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 epistemology and metaphysics, and to develop students’ ability to think critically about these topics.

**Course Organiser:**
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Office Hours: TBA  
Lecturer for weeks 1-5

**Lecturer:**
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Lecturer for weeks 6-10

**Course Secretary:**
Alison Lazda  
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**Lecture Information**

Pre-recorded lectures will be released two days a week, sometime before 1 pm on Mondays and Thursdays. While the lectures are in your timetable to remind you to watch them, you may watch them at any time that is convenient for you. You should, however, watch them prior to your tutorial meeting. Tutorials will cover the material from the previous week’s lectures, e.g. the tutorial in week 2 will cover the material from the first week of lecture. In addition, there will be a synchronous online Q&A session for the entire course on Friday mornings at 11 am. This is not a lecture and but will serve to review, discuss, and reinforce the material from the week’s lectures. Attendance is strongly encouraged. Information about how to access the synchronous session will be on the Learn page.

**Lecture Topics and Readings**

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<th>Week (Beginning)</th>
<th>Topic</th>
<th>Core Reading</th>
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| Week 1 (17 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/](https://www.thebritishacademy.ac.uk/blog/what-is-metaphysics/)  
Optional reading: Chapter 4. |
Please read Chapters 1 and 3.  
Optional reading: Chapters 4, 6 and 8. |
Please read Chapters 7 and 8.  
*What Is Race?: Four Philosophical Views*, Oxford University Press 2019. (See especially the contribution by Chike Jeffers.) |
| Week 5 (14 February) | **Free Will and Determinism** (Marušić) | 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.  
Optional reading: Chapters 5 and 7. |
<p>| Break (21 February) | | |</p>
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<th>Week 7 (7 March)</th>
<th><strong>Scepticism</strong></th>
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<th>Week 8 (14 March)</th>
<th><strong>Internalism and Externalism</strong></th>
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<td>Alvin Goldman. 2015. ‘Reliabilist Epistemology.’ <em>Stanford Encyclopedia of Philosophy</em>, sections 1-4:</td>
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### Week 9 (21 March)  **Social Epistemology**


### Week 10 (28 March)  **Applied Epistemology**

Veronica Ivy. 2016. ‘Epistemic Injustice’. *Philosophy Compass*. (Published as Rachel McKinnon)


### Week 11 (4 April)  **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:
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. These give you a chance to further discuss topics and issues in the course and its lectures. Tutorials will take place, at times and places to be arranged, during weeks 2 through 11 of the semester.

Attendance at tutorials is compulsory for all students on this course. The class tutor will maintain a register of attendance. Unexplained absences will be brought to the attention of your Personal Tutor.

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 a midterm essay (30%), and a final essay (70%). Exam information will be provided during the course.

| Midterm Essays: The midterm essays are worth 30% of Course Mark. The essays will be comprised of two short essays of approximately 500 words each. (The total word count must not exceed 1,000 words.) | Essay Topics available on Learn. (Students must choose two of these topics.) |
| Thursday 3 March by 12pm | |
**Final Essays**: The final essays are worth 70% of Course Mark. The essays will be comprised of four short essays of approximately 500 words each. (The total word count must not exceed 2,000 words.)

| Thursday 21 April by 12pm | Essay Topics available on Learn. (Students must choose four of these topics.) |

**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.

**Resits**: For those failing or missing the exam, a resit examination is held in late August. It is the student's responsibility to check the resit timetable on the Student Administration website, find the time and location of the resit exam and ensure they are present for that resit. No formal registration is necessary and students will not be individually notified of the resit date and location of resit exams.

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

**Mark Schemes**
For Philosophy-specific marking guidelines go here:
年级-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.