

**Course Code: PHIL 3803**

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Course Title: Topics in Metaphysics: Philosophy of Time (形上學專題: 時間哲學)

2017-18 Term 2

Instructor: Cheung, Kam Ching Leo (張錦青) (email: leokccheung@cuhk.edu.hk)

Tutor: TBA

Time / Venue (Lecture): Monday 10:30-13:15/ LSK 208

*BLACKBOARD LEARN will be used for this course.*

**Course Description:**

Philosophy of time is a branch of philosophy, which investigates the nature of time and tackles philosophical issues and puzzles related to time. This course aims to be a comprehensive introduction to philosophy of time. It will introduce and critically examine the philosophies of time of Zeno, Aristotle, Newton, Leibniz and Kant, as well as that in relativity, J. M. E. McTaggart's famous argument for the unreality of time, and the A-theory and B-theory of time. If "time" permits, some of the following issues will be discussed: presentism, eternalism, the growing universe theory, time travel.

**Learning outcomes:**

After taking this course, students should be able to:

- understand the basic concepts in philosophy of time.
- demonstrate familiarity with the major issues and prominent theses and positions in philosophy of time.
- appreciate the main concerns and the nature of the major issues in philosophy of time, especially those about the nature of time.
- acquire skills in argumentative discussion and in writing about issues in philosophy of time.
- enhance the ability of logical reasoning and argumentation and that of philosophy of time.

## **Learning activities:**

Learning activities of this course include lectures, tutorials, reading essays, and writing a short essay and a term paper:

1. Lecture: 2 hours a week (mandatory).
2. Tutorial class: one two-hour session every two weeks (mandatory).
3. A short essay.
4. A term paper.

In this course, students are required to attend all the lectures and tutorials. Students are expected to read assigned essays before the lectures and study tutorial materials, consisting of assigned essays or book chapters, before the tutorial classes.

Students are also expected to devote sufficient time to the writing of a short essay and a term paper throughout the whole course. Surveying and reading the relevant literature and analyzing the materials are essential to the production of satisfactory short essay and term paper.

Students should be able to develop and enhance their analytical and argumentative skills through discussion in tutorials and classroom and writing the short essay and the term paper.

## **Assessment:**

Tutorial performance	(20%)
Short essay	(20%)
Term Paper*	(60%)

**Short essay:** You need to write a short essay for this course. It would carry a maximum 20% of the mark of the course.

Word limit of the short essay: 1000-2000

Deadline for the short essay: TBA

A set of topics will be given to you three weeks before the deadline of the short essay.

## **Term paper:**

Word limit of the term paper: 3000-5000

Deadline for term paper: TBA

## **Attention:**

In your *term paper and short essay*, if there are any ideas, opinions and/or materials which are taken from others, no matter whether you quote them word by word or not, you **MUST** provide the sources. Otherwise, you would be considered as having

committed Plagiarism. (Please also refer to <http://www.cuhk.edu.hk/policy/academichonesty/> for ‘Honesty in Academic Work’.)

This only applies to the term paper: Students are required to submit their term papers to the **VeriGuide** system before handing them in. Please visit the following website for the VeriGuide system: <http://veriguide1.cse.cuhk.edu.hk/portal/page/index.jsp>

### **Outline Content:**

1. Zeno and Aristotle on time
2. Newton and Leibniz on time
3. Kant on time
4. Time and relativity
5. McTaggart’s argument for the unreality of time
6. The A-theory
7. The B-theory
- 8.\* Presentism, Eternalism and the growing universe theory.
- 9.\* Time travel.

\*. This chapter may not be taught.

### **References (selected):**

- Aristotle (1941). *Physics*. R. P. Hardie and R. K. Gaye. trans. In McKeon (1941: 213-394).
- Bardon, A. (2013). *A Brief History of the Philosophy of Time*. Oxford: OUP.
- Bourne, C. (2006). *A Future for Presentism*. Oxford: OUP.
- Dyke, H. and Baron, A. eds. (2013). *A Companion to the Philosophy of Time*. Oxford: Wiley-Blackwell.
- Horwich, P. (1989). *Asymmetries in Time*. NJ: MIT press.
- Kant, I. (2003). *Critique of Pure Reason*. N. K. Smith. trans. NY: Palgrave Macmillan.
- Le Poidevin, R. and MacBeath, M. eds. (1993). *The Philosophy of Time*. Oxford: OUP.
- McKeon, R. ed. (1941). *The Basic Works of Aristotle*. NY: Random House.

McTaggart, J. M. E. (1927). *The Nature of Existence—Volume II*. C. D. Broad. ed. Cambridge: CUP.

——— (1908). “The Unreality of Time.” *Mind* 17/68: 457-74.

Mellor, D. H. (1992). *Real Time II*. London: Routledge.

——— (1981). *Real Time*. Cambridge: CUP.

Oaklander, N. (2004). *The Ontology of Time*. NY: Prometheus.

Westphal, J. and Levenson, C. eds. (1993). *Time*. Cambridge: Hackett.

### **Academic honesty and plagiarism:**

Attention is drawn to University policy and regulations on honesty in academic work, and to the disciplinary guidelines and procedures applicable to breaches of such policy and regulations. Details may be found at <http://www.cuhk.edu.hk/policy/academichonesty/> .

For assignments in the form of a computer-generated document that is principally text-based and submitted via VeriGuide, the statement, in the form of a receipt, will be issued by the system upon students’ uploading of the soft copy of the assignment. Assignments without the receipt will not be graded by teachers. Only the final version of the assignment should be submitted via VeriGuide.