

PHIL3800
Metaphysics 形上學

Course Outline

Time : M 1:30pm-4:15pm

Location :

LSK LT7

Course overview (as shown on CUSIS)

Metaphysics concerns with the fundamental structure of reality as a whole. This can be understood as external: the nature of reality and its principles, such as space, time, causation, substance, universals, and so forth; or it can be understood as internal: the nature of human reality, what it is to be a person, to have a mind or soul, to have choice or freedom, etc. Alternately, one may say that metaphysics purports to discover what the totality of existence *could* embrace: that is to say, what categories of entities could co-exist. In short, it is an intellectual discipline with a task to chart the *possibilities* of real existence. The fruit of metaphysics is not empirical knowledge but some special *understanding*. (A manifestation of understanding in this sense is a capacity to see deep difficulties in opposing views that seem obviously true or hard to give up.) Our investigation in this course will focus on certain metaphysical problems of a very basic and perennial nature, consequently acquaint the students with some classical answers and theories.

Advisory to Majors: to be taken in year 2 or above.

Learning outcomes (as shown on CUSIS)

On completion of this course, students should:

1. Acquire a basic conception about the nature of certain classic as well as contemporary metaphysical questions.
2. Understand some of their implications for other philosophical issues.
3. Able to engage themselves in raising and discussing issues of metaphysical relevance from their daily encountered things or experiences.

Topics

1. Persons & bodies
2. Interactionism
3. Mind as function of body
4. Space and time
5. Paradoxes of motion
6. Temporal passage
7. Causation
8. Freedom & determinism
9. Fate
10. God
11. Polarity

Learning activities

Reading of required texts is essential and compulsory while supplementary readings are optional (but recommended for those who are interested in certain respective subject-matters).

Free discussions (or Q&A's) are always and highly encouraged during lectures as well as tutorial sessions.

Each student will present, in a tutorial, on one pre-chosen topic from those that exactly correspond to the lecture topics.

Assessment scheme as prescribed on CUSIS (revise if necessary)

<i>Task nature</i>	<i>Description</i>	<i>Weight</i>
Continuous Assessment (a tutorial presentation; a paper; participation)		60%
Exam		40%

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

Required Readings:

R. Taylor, *Metaphysics* (4th ed.), Prentice Hall, 1992.

One chapter from E. J. Lowe, *A Survey of Metaphysics*, Oxford University Press, 2002.

Supplementary Readings:

P. F. Strawson, *Analysis and Metaphysics*, Oxford University Press, 1992.

D. E. Cooper, *Metaphysics: the classic readings*, Blackwell, 2000.

E. J. Lowe, *A Survey of Metaphysics*, Oxford University Press, 2002 (other than the required chapter).

Course schedule

<i>Week</i>	<i>Topics</i>	<i>Teaching Mode</i> <i>Online / in-campus</i>	<i>Required reading</i>	<i>Tutorials</i>	<i>Remarks</i>
1	Introduction			Logistics	
2	Persons & bodies			Free discussion	
3	Interactionism			Free (discussion)	
4	Mind as function of body			1 st presentation	
5	Space and time			2 nd presentation	
6	Paradoxes of motion			3 rd presentation	
7	Temporal passage			4 th presentation	
8	Causation			5 th presentation	
9	Freedom & determinism			6 th presentation	
10	Fate			7 th presentation	

11	God			8 th presentation	
12	Polarity			9 th presentation	
13	Future of metaphysics			10 th presentation	
14	Wrap-up/back-up			11 th presentation	

Details of course website

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

Teacher	
Name:	Zheng Yujian
Office location:	G26B, Fung King Hey Building
Telephone:	
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TA	
Name:	
Office location:	
Telephone:	
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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.