

**Lingnan University**  
**Department of Philosophy**

<b>Course Title</b>	: Metaphysics
<b>Course Code</b>	: PHI2115
<b>Recommended Study Year</b>	: 2 <sup>nd</sup> year
<b>No. of Credits/Term</b>	: 3
<b>Mode of Tuition</b>	: Sectional approach
<b>Class Contact Hours</b>	: 3 hours Lecture/week
<b>Category in Major Programme</b>	: Core Philosophy Elective
<b>Prerequisite(s)</b>	: N/A
<b>Co-requisite(s)</b>	: N/A
<b>Exclusion(s)</b>	: N/A
<b>Exemption Requirement(s)</b>	: N/A

**Brief Course Description**

Metaphysical questions are those having to do with the nature of existence. This can be understood as external: the nature of reality and its principles, such as time, causation, substance, universals, and so forth; or it can be understood as internal: the nature of human reality, what it is to be a person, is there a soul, what is death, do we have freedom. Our investigation will centre on questions such as these, and acquaint the student with some classical answers and theories.

**Aims**

1. To acquaint students with some classical metaphysical questions and theories
2. To encourage students to think about metaphysical issues

**Learning Outcomes**

On completion of this course, students will be able to:

1. acquire a basic conception about the nature of certain classic as well as contemporary metaphysical questions.
2. be able to understand some of their implications for other philosophical issues.

**Indicative Content**

1. The nature of reality
2. Mind and body
3. Universals and particulars
4. Time and space
5. Paradoxes of change
6. Causality and determinism
7. God and fate
8. Free will
9. Personal identity

**Teaching Method**

Lecture, class discussion, structured group work in-class, structured research assignments outside of class.

**Measurement of Learning Outcomes**

1. Final exam will test students' overall grasp of the basic concepts and ideas covered by the textbook and in lectures. (This corresponds to LO1 and LO2)
2. Term paper will measure students' ability to apply learnt concepts/ideas to resolving or discussing a chosen issue related to the course material. (This corresponds to LO1 and LO2)
3. Tutorial presentation and performance in free discussion will be used to measure the students' understanding and articulation of both focused content and relevant content in the

wider range. (This corresponds to LO1 and LO2)

Evaluation of any essay or essay like assessment in this course will be based on either the Philosophy Department Standard Essay Grading Rubric (see attachment), or on a replacement rubric chosen by the instructor.

### **Assessment**

60 % Continuous Assessment (possible forms include midterm paper 15%, term paper 25%, tutorial presentation and class participation 20%)

40% Final Examination

### **Required Readings**

Taylor, Richard, *Metaphysics*, 4<sup>th</sup> edition, Oxford University Press, 1990.

### **Supplementary Readings**

Cooper David E., *Metaphysics: the classic readings*, Oxford; Malden, Mass: Blackwell, 2000.

Inwagen, Peter van and Zimmerman Dean W. ed., *Metaphysics*, Malden, Mass: Blackwell, 1998.

Strawson, P. F., *Analysis and Metaphysics*, Oxford : Oxford University Press, 1992

### **Important Notes**

- (1) Students are expected to spend a total of 9 hours (i.e. 3 hours of class contact and 6 hours of personal study) per week to achieve the course learning outcomes.
- (2) Students shall be aware of the University regulations about dishonest practice in course work, tests and examinations, and the possible consequences as stipulated in the Regulations Governing University Examinations. In particular, plagiarism, being a kind of dishonest practice, is “the presentation of another person’s work without proper acknowledgement of the source, including exact phrases, or summarised ideas, or even footnotes/citations, whether protected by copyright or not, as the student’s own work”. Students are required to strictly follow university regulations governing academic integrity and honesty.
- (3) Students are required to submit writing assignment(s) using Turnitin.
- (4) To enhance students’ understanding of plagiarism, a mini-course “Online Tutorial on Plagiarism Awareness” is available on <https://pla.ln.edu.hk/>