



**School of History, Philosophy, Political Science and International Relations  
Te Hunga Aro Whakamuri**

**PHILOSOPHY PROGRAMME  
Trimester 2, 2007**

**PHIL325: Metaphysics  
CRN 7043**

**COURSE INFORMATION**

**Course Coordinator:** Dr Cei Maslen  
**Room:** Murphy Building, MY 707  
**Phone:** 463 6524  
**Email:** Cei.Maslen@vuw.ac.nz  
**Office Hours:** Wednesdays 10-11am and 2-3pm.  
**Lectures:** Wed, Thu 11-1pm  
**Venue:** Hugh Mackenzie (HM) LT 003

**Additional Information:** Any additional information or notices about this course will be posted on "Blackboard"

**COURSE AIMS:**

PHIL 325 is an introduction to central problems in metaphysics. The aim is to answer some fundamental questions about the nature of time, space, and free will, such as the following: What are space and time? Do the past and future exist or does only the present exist? Are time and space real? Is there a fourth dimension of space? Does time really flow? Could time go backwards? Did time have a beginning? Can we have free will and control over our actions, even if there is inherent randomness in the world?

**COURSE CONTENT:**

A lecture outline will be distributed separately.

**COURSE OBJECTIVES:**

Students passing this course will have gained familiarity with most central topics of metaphysics. They will also have acquired detailed knowledge of the Relational and Substantival theories of time, the Eternalism vs. Presentism debate, Kant's lone hand argument, McTaggart's argument, Zeno's paradox, the Fatalist argument, the Dilemma of Divine Foreknowledge, the Consequence Argument for the incompatibility of free will and determinism, Kane's account of free will, Frankfurt's account of free will, and recent discussions of the Principle of Alternate Possibilities. More generally, the course provides the opportunity for students to strengthen their skills in argumentation, logical analysis, writing, and individual research.

## ESSENTIAL TEXTS:

(1) Robin Le Poidevin, *Travels in Four Dimensions: The Enigmas of Space and Time*, Oxford University Press, 2003. (The bookstore seems to have ordered the hardcover which is \$115, but I have now asked them to look into ordering the cheaper paperback version.)

(2) PHIL 225/325 Course reader available from the Student Notes Centre, Student Union Building.

Texts are available from Student Notes. Students can order textbooks and student notes online at [www.vicbooks.co.nz](http://www.vicbooks.co.nz), or email an order or enquiry to [enquiries@vicbooks.co.nz](mailto:enquiries@vicbooks.co.nz). Vicbooks can courier books to customers or they can be picked up from either shop the day after placing an order online. Their telephone numbers are: Kelburn: 463 5515, Pipitea: 463 6160. Opening hours: 8am – 6pm Mon–Fri (during term time); 10am – 1pm, Saturday

## ASSESSMENT:

The assessment will be based on two essays, six in-class quizzes, and a final exam, as shown below.

- (a) **Two essays, around 2,500 words each**, each worth 25% of total course marks each. The first is due by **4pm, Thursday 6 September 2007**. The second is due by **4pm, Thursday 11 October 2007**.

WHERE TO HAND IN YOUR ESSAYS: You must submit your essay electronically via *Blackboard*. Please consult *Blackboard* for instructions). This electronic version will be sent to turnitin.com, an anti-plagiarism website, and is the version that will be graded. However, as a back-up you must also submit a paper copy of your essay to me in class or to the Philosophy Department office (MY 518), prior to the due-date.

ESSAY TOPICS will be handed out in class at least 2 weeks prior to the due date.

HOW TO WRITE YOUR ESSAYS: If you get stuck, or don't know how to begin then come to see me in my office hours or make an appointment to meet with me at your convenience. I am also happy to look at rough drafts, provided that you give me some advance notice. See the handout "Assessment criteria" (at the front of your course reader) for general advice on writing a philosophy paper. Model papers written by previous students in my classes are also available on request. I highly recommend P. Martinich, *Philosophical Writing*, Blackwell, 1996.

HOW I MARK YOUR ESSAYS: See the handout "Assessment Criteria..." (at the front of your course reader) for a summary of the criteria that I use in marking essays.

- (b) **In-class quizzes**, together worth 25% of total course marks. These are short-answer tests, taking the first 20 minutes of class time, every second Wednesday of class (i.e. July 18<sup>th</sup>, August 1<sup>st</sup>, August 15<sup>th</sup>, September 12<sup>th</sup>, September 26<sup>th</sup>, October 10<sup>th</sup>). There will be **six** quizzes, but only your best five quiz marks will count towards your final mark. The quizzes will be on material from the previous lectures and you will be given review questions in advance
- (c) **A Final Exam**, worth 25% of total course marks, during exam period. This will be a three-hour, closed book, registry-administered examination. There will be a short-answer section and a short-essay section, and review questions will be handed out in class prior to the examination. The date of the examination is set later in the trimester by the Registrar but will fall within the date range of **15 October to 11 November 2007**.

## RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN ASSESSMENT AND OBJECTIVES

The essays will help students to gain in-depth knowledge of some of the course material and also provide opportunity for strengthening skills in argumentation, logical analysis, writing, and individual research.

Preparing for the quizzes and the exam will help students to gain a solid understanding of the course material.

### **SUBMISSION OF WRITTEN WORK: SPECIAL REQUIREMENTS**

All essays must be submitted digitally via "Blackboard"; select 'assignments' icon in the course menu. Make sure you save your file as a Microsoft Word document. If you have trouble using this function, make sure you see the course coordinator *before the due date*.

### **ELECTRONIC SUBMISSIONS**

All essays must be submitted digitally via "Blackboard"; select 'assignments' icon in the course menu. Make sure you save your file as a Microsoft Word document. The title of your file should follow the following format: last name, underscore, first name, underscore, dot, doc (for example: frodo\_baggins.doc). If you have trouble using this function, make sure you see the course coordinator *before the due date*.

### **PENALTIES:**

Essays submitted after the due-date will be penalised as follows:

**one third of a letter grade (e.g. B+ → B) per day will be deducted.**

However, penalties may be waived if there are valid grounds, e.g. illness (presentation of a medical certificate will be necessary) or similar other contingencies. In such cases prior information will be necessary. It is in your interests to contact the course coordinator as soon as a potential problem emerges – not just before a deadline. Extension forms are available in the Philosophy Programme office. If granted an extension by the course coordinator, students are required to agree to a new assessment due date.

### **ATTENDANCE**

Attendance is recommended but not required. It is the student's responsibility to catch up on missing material if they have missed a lecture.

### **MANDATORY COURSE REQUIREMENTS**

Each PHIL 325 student must:

- Submit both essays, on or by the specified dates (subject to such provisions as are stated for late submission of work)

PLEASE NOTE that **Friday, 19 October 2007** is the **FINAL DATE** on which any written work can be accepted by the Programme, since this is the date on which we must determine whether students have met the course requirements. This means that the provision for late submission with a penalty does not apply beyond this date. Permission to submit work after 19 October 2007 must be sought in writing from the Head of Programme, Dr Cei Maslen, and will only be granted for serious medical reasons (supported by medical certificate), or in case of serious personal crisis.

**Note:** A student who has obtained an overall mark of 50% or more, but failed to satisfy a mandatory requirement for a course, will receive a K grade for that course, while a course mark less than 50% will result in the appropriate fail grade (D, E or F).

### **Workload guidelines**

In accordance with Faculty of Humanities and Social Sciences Guidelines, this course has been constructed on the assumption that students will devote 18 hours per week to PHIL 325. This includes 4 hours per week of lectures.

## AEGROTATS

Please note that under the revised Examination Statute (Sections 6-10) students may now apply for an aegrotat pass in respect of any item of assessment falling within the last three weeks before the day on which lectures cease. In the case of second trimester courses in 2007 the starting point for this period is **Monday, 24 September 2007**.

The following rules apply:

- Where a student is not able to sit a test falling within these last three weeks because of illness or injury etc., an alternative test will be arranged where possible. If the student has completed in the view of the course-supervisor, sufficient marked assessment relevant to the objectives of the course, an average mark may be offered.
- Where a student has an essay or other piece of assessment due in the last three weeks, and has a medical certificate or other appropriate documentation, the student will be given an extension.

## ACADEMIC INTEGRITY AND PLAGIARISM

Academic integrity is about honesty – put simply it means **no cheating**. All members of the University community are responsible for upholding academic integrity, which means staff and students are expected to behave honestly, fairly and with respect for others at all times.

Plagiarism is a form of cheating which undermines academic integrity. Plagiarism is **prohibited** at Victoria.

The University defines plagiarism as follows:

*Plagiarism is presenting someone else's work as if it were your own, whether you mean to or not.*

'Someone else's work' means anything that is not your own idea, even if it is presented in your own style. It includes material from books, journals or any other printed source, the work of other students or staff, information from the Internet, software programmes and other electronic material, designs and ideas. It also includes the organization or structuring of any such material.

*Plagiarism is not worth the risk.*

Any enrolled student found guilty of plagiarism will be subject to disciplinary procedures under the Statute on Student Conduct ([www.vuw.ac.nz/policy/studentconduct](http://www.vuw.ac.nz/policy/studentconduct)) and may be penalized severely. Consequences of being found guilty of plagiarism can include:

- an oral or written warning
- suspension from class or university
- cancellation of your mark for an assessment or a fail grade for the course.

Find out more about plagiarism and how to avoid it, on the University's website at: [www.vuw.ac.nz/home/studying/plagiarism.html](http://www.vuw.ac.nz/home/studying/plagiarism.html).

## GENERAL UNIVERSITY REQUIREMENTS

### General University policies and statutes

Students should familiarise themselves with the University's policies and statutes, particularly the Assessment Statute, the Personal Courses of Study Statute, the Statute on Student Conduct and any statutes relating to the particular qualifications being studied; see the Victoria University Calendar available in hard copy or under 'About Victoria' on the VUW home page at [www.vuw.ac.nz](http://www.vuw.ac.nz).

### Student and staff conduct

The Statute on Student Conduct together with the Policy on Staff Conduct ensure that members of the University community are able to work, learn, study and participate in the academic and social aspects of the University's life in an atmosphere of safety and respect. The Statute on Student Conduct contains information on what conduct is prohibited and what steps are to be taken if there is a complaint. For information about complaint procedures under the Statute on Student Conduct, contact the Facilitator and Disputes Advisor or refer to the statute on the VUW policy website at:

[www.vuw.ac.nz/policy/studentconduct](http://www.vuw.ac.nz/policy/studentconduct)

The Policy on Staff Conduct can be found on the VUW website at: [www.vuw.ac.nz/policy/staffconduct](http://www.vuw.ac.nz/policy/staffconduct)

### **Academic grievances**

If you have any academic problems with your course you should talk to the tutor or lecturer concerned; class representatives may be able to help you in this. If you are not satisfied with the result of that meeting, see the Head of School or the relevant Associate Dean; VUWSA Education Coordinators are available to assist in this process. If, after trying the above channels, you are still unsatisfied, formal grievance procedures can be invoked. These are set out in the Academic Grievance Policy which is published on the VUW website at: [www.vuw.ac.nz/policy/academicgrievances](http://www.vuw.ac.nz/policy/academicgrievances)

### **Students with Impairments (see Appendix 3 of the Assessment Handbook)**

The University has a policy of reasonable accommodation of the needs of students with disabilities. The policy aims to give students with disabilities the same opportunity as other students to demonstrate their abilities. If you have a disability, impairment or chronic medical condition (temporary, permanent or recurring) that may impact on your ability to participate, learn and/or achieve in lectures and tutorials or in meeting the course requirements, please contact the course coordinator as early in the course as possible. Alternatively, you may wish to approach a Student Adviser from Disability Support Services (DSS) to discuss your individual needs and the available options and support on a confidential basis. DSS are located on Level 1, Robert Stout Building; telephone: 463-6070, email: [disability@vuw.ac.nz](mailto:disability@vuw.ac.nz). The Disability Liaison Person for the Philosophy Programme is Sophia Zhao, tel. 463 5368 or email [sophia.zhao@vuw.ac.nz](mailto:sophia.zhao@vuw.ac.nz)

### **Student Support**

Staff at Victoria want students to have positive learning experiences at the University. Each faculty has a designated staff member who can either help you directly if your academic progress is causing you concern, or quickly put you in contact with someone who can. In the Faculty of Humanities and Social Sciences the support contact is **Dr Allison Kirkman, Murphy Building, room 407 and Dr Stuart Brock, Murphy Building, room 312**. Assistance for specific groups is also available from the Kaiwawao Maori, Manaaki Pihipihinga or Victoria International.

In addition, the Student Services Group (email: [student-services@vuw.ac.nz](mailto:student-services@vuw.ac.nz)) is available to provide a variety of support and services. Find out more at: [www.vuw.ac.nz/st\\_services/](http://www.vuw.ac.nz/st_services/)

VUWSA employs Education Coordinators who deal with academic problems and provide support, advice and advocacy services, as well as organising class representatives and faculty delegates. The Education Office (tel. 463-6983 or 463-6984, email at [education@vuwsa.org.nz](mailto:education@vuwsa.org.nz)) is located on the ground floor, Student Union Building.

### **Manaaki Pihipihinga Maori and Pacific Mentoring programme**

1. Academic mentoring for all Maori & Pacific students at all levels of under graduate study for the faculties of Commerce & Administration and Humanities & Social sciences. Contact [Manaaki-Pihipihinga-Programme@vuw.ac.nz](mailto:Manaaki-Pihipihinga-Programme@vuw.ac.nz) or phone 463 6015 to register for Humanities & Social Science mentoring and 463 8977 to register for mentoring for Commerce and Administration courses
2. Post graduate support network for the above faculties, which links students into all of the post grad activities and workshops on campus and networking opportunities
3. Pacific Support Coordinator who can assist Pacific students with transitional issues, disseminate useful information and provide any assistance needed to help students achieve. Contact: [Pacific-Support-Coord@vuw.ac.nz](mailto:Pacific-Support-Coord@vuw.ac.nz) or phone 463 5842

We are located at: 14 Kelburn Parade back court yard Room 109 D (for Humanities mentoring & some first year commerce mentoring) or Room 210 level 2 west wing railway station Pipitea (commerce mentoring space). Maori Studies mentoring is done at the marae. Pop in and see us to register with the programme (and use our study spaces and computer suites and free cups of tea and coffee while you study)