



UNIVERSITY OF
CALGARY

FACULTY OF ARTS
DEPARTMENT OF PHILOSOPHY

PHIL 523.6 Lec 01
Advanced Topics in Metaphysics (Scientific Metaphysics)
Fall Term 2017

Tuesdays 12:30-3:15 pm in SS 1253

Course Outline

Instructor: Ken Waters
Phone: please use email
Office Hours: By appointment

Office: SS 1212
Email: ckwaters@ucalgary.ca

Instructor: Marc Ereshefsky
Phone: 403-220-3162
Office Hours: By appointment

Office: SS 1204
Email: ereshefs@ucalgary.ca

Course Description

This course is paired with a graduate research seminar (PHIL 623) that meets at the same time. Many philosophers believe that metaphysics should be informed by science, and this is usually taken to mean that metaphysics should be informed by the theoretical results of fundamental physics. We will pursue a different approach to scientific metaphysics, one that seeks to inform metaphysics by the nature of successful practices across the sciences. These include practices of theorizing, but also practices of experimentation and manipulation, and practices of classification and individuation.

Prerequisites

Two previous courses in Philosophy, one of which must be 201, 395, 421, 423, 461, 463, 467, 481 or 483 and one of which must be at the 400 level, or higher.

Course Learning Outcomes

- Deep knowledge of one central area of philosophical inquiry;
- Ability to critically read, interpret, and analyze complex sources;
- Ability to identify and articulate questions for discussion and investigation;
- Ability to engage in constructive philosophical discussion of peers' ideas;
- Ability to write a convincing argument that takes adequate account of alternative positions;
- Ability to help peers develop their positions and arguments;
- Ability to use feedback from others to improve one's own positions and arguments;
- Ability to engage in constructive, respectful oral and written argumentation.

Course Work

12 Written Preparations on Gateway Readings, Topic Area Readings, and Graduate Student Papers

Students are required to write and submit a question at the beginning of each class each week. You should develop a question for each reading that could provide a basis for class discussion. Your written prep should have four parts.

- (1) A general description of the reading that puts your question into the context of the reading.
- (2) A single sentence statement of your question (this should be a sentence that ends with a question mark).
- (3) An exposition of your question that restates your question in a clear way and does some (or all) of the following:
 - identifies pages, passages, or arguments in the reading selection in which your question arises;
 - explains in the context of the reading why your question arises (e.g. “in this passage author claims *X* but this other passage seems to imply *not X*”);
 - provides ideas about how one might try to answer the question;
 - offers possible answers to the question.(The aim of the exposition section of your preparation is to develop your question in a way that will elicit an informative discussion and possibly lead to a paper topic.)
- (4) An explanation of why your question is important.

Please organize your presentation into four parts labeled as follows:

1. Background on reading selection relevant to the question.
2. One sentence statement of the question.
3. Exposition of the question.
4. Why this question is important.

Your written preparation should be 200 – 300 words in length.

Remarks on using quotations: you may find using quotations helpful, but please do not use quotations to do your explaining for you. If you quote a passage, you should restate the idea in your own words. If you quote, you must follow the style guidelines specified in the course outline. Please do not paraphrase. Either quote strictly following scholarly conventions or write in your own words. If you have any questions concerning quotation or paraphrasing, please see an instructor.

Your question may be remedial; for example it might ask for a clarification of an important claim, concept, or argument in the reading that you do not understand. Or your question could be more critical in nature, alluding to a weakness in the reading. Or your question could be probing, identifying an issue that is raised by the reading or a possible implication of the reading. Identifying and developing good research questions is possibly the most important and challenging part of doing philosophy. Some questions are more researchable than others. Your weekly task is to develop questions that will provide a basis for engaging seminar discussions and possibly a starting point for fruitful philosophical investigation.

Two papers

Students are required to write and submit two papers. The papers will be based on class readings and discussions. Students will have the option of visiting an instructor with rough drafts of each paper. The final draft of each paper should be about 2,750 words in length (including footnotes but not references). Student will choose one of two assigned topics for the first paper, and likewise for the second.

Two Research Talk Reports

Students are required to attend and report on two Philosophy Department research talks. These talks will be announced in class and posted on the Philosophy Department website. Research talk reports should be 200 – 300 words in length and organized into three labeled parts: a. report of the research presentation; b. report of the discussion during the question and answer period after the main presentation; and c. your reaction to the research presentation and discussion, and what you they learned from them.

Peer Meeting Reports

During the last week of class students will meet to discuss one another's papers. In this part of the course, you are required to submit a written preparation for your peers' papers, and a report on what you learned from your peers' comments and the discussions of your own paper. Specific guidelines for these assignments will be distributed.

Due Dates and Grading

Important: there is a required reading and written preparation assignment due at the beginning of the first class (September 12). The reading assignment for the first class is presented below (an aftersheet form for this assignment will be emailed to enrolled students at least one week before class):

Background reading (no written prep question about this reading):

Bryant, Amanda (2017) "What's Metaphysics All About?", *Philosophy for Our Times*, online 15 August 2017: <https://iainews.iai.tv/articles/what-is-metaphysics-all-about-auid-870?access=ALL>

Primary reading (your written prep question should be a question about this reading):

Bryant, Amanda (2017) Keep the chickens cooped: the epistemic inadequacy of free range metaphysics, *Synthese*, published online, 8 April 2017:
<https://link.springer.com/article/10.1007/s11229-017-1398-8>

The background reading is available for free; it is published open-access. The primary reading can be obtained for free to the University of Calgary community by navigating via library.ucalgary.ca or it can be purchased by going directly to the link above.

Assignment	Due date	Points
12 Written preparations	Beginning of each class	2 points each, lowest two scores dropped
Paper 1	Oct 17	30 points
Paper 2	Nov 28	30 points
2 Research talk reports	Oct 24 Nov 28	3 points each
These are due dates for research talk reports, but students are encouraged to submit their reports earlier.		
Written preparation for discussion of peer papers	Dec 5	8 points
Report on what was learnt from comments and discussion of your paper	Dec 8	6 points

Completion Requirement: Each of the above assignments, including participation in the group discussion of peers' papers on Dec 5, must be completed and submitted to pass the course.

Assignments turned in late: If an assignment is turned in late without an appropriate excuse it will receive a grade of zero, but it nevertheless can count towards fulfilling the Completion Requirement

stated above. For example, if a written preparation is not turned in at the beginning of class, it must be turned in afterwards in order for the student to pass the course; if the lateness is unexcused, the prep will receive a grade of zero but it can still count as satisfying the Completion Requirement (if it written in a satisfactory manner).

No registrar scheduled final will be given.

Final grades will be awarded as follows

96-100 = A+	75-79 = B	55-59 = C-
90-95 = A	70-74 = B-	50-54 = D+
85-89 = A-	65-69 = C+	45-49 = D
80-84 = B+	60-64 = C	below 45 = F

Readings

Readings will be available on-line. There are no printed texts to purchase for this course.

Course Schedule

The first four classes (September 12, 19, 26 & October 3) will be devoted to reading and discussing Gateway Readings on metaphysics and scientific metaphysics. Oct 10 will be an undergraduate only reading discussion. October 17, 24, 31 & November 7 will be devoted to discussing graduate student-selected Topic Areas readings. Nov 14 will be an undergraduate only reading discussion. November 21 & 28 will be devoted to discussing drafts of graduate research papers. The last class (Dec 5) will be a discussion of your undergraduate peers' papers.

Style and Citation Requirements

All written work for this course should be submitted as hard copies and adhere to the formatting requirements of the journal *Philosophy of Science* with three exceptions:

1. Please staple an aftersheet with your name on it for everything you turn in. Your name should not appear anywhere else on the assignment (so we can follow the best practice of masked grading when possible).
2. Include page numbers at the bottom of each page of any multipage submission (except for the aftersheet, which does not need to be numbered).
3. You do not need to include an abstract for any assignment.

The formatting requirements of *Philosophy of Science* can be found at:

<http://journal.philsci.org/formatting-guidelines>

IMPORTANT DEPARTMENTAL, FACULTY AND UNIVERSITY INFORMATION

Academic Honesty

Cheating or plagiarism on any assignment or examination is regarded as an extremely serious academic offense, the penalty for which may be an F on the assignment, an F in the course, academic probation, or requirement to withdraw from the University. See the relevant sections on 'Academic Misconduct' in the current University Calendar. Intellectual honesty requires that your work include adequate referencing to sources. Plagiarism occurs when you do not acknowledge or correctly reference your sources. If you have questions about correct referencing, consult your instructor.

Academic Accommodation

The student accommodation policy can be found at: ucalgary.ca/access/accommodations/policy.

Students needing an Accommodation because of a disability or medical condition should communicate this need to Student Accessibility Services in accordance with the Procedure for Accommodations for Students with Disabilities ucalgary.ca/policies/files/policies/student-accommodation-policy.

Students needing an Accommodation based on a Protected Ground other than Disability, should communicate this need, preferably in writing, to their instructor.

D2L Help

Desire2Learn is UCalgary's online learning management system. Important information and communications about this course may be posted on D2L. Go to <https://ucalgary.service-now.com/it> for help.

General Academic Concerns and Program Planning

Have a question but not sure where to start? The Arts Students Centre is your information resource for everything in the Faculty of Arts. Drop in at SS102, call 403-220-3580, or email ascarts@ucalgary.ca.

Advisors in the ASC can also provide assistance and advice in planning your program through to graduation. Visit the Faculty of Arts website at <https://arts.ucalgary.ca/undergraduate> for detailed information on common academic concerns

Advice on Philosophy Courses

You may find answers to your more specific questions about a philosophy degree on the Department of Philosophy's website <http://phil.ucalgary.ca>, or contact one of Philosophy's Undergraduate Advisors.

Jeremy Fantl (jfantl@ucalgary.ca), Allen Habib (anhabib@ucalgary.ca), Megan Delehanty (mdelehan@ucalgary.ca).

Registration Overload/Prereq Waivers

If you are seeking to register in a Philosophy course that is full or to get permission to waive the prereq for a course, email the Department Manager, Tram Nguyen (tram.nguyen1@ucalgary.ca). Include the specific course information and your UCID number in your request.

Writing

This course will include written assignments. Faculty policy directs that all written assignments (including, although to a lesser extent, written exam responses) will be assessed at least partly on writing skills. Writing skills include not only surface correctness (grammar, punctuation, sentence structure, etc.) but also general clarity and organization. Research papers must be properly documented. Students are also encouraged to use Writing Support Services and other Student Success Centre Services, located on the 3rd floor of the Taylor Family Digital Library. Writing Support Services assist with a variety of assignments, from essays to lab reports. Students can book 30-minute one-on-one appointments online, sign up for 15-minute drop-in appointments, and register for a variety of writing workshops. For more information on this and other Student Success Centre services, please visit www.ucalgary.ca/ssc.

Protection of Privacy

The University of Calgary is under the jurisdiction of the provincial Freedom of Information and Protection of Privacy (FOIP) Act. The Department of Philosophy ensures the student's right to privacy by requiring all graded assignments be returned to the student directly from the instructor or teaching assistant.

Internet and Electronic Communication Devices

The instructor reserves the right to establish course policies regarding the use of devices such as laptops, tablets, and smartbooks. If allowed, these devices must be used exclusively for instructional purposes and must not cause disruption to the instructor or to fellow students. Cell phones and paging devices should be set to silent mode during lectures. Audio or video recording of lectures is not permitted without the written permission of the instructor. Students violating this policy are subject to discipline under the University of Calgary's Non-Academic Misconduct policy

Emergency Evacuation:

In case of an emergency evacuation during class, students must gather at the designated assembly point nearest to the classroom. The list of assembly points is found at <http://www.ucalgary.ca/emergencyplan/assemblypoints> . Please check this website and note the nearest assembly point for this course.

Other Helpful Contacts

- Safewalk and Campus Security: 403-220-5333.
- Faculty of Arts Student Representatives: 403-220-6552, arts1@su.ucalgary.ca , arts2@su.ucalgary.ca, arts3@su.ucalgary.ca, arts4@su.ucalgary.ca .
- Student Ombudsman: <http://www.ucalgary.ca/provost/students/ombuds>