

PHIL 14: Introduction to Philosophy: Metaphysics (Winter 2011)

Instructor: Dr. Mitchell Herschbach (mherschb@ucsd.edu)

Office: HSS 8037

Office Hours: Thursdays 2:30-4:30pm or by appointment

Lecture: Tues & Thurs 5:00-6:20pm, Pepper Canyon Hall 122

Course website: <http://webct.ucsd.edu>

Sections	TA	Office	Office Hours
A01 Tues 11:00-11:50am Cognitive Science Building 005	Matthew Denaci (MattPhil14Winter2011@gmail.com)	HSS 8073	Tues 12-2pm
A02 Thurs 11:00-11:50am, University Center 413	Matthew Denaci (MattPhil14Winter2011@gmail.com)	HSS 8073	Tues 12-2pm
A03 Wed 1:00-1:50pm Peterson 102	Jeremy Gomer (jgomer@ucsd.edu)	HSS 7059	Mon 2-4pm
A04 Fri 12-12:50pm Solis 110	Jeremy Gomer (jgomer@ucsd.edu)	HSS 7059	Mon 2-4pm

Course Description

This course is an introductory survey of some of the chief problems in metaphysics. Metaphysics is one of the core areas of philosophical study. It seeks to answer questions about what sorts of things exist and the nature of those things. The course is topic-oriented rather than history-oriented. Topics we will cover include: God, the mind-body problem, causation, time, constitution, personal identity, and free will.

Course Objectives

Students will:

- Learn to identify, describe, analyze, compare and contrast, and evaluate major questions, concepts, theories, and arguments in metaphysics
- Develop their ability to read and analyze philosophical texts and arguments
- Develop their skills to write clearly, precisely, concisely, logically, and persuasively

Course Materials

1. *Riddles of Existence* by Earl Conee and Ted Sider (available at the UCSD Bookstore)
2. Articles available electronically on WebCT

Course Requirements

1. Reading Questions (15%)

For each reading assignment, you will be required to provide written responses to a set of reading questions. The purpose of the reading responses is to help you begin to understand important parts of the readings. Your responses should demonstrate that you are engaging with the texts. I am not so much concerned that you answer the questions correctly, as I am that you have made a honest effort to try and understand them. This means that it's okay to say that you do not understand a portion of the material, but it also means that—if you're having trouble—you need to discuss why, explaining precisely what you do not understand and what you think the answer might be.

- Responses must be submitted via email to your TA by the beginning of lecture (5pm)
- Late responses will not be accepted, barring a legitimate excuse (see **Polices** section below).
- You can skip one and only one reading response without penalty.
- Responses will be marked as either complete or incomplete. Four of your responses will be selected at random throughout the quarter to be graded more closely with comments, on a scale of excellent (check plus), adequate (check), and inadequate (check minus).

2. Section attendance and participation (5%)

You are expected to attend a weekly discussion section, prepared to discuss that week's material. Your attendance and participation will be recorded. Quizzes may also be given to assess your understanding.

3. *Paper (20%)*

You will be required to write a paper roughly 5 pages in length on an assigned topic. Instructions and topics will be posted on WebCT. You will be required to submit your paper through Turnitin.com. It will be due Thursday January 27th.

4. *Midterm Exam (30%)*

In-class, closed-book exam consisting of multiple-choice, short answer, and essay questions. The midterm exam will be given Tuesday, February 8th.

5. *Final Exam (30%)*

Take-home exam consisting of essay questions covering all material for the course. I will provide you with the instructions approximately one week prior to the due date, which is 7pm Thursday, March 17th.

Expectations

I expect you to:

- complete the readings by the day indicated on the syllabus, and bring them with you to lecture and section
- attend lecture and section
- participate actively in section
- if you have any problems or questions, come see me or your TA during office hours or contact us via email—we're here to help!

Advice

It is important that you read the material carefully and give it serious thought before coming to class so that lecture and section will be as productive as possible. You will probably need to approach these readings more carefully than you do most other texts. You should read the material slowly and often more than once. Focus on identifying what claims an author is defending, and what reasons they offer in favor of these claims. Be careful to distinguish (a) cases where an author states something in order to later defend it, from (b) cases where they state something which they don't actually endorse, but will later give reason to reject.

If you're new to philosophy, these are helpful handouts created by Jim Pryor:

Guidelines on Reading Philosophy: <http://www.jimpryor.net/teaching/guidelines/reading.html>

Guidelines on Writing a Philosophy Paper: <http://www.jimpryor.net/teaching/guidelines/writing.html>

Philosophical Glossary for Beginners: <http://www.jimpryor.net/teaching/vocab/glossary.html>

Policies

Special Accommodations

Students requesting accommodations and services due to a disability for this course need to provide a current Authorization for Accommodation (AFA) letter issued by the Office for Students with Disabilities (OSD), prior to eligibility for requests. Receipt of AFAs in advance is necessary for appropriate planning for the provision of reasonable accommodations. OSD Academic Liaisons also need to receive current AFAs. For more information, contact the OSD at (858) 534.4382 (V); (858) 534-9709 (TTY); <mailto:osd@ucsd.edu>, or <http://osd.ucsd.edu>.

Academic Integrity

Students are expected to do their own work, as outlined in the UCSD Policy on Integrity of Scholarship:

<http://www-senate.ucsd.edu/manual/Appendices/app2.htm>

Cheating will not be tolerated, and any student who engages in forbidden conduct will be subjected to the disciplinary process. You are responsible for familiarizing yourself with these policies; ignorance will not be an excuse. If you have any questions about these policies, feel free to contact me.

Deadlines for Assignments

Make-up exams or extended deadlines for assignments will only be given under the most severe circumstances. Any student who wishes to take a make-up exam or needs an extension must inform me or their TA (in person or by email) before the deadline. In order to qualify for a make-up exam or an extension, appropriate evidence of the most severe circumstances must be produced by the student. I will determine, in consultation with the student, what qualifies as appropriate evidence.

Classroom Conduct

Please arrive to class on time. Students should be respectful of their fellow classmates, allowing them to finish before speaking, listening to and respecting classmates' views/opinions. In addition, students must silence all cellular telephones, pagers, and iPods, etc., before entering the classroom. Laptops and other electronic devices may only be used for note taking.

Email

Email is a good way to reach me to ask questions about the course. I will do my best to respond to emails within 24 hours—though I often can respond much sooner than that. For questions that need a longer response, I may ask you to meet in person.

Schedule

This schedule is tentative and subject to revision. The current version of the syllabus will be posted on WebCT.

	Date	Topic and Readings	Assignments
Week 1	Tues 1/4	Introduction to Course and Philosophical Arguments Syllabus Pryor, "What is an argument?" Pryor, "Vocabulary Describing Arguments"	
	Thurs 1/6	Deductive Arguments for God's Existence: Cosmological and Ontological <i>Riddles of Existence</i> pp. 62-70, 78-84, 87-101 Rowe, "The Ontological Argument"	Reading Questions #1
Week 2	Tues 1/11	Inductive Arguments for God's Existence: Design and Anthropic <i>Riddles of Existence</i> pp. 70-78 Paley, "The Argument From Design" Hume, <i>Dialogues Concerning Natural Religion</i> , parts 5 and 7	Reading Questions #2
	Thurs 1/13	The Problem of Evil Mackie, "Evil and Omnipotence" Hick, <i>Philosophy of Religion</i> , pp. 40-49	Reading Questions #3
Week 3	Tues 1/18	Mind-Body Problem: Substance Dualism and Behaviorism Descartes, <i>Meditations</i> 2 and 6 Churchland, <i>Matter and Consciousness</i> , pp. 7-25	Reading Questions #4
	Thurs 1/20	Mind-Body Problem: Identity Theory, Functionalism, and Eliminative Materialism Churchland, <i>Matter and Consciousness</i> , pp. 26-49	Reading Questions #5
Week 4	Tues 1/25	The Mind-Body Problem: Can Computers Think? Searle, "Can Computers Think?" Churchland & Churchland, "Could A Computer Think?"	Short paper Reading Questions #6
	Thurs 1/27	Mind-Body Problem: The Extended Mind Clark & Chalmers, "The Extended Mind" Clark, "Out of Our Brains" and "Extended Mind Redux: A Response"	Reading Questions #7
Week 5	Tues 2/1	Possibility and Necessity, Causation and Laws of Nature <i>Riddles of Existence</i> pp. 181-196 Hume, <i>An Enquiry Concerning Human Understanding</i> , sections 5 and 7	Reading Questions #8
	Thurs 2/3	Causation and Laws of Nature Salmon, "Causation"	Reading Questions #9
Week 6	Tues 2/8	Midterm exam	
	Thurs 2/10	Time: Does it Flow? <i>Riddles of Existence</i> pp. 44-61	Reading Questions #10

Week 7	Tues 2/15	Time: Is Time Travel Possible? Lewis, "The Paradoxes of Time Travel"	Reading Questions #11
	Thurs 2/17	Constitution <i>Riddles of Existence</i> pp. 134-153	Reading Questions #12
Week 8	Tues 2/22	Personal Identity <i>Riddles of Existence</i> pp. 7-21 Locke, "Of Identity and Diversity"	Reading Questions #13
	Thurs 2/24	Personal Identity Parfit, "Personal Identity"	Reading Questions #14
Week 9	Tues 3/1	Personal Identity Dennett, "The Origins of Selves"	Reading Questions #15
	Thurs 3/3	Fatalism <i>Riddles of Existence</i> pp. 22-43	Reading Questions #16
Week 10	Tues 3/8	Free Will <i>Riddles of Existence</i> pp. 112-133 Kane, "Libertarianism"	Reading Questions #17
	Thurs 3/10	Free Will Frankfurt, "Alternate Possibilities and Moral Responsibility"	Reading Questions #18
Week 11	Thurs 3/17	Take home final exam due	