

Syllabus for PHIL 340, Winter 2020, Term 1

METAPHYSICS

Instructor: Dr Anders Kraal

1. Course Description

Metaphysics has always been a core field of Western Philosophy. In this course we survey some major issues in contemporary metaphysics, including the question of what there is (“ontology”); what it means to ask what there is and how this is to be determined (“meta-ontology”); and in particular whether we should recognize such a thing as Free-Will amongst the things that are.

2. Lectures

Mon/Wed/Fri: 10:00-10:50 on Collaborate Ultra (accessible via Canvas)
Recorded lectures will be available on Canvas or YouTube

3. Instructor

Dr. Anders Kraal (anders.kraal@ubc.ca)

4. Instructor Office Hours

No in person office hours this term due to social distancing rules connected to Covid-19.

5. Instructor Email Policy

Instructor will reply to emails on weekdays. *Email correspondence is intended chiefly for clarification of specific course content and presupposes attendance at the lectures that dealt with this content.*

6. Teaching Assistant

TBA

The TA will be marking exams and papers, will hold so-called Review Sessions for you to view marked work, and will answer questions about marked work via email.

7. Required Texts

Our readings will consist of modern classic papers in metaphysics. All readings will be available free of charge as PDFs on Canvas. These papers will include:

Introductory paper:

Anders Kraal: “Ontology”

Ontology and Meta-Ontology:

Bertrand Russell:	“On Denoting”
WVO Quine:	“On What There Is”
Richard Routley:	“On What There Isn’t”
David Lewis:	“Noneism or Allism?”
Peter van Inwagen:	“Meta-ontology”

Free-Will:

Peter Strawson:	“Freedom and Resentment”
Harry Frankfurt:	“Alternate Possibilities and Moral Responsibility”
Galen Strawson:	“The Impossibility of Moral Responsibility”
Peter van Inwagen:	“On Two Arguments for Compatibilism”, “The Consequence Argument,” and “Van Inwagen on Free-Will”

8. Course Requirements

Assignment	Percentage Worth
In-Class Exam (x2)	20% (x2)
Take-Home Paper	20%
Final Exam	40%

For dates, see the Schedule at the end of this document.

In the in-class exams, you will be asked to provide answers to questions dealing with matters brought up in class prior to the date of the exam. If you miss the in-class exam you will automatically be assigned 0 points unless you provide the TA with an UBC Academic Calendar approved rationale for doing a make-up exam (this is to be provided within 1 week of the day of the exam).

In the take-home paper, you will be asked to write a 3-4 page text in response to one or more questions about material covered in class. The prompt for this paper will be posted on Canvas 1 week before the due date, and is to be submitted on Canvas. A missed assignment will automatically receive 0 points. Late assignments will not be accepted, unless you provide the TA with a UBC Academic Calendar approved rationale for an extended deadline (this is to be provided within 1 week of the day of the fixed deadline).

The final exam will be held during UBC’s final examinations period. A missed final exam will be assigned a grade point of 0 unless an explanation is provided that is acceptable by the standards of the UBC Academic Calendar (in which case there will be opportunity for a make-up exam).

9. Lecture Recordings

Lectures covering examinable content will be recorded and uploaded on Canvas or YouTube for students. You do not need to watch the lectures live, but can see the recordings afterwards.

10. Learning Outcomes

At the end of the course the student will be expected to:

- i. Be familiar with the main themes in contemporary metaphysics

- ii. Have more detailed knowledge of metaphysical debates as to “what there is” and “whether there is free-will”
- iii. Be able to demonstrate critical reflection on the above two topics

11. Marking Parameters

Your mark in this course will be a function of three main factors: 1) your performance on the examinable momenta *relative to your peers*, 2) your comprehension of the course material, 3) demonstration of skill in assessing and evaluating philosophical ideas.

12. Marking Scale

A+ 90-100%	B+ 76-79%	C+ 64-67%	D 50-54%
A 85-89%	B 72-75%	C 60-63%	F 0-49%
A- 80-84%	B- 68-71%	C- 55-59%	

The degree of difficulty on the examinable momenta will be set so as to *aim* at a class average outcome that by and large conforms to the department average for this course down the years, which is in the range 68%-75%, i.e., in the B/B- range. Upwards scaling may be used to this effect.

13. Policy on Review of Marked Work

Marks on exams and papers will be posted on canvas. Feedback on expected outcomes of exams and papers will be provided (typically by the Instructor) in so-called Feedback Sessions. Any concerns about the marking of a paper or exam should be submitted to the marker (typically the TA) *via email*, and will be responded to (typically by the TA) *via email*.

14. Plagiarism (from the UBC Academic Calendar)

Plagiarism, which is intellectual theft, occurs where an individual submits or presents the oral or written work of another person as his or her own. Scholarship quite properly rests upon examining and referring to the thoughts and writings of others. However, when another person's words (i.e. phrases, sentences, or paragraphs), ideas, or entire works are used, the author must be acknowledged in the text, in footnotes, in endnotes, or in another accepted form of academic citation. Where direct quotations are made, they must be clearly delineated (for example, within quotation marks or separately indented). Failure to provide proper attribution is plagiarism because it represents someone else's work as one's own. Plagiarism should not occur in submitted drafts or final works. A student who seeks assistance from a tutor or other scholastic aids must ensure that the work submitted is the student's own. Students are responsible for ensuring that any work submitted does not constitute plagiarism. Students who are in any doubt as to what constitutes plagiarism should consult their instructor before handing in any assignments. See also <http://www.calendar.ubc.ca/Vancouver/index.cfm?tree=3,54,111,959>

15. UBC Values and Policies (from the UBC Academic Calendar)

UBC provides resources to support student learning and to maintain healthy lifestyles but recognizes that sometimes crises arise and so there are additional resources to access including those for survivors of

sexual violence. UBC values respect for the person and ideas of all members of the academic community. Harassment and discrimination are not tolerated nor is suppression of academic freedom. UBC provides appropriate accommodation for students with disabilities and for religious and cultural observances. UBC values academic honesty and students are expected to acknowledge the ideas generated by others and to uphold the highest academic standards in all of their actions. Details of the policies and how to access support are available here (<https://senate.ubc.ca/policiesresources-support-student-success>).

16. *The Nature of this Syllabus*

This syllabus sets out the policies according to which this course will proceed. Enrollment in the course involves an acceptance of these policies.

17. *Schedule*

	<i>Date</i>	<i>Topic</i>
<i>Week 1</i>	September 9 (W)	Introductory Remarks on Metaphysics
	September 11 (F)	History of the Terms “Metaphysics” and “Ontology” (Kraal, “Ontology”, 2013)
Contemporary Metaphysics, Part 1: Ontology and Meta-Ontology		
<i>Week 2</i>	September 14 (M)	Bertrand Russell’s Early Realism
	September 16 (W)	Bertrand Russell’s “On Denoting” (1905)
	September 18 (F)	Bertrand Russell’s “On Denoting” (1905)
<i>Week 3</i>	September 21 (M)	WVO Quine’s “On What There Is” (1948)
	September 23 (W)	WVO Quine’s “On What There Is” (1948)
	September 25 (F)	WVO Quine’s “On What There Is” (1948)
<i>Week 4</i>	September 28 (M)	Richard Routley’s “On What There Isn’t” (1980)
	September 30 (W)	Richard Routley’s “On What There Isn’t” (1980)
	October 2 (F)	Richard Routley’s “On What There Isn’t” (1980)
<i>Week 5</i>	October 5 (M)	David Lewis’ “Noneism or Allism?” (1990)
	October 7 (W)	David Lewis’ “Noneism or Allism?” (1990)
	October 9 (F)	David Lewis’ “Noneism or Allism?” (1990)
<i>Week 6</i>	October 12 (M)	THANKSGIVING DAY- NO CLASS
	October 14 (W)	Peter van Inwagen’s “Meta-ontology” (1998)
	October 16 (F)	Peter van Inwagen’s “Meta-ontology” (1998)

<i>Week 7</i>	October 19 (M)	Peter van Inwagen's "Meta-ontology" (1998)
	October 21 (W)	<i>IN-CLASS EXAM #1</i>
Contemporary Metaphysics, Part 2: Arguments against Free-Will		
	October 23 (F)	Background: Augustine on Free-Will
<i>Week 8</i>	October 26 (M)	Background: Hume on Free-Will
	October 28 (W)	Background: Kant on Free-Will
	October 30 (F)	Peter Strawson's "Freedom and Resentment" (1962) <i>ESSAY PROMPT AVAILABLE (CANVAS)</i>
<i>Week 9</i>	November 2 (M)	Peter Strawson's "Freedom and Resentment" (1962)
	November 4 (W)	Harry Frankfurt's "Alternate Possibilities and Moral Responsibility" (1994)
	November 6 (F)	Harry Frankfurt's "Alternate Possibilities and Moral Responsibility" (1994) <i>TAKE-HOME ESSAY DUE MIDNIGHT</i>
<i>Week 10</i>	November 9 (M)	Galen Strawson's "The Impossibility of Moral Responsibility" (1994)
	November 11 (W)	REMEMBRANCE DAY- NO CLASS
	November 13 (F)	Galen Strawson's "The Impossibility of Moral Responsibility" (1994)
<i>Week 11</i>	November 16 (M)	Discussion of Peter Strawson, Frankfurt, and Galen Strawson
	November 18 (W)	<i>IN-CLASS EXAM #2</i>
Contemporary Metaphysics, Part 3: Arguments for Free-Will		
	November 20 (F)	Peter van Inwagen's "On Two Arguments for Compatibilism" (1985)
<i>Week 12</i>	November 23 (M)	Peter van Inwagen's "On Two Arguments for Compatibilism" (1985)
	November 25 (W)	Peter van Inwagen's "The Consequence Argument" (2008)
	November 27 (F)	Peter van Inwagen's "The Consequence Argument" (2008)
<i>Week 13</i>	November 30 (M)	Peter van Inwagen's "van Inwagen on Free-Will" (2004)
	December 2 (W)	Concluding Remarks