

PHIL 115: TEMPORAL REFLECTIONS



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When TuTh 11-12:20

Where U413A

Office hrs Tues: 1:30-2:30 and by appt.

The primary purpose of this course is to teach philosophy majors how to understand, write and present philosophical arguments. The course will be somewhat unorthodox: no exams, no long lectures, no rows of seats, and so on, but lots of presentations and writing. The idea is that continued feedback on your writing and presentational skills will provide a kind of "crash course" in the talents one needs to be a good philosopher. Since strong aptitude in comprehension/writing/presenting is needed outside philosophy too, it is hoped that this course will serve all the students taking it, no matter in what profession their future lie.

The secondary goal of this course is to study time and philosophical problems associated with time. We'll begin with some topics in philosophy of time proper. Then we'll branch out to philosophical problems in which time figures prominently. In this way the topic of time will provide a prism through which we can see various topics and branches of philosophy. The topic of time will force

the student to come to grips with a diverse range of texts: metaphysics, contemporary ethics, decision theory, philosophy of science, philosophy of physics, and epistemology. Hence it is the perfect topic to help us realize the primary goal of the course.

Class format

- Six essays. The first five essays are due in term, and the first few of these will be on very specific questions. These essays will be between 3-4 pages each, single-spaced. The last, and sixth, essay is due during exam week (on the day the exam for this class is scheduled). It is to be a slightly longer, rewritten and (one would expect) improved version of one of the previous five shorter papers. (You'll talk with me about which one to pick.)
- Come to class prepared for discussion. This means carefully reading everything assigned for the day. A discussion class (seminar) is doomed if everyone hasn't done the reading prior to class; consequently, your reading will be monitored through a variety of means, e.g., quizzes.
- You will be assigned two-to-three (depending on class size) 10-15 minute class presentations, in which one (a) succinctly introduces the material, (b) discusses its merits and demerits, and (c) raises interesting discussion questions about it. These presentations will be graded (by me) and critiqued (by me and the class), as presentations, right there and then in the class. But no worries --- the criticism will be constructive in spirit. You will stand at the front of the class and use either the projector or OHP. (I can provide transparency paper.)
- After the first two essays have been graded, we'll set up a meeting with me to go over your work (to see if I spot any positive and negative tendencies in your writing). Meeting with me in my office is a mandatory part of the course.
- We may also organize in-class 'writing centers', to be explained.

Grading

If no reading quizzes, etc. are necessary, then the grade will be determined as follows: papers 1-5 (15% each), paper 6 (10%), and presentations (15%). If quizzes are assigned, they will total no more than 10% of the grade and the above percentages will be re-scaled appropriately. You are expected to make every class – your grade will be docked **2pts** for each class missed, unless the absence is excused beforehand by the TA or Professor.

Fine Print

In your short papers, 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://www-senate.ucsd.edu/manual/appendices/app2.htm>. Late papers will be accepted, but docked at the rate of 5% per day.

Reading

All the articles will be made available either through the electronic library, e-reserves, or direct email. We will mostly concentrate on very recent, cutting edge works—many will be not-yet-published essays forthcoming in the *Oxford Handbook of Time*.

Links to good "How-to-write-philosophy" pages:

"How to Write a Philosophy Paper"

<http://www.cariboo.bc.ca/ae/php/phil/mclaughl/courses/howrit.htm>

Jim's Pryor's page: <http://www.jimpryor.net/teaching/>

Holton's samples: <http://homepages.ed.ac.uk/rholton/write/writehome.html>

Vargas, "How to Write Philosophy Papers That Don't Suck"

<http://www.usfca.edu/fac-staff/mrvargas/Handouts/Howtowrite.pdf>

Tentative Schedule, Topics and Readings

3-31 Introduction: Dynamic versus Static Theories of Time

Introductory stage setting by Professor on the philosophy of time. Also, discussion of some points from the "How-to-Write" links, above.

Lockwood, *Labyrinth of Time*, chapter 1

4-2 **The Four-Dimensional "Block"**

Lockwood, *Labyrinth of Time*, chapters 2 and 3

Supplemental: Callender, "Time in Physics" *Encyclopedia of Philosophy*

4-7 **Presentism and the Growing Block**

Zimmerman, Dean, "The Privileged Present: Defending an 'A-theory' of Time", in *Contemporary Debates in Metaphysics*, ed. by Ted Sider, John Hawthorne, and Dean W. Zimmerman, 2007, 211-225. <http://fas-philosophy.rutgers.edu/zimmerman/PrivilegedPresent.pdf>

4-9 **Does Time Pass?**

Williams, D.C. "The Myth of Passage", selections. JSTOR
Maudlin, Tim. "On the Passing of Time" in: *The Metaphysics Within Physics*, 2007, selections.

4/14 **Does Time Pass?**

Price, Huw. "The Flow of Time" *Oxford Handbook on Time*

4/16 **The Now**

Callender, "The Common Now" *Philosophical Issues*, 2008.
Eagleman DM (2008). Human time perception and its illusions. *Current Opinion in Neurobiology*. 18(2): 131-6

4-21 **Time and the Self**

Ismael, "Temporal Experience" *Oxford Handbook of Time*

4-23 **Time and the Self**

Velleman, "So It Goes"

http://papers.ssrn.com/sol3/papers.cfm?abstract_id=1006901

4-28 **The Difference Between Space and Time**

Taylor, Richard. "Spatial and Temporal Analogies and the Concept of Identity", *The Journal of Philosophy* 1955, pp. 599-612.

4-30 **The Difference Between Space and Time**

Callender, "What Makes Time Special" my website

5-5 **Time Travel**

Lewis, David, "The Paradoxes of Time Travel", *American Philosophical Quarterly*, 145-52.

5-7 **Time Travel**

Arntzenius, Frank. "Time Travel: Double Your Fun" *Philosophical Compass*, 2006.

5-12 **The Direction of Time**

Price, Huw. 1996. *Time's Arrow and Archimedes' Point*, selections

5-14 **Time's Arrow and Epistemology: The Knowledge Asymmetry**

Guest Speaker: Tarun Menon,
Horwich, *Asymmetries in Time*, chapter 5

5-19 **Time and Epistemology: The Problem of Ulysses**

Foley, Richard. "How Should Future Opinion Affect Current Opinion?"
Philosophy and Phenomenological Research, 1994.

For more, see: van Fraassen. Bas. "Belief and the Problem of Ulysses and the Sirens". *Philosophical Studies*, 77:7–37, 1995.

5-21 **Time and Epistemology: Newcomb's Problem**

Horwich, *Asymmetries in Time*, chapter 11

5-26 **Time and Free Will**

Read: Egan, Greg. [The hundred light year diary](#)

5-28 **Fatalism**

Craig Bourne, "Fatalism and the Future" *Oxford Handbook on Time*

6-2 **Time and Happiness**

Beardman, "[The Choice Between Current and Retrospective Evaluations of Pain](#)"

6-4 **Time and Ethics**

Velleman, "Time and Well-Being"