

Philosophy 14: The Nature of Reality

UCSD Winter Quarter 2012

Lecture:	TTh 11am–12:20pm	Center 214
Sections:	A01 M 2–2:50pm	Center 203
	A02 T 1–1:50pm	Univ. Center 413
	A03 W 11–11:50am	York 3000A
	A04 Th 9–9:50am	Center 205
Instructor:	Adam Streed	[astreed@ucsd.edu]
Teaching Assistants:	Danny Weltman	[dweltman@ucsd.edu]
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Course Description. Phil 14 is an introduction to metaphysics, one of the major branches of philosophical inquiry. Metaphysics investigates very general questions about existence, such as what sorts of things exist, the nature of those things, and relationships between things. Just about every philosopher has had something to say about metaphysics, so no course can hope to cover everything in the area. Our approach will be topic-based, looking at a handful of major topics.

Course Materials. All readings for the class will be available for free download through Ted (ted.ucsd.edu); just log in using your UCSD account and click on the link for Phil 14. Many readings will be drawn from one particular source: Earl Conee and Ted Sider's *Riddles of Existence*. Since the relevant selections will be available online, you do not need to buy the book. Still, you may want to do so. In any case, I *highly* recommend printing out every assigned reading so that you may make marginal notes, or at the very least using a .pdf reader that supports annotation.

Format. The class consists of lectures and discussion sections, with two short papers and a final exam assigned. There will also be occasional (unannounced) in-class quizzes on the day's assigned reading. Your total score will be determined by the following breakdown:

- paper 1: 25%
- paper 2: 25%
- final exam: 30%
- reading quizzes: 10%
- class participation: 10%

The default way of assigning grades is by the standard ten-percent intervals; i.e. an A- for 90%, a B- for 80%, and so on. There *might* be a slight curve depending on the distribution of final scores, but you should not rely on it. Should there turn out to be a curve, consider it a pleasant surprise.

Expectations. Students are expected to:

- complete all assigned readings before the class meeting indicated on the schedule
- attend all lectures and discussion sections
- participate in section
- strive for intellectual virtue, including taking arguments seriously, being a respectful listener, being willing to consider challenges to previously held beliefs, doing one's own work, and acknowledging the contributions of others

Computers in Class. Laptops and other such devices are permitted in class, but should be used only for taking notes and consulting course documents. If you simply cannot help checking Facebook, shopping online, watching sports highlights, or what have you, please sit in the back row so as not to distract other, more attentive students.

Talking in Class. Asking questions is strongly encouraged—you should always feel free to raise any question you have, even on a minor point of clarification. However, don't hold any side conversations, even about the class material. It is vital that every student is given the opportunity to hear a speaker (whether the lecturer or another student) without being distracted by their neighbors. Any students who hold side conversations after being given a warning will be asked to leave the classroom.

How to do Well. Different students have different needs, and of course there is no magic recipe that ensures success in a class. Nonetheless, the following strategies should help anyone who follows them:

- *Read the assigned readings.* Obvious, right? Still, this is something many students skimp on. When you do the reading before class, you are setting yourself up to be an active participant in lectures and sections. Not only will this make attending class more enjoyable, but you will also do better when it is time to write a paper or take an exam.
- *Take notes while you read.* Philosophical texts can be dense, difficult, or (often) both; taking notes is a good way to make life easier and increase your recall. While reading (or immediately after reading), write down the author's main claim, and then the argument for that claim. This will often require reading back over something you've already looked at—that's good.
- *Participate in class.* 'Participation' means more than just talking; it means taking an active part in what's going on. The easiest way to get involved is to bring a *specific* question to class about something in the readings that confused you. Not only do you get credit for participation, but you get to have class time devoted specifically to helping you out. Double win.

- *Visit office hours.* Office hours are a valuable resource that too few students use. If you've got questions about anything that remain after class, visit office hours and talk them over.
- *Don't binge.* Many students are binge workers, and try to fit the above activities into the few days before a paper is due, usually while also trying to write the paper. This is a very bad use of your time. You will do better by devoting the same number of hours to work done regularly during the quarter.

Academic Honesty. Students are expected to do their own work, as outlined in the UCSD Policy on Integrity of Scholarship published in the UCSD General Catalog. Academic misconduct includes but is not limited to:

- *Cheating*, such as using “crib notes” or copying answers from another student during an exam, modifying a graded exam and returning it for a new grade, or submitting the same paper or assignment for two or more different courses unless authorized by the instructors concerned.
- *Plagiarism*, such as using the writings or ideas of another person, either in whole or in part, without proper attribution to the author of the source.
- *Collusion*, such as engaging in unauthorized collaboration on homework assignments or take home exams, completing for another student any part or the whole of an assignment or exam, or procuring, providing or accepting materials that contain questions or answers to an exam or assignment to be given at a subsequent time.

The General Catalog can be found at <http://www.ucsd.edu/catalog/>. More helpful information can be found at <http://academicintegrity.ucsd.edu>. It is your responsibility to understand the Policy; if you have any questions about what constitutes acceptable work, please contact me or your TA.

Schedule. The following is provisional; any changes will be announced in class and over Ted:

Week 1	T 1/10	Introduction. Philosophy and metaphysics. Arguments.
	Th 1/12	God: Ontological and Cosmological Arguments <i>Riddles of Existence</i> Chapter 4 (pp. 62–70, 78–84) Anselm, <i>Proslogion</i> (excerpt) Aquinas, <i>Summa Theologica</i> (excerpt)
Week 2	T 1/17	God: the Design Argument Paley, <i>Natural Theology</i> Chapters 1 and 2 Russell, “Why I am Not a Christian” Hume, <i>Dialogues on Natural Religion</i> (excerpt) <i>Riddles of Existence</i> Chapter 4 (pp. 70–78)
	Th 1/19	God: the Problem of Evil Mackie, “Evil and Omnipotence”

Week 3	T 1/24	God: the Problem of Evil Swinburne, "The Problem of Evil"
	Th 1/26	Personal Identity Dennett, "Where am I?" <i>Riddles of Existence</i> Chapter 1
Week 4	T 1/31	Personal Identity Parfit, "Personal Identity"
	Th 2/2	Personal Identity Williams, "The Self and the Future"
Week 5	T 2/7	First Paper Due The Mind/Body Problem: Substance Dualism Descartes, <i>Meditations</i> 2 and 6
	Th 2/9	The Mind/Body Problem: Behaviorism Ryle, "Descartes' Myth"
Week 6	T 2/14	The Mind/Body Problem: Eliminative Materialism Churchland, "Eliminative Materialism and the Propositional Attitudes"
	Th 2/16	The Mind/Body Problem: The Intentional Stance Dennett, "Intentional Systems"
Week 7	T 2/21	Metaethics: No Objective Values Mackie, "The Subjectivity of Values"
	Th 2/23	Metaethics: Against Relativism and Subjectivism Williams, "Subjectivism: First Thoughts" and "Interlude: Relativism"
Week 8	T 2/28	Metaethics: Realism Sturgeon, "Moral Explanations"
	Th 3/1	Fatalism <i>Riddles of Existence</i> Chapter 2
Week 9	T 3/6	Second Paper Due Free Will <i>Riddles of Existence</i> Chapter 6
	Th 3/8	Free Will Chisholm, "Human Freedom and the Self" Frankfurt, "Alternate Possibilities and Moral Responsibility"
Week 10	T 3/13	Abstract Objects: Pro Swoyer, "Abstract Entities"
	Th 3/15	Abstract Objects: Con Dorr, "There are No Abstract Objects"
Final	Th 3/22	11:30am–2:29pm, location TBA