

Syllabus for PHIL 340, Winter 2021, Term 1

METAPHYSICS

Instructor: Dr Anders Kraal

1. Course Description

Metaphysics has always been a core field of Philosophy. In this course we survey some major issues in contemporary metaphysics, including the question of what there is (“ontology”), and in particular whether there is such a thing as Free-Will.

2. Lectures

Mon/Wed/Fri: 2-3 pm

3. Instructor

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

4. Instructor Office Hours

TBA

5. Instructor Email Policy

Instructor will read and reply to emails weekdays.

6. Teaching Assistants

TBA

The TAs 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 as PDFs on Canvas. These papers will include:

Introductory paper:

Anders Kraal: “Ontology”

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:	“The Consequence Argument”
	“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 or having the weight of the missed exam transferred to the final 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. Missed Lecture Policy

Please note that if you miss a lecture you won’t be able to recover the content of the lecture by emailing the Instructor or the TA asking for a summary of the lecture via email or going to them during office hours for this purpose. Office hours and email communications should be confined to clarification of specific course content that presupposes attendance at the lectures that dealt with this content. If you anticipate missing lectures, you are strongly encouraged to find a classmate early in the course who is willing to share notes with you.

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 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. Schedule

See the end of this document.

17. 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.

	<i>Date</i>	<i>Topic</i>
<i>Week 1</i>	September 8 (W)	Introductory Remarks on Metaphysics
	September 10 (F)	History of the Terms “Metaphysics” and “Ontology” (Kraal, “Ontology”, 2013)
Contemporary Metaphysics, Part 1: Ontology and Meta-Ontology		
<i>Week 2</i>	September 13 (M)	Bertrand Russell’s Early Realism
	September 15 (W)	Bertrand Russell’s “On Denoting” (1905)
	September 17 (F)	Bertrand Russell’s “On Denoting” (1905)
<i>Week 3</i>	September 20 (M)	WVO Quine’s “On What There Is” (1948)
	September 22 (W)	WVO Quine’s “On What There Is” (1948)
	September 24 (F)	WVO Quine’s “On What There Is” (1948)
<i>Week 4</i>	September 27 (M)	Richard Routley’s “On What There Isn’t” (1980)
	September 29 (W)	Richard Routley’s “On What There Isn’t” (1980)
	October 1 (F)	Richard Routley’s “On What There Isn’t” (1980)
<i>Week 5</i>	October 4 (M)	David Lewis’ “Noneism or Allism?” (1990)
	October 6 (W)	David Lewis’ “Noneism or Allism?” (1990)
	October 8 (F)	David Lewis’ “Noneism or Allism?” (1990)
<i>Week 6</i>	October 11 (M)	THANKSGIVING DAY- NO CLASS
	October 13 (W)	Peter van Inwagen’s “Meta-ontology” (1998)
	October 15 (F)	Peter van Inwagen’s “Meta-ontology” (1998)
<i>Week 7</i>	October 18 (M)	Peter van Inwagen’s “Meta-ontology” (1998)
	October 20 (W)	<i>IN-CLASS EXAM #1</i>
Contemporary Metaphysics, Part 2: Arguments against Free-Will		
	October 22 (F)	Background: Augustine on Free-Will
<i>Week 8</i>	October 25 (M)	Background: Hume on Free-Will
	October 27 (W)	Background: Kant on Free-Will
	October 29 (F)	Peter Strawson’s “Freedom and Resentment” (1962) <i>ESSAY PROMPT AVAILABLE (CANVAS)</i>
<i>Week 9</i>	November 1 (M)	Peter Strawson’s “Freedom and Resentment” (1962)

	November 3 (W)	Harry Frankfurt's "Alternate Possibilities and Moral Responsibility" (1994)
	November 5 (F)	Harry Frankfurt's "Alternate Possibilities and Moral Responsibility" (1994) <i>TAKE-HOME ESSAY DUE MIDNIGHT</i>
Week 10	November 8 (M)	Galen Strawson's "The Impossibility of Moral Responsibility" (1994)
	November 10 (W)	NO CLASS
	November 12 (F)	NO CLASS
Week 11	November 15 (M)	Discussion of Peter Strawson, Frankfurt, and Galen Strawson
	November 17 (W)	<i>IN-CLASS EXAM #2</i>
Contemporary Metaphysics, Part 3: Arguments for Free-Will		
	November 19 (F)	Peter van Inwagen's "The Consequence Argument" (2008)
Week 12	November 22 (M)	Peter van Inwagen's "The Consequence Argument" (2008)
	November 24 (W)	Peter van Inwagen's "The Consequence Argument" (2008)
	November 26 (F)	Peter van Inwagen's "The Consequence Argument" (2008)
Week 13	November 29 (M)	Peter van Inwagen's "van Inwagen on Free-Will" (2004)
	December 1 (W)	Peter van Inwagen's "van Inwagen on Free-Will" (2004)
	December 3 (F)	Peter van Inwagen's "van Inwagen on Free-Will" (2004)
Week 14	December 6 (M)	Concluding Remarks