

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.

INSTRUCTION Monday/Wednesday 2:30-3:50^{PM} 📖 COR B129

INSTRUCTOR Professor Mike Raven (raven@uvic.ca • raven.site)
OFFICE HOURS • Tue/Wed 1:00-2:00^{PM} (or appointment) 📖 CLE B323

ASSISTANT Elyse Kim (kimelyse17@gmail.com)

LMS bright.uvic.ca/d2l/home/295654 (Consult for updates and current course documents.)

TEXTS — **BEFORE BUYING:** TEXT(S) ARE ON RESERVE AND MANY ARE ALSO AVAILABLE ONLINE —
REQUIRED 📖 • Boghossian, *Fear of Knowledge*
REQUIRED 📖 • Chalmers, *Reality+*
OPTIONAL 📖 ○ [Conee & Sider, *Riddles of Existence* \(new edition\)](#)

EVALUATION

GRADES Work—essential (▶) or inessential (▷) alike—earns a [grade](#) based on its craftsmanship ([RUBRIC](#)). A failing N course grade is earned if any essential work is not submitted.

WORK ▶ INTEGRITY Online courses: [Integrity Matters](#) and [Integrity in Practice](#).
▶ PROBLEM SETS [²/₃] Short essay assignments.
▷ CHECKPOINTS [¹/₆] Best 7 of 10 reading comprehension quizzes.
▷ [ENGAGEMENT](#) [¹/₆] Contribute at least 6 posts and 6 replies to the forum.

Work will be listed on, and submitted to, the LMS.

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 or traded. To use, state the number used in the Comments field when submitting your work.

LATENESS Unaccommodated work may be submitted late for pass(50)/fail(49) credit.

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. Use devices only for class purposes.
• **Be professional.** Check sources first. Follow etiquette. Allow ≥1 day for replies.
• **Demonstrate [academic integrity](#).** Learn the policies. Ignorance is no excuse.

PLANS Accessibility plans must be made through the [Centre for Accessible Learning](#).
All academic concessions must be made by [official request](#).

GUESTS Guests permitted only with instructor's prior consent.

COPYRIGHT Course content/materials are [protected by copyright law](#).

RESOURCES

[LAND ACKNOWLEDGEMENT](#) We acknowledge and respect the ɫəkʷənən peoples on whose traditional territory the university stands and the Songhees, Esquimalt and WSANEC peoples whose historical relationships with the land continue to this day.

[WELLNESS](#) Take care of your mental and physical well-being! If your symptoms are related to this course, then please speak with the instructor.

[LEARN ANYWHERE](#) For student and academic support services.

SCHEDULE

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

Required texts (*) *must* be read *before* each class. **Optional texts** (○) are also most usefully read *before* each class.

Dates are tentative; consult LMS for updates.

INTRODUCTION	
SEP 6	• Raven, <i>Philosophy & Logic Primer</i>
REALITY	
SEP 11	• Boghossian, <i>Fear of Knowledge</i> chapters 1-2
SEP 13	• Boghossian, <i>Fear of Knowledge</i> chapter 2
SEP 18	• Boghossian, <i>Fear of Knowledge</i> chapter 3
SEP 20	• Boghossian, <i>Fear of Knowledge</i> chapter 4
SEP 25	• Passinsky, “Social Objects, Response-Dependence, and Realism”
SEP 27	• Chalmers, <i>Reality+</i> chapter 1 and pages 107-119,230-234
VIRTUAL REALITY	
OCT 4	↓ Chalmers, <i>Reality+</i> chapter 2 • Descartes, <i>Meditations on First Philosophy</i> I
OCT 11	↓ Chalmers, <i>Reality+</i> chapter 3 • Descartes, <i>Meditations on First Philosophy</i> II
OCT 16	• Berkeley, <i>Three Dialogues between Hylas and Philonous</i> pages 1-30
OCT 18	• Chalmers, <i>Reality+</i> chapter 4
OCT 23	• Chalmers, <i>Reality+</i> chapter 8
GOD	
OCT 25	○ Conee & Sider, “God” ↓ Chalmers, <i>Reality+</i> chapter 7 • al-Ghazālī, <i>Incoherence of the Philosophers</i> pages 20-22,89-92
PERSONS	
OCT 30	○ Conee & Sider, “Personal Identity” ↓ Chalmers, <i>Reality+</i> chapter 14 • Princess Elisabeth/Descartes, <i>Letters</i> 6.v.1643-1.ii.1643
NOV 1	• Unger, “I Do Not Exist”
NOV 6	• Thomson, “People and their Bodies”
NOV 8	↓ Thomson, “People and their Bodies” • Chalmers, <i>Reality+</i> 219-223
NOV 20	↓ Kripke, <i>Naming and Necessity</i> pages 110-115 • Appiah, “But Would That Still Be Me?”
FREE WILL	
NOV 22	○ Conee & Sider “Fatalism” • Conee & Sider, “Free Will and Determinism”
NOV 27	• BBC Radio 4, “The Libet Experiment: Is Free Will Just an Illusion?” ↓ Roskies, “Neuroscientific Challenges to Free Will and Responsibility”
NOV 29	• Wolf, “Sanity and the Metaphysics of Responsibility”
TIME	
DEC 4	○ Conee & Sider, “Time” ↓ Smart, “The Space-Time World” • Prior, “The Notion of the Present”