This course is an introduction to epistemology and metaphysics. Its aim is to introduce some main topics in contemporary epistemology and metaphysics, in a form suitable for students with little or no prior background in these areas of philosophy, and to develop students’ ability to think critically about these topics.

Course Organiser:
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Office Hours: TBA

Lecturer:
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Course Secretary:
Vera Spiliotakou
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Lecture Times and Location
Due to uncertainty about the extent to which the university will be open for in-person classes, information about class timing and format is subject to change, and will be given on the LEARN page for the course.

Lecture Topics and Readings

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<thead>
<tr>
<th>Week (Beginning)</th>
<th>Topic</th>
<th>Core Reading</th>
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| Week 1 (11 January) | Reality and Metaphysics (Marušić) | Timothy Williamson, “What is Metaphysics?” Blog post, which is available here: https://www.thebritishacademy.ac.uk/blog/what-is-metaphysics/  
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Week</th>
<th>Subject</th>
<th>Author(s)</th>
<th>Reading Material</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>January</td>
<td>Objects</td>
<td>Ordinary. Oxford University Press. Please read Chapters 2-3.</td>
<td>(Optional reading: Chapter 4.)</td>
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<tr>
<td>Week 5 (8 February)</td>
<td>Free Will and Determinism</td>
<td>J.T. Ismael (2016). How Physics Makes Us Free. Oxford University Press. Please read Part 1, Chapter 1 and the “Appendix for the Slackers” at the end of Part 1, starting on p. 73, and then Part 2, Chapter 4.</td>
<td>(Optional reading: Chapters 5 and 7.)</td>
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<tr>
<td>Reading Week (15 February)</td>
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| Week 10 (22 March) | **Applied Epistemology** (McGlynn) | Veronica Ivy. 2016. ‘Epistemic Injustice’. *Philosophy Compass*. (Published as Rachel McKinnon)  
| Week 11 (29 March) | **Review Week** | Lecture notes and other materials will be available on [Learn](#). |
Further advice on Readings
Encyclopaedias are a very good source of extra reading. Avoid Wikipedia (it is often inaccurate on philosophy) but there are good internet encyclopaedias that can be useful:

- The Stanford Encyclopedia of Philosophy (SEP)
- The Internet Encyclopedia of Philosophy (IEP)

Websites
We also recommend the following as starting points for your research:

- PhilPapers
- Philosophy Compass
- The Diversity Reading List

You will need to know how to track down sources, including electronic journals, using the library search engine DiscoverED.

Tutorials
In addition to three course lectures per week, you will have weekly tutorials. Tutorials will take place, at times and places to be arranged, during weeks 2 through 11 of the semester. Some tutorials will be in-person, and some will be online.

Attendance at tutorials is obligatory for all students on this course, and you have to attend them. Attendance will be greatly beneficial for deepening your understanding of the materials and for asking questions and discussing them with your tutor and your fellow students. They are also a good opportunity to meet other students (be it in person or online) and thus have an important social function. You will be allocated a suitable tutorial group by the Timetabling Department based on your timetable. Should you wish to change the group you have been allocated to, you will need to fill in the Tutorial Group Change form on the Timetabling Department’s webpage.

Please inform your tutor and the Teaching Office of any absences. Students who miss tutorials may be required to do additional written work.

Assessment
This course is assessed by five short assignments (1% each), a midterm essay (25%), and a final exam (70%). Exam information will be provided during the course.

**Short Assignments:** Small exercises to develop your philosophy skills. Each are worth 1% of the Course Mark.
Assignment 1 - Thursday 28th January by 12pm
Online Exercise on Learn

Assignment 2 - Thursday 4th February by 12pm
Online Exercise on Learn

Assignment 3 - Thursday 11th February by 12pm
Online Exercise on Learn

Assignment 4 - Thursday 11th March by 12pm
Online Exercise on Learn

Assignment 5 - Thursday 18th March
Online Exercise on Learn

Midterm Essay: (Max. 1500 Word Essay). This essay is worth 25% of the Course Mark.
Wednesday 24th February by 12pm
Essay Topics available on Learn

Final Essay: (Word Limit to be announced). This essay is worth 70% of the Course Mark.
Thursday 22nd April by 12pm
Essay Topics available on Learn

Word Counts: The word count of your essay, including footnotes but excluding bibliography, must not exceed the specified word limit. The precise word count must be written on the coversheet. Overlong essays will be penalised according to the following rule: 1% of the maximum obtainable mark will be deducted for every 100 words, or part thereof, over the word limit. So, exceeding the word limit by 1-100 words incurs a deduction of 1%; exceeding by 101-200 words incurs a deduction of 2%; and so on.

Visiting undergraduates
The assessment arrangements for visiting undergraduates are the same as for other students.

Mark Schemes
For Philosophy-specific marking guidelines go here:
Grade-related marking guidelines for Philosophy
For the University’s general marking scheme go here:
Common Marking Scheme
Learning Resources

Learn
You should regularly check your university email and check for announcements on the course Learn page.

The course Learn page will provide information concerning:
- General information and announcement about the course
- Lecture notes and slides
- Tutorial arrangements
- Information about assessment arrangements

University of Edinburgh Library
The library’s hard-copy and online resources can be searched online via DiscoverEd.

Exemplar essays
Anonymised exemplar essays will be on the Learn pages. These are essays written by past students that they have kindly agreed for us to use. We encourage you to read these essays in conjunction with the Philosophy-specific marking guidelines. In doing so think about the strengths and weaknesses of the essay, why the essays fell into their grade-band, and how they could have been improved.

There are many ways for an essay to fall into a particular grade-band. The Philosophy-specific marking guidelines provide explanation of the many, diverse, ways in which an essay can be a 1st, 2.i, 2.ii, and so on. The exemplar essays only show one way to achieve a certain grade; it is not the only way.

Autonomous Learning Groups
Each course has dedicated Autonomous Learning Groups. It is up to you, the members of the ALG, to organise the meetings. You decide how often to meet and what to do in your ALG. ALGs are designed to help you learn and get to know your classmates; they are not a formal requirement of the course. It is important to note that assessment in your courses is non-competitive: you aren’t competing against your classmates, only against the general grade criteria. It is in your interests to help each other.

You could use ALG meetings to:
- Read and discuss the papers together
- Discuss essay-writing and time-management techniques
- Constructively critique draft essays or plans
- Work on presentations or discussion posts that the class may involve
- Share tips on career advice
Please email the Course Organiser if you feel that it would be useful for the group if they joined one of your sessions. Please contact the course secretary if you find it necessary during the semester to transfer into a different group.

**Getting in Touch**
If you have a question regarding lecture content you should ask it in your tutorial group and/or visit the relevant lecturer to discuss it during their office hour.

For other specifically academic matters you can contact the Course Organiser.

If you have questions not specifically about lecture content, you should contact the Course Secretary.

**Prizes**
Students who perform with excellence in Knowledge and Reality are eligible for the James Hutchinson Prize.