

14 Introduction to Philosophy: Nature of Reality

Christian Wüthrich

Winter 2015

Class schedule: TuTh 5:00pm-6:20pm, CENTR 216
Sections: A01: M 10-10:50am, CENTR 207 (TA xx)
A02: M 2-2:50pm, CENTR 218 (TA xx)
A03: W 12-12:50pm, APM 2301 (TA xx)
A04: W 1-1:50pm, APM 2301 (TA xx)
Website: <http://philosophy.ucsd.edu/faculty/wuthrich/>
Contact: Office hours are Th 2-4pm and by appointment
Room 8047 HSS ☎ 858-534-6548 ✉ wuthrich@ucsd.edu
TAs: TBA (Office hrs, HSS xx) ✉ aa@ucsd.edu
TBA (Office hrs, HSS xx) ✉ bb@ucsd.edu

This course is an introductory survey of some of the chief problems in metaphysics. It is topic-oriented rather than history-oriented. This emphasis means we will often consider problems independently of their historical context. Hopefully, what is lost by way of historical grounding will be balanced by a gain in interest in the issues themselves. Due to time constraints, the course must also focus on a limited subset of philosophical problems. We will spend most of our time on what are arguably the really big problems of philosophical metaphysics: God, Causation, the Mind-Body Problem, Personal Identity, Free Will, and Time.

Along with serving as an introduction to some philosophical puzzles, the course also hopes to develop and foster good argumentative skills and critical thinking on the part of the student. Combined with the fact that philosophical texts are frequently difficult for beginning students, this makes the course relatively challenging for an introductory course. But for those with a speculative turn of mind, it should be fun.

Course materials

The lecture is primarily intended to set the scene and provide the stimulus for your own studies. You should do at least the required reading for every topic as preparation for the class in which you will discuss the material in depth. I hope that you will be interested enough to follow up some of the recommended reading on at least some of the topics—this will more than repay the effort. I have also posted some relevant podcasts on the course website and hope that you will find them stimulating food for thought.

Most of the mandatory reading material is electronic, accessible through reserves.ucsd.edu. This method will save you a lot of money and also give you better readings. You will find a direct link to this course's readings from the course website.

I have also ordered the very readable *Riddles of Existence: A Guided Tour of Metaphysics* by Earl Conee and Theodore Sider (CS). It's available at the Price Center Bookstore (\$25.95 new, \$19.50 used, \$18.99 ebook).

You will also need to purchase an **i>clicker**, the student response system used in this class. These ‘clickers’ are available at the Price Center bookstore; alternatively, you purchase the app called ‘i>clicker GO’. In order to receive credit, students must register their clickers at the i>clickers website at <https://www1.iclicker.com/register-clicker/> within the first week of class. For more information, visit <http://acms.ucsd.edu/faculty/clickers/>.

Course requirements and evaluation

Attendance in class and sections is required. Since every class will contain some material not found in the readings, it is nearly impossible to do well in this course if one’s attendance is anything short of regular. The final grade for this course will be determined by the total points a student earns from the five types of evaluation indicated below. I grade to the curve, i.e., the top 25-30% of the students in this class will get a grade in the A range (A+, A, A-), the next 25-35% a grade in the B range (B+, B, B-), the next 25-30% a grade in the C range (C+, C, C-), and the remaining 5-25% a D or an F. This is the minimum I guarantee; if the class has worked very well and no one deserves a D or an F, I will adjust the curve upwards, accordingly.

1. *Attendance* (5 points): You get 1 point for attending a full section, up to a maximum of 5 points.
2. *Participation* (20 points): Your ‘clicker’ score will be based on in-class questions scored using the student response system. During each class (except the first), I will ask you to ‘buzz in’ and the system will automatically record your responses, and then transmit it to me. Perhaps twice or so during classes, I will put up a short quiz or poll for you to answer. Your clicker score will be the percentage of points earned divided by the maximum possible. **Important: you must have your clicker every class period to get these points—no exceptions.**
3. *Short paper* (20 points) [<http://www.turnitin.com>]: You are expected to write one short essay of roughly 5 pages due on **5 February 2015** at the end of class. I shall hand out a list of paper topics fairly early in the course. For each day your paper is late, five points will be deducted from your point total, although no negative point totals will be given for the midterm papers.
4. *Midterm exam* (25 points): There will be a **midterm exam** in class on 17 February 2015. You are not allowed to use any books or notes or the like, i.e. the exam is ‘closed-books’.
5. *Final exam* (30 points): There will be a **final exam** on 19 March 2015, 7:00pm-9:59pm. You are not allowed to use any books or notes or the like, i.e. the exam is ‘closed-books’. The final exam is cumulative, i.e. it covers all the material of the entire course.

The short papers must be submitted through <http://www.turnitin.com> by the due date in order to earn credit. You must enroll at <http://www.turnitin.com> by creating a new profile. You will need the following course information, depending on who your TA is:

TA:	AA	BB
Class ID:	xx	xx
Enrollment Passwords:	015aa	015bb

Note the difference between lower case ‘l’ and the numeral ‘1’. If you have any problems with using <http://www.turnitin.com>, you can contact the Instructional Web Development Center of Academic Computing Services at 858-822-3315 or iwdc@ucsd.edu.

The fine print

Texting, surfing the web, emailing, etc., during lecture or section is not allowed. It’s distracting to other students and the lecturer.

In your short paper, all sources, including discussions with classmates, must be appropriately acknowledged. *All answers given must be in your own wording.* Closely paraphrasing or simply copying the work of others (such as authors of books or articles, or classmates) is not allowed and will be severely penalized. You must ask me in case you are uncertain whether something constitutes plagiarism. Plagiarism, the stealing of an idea or actual text, and other forms of academic dishonesty will be immediately reported to the Academic Integrity Office.

Students agree that by taking this course all required papers will be subject to submission for textual similarity review to Turnitin.com for the detection of plagiarism. All submitted papers will be included as source documents in the Turnitin.com reference database solely for the purpose of detecting plagiarism of such papers. Use of the Turnitin.com service is subject to the terms of use agreement posted on the Turnitin.com site.

You must observe the University’s Policy on Integrity of Scholarship, which can be found at <http://students.ucsd.edu/academics/academic-integrity/policy.html>.

Make-up exams (for midterm and final) or extended deadlines (for the paper) will only be given under the most severe circumstances. The student who wishes to write a make-up exam or needs an extension must inform me ahead of the time of when the paper is due or the exam takes place. 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.

Tentative schedule of classes (see overleaf)

You should complete all the assigned readings before the corresponding class meeting. My presentations slides are available online as PDF files. Additional background material on all topics will also be available on the course website. I gratefully acknowledge Craig Callender’s generosity in sharing his class materials.

Date Topic and Mandatory Readings

- 6 Jan Introduction: Philosophical Arguments and God's Existence
CS: pp. 62-70
- 8 Jan Deductive Arguments for God's Existence: Cosmological and Ontological
CS: pp. 78-84, 87-101
Rowe, W., 'The Ontological Argument' (e-reserves)
- 13 Jan Inductive Arguments for God's Existence: Design and Anthropic
CS: pp. 70-78
Paley, W., 'The Argument From Design', selection from *Natural Theology* (e-reserves)
Hume, D., *Dialogues Concerning Natural Religion*, parts 5 and 7 (e-reserves)
- 15 Jan The Problem of Evil
Mackie, J.L., 'Evil and Omnipotence' (e-reserves)
- 20 Jan Causation: What Holds the Universe Together?
Hume, D., *An Enquiry Concerning Human Understanding*, Sec. 5 (only Part I) and
Sec. 7 (only Part II) (e-reserves)
- 22 Jan Causation: Do We See It?
Ducasse, C.J., 'On the Nature and Observability of the Causal Relation' (e-reserves)
Beebe, H., 'Seeing Causing', pp. 257-267 (e-reserves)
- 27 Jan Causation and Laws: Humean and Non-Humean Views of the World
Beebe, H., 'The Non-Governing Conception of Laws of Nature', Secs. 1 and 5 (e-reserves)
- 29 Jan Mind-Body Problem
Taylor, R., *Metaphysics*, Excerpts from Chs. 2 and 3 (e-reserves)
- 3 Feb Mind-Body Problem
Churchland, P., *Matter and Consciousness*, Ch. 2, pp. 7-50. (e-reserves)
- 5 Feb The Mind-Body Problem: Can Computers Think?
Short paper due
Searle, J., 'Can computers think?' (e-reserves)
Churchland, P.M., and P.S. Churchland, 'Could a machine think?' (e-reserves)
- 10 Feb Personal Identity
CS: pp. 7-22
- 12 Feb Personal Identity and Time
Dennett, D., 'The Origins of Selves', (e-reserves)
- 17 Feb **Midterm exam** in class (bring blue books)
- 19 Feb Fatalism
CS: pp. 22-43
- 24 Feb Free Will
CS: pp. 112-133
- 26 Feb Free Will
Frankfurt, H.G., 'Alternate Possibilities and Moral Responsibility' (e-reserves)
Chisholm, R., 'Human Freedom and the Self' (e-reserves)
- 3 Mar Free Will
Libet, B., 'Do we have free will?' (e-reserves)
- 5 Mar Time: Is the World Four-Dimensional?
Callender, C., *Introducing Time*, excerpt (e-reserves)
- 10 Mar Time: Does it Flow?
CS: pp. 44-61
Dainton, B., *Time and Space*, Chs. 1 and 2 (e-reserves)
- 12 Mar Time: Is Time Travel Possible?
Heinlein, R., '—All you zombies—' (e-reserves)
- 19 Mar **Final exam**, 7:00pm-9:59pm (bring blue books)