



## Metaphysics Course Descriptor

Course Title	Metaphysics	Faculty	Philosophy
Course Code	NCHPH729	Course Leader	Dr Brian Ball
Credit Points	20	Teaching Period	Any
FHEQ Level	Level 7	Date Approved	June 2020
Compulsory/ Optional	Optional		
Pre-requisites	None		
Co-requisites	None		

### COURSE SUMMARY

This course investigates the fundamental nature of reality, beginning with ontology (the science of being), before turning to consider time, modality, causality, personal identity, and free will. What is existence? Could two objects be exactly similar in every respect? Are entities of two fundamental kinds, particulars and universals? In virtue of what is it true that Aristotle could have been a poet? Does time flow? Is the future real? Are we simply our bodies? Under what conditions does a person continue to exist from one time to another? If the thesis of determinism is true, in what sense (if any) can we be free?

### COURSE AIMS

The aims of this course are:

- To develop students' skills in the interpretation, analysis, and evaluation of key texts in contemporary metaphysics and its recent history.
- To promote students' ability to categorize, elaborate, and compare, the chief philosophical approaches to central philosophical questions about the fundamental nature of reality.
- To enable students to form and defend their own estimates of the merits of alternative theories of ontology, modality, and time and to develop their own views on such topics as existence, causation, freedom, persistence, and identity.

## LEARNING OUTCOMES

On successful completion of the course, students will be able to:

### KNOWLEDGE AND UNDERSTANDING

- K1d Demonstrate wide-ranging knowledge of, and recognition of systematic connections. between key questions and debates in contemporary metaphysics and its recent history
- K2d Engage sensitively and creatively with the texts and theories from a range of philosophers.
- K3d Construct original arguments that show sensitivity to truth-preserving patterns of inference in defense of metaphysical positions.

### SUBJECT-SPECIFIC SKILLS

- S1d Employ advanced scholarly techniques to clarify and interpret positions and arguments in contemporary metaphysics.
- S2d Engage critically with material at the forefront of contemporary metaphysics, selecting and analysing information, and questioning assumptions.
- S3d Employ a range of philosophical devices to articulate, develop, and defend contested metaphysical positions.

### TRANSFERABLE AND PROFESSIONAL SKILLS

- T1d Show self-direction in working independently, creatively, and to deadlines.
- T2d Organize and synthesize information, question assumptions, and engage constructively with competing arguments.
- T3d Produce original, clear, sophisticated, and persuasive presentations on complex topics, especially in writing.
- T3d Consistently apply an excellent level of technical proficiency in written English, using an advanced application of scholarly terminology, that demonstrates the ability to deal with complex issues both systematically and with sophistication.

## TEACHING AND LEARNING

Teaching and learning strategies for this course will include:

- 30 hours of lectures/seminars
- Two one-hour one-to-one tutorials

Course information and supplementary materials are available on the College's Virtual Learning Environment (VLE).

Students are required to attend and participate in all timetabled sessions for this course. Students are also expected to manage their directed learning and independent study in support of the course.

## EMPLOYABILITY SKILLS

The metaphysics course cultivates skills that are employable across a range of sectors. These include the abilities to:

- Work independently, creatively, and to deadlines.
- Conduct research and explore relevant existing knowledge.
- Analyse, contextualise, and interpret complex ideas and materials.
- Synthesise and evaluate information against a backdrop of uncertainty.
- Solve problems through logical reasoning.
- Present findings and opinions in a clear, structured manner, whether orally or in writing.
- Engage in collaborative and constructive discussion.

## ASSESSMENT

### FORMATIVE

Students will be formatively assessed during the course by means of set assignments. These do not count towards the end of year results, but will provide students with developmental feedback, both written and oral.

### SUMMATIVE

Assessment will be in one form:

AE:	Assessment Activity	Weighting (%)	Online submission	Duration	Length
1	Written assignment	100%	Yes	N/A	5000 words

The written assignment will be assessed in accordance with the assessment aims set out in the Programme Specification.

## FEEDBACK

Students will receive feedback in a variety of ways, written and oral, within one-to-one tutorials, in discussion phases of lectures, and on formatively and summatively assessed assignments. Students will also attend the formal meeting, Collections, in which they will receive constructive and developmental feedback on their performance.

Feedback is provided on summative assessment and is made available to the student either via email, the VLE or another appropriate method.

## INDICATIVE READING

Note: Comprehensive and current reading lists for courses are produced annually in the Course Syllabus or other documentation provided to students; the indicative reading list provided below is used as part of the approval/modification process only.

### INTRODUCTIONS

Conee, E. and Sider, T. (2005), *Riddles of Existence*, Oxford: Oxford University Press.

Garrett, B. (2011), *What is this Thing Called Metaphysics?*, 2<sup>nd</sup> edition, Abingdon: Routledge.

Ney, A. (2014), *Metaphysics: an Introduction*, Abingdon: Routledge.

Russell, B. (1912), *The Problems of Philosophy*. Any edition.

**ANTHOLOGIES**

Crane, T., and Farkas, K. (2004), *Metaphysics: a Guide and Anthology*, Oxford: Oxford University Press

Kim, J., Korman, D. and Sosa, E. (2011), *Metaphysics: an Anthology*, Oxford: Blackwell.

**PRIMARY TEXTS**

Anscombe, E. (1971), *Causality and Determination: An Inaugural Lecture*, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

Lewis, D. (2001), 'Causation', *Journal of Philosophy*, 70.

McTaggart, J. M. E. (1908), 'The Unreality of Time,' *Mind*, 17.

Quine, W.V.O. (1948), 'On What There Is', *Review of Metaphysics* 2.

**INDICATIVE TOPICS**

- Ontology
- Modality
- Causation and Freedom
- Time and Persistence
- Personal Identity

<b>Title: NCHPH729 Metaphysics Course Descriptor</b>					
<b>Approved by: Academic Board</b>					
<b>Location: Academic Handbook/Programme specifications and Handbooks/ Postgraduate Programme Specifications/MA Philosophy Programme Specification/Philosophy Course Descriptors</b>					
Version number	Date approved	Date published	Owner	Proposed next review date	Modification (As per AQF4) & category number
2.0	January 2022	April 2022	Brian Ball	April 2025	Category 3: Changes to Course Learning Outcomes
1.0	June 2020	June 2020	Brian Ball	April 2025	