

Introduction to Metaphysics (sample)

24 lectures for Fall 2018

Instructor: Dr. Owen Pikkert, owen.pikkert@mail.utoronto.ca

Lecture hours: TBD

Instructor's office hours: Thursdays 3:30 to 5:00 in NE 6144

Course description

In this course we will examine three topics of perennial interest in metaphysics: the existence of God, the nature of persons, and skepticism about metaphysics itself.

Logistics

Evaluation: Three quizzes at 10% each, two papers at 20% each, final cumulative exam at 20%, and tutorial attendance at 10%.

Quizzes: Quizzes will be taken in class. Only material from the lectures will be quizzed.

Papers: Topics and instructions for the papers will be posted to Quercus at least three weeks in advance of the deadline. Papers are to be submitted online via Quercus, which incorporates Turnitin.com. Late papers will be penalized at 5% for each calendar day, and papers more than one week late will not be accepted. For instructions on how to request an extension, please visit utm.philosophy.utoronto.ca/courses.

Readings: All of the readings are freely available via Quercus. See Quercus for instructions on how to access these readings.

Turnitin.com: Normally, students will be required to submit their course essays to Turnitin.com for a review of textual similarity and detection of possible plagiarism. In doing so, students will allow their essays to be included as source documents in the Turnitin.com reference database, where they will be used solely for the purpose of detecting plagiarism. The terms that apply to the University's use of the Turnitin.com service are described on the Turnitin.com web site.

Academic integrity

By university regulation, plagiarism will automatically be reported to the Dean. Plagiarism is presenting someone else's ideas or words as if they are your own. You may use ideas and examples that come from others, but you must make clear that you are doing so. It is

acceptable to quote, but when you do so, you must clearly provide a citation to the relevant work.

It is important to know that there are various forms of academic offense besides plagiarism. For more information please visit the following website about academic integrity: utm.utoronto.ca/academic-integrity. This site can help you get clear about what counts as an academic offense, how to prevent it, and the university's policies for dealing with suspected cases. Even if you plagiarize unintentionally, it still counts as an academic offense.

Lecture schedule

Arguments for God's existence

Sep 6	The ontological argument	René Descartes (1641: Meditation V)
Sep 8	The cosmological argument	Richard Taylor (1992: 99-108)
Sep 13	The fine-tuning argument	Robin Collins (1998: 47-66)

Arguments against God's existence

Sep 15	The logical problem of evil	J. L. Mackie (1955: 200-12)
Sep 20	The evidential problem of evil	William Rowe (1979: 335-41)
Sep 22	Reframing the problem of evil	Marilyn McCord Adams (1989: 297ff)
Sep 27	The irrationality of belief in miracles	David Hume (1748: §10, Part I)

Mind and body

Sep 29	Substance dualism	René Descartes (1641: Meditation VI)
Oct 4	Identity theory	J. J. C. Smart (1959: 141-56)
Oct 6	Turing tests	Alan Turing (1950: 433-5, 442-7)
Oct 18	The Chinese room argument	John Searle (1980: 417-424)
Oct 20	The knowledge argument	Frank Jackson (1982: 127-30, 133-6)

Free will

Oct 25	Libertarianism	Roderick Chisholm (1964: 3-15)
Oct 27	Hard incompatibilism	Galen Strawson (1994: 5-16)
Nov 1	Classical compatibilism	David Hume (1748: §8)
Nov 3	Alternative possibilities	Harry Frankfurt (1969: 829-39)
Nov 8	Sanity and responsibility	Susan Wolf (1987: 46-62)

Skepticism about metaphysics

Nov 10	The challenge from empiricism	David Hume (1748: §2-3)
Nov 15	The challenge from science	B. Russell (1912: 141-52)
Nov 17	The challenge from verificationism	A. J. Ayer (1936: chapter 1)
Nov 22	The challenge from external questions	Rudolf Carnap (1950: 20-33)
Nov 24	The challenge from quantifier variance	Eli Hirsch (2002: 51-59, 67-71)
Nov 29	The challenge from methodology	Uriah Kriegel (2013: 1-7, 26-7)
Dec 1	The challenge from finitude	Bryan Magee (2016: 1-16)