

# INTRODUCTION TO METAPHYSICS

PHIL252 (A01)

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.

**PLACE/TIME** ELL 062, Monday & Thursday 1:00—2:20pm

**INSTRUCTOR** DR Mike Raven (✉ [mike@mikeraven.net](mailto:mike@mikeraven.net) • 📧 [mikeraven.net](http://mikeraven.net))  
**OFFICE HOURS** • CLE B323 Mon/Thu 11:30am—12:30pm, or appointment.

**ASSISTANT** tba

**COURSESPACE** 📄 [coursespaces.uvic.ca/course/view.php?id=65132](https://coursespaces.uvic.ca/course/view.php?id=65132) (Consult for all official course documents.)

**TEXTS**

- Conee & Sider, *Riddles of Existence* (New Edition)
- Boghossian, *Fear of Knowledge*

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## EVALUATION

**GRADES** The grade you earn is determined by the quality of your work in this course. The university's scale is used: **A+**-90 **A**89-85 **A-**84-80 **B+**79-77 **B**76-73 **B-**72-70 **C+**69-65 **C**64-60 **D**59-50 **F**<50

**WORK**

Problem Sets (70%) • **Due (tentative):** SEP 23, OCT 14, NOV 4, NOV 18, DEC 9

Checkpoints (20%) • Best 7 of 10 unscheduled in-class assignments.

Participation (10%) • Evidence of engagement with the course.

**RUBRIC** Work is evaluated for craftsmanship, in accordance with the guidelines in:  
📄 [mikeraven.net/teaching/\[Raven\] Philosophy Rubric.pdf](http://mikeraven.net/teaching/[Raven] Philosophy Rubric.pdf)

**GRACE POINTS** A **grace point** can be used to delay a due date by 1 day. Each student begins with 5 grace points. Points can be used in any combination at the students' discretion (no justification needed). But points cannot be reused, traded, or earned.

- To use, write at the beginning of your assignment 'Using # grace points' (replace # with the number of grace points). *This is the only way to use grace points.*

**LATENESS** Unexcused late work is penalized 5% per day late and is not entitled to feedback.

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## POLICIES

**CONDUCT** Enrolling binds you to a social contract with your instructor and classmates:

- **Be prepared.** Read the syllabus. Do the reading before class. Attend class.
- **Be respectful.** In class, don't bully or distract. In work, follow RUBRIC §3.4.
- **Be professional.** Check sources first (don't expect replies to questions answered by the syllabus). Follow etiquette. Allow time for replies.

**ACCESSIBILITY** Arrange accommodations with CAL. Other accommodation requests (e.g. extra credit, extensions, alternate/make-up work) will *not* be considered, except under extraordinary circumstances (instructor's discretion) and when both the request and suitable documentation are received no more than 3 days after the due date.

**PRIVACY** Course documents are the instructor's intellectual property. Do not distribute. Recordings permitted only with instructor's prior consent. Do not distribute.

**GUESTS** Guests permitted only with instructor's prior consent.

**INTEGRITY** Plagiarism and cheating are not tolerated. Ignorance is no excuse. Read:  
📄 [web.uvic.ca/calendar2019-09/undergrad/info/regulations/academic-integrity.html](https://web.uvic.ca/calendar2019-09/undergrad/info/regulations/academic-integrity.html)

**SCHEDULE**Tentative: see [coursespace](#) for updates.**INTRODUCTION**

SEP 5	Introduction
<b>REALITY</b>	▪ <a href="#">Raven, <i>Philosophy &amp; Logic Primer</i></a>
SEP 9	• Boghossian, <i>Fear of Knowledge</i> [chapter 1]
12	• Boghossian, <i>Fear of Knowledge</i> [chapter 2]
16	• Boghossian, <i>Fear of Knowledge</i> [chapter 3]
19	• Boghossian, <i>Fear of Knowledge</i> [chapter 4]
<b>MATTER</b>	▪ <a href="#">Raven, <i>Philosophy &amp; Logic Primer</i></a>
SEP 23,26	• <a href="#">Berkeley, <i>Three Dialogues between Hylas and Philonous</i></a> [§§1-2]
30	• Russell, "Idealism"
<b>IDENTITY</b>	
OCT 3,7	• <a href="#">Descartes, <i>Meditations on First Philosophy</i></a> [I,II,VI]
	• <a href="#">Princess Elisabeth/Descartes, <i>Letters</i></a> [6.v.1643-1.ii.1643]
10	• <a href="#">Fine, "Essence and Modality"</a> [1-3]
	• Kripke, <i>Naming and Necessity</i> [110-116]
17	• <a href="#">Witt, "Anti-Essentialism in Feminist Theory"</a>
<b>PERSONS</b>	▪ Conee & Sider, "Personal Identity"
OCT 21	• <a href="#">Appiah, "But Would That Still Be Me?"</a>
24,28	• <a href="#">Locke, <i>An Essay Concerning Human Understanding</i></a> [book II, chapter 27]
<b>FREE WILL</b>	▪ Conee & Sider, "Free Will and Determinism"
OCT 31	• d'Holbach, "The Illusion of Free Will"
NOV 4,7	• Chisholm, "Human Freedom and the Self"
	• <a href="#">Libet, "Do We Have Free Will?"</a>
14	• <a href="#">Roskies, "Neuroscientific Challenges to Free Will and Responsibility"</a>
<b>GOD</b>	▪ Conee & Sider, "God"
NOV 18	• Paley, "The Watchmaker Argument"
21	• <a href="#">Stump, "The Mirror of Evil"</a>
25	• Craig & Moreland, "The <i>Kalām</i> Cosmological Argument"
<b>TIME</b>	▪ Conee & Sider, "Fatalism" & "Time"
28	• Prior, "The Notion of the Present"
	• Prior, "Some Free Thinking about Time"
DEC 2	• <a href="#">Smart, "The River of Time"</a>