

PHIL5532 Metaphysics and the Quest for Reality

Course Outline

Mode of Teaching: online until further notice

Time : Thursday 18:30 – 21:30

Location : NRR

Course overview (as shown on CUSIS)

This course is conducted either from the historical approach or the analytic approach, or a combination of both. The historical approach discusses such themes as Parmenides and the beginning of metaphysical questioning, Plato and Aristotle's metaphysical systems, Descartes' metaphysics of subjectivity, Hume's critique of metaphysics, Kant and the possibility of metaphysics as a science, Hegel's metaphysical idealism, and Nietzsche and the end of metaphysics. Themes discussed from the analytic approach include: the problem of universals, the status of particulars, modality and possible world, the problem of self and identity, freedom and causality, realism and anti-realism, etc.

Learning outcomes (as shown on CUSIS)

1. Understand the connection between metaphysical issues and other philosophical issues.
2. Grasp the major themes in metaphysics.
3. Understand the relevance of metaphysical issues to/for the contemporary human setting.
4. Demonstrate an enhanced ability to research independently on the issues taught.

Topics

1. Introduction
2. Ancient and Medieval Metaphysics
 - a. Pre-Socratics
 - b. Plato and Aristotle
 - c. Medieval Metaphysics
3. Modern Metaphysics
 - a. Continental Rationalism
 - b. British Empiricism
 - c. Kant and German Idealism
4. End of Metaphysics or Contemporary Metaphysics
 - a. Anti-Rational Movements
 - b. Logical Positivism
 - c. Analytic Metaphysics

Learning activities

Lectures, class presentations and discussion

Assessment scheme as prescribed on CUSIS (revise if necessary)

<i>Task nature</i>	<i>Description</i>	<i>Weight</i>
Essays	Final paper	60%
Others	Presentation +	40%

Backup plan for assessment in case face-to-face teaching and assessment is not possible due to the pandemic (no need to fill in if the class and related assessments are to be conducted online)

<i>Task nature</i>	<i>Description</i>	<i>Weight</i>

Remarks on Assessment Scheme (if any)

Grade Descriptor

Please refer to: http://phil.arts.cuhk.edu.hk/~phidept/UG/Grade_descriptors.pdf

Recommended learning resources

1. T. Nagel, *What Does It All Mean? A Very Short Introduction to Philosophy*, New York: Oxford University Press, 1987.
2. B. Russell, *The Problems of Philosophy*, New York: Oxford University Press, 1997.
3. D. E. Cooper ed., *Metaphysics: The Classic Readings*, Oxford: Blackwell, 2000.
4. T. Crane/K. Farkas ed., *Metaphysics: A Guide and Anthology*, Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2004.
5. R. C. Hoy/L. N. Oaklander ed., *Metaphysics: Classic and Contemporary Readings*, Belmont, California: Wadsworth Publishing, 1991.
6. F. C. Copleston, *A History of Philosophy*, 9 vols., New York: Image Books, 1993.
7. A. Kenny, *A New History of Western Philosophy*. Oxford: Oxford UP, 2010.
8. W. Windelband, *A History of Philosophy: With Special Reference to the Formation and Development of its Problems and Conceptions*, trans. J. H. Tufts, New York: Macmillan Co., 1901.
9. 傅偉勳，《西洋哲學史》。台北：三民書局，1965。

Course schedule

<i>Week</i>	<i>Topics</i>	<i>Required reading</i>	<i>Tutorials (if any)</i>	<i>Remarks</i>

Details of course website

Contact details for teacher(s) or TA(s)

Teacher	
Name:	Prof. LAU Chong Fuk
Office location:	
Telephone:	
Email:	cflau@cuhk.edu.hk

TA	
Name:	
Office location:	
Telephone:	
Email:	

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/>

With each assignment, students will be required to submit a signed declaration that they are aware of these policies, regulations, guidelines and procedures. For group projects, all students of the same group should be asked to sign the declaration.

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.