



# ***Metaphysics (PHIL10155)***

## ***Course Guide 2020/21***

### **Course Organiser:**

Dr. Alasdair Richmond, [A.Richmond@ed.ac.uk](mailto:A.Richmond@ed.ac.uk)  
Dugald Stewart Building, room 6.11, 0131 650 3656

I hope to be offering **office hours** as well but they will obviously be contingent on how the re-opening of University proceeds in the wake of Covid-19. So look out for further announcements but chats via (e.g.) Skye or Teams will be possible regardless.

### **Course Secretary:**

Ms. Ann Marie Cowe, [philinfo@ed.ac.uk](mailto:philinfo@ed.ac.uk)  
Undergraduate Teaching Office,  
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## Course Aims and Objectives

In keeping with the course remit of offering a detailed introduction to one perennially interesting, central, topic in metaphysics, this year *Metaphysics* (PHIL10155) will consist of detailed seminars and accompanying tutorials on key philosophical issues in the **philosophy of time**. Coverage is largely with an analytical slant but including some classic historical issues too. Students should end this course conversant with a range of significant metaphysical (and other) issues surrounding time. No detailed logical, scientific or metaphysical expertise will be assumed, and the course is intended to be accessible to students with a wide range of philosophical interests and aptitudes.

## Intended Learning Outcomes

To develop further the philosophical skills, and to extend and deepen the philosophical knowledge, acquired in previous philosophy courses. Transferable skills that students will acquire or hone in taking this course should include the following:

- written skills (through summative essays)
- oral communication skills (through lecturer-led and/or student-led seminar discussions)
- analytical skills (through exploring a carefully-chosen series of philosophical texts)
- ability to recognise and critically assess an argument.

## Lecture Times and Locations

### Semester One

**Day/ Time: Again, this is all rather contingent on how re-opening proceeds. However please note that: i) all lecture content is already available in pre-recorded form on the LEARN page for this course, and ii) we have resources to allow this course to proceed fully online if required. I hope to have (at the very least) small group face-to-face meetings but rest assured, the course can carry on as planned even if direct meetings prove impracticable. (I have delivered entire courses electronically before, I stress.)**

## Lecture Content and Readings

\*\*\* Please note: electronic alternatives to print resources can always be provided if (e.g.) the Main Library proves difficult of access. There is no irreplaceable reading that is only available in print. As always, please ask if I can help at all. \*\*\*

### Main texts:

- Philip Turetzky, *Time*, London, Routledge, 1998, available in the Library Hub Reserve (at shelf-mark **BD638 Tur**) and **electronically** via the Library / MyEd.
- Barry Dainton, *Time and Space*, first edition Chesham, Acumen, 2001, second edition Durham Acumen 2010, multiple copies should be available in the Library Hub Reserve (at shelf-mark **BD632 Dai**). Virtually all the material we will be covering can be found in either edition of Dainton's (wonderful) book.

### Highly recommended:

- Robin Le Poidevin and Murray MacBeath, (edd.), *The Philosophy of Time, (Oxford Readings in Philosophy)*, (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1993, multiple copies are available in Library Hub Reserve (at shelf-mark **BD638 Phi**).

Please note that the following lists of readings are prioritised, with the most important / useful readings at the top. So the recommended way to tackle the suggested readings is to start at the top of each list and work downwards.

**If you read only one thing for each seminar, please tackle the reading at the top of each list.**

**As always, if you've any problems please let me know.**

### Week 1

Introduction – A Brief History of the History of Time.

The Essential Tension: Time as Series and as Flow.

Recommended reading:

- Philip Turetzky, *Time*, Chapters 1-3, pp. 1-33.
- Barry Dainton, *Time and Space*, Chapter 1, pp. 1-12 (either 2001 or 2010 editions).
- Patricia Kenig Curd, 'Parmenidean Monism', *Phronesis*, 36, 1991: 241-264.
- Charles H. Kahn, 'A New Look at Heraclitus', *American Philosophical Quarterly*, 1, 1964: 189-203.

Useful background / of related interest:

- Jonathan Barnes (Editor and translator), *The Early Greek Philosophers*, Harmondsworth, Penguin, 1987, 'Anaximander', pp. 71-76, 'Heraclitus', pp. 100-126, 'Parmenides', pp. 129-142 and 'Zeno', pp. 150-158.
- Wesley C. Salmon, *Zeno's Paradoxes*, Indianapolis, Hackett, 2001: 5-44.

### Week 2

Plato and Aristotle

Recommended reading:

- Philip Turetzky, *Time*: 11-17.
- Jaakko Hintikka, 'The Once and Future Sea Fight: Aristotle's Discussion of Future Contingents in De Interpretatione IX', *The Philosophical Review*, 73, 1964: 461-92.
- W. von Leyden, 'Time, Number, and Eternity in Plato and Aristotle', *The Philosophical Quarterly*, 14, 1964: 35-52.
- Berit Brogaard, 'Sea Battle Semantics', *The Philosophical Quarterly*, 58, 2008: 326-335.

Useful background / of related interest:

- Aristotle, *Physics*, Translated by Robin Waterfield, Oxford World's Classics, Oxford University Press, Oxford, 1996, IV, 10-14, (Waterfield, pp. 102-117).
- Plato, *Timaeus*, as in *Timaeus and Critias*, translated by Desmond Lee, Harmondsworth, Penguin, 1977.

### Week 3

Sextus Empiricus, St. Augustine and Peter Damian.

Recommended reading:

- Philip Turetzky, *Time*, Chapter 3, pp. 30-42, but particularly pp. 30-34; Chapter 5, pp. 56-70, but particularly, pp. 56-62.
- Sextus Empiricus, *Selections from the Major Writings on Scepticism, Man & God*, edited by Philip P. Hallie and translated by Sanford G. Etheridge, Indianapolis, Indiana: Hackett Publishing, 1985: 124-27.
- Saint Augustine, *Confessions*, translated by Henry Chadwick, Oxford, Oxford University Press, Book XI, 'Time and Eternity': 221-245

Useful background / of related interest:

- Brian Leftow, 'On a Principle of Sufficient Reason', *Religious Studies*, 39, 2003: 269-26.
- Robert P. McArthur and Michael P. Slattery, 'Peter Damian and Undoing the Past', *Philosophical Studies*, 25, 1974: 137-41.
- Peter Remnant, 'Peter Damian: Could God Change the Past?', *Canadian Journal of Philosophy*, 8, 1978: 259-268.

### Week 4

McTaggart on the Unreality of Time (part one).

Recommended reading:

- Barry Dainton, *Time and Space*, Chapters 2 and 3, pp. 13-43 (either 2001 or 2010 editions).
- Philip Turetzky, *Time*, Chapter 9: 121-36.
- Michael Dummett, 'A Defence of McTaggart's Proof of the Unreality of Time', *Philosophical Review*, 69, 1960: 497-504.
- J. M. E. McTaggart, 'The Unreality of Time', taken from Chapter 33 of *The Nature of Existence* (Cambridge, Cambridge University Press, 1921), and also reprinted in Le Poidevin and MacBeath, (edd.), pp. 23-34. See also original version published as 'The Unreality of Time', *Mind*, 17, 1908: 457-74.

Useful background / of related interest:

- Denis Corish, 'McTaggart's Argument', *Philosophy*, 80, 2005: 77-99.

- John King-Farlow, 'The Positive McTaggart on Time', *Philosophy* 49, 1974: 169-78.

#### Week 5

McTaggart on the Unreality of Time (part two).

Recommended reading: as above for week 4, plus:

- J. Bigelow, 'World's Enough for Time', *Noûs*, 25, 1991: 1-19.

Useful background / of related interest:

- E. J. Lowe, 'McTaggart's Paradox Revisited', *Mind*, 101, 1992: 323-26.
- G. N. Schlesinger, '*E pur si muove*', *Philosophical Quarterly*, 41, 1991: 427-41.

#### Week 6

- Absolutism and Relationalism About Time.
- Recommended reading:
- Philip Turetzky, *Time*, Chapter 6: 71-84.
- Barry Dainton, *Time and Space*, Chapter 11, pp. 169-80 (2001 edition); pp. 182-193 (2010 edition).
- Robin Le Poidevin, 'Relationism and Temporal Topology', *Philosophical Quarterly*, 40, 1990: 419-32, reprinted with a new postscript in Le Poidevin and Murray MacBeath, (edd.), 1993: 149-67.
- Useful background / of related interest:
- H. G. Alexander, (Editor), *The Leibniz - Clarke Correspondence*, Manchester, University of Manchester Press, 1956, esp. editor's Introduction.
- Tim Maudlin, 'Buckets of Water and Waves of Space: Why Space-Time is (Probably) a Substance', *Philosophy of Science*, 27, 1993: 183-203.

#### Week 7

Tense and Tenseless; Static and Dynamic.

- Philip Turetzky, *Time*, Chapter 10: 137-55.
- Barry Dainton, *Time and Space*, Chapters 5 and 6, pp. 63-92 (2001 edition); pp. 63-102 (2010 edition).
- D. H. Mellor, 'The Unreality of Tense', originally in *Real Time*, Cambridge, CUP, 1981, reprinted in Le Poidevin & MacBeath, pp. 47-59.
- Ted Sider, 'Presentism and Ontological Commitment' *Journal of Philosophy* 96, 1999: 325-47.

Useful background / of related interest:

- Craig Bourne, 'When Am I?: A Tense Time for Some Tense Theorists?' *Australasian Journal of Philosophy*, 80, 2002: 359-71.
- J. J. C. Smart, 'Spatialising Time', *Mind*, 64, 1955: 239-41.

#### Week 8

Three-Dimensionalism vs. Four-Dimensionalism (Endurantism vs. Perdurantism).

- Katherine Hawley, 'Why Temporary Properties Are Not Relations Between Physical Objects and Times', *Proceedings of the Aristotelian Society*, 98, 1998: 211-216.
- Neil McKinnon, 'The Endurance/Perdurant Distinction', *The Australasian Journal of Philosophy*, 80, 2002: 288-306.
- Trenton Merricks, 'Persistence, Parts and Presentism', *Noûs*, 33, 1999: 421-38.

- Theodore Sider, 'All the World's a Stage', *Australasian Journal of Philosophy*, 74, 1996: 433–53.
- Peter van Inwagen, 'Four-Dimensional Objects', *Noûs*, 24, 1990: 245–55.

Useful background / of related interest:

- Katherine Hawley, 'Persistence and Non-Supervenient Relations', *Mind*, 108, 1999: 53-67.
- Mark Heller, 'Temporal Parts of Four-Dimensional Objects', *The Ontology of Physical Objects*, Cambridge, (Cambridge, Cambridge University Press, 1990), and reprinted in Jaegwon Kim and Ernest Sosa, (edd.), *Metaphysics: An Anthology*, (Oxford, Blackwell, 1999): 312-26.
- Fraser MacBride, 'Four New Ways to Change Your Shape', *Australasian Journal of Philosophy*, 79, 2001: 81–9.

### Week 9

Questions of Topology: Linear, Branching or Multi-Dimensional?

- John Earman, 'How To Talk About the Topology of Time', *Noûs*, 11, 1977: 211-26.
- Storrs McCall, 'Objective Time Flow', *Philosophy of Science*, 43, 1976: 337-62.
- Murray MacBeath, 'Time's Square', in Le Poidevin and MacBeath, 1993: 183–202.

Useful background / of related interest:

- Robin Le Poidevin, 'Time, Tense and Topology', *Philosophical Quarterly*, 46, 1996: 467-81..
- Judith Jarvis Thomson, 'Time, Space and Objects', *Mind*, 74, 1965: 1-27.

### Week 10

The Directionality of Time (and Causation)

- Roderick M. Chisholm and Richard Taylor, 'Making Things to Have Happened', *Analysis*, 20, 1960: 73-8.
- Michael Dummett, 'Bringing About the Past', *The Philosophical Review*, 73, 1964: 338-59.
- David Lewis, 'Counterfactual Dependence and Time's Arrow', *Noûs*, 13, 1979: 455-76.

Useful background / of related interest:

- Hanoeh Ben-Yami, 'The Impossibility of Backward Causation', *The Philosophical Quarterly*, 57, 2007: 439-55.
- Graham Oddie, 'Backwards Causation and the Permanence of the Past', *Synthese*, 85, 1990: 71-93.
- Huw Price, 'The Physics and Philosophy of Affecting the Past', *Synthese*, 61, 1984, 299-323.

### Week 11

Recapitulation / Revision.

## **Assessment Information**

This course will be assessed by means of two essays per student.

1. A short (no more than 1,500 word) essay (40% overall mark):  
Due no later than **12 pm Thursday 22<sup>nd</sup> October 2020**.

2. A final long (no more than 2,500 word) essay (55% overall mark):  
Due no later than **12 pm Thursday 10<sup>th</sup> December 2020**

**3. Please note 5% of the total mark is based on participation. Participation marks will be awarded on the basis of your course organiser's assessment of frequency and quality of contribution, in accordance with the Common Marking Scheme guidelines and the accompanying grade descriptors. Contributions can be made electronically, e.g. via e-mail and can include (e.g.) questions (in class or outside, short comprehensions on assigned readings, etc. Closing date is the end of teaching in the semester concerned.**

## Essay Questions

Below are some suggested questions intended to cover *both* the **short mid-term** (no more than 1,500 word) and final (no more than 2,500 word) **essays**.

**Do please answer different questions for your mid-term and final essays.**

Please note that for long essay purposes, students should be prepared to supplement the suggested readings above, either through their own research and/or through consultation with course organiser. As always, additional / alternative readings can be provide on request – please just ask.

1) Compare and critically contrast Heraclitean and Parmenidean conceptions of time and change.

Reading as for week 1.

2) Does the 'sea fight' problem of future contingents suggest that the future is indeterminate?

Reading as for week 2.

3) How did McTaggart try to establish the unreality of time and did he succeed?

Reading as for weeks 4 and 5.

4) Compare and critically contrast tensed and tenseless views of time.

Reading as for week 7

5) Compare and critically contrast perdurantist and endurantist approaches to persistence.

Reading as for week 8.

6) Is a linear topology for time the only one acceptable?

Reading as for week 9.

**\*\*\* Again, additional / alternative readings and/or questions can always be provided on request. The above are prompts merely. \*\*\***



## Selected Additional References / Further Reading

- Yuri Balashov, 'Defining Exdurance', *Philosophical Studies*, 133, 2007: 133-49.
- Craig Bourne, *A Future for Presentism*, Oxford, Oxford University Press, 2006.
- Berit Brogaard, 'Presentist Four-Dimensionalism', *The Monist*, 83, 2000: 341-56.
- David J. Buller and Thomas R. Forster, 'The New Paradox of Temporal Transience', *The Philosophical Quarterly*, 42, 1992: 357-366.
- David Cockburn, 'The Problem of the Past', *The Philosophical Quarterly*, 37, 1987: 54-77.
- Nikk Effingham and Joseph Melia, 'Endurantism and Timeless Worlds', *Analysis*, 67, 2007: 140-7.
- J. N. Findlay, 'Time: A Treatment of Some Puzzles', *Australasian Journal of Philosophy*, 19, 1941: 216-35.
- Peter Geach, 'Some Problems About Time', *Proceedings of the British Academy*, LI, 1966, 321-36.
- Samuel Gorovitz, 'Leaving the Past Alone', *Philosophical Review*, 73, 1964: 360-71.
- Sally Haslanger, 'Persistence, Change and Explanation', *Philosophical Studies*, 56, 1989: 1-28.
- Katherine Hawley, *How Things Persist*, Oxford, Oxford University Press, 2001.
- Mark Hollis, 'Times and Spaces', *Mind*, 76, 1967: 524-36.
- Paul Horwich, 'Explanatory Relations Between the Direction of Causation and the Fork Asymmetry', *Analysis*, 53, 1993: 154-55.
- Hud Hudson, 'Temporally Incongruent Counterparts', *Philosophy and Phenomenological Research*, 68, 2004: 337-43.
- Robin Le Poidevin, 'Recent Work on Time', *Philosophical Books*, 40, 1999: 1-9.
- Robin Le Poidevin, *Travels in Four Dimensions: The Enigmas of Space and Time*. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2003.
- Storrs McCall, *A Model of the Universe*, Oxford, Clarendon, 1996.
- Murray MacBeath, 'Communication and Time Reversal', *Synthese*, 56, 1983: 27-46.
- D. H. Mellor, 'On Things and Causes in Spacetime', *British Journal for the Philosophy of Science*, 31, 1980: 282-8.
- D. H. Mellor, *Real Time*, Cambridge, Cambridge University Press, 1981.
- D. H. Mellor, *Real Time II*, London, Routledge, 1998.
- Joshua Mozersky, 'Time and Temporal Semantics', *Synthese*, 124, 2000: 257-79.
- R. E. Nusenoff, 'Two-Dimensional Time', *Philosophical Studies*, 29, 1976: 337-41.
- Christopher Ray, *Time, Space and Philosophy*, London, Routledge, 1991.
- Alasdair Richmond, 'Plattner's Arrow: Science and Multi-Dimensional Time', *Ratio*, 13, 2000: 256-74.
- Steven S. Savitt, 'Epistemological Time Asymmetry', *PSA: Proceedings of the Philosophy of Science Association*, 1990, Vol. 1: 317-324.
- George Schlesinger, 'Two Concepts of the Passage of Time', *Nôus*, 3, 1969: 1-16.
- Theodore Sider, *Four Dimensionalism: An Ontology of Persistence and Change*, Oxford, Oxford University Press, 2001.
- Quentin Smith, 'Sentences About Time', *Philosophical Quarterly*, 37, 1987: 37-53.
- Quentin Smith, *Language and Time*, New York, Oxford University Press 1993..
- Jonathan Tallant, 'What is B-Time?', *Analysis*, 67, 2007: 147-156.
- Michael Tooley, *Time, Tense and Causation*, Oxford, Oxford University Press, 1997.
- Sarah Waterlow, 'Backwards Causation and Continuing', *Mind*, 83, 1974: 372-87.
- Tom Wilkerson, 'Time and Time Again', *Philosophy*, 48, 1973: 173-77.
- E. M. Zemach, 'Many Times', *Analysis*, 28, 1968: 145-151.

## Selected on-line resources:

1. Daniel W. Graham, 'Heraclitus', *The Stanford Encyclopedia of Philosophy (Fall 2015 Edition)*, Edward N. Zalta (ed.), <https://plato.stanford.edu/archives/fall2015/entries/heraclitus/>
2. John Palmer, 'Parmenides', *The Stanford Encyclopedia of Philosophy (Fall 2019 Edition)*, Edward N. Zalta (ed.), <https://plato.stanford.edu/archives/fall2019/entries/parmenides/>
3. Katherine Hawley, 'Temporal Parts', *The Stanford Encyclopedia of Philosophy*, Edward N. Zalta ed., <http://plato.stanford.edu/archives/fall2008/entries/temporal-parts/>
4. Ned Markosian, 'Time', *The Stanford Encyclopedia of Philosophy (Fall 2009 Edition)*, Edward N. Zalta (ed.), <http://plato.stanford.edu/archives/fall2009/entries/time/>
5. Steven Savitt, 'Being and Becoming in Modern Physics', *Stanford Encyclopedia of Philosophy*, edited by E. N. Zalta, <http://plato.stanford.edu/archives/win2008/entries/spacetime-bebecome/>

## Feedback

It's very important that you should know what sort of standard of feedback you can expect on my courses and how quickly I aim to turn work around. I aim to make my feedback as useful as I can and to help you pinpoint not only those areas where improvement might be indicated but also those areas where you've done well. Please note that besides written feedback on summative work and draft work, you can also obtain feedback by making an appointment to see me, by sending me questions or concerns via e-mail.

For **short or long essays**, I aim to complete coversheets and return work electronically within **three working weeks** of initial submission.

If you've any questions relating to feedback or any other aspect of the course, please don't hesitate to get in touch.

## Please Note

This course is completely independent of my Honours option course 'Philosophy of Time Travel'. Some topics inevitably may reflect each other across the two courses but neither course is required for the other.