3 April to 19 April 2015; 24 August to 6 September 2015

**Mid-year break:** 2 – 12 July 2015

**Last piece of assessment due:** 16 October 2015

**Withdrawal dates:** Refer to [www.victoria.ac.nz/students/study/withdrawals-refunds](http://www.victoria.ac.nz/students/study/withdrawals-refunds). If you cannot complete an assignment or sit a test or examination, refer to the following webpage [www.victoria.ac.nz/students/study/exams/aegrotats](http://www.victoria.ac.nz/students/study/exams/aegrotats).

**Class times and locations**

**Seminars**

Trimester 1: Tuesdays 9:00-11:00 am Murphy 617

Trimester 2: Mondays 11.00 am – 12.50 pm Murphy 617

**Names and contact details**

<b>Lecturer</b>	Cei Maslen	Richard Joyce	Edwin Mares (Course Coordinator)
<b>Office</b>	MY707	MY713	MY618
<b>Phone</b>	(04) 463-6524	(04) 463-7199	(04) 463-5234
<b>Email</b>	<a href="mailto:cei.maslen@vuw.ac.nz">cei.maslen@vuw.ac.nz</a>	<a href="mailto:richard.joyce@vuw.ac.nz">richard.joyce@vuw.ac.nz</a>	<a href="mailto:edwin.mares@vuw.ac.nz">edwin.mares@vuw.ac.nz</a>
<b>Office Hours</b>	By Appointment	By Appointment	By Appointment

## **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 Course 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 first eight-week section of the course will be taught by Cei Maslen on Mental Causation. The second eight week section will be taught by Richard Joyce on moral knowledge. The final eight-week section will be taught by Edwin Mares on the realism-antirealism debate in metaphysics. More detailed information about the course content will be given in the first class of each module.

## **Course learning objectives (CLOs)**

Students passing the course should be able to:

1. understand and appreciate the current state of research and knowledge in a variety of fields within analytic philosophy,
2. properly evaluate current and future research within those fields, and
3. under supervision, embark on a research project within those fields.

## **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:

[www.victoria.ac.nz/hppi/about/overview-of-the-school/phil-overview#grad-attributes](http://www.victoria.ac.nz/hppi/about/overview-of-the-school/phil-overview#grad-attributes)

## **Teaching format**

This course will involve one seminar per week in the first and second trimesters. Seminars will run for one hour and 50 minutes.

## **Mandatory course requirements**

There are no mandatory course requirements for PHIL 403.

## **Workload**

In accordance with University guidelines, students will nominally devote 300 hours to the course throughout the trimester. This includes weekly attendance at lectures and tutorials and revision for and completion of all set assessment tasks. The University's Assessment Handbook stipulates that course outlines should "specify the average time that is notionally assigned to the completion of each assessment task." Notional assignments of completion times appear below (which

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excludes the times required for attendance at seminars, reading for class and preparation for presentations):

Essay 1: 50 hours

Essay 2: 50 hours

Essay 3: 50 hours

### Assessment

Assessment Item	Weighting	CLOs	Due Date
Essay 1 (3,000-3,500 words)	33 $\frac{1}{3}$ %	1, 2, 3	1 May, 5.00 pm
Essay 2 (3,000-3,500 words)	33 $\frac{1}{3}$ %	1, 2, 3	31 July, 5.00 pm
Essay 3 (3,000-3,500 words)	33 $\frac{1}{3}$ %	1, 2, 3	16 October, 5.00 pm

Each essay will be evaluated against the following criteria:

1. succinctness, clarity and precision of expression,
2. originality of thesis,
3. soundness of argument,
4. understanding and survey of related literature.

### Submission and return of work

All essays must be submitted in two ways. A copy of the essay must first be submitted digitally via blackboard. 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, essay number, dot, docx (for example: smith\_john\_5.docx). A hard copy of the essay must then be submitted to one of the school administrators located in MY518. Indicative grades and comments will be posted on blackboard.

Please ensure that all essays have page numbers.

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 Office, Murphy Room 518, between the hours of 2.00 and 3.00 pm from Monday to Friday and must show their Student ID card before collection.

## Extensions and Penalties

### Extensions

- All extensions must be obtained directly from the Coordinator of Graduate Studies. In 2015 this is Ramon Das, MY 607, [ramon.das@vuw.ac.nz](mailto:ramon.das@vuw.ac.nz).
- All extensions must be obtained prior to the deadline for submission of the assessment task unless unforeseeable circumstances prevent this.
- Short extensions of up to 3 days will be automatically granted to any student who requests it with an email prior to the scheduled deadline.
- Longer extensions need to be negotiated and require justification and supporting evidence.
- Any work submitted late without an extension having been obtained is subject to penalties (see below).

### Penalties

Late essays submitted without extensions having been obtained will receive a penalty of 5 points per day late. No essay will be accepted after 10 November.

### Set texts

A full reading list and selected papers for each module will be given to students in (or by) the first class of each module. Students will also be expected to do some additional research using the Philosophers Index (library database).

### Class representative

The class representative provides a useful way to communicate feedback to the teaching staff during the course. A class representative will be selected at the first lecture of the course. Contact details for the class representative will be made available on blackboard.

### Student feedback

PHIL 403 was last formally evaluated in 2008, and students will be asked to evaluate the course in 2014. In light of that feedback, the course has been restructured so that important course information—such as learning objectives, deadlines, assessments, grading criteria and how to prepare for essays—is communicated early and clearly.

Student feedback on University courses may be found at [www.cad.vuw.ac.nz/feedback/feedback\\_display.php](http://www.cad.vuw.ac.nz/feedback/feedback_display.php).

### Other important information

The information above is specific to this course. There is other important information that students must familiarise themselves with, including:

- Academic Integrity and Plagiarism: [www.victoria.ac.nz/students/study/exams/integrity-plagiarism](http://www.victoria.ac.nz/students/study/exams/integrity-plagiarism)
- Aegrotats: [www.victoria.ac.nz/students/study/exams/aegrotats](http://www.victoria.ac.nz/students/study/exams/aegrotats)

- Academic Progress: [www.victoria.ac.nz/students/study/progress/academic-progress](http://www.victoria.ac.nz/students/study/progress/academic-progress) (including restrictions and non-engagement)
- Dates and deadlines: [www.victoria.ac.nz/students/study/dates](http://www.victoria.ac.nz/students/study/dates)
- FHSS Student and Academic Services Office: [www.victoria.ac.nz/fhss/student-admin](http://www.victoria.ac.nz/fhss/student-admin)
- Grades: [www.victoria.ac.nz/students/study/progress/grades](http://www.victoria.ac.nz/students/study/progress/grades)
- Resolving academic issues: [www.victoria.ac.nz/about/governance/dvc-academic/publications](http://www.victoria.ac.nz/about/governance/dvc-academic/publications)
- Special passes: [www.victoria.ac.nz/about/governance/dvc-academic/publications](http://www.victoria.ac.nz/about/governance/dvc-academic/publications)
- Statutes and policies including the Student Conduct Statute: [www.victoria.ac.nz/about/governance/strategy](http://www.victoria.ac.nz/about/governance/strategy)
- Student support: [www.victoria.ac.nz/students/support](http://www.victoria.ac.nz/students/support)
- Students with disabilities: [www.victoria.ac.nz/st\\_services/disability](http://www.victoria.ac.nz/st_services/disability)
- Student Charter: [www.victoria.ac.nz/learning-teaching/learning-partnerships/student-charter](http://www.victoria.ac.nz/learning-teaching/learning-partnerships/student-charter)
- Student Contract: [www.victoria.ac.nz/study/apply-enrol/terms-conditions/student-contract](http://www.victoria.ac.nz/study/apply-enrol/terms-conditions/student-contract)
- Subject Librarians: <http://library.victoria.ac.nz/library-v2/find-your-subject-librarian>
- Turnitin: [www.cad.vuw.ac.nz/wiki/index.php/Turnitin](http://www.cad.vuw.ac.nz/wiki/index.php/Turnitin)
- University structure: [www.victoria.ac.nz/about/governance/structure](http://www.victoria.ac.nz/about/governance/structure)
- Victoria graduate profile: [www.victoria.ac.nz/learning-teaching/learning-partnerships/graduate-profile](http://www.victoria.ac.nz/learning-teaching/learning-partnerships/graduate-profile)
- VUWSA: [www.vuwsa.org.nz](http://www.vuwsa.org.nz)