

INTRODUCTION TO METAPHYSICS

PHIL252 (AO1)

Metaphysics concerns the nature of reality. This course introduces some of its central topics, including: reality, matter, identity, persons, free will, god, and time.

PREREQUISITES None.

INSTRUCTOR Professor Mike Raven (✉ raven@uvic.ca • raven.site)
OFFICE HOURS • Wednesdays 1:00-3:00_{PM} in CLE B323 or weekdays by appointment.

ASSISTANT Nate Lavallee (✉ nlavallee@uvic.ca)
OFFICE HOURS • Mondays 2:30-3:30_{PM} in CLE D275.

INSTRUCTION On campus: Mondays/Thursdays 1:00-2:20_{PM} in CLE A207.

LMS bright.uvic.ca/d2l/home/147655 (Consult for updates and current course documents.)

TEXTS

- **REQUIRED** (*online*) [Conee & Sider, *Riddles of Existence* \(new edition\)](#)
- **REQUIRED** (*purchase*) [Boghossian, *Fear of Knowledge*](#)

EVALUATION

RUBRIC Grades ([UVic's scale](#)) you earn are determined by the philosophical craftsmanship of your work for this course according to the **RUBRIC**: raven.site/teaching/Rubric.pdf

WORK

- **INTEGRITY MATTERS** Short online course on academic integrity.
- **PROBLEM SETS** [²/₃] 5 short skill-training assignments (see **SCHEDULE** for due dates).
- **CHECKPOINTS** [¹/₆] Best 7 of 10 online reading comprehension quizzes.
- **ENGAGEMENT** [¹/₆] In-class, office hours, or forum: raven.site/teaching/Engagement.pdf

A failing **N** grade will be earned if any essential work (•) is not completed.

GRACE POINTS A **grace point** delays the due date of an essential work (•) by 1 day. 5 are allotted and may be used in any combination without justification, but cannot be reused, traded, or earned. To use # grace points, write '# grace points' at the beginning of your submission.

LATENESS Work submitted after a due date will *not* be accepted (see **ACCESSIBILITY** for exceptions).

POLICIES

CONDUCT Enrolling binds you to a social contract with your instructor and classmates:

- **Be prepared.** Consult course documents. Read assigned text before class.
- **Be engaged.** Attend class. Use office hours and tutorials.
- **Be respectful.** Don't bully or distract others.
- **Be professional.** Check sources first. Follow etiquette. Allow ≥1 day for replies.
- **Demonstrate academic integrity:** www.uvic.ca/current-students/home/academics/academic-integrity/

REQUESTS Accessibility arrangements must be made with [CAL](#) (see **RESOURCES**). Other requests (extra credit, extensions, alternate/makeup work) will *not* be considered, except by for extraordinary cases (instructor's discretion; e.g. *not* technical/wifi issues) and when the request (and documents, if any are required) is received within 3 days of the due date.

GUESTS Guests permitted only with instructor's prior consent.

RESOURCES

INDIGENOUS SUPPORT We acknowledge and respect the ləkʷəŋən peoples on whose traditional territory the university stands and the Songhees, Esquimalt and W̱SÁNEC peoples whose historical relationships with the land continue to this day. For more information and support: www.uvic.ca/services/indigenous/

ACCESSIBILITY For accessibility support, consult the Centre for Accessible Learning (**CAL**): www.uvic.ca/services/cal/

WELLNESS Take care of your mental and physical well-being! If your symptoms are related to this course, then please speak with the instructor. For cost-free, confidential support: www.uvic.ca/student-wellness/

LEARN ANYWHERE For student and academic support services: onlineacademiccommunity.uvic.ca/LearnAnywhere/

COPYRIGHT Course content/materials are protected by copyright law: www.uvic.ca/library/research-teaching/copyright

SCHEDULE

Consult www.uvic.ca/calendar/dates/ for important dates (including last add/drop dates).

Required texts (•) must be read *before* each class. Dates are tentative; consult [LMS](#) for updates.

INTRO

SEP 9 Introduction

REALITY • [Raven, *Philosophy & Logic Primer*](#)

SEP 13 • Boghossian, *Fear of Knowledge*, **chapters 1-2**
 SEP 16 •
 SEP 20 • Boghossian, *Fear of Knowledge*, **chapter 3**
 SEP 23 • Boghossian, *Fear of Knowledge*, **chapter 4**
 SEP 26 ✦ **DUE: INTEGRITY MATTERS**
 ✦ **DUE: PROBLEM SET 1**

MATTER • [Raven, *Philosophy & Logic Primer*](#)

SEP 27 • [Berkeley, *Three Dialogues between Hylas and Philonous*](#), I-II
 OCT 4 •
 OCT 7 • Russell, "Idealism"

GOD • Conee & Sider, "God"

OCT 14 • [al-Ghazālī, *Incoherence of the Philosophers*](#), pp.20-22,89-92
 OCT 17 ✦ **DUE: PROBLEM SET 2**
 OCT 18 •
 OCT 21 • [Stump, "The Mirror of Evil"](#)

IDENTITY • Conee & Sider, "Personal Identity" pp.7-11

OCT 25 • [Descartes, *Meditations on First Philosophy*](#) I-II
 OCT 28 • [Descartes, *Meditations on First Philosophy*](#) VI
 • [Princess Elisabeth/Descartes, *Letters*](#), 6.v.1643-1.ii.1643
 NOV 1 • Unger, "I Do Not Exist"

PERSONS • Conee & Sider, "Personal Identity" pp.12-21

NOV 4 • Thomson, "People and their Bodies"
 NOV 7 ✦ **DUE: PROBLEM SET 3**
 NOV 8 •
 NOV 15 • Kripke, *Naming and Necessity*, pp.110-115
 • [Appiah, "But Would That Still Be Me?"](#)

FREE WILL • Conee & Sider, "Free Will and Determinism"

NOV 18 • Chisholm, "Human Freedom and the Self"
 NOV 22 •
 NOV 25 • Libet, "Do We Have Free Will?"
 • Roskies, "Neuroscientific Challenges to Free Will and Responsibility"
 NOV 25 ✦ **DUE: PROBLEM SET 4**

TIME • Conee & Sider, "Fatalism" & "Time"

NOV 29 • Prior, "The Notion of the Present"
 • Prior, "Some Free Thinking about Time"
 DEC 2 • [Smart, "The River of Time"](#)
 DEC 6 •
 DEC 16 ✦ **DUE: PROBLEM SET 5**