

PHIL3800 Metaphysics

Course Description

This course is intended to examine some of the central problems in metaphysics from a contemporary, analytic perspective. It is assumed that each student already possesses a basic understanding of logic and analytic skills, though this course also aims to develop such skills through rigorous examination of the arguments and views discussed.

Topics

1. Introduction
2. Possibility and Necessity
3. Existence: Is existence a property?
4. Necessary Existence: Why is there something rather than nothing?
5. Fatalism
6. Determinism and Free Will
7. Causation
8. Realism and Anti-realism

Important points to note

- You are expected to attend all lectures and read the assigned readings for each topic.

Tutorials

- Tutorials are mandatory. The Briefing session in the 3rd week will provide you with all you need to know about the tutorials, e.g., assessment, workload, and readings.

Tests

- There will be a mid-term test and an end-of-term test. Test questions will cover the lectures (not just the notes), required readings and tutorial materials.

Tutorials

Six 90-min sessions: 1 briefing plus 5 tutorial sessions. Workload: presentations; participation in discussion; 2-page critical comments on reading material, one for each tutorial.

Assessment

Grading will be based on the following:

1. Tutorial (and class participation) performance: 30%
2. Tests: 35% in total
3. Term Essay: 35%.