

PHIL 230: Experience and Reality

Term:	Spring 2016	Instructor:	Robert Smithson
Time:	MTWRF 9:45 – 11:15	Email:	rhs2z@live.unc.edu
Room:	Caldwell 103	Office:	Caldwell 105D
Website:	sakai.unc.edu/portal/ site/phil230-ss2	Office Hours:	MW 11:15-12:15 and by appt.

Course Description

Why is the nature of space and time? Do humans have free will? What is the relation between the mind and the physical world? Is time travel possible? What is the nature of the self? Metaphysics is the study of these basic questions about the world and our place in it. In this introductory course, we will consider how philosophical arguments might be used to decide these issues.

Course Goals

1. To provide an overview of six fundamental topics in metaphysics: *world, space & time, personal identity, free will, mind, and existence.*
2. To develop students' philosophical writing and philosophical argumentation through a series of short writing assignments throughout the term.

Course Texts

All texts for the course will be posted to the course's Sakai site.

Honor Code

In this class, the Honor Code is taken very seriously and all infractions will be reported to the Honor Council. In particular, papers previously turned in for other classes are not eligible to be turned in for this class.

Grading

Four writing assignments (3 pages each): 50%

Final: 30%

Participation/Unannounced quizzes: 20%

The participation grade takes into account both attendance and discussion in class. Class attendance is mandatory. If you have an excused absence (such as a medical absence), please bring me a note or send me an email.

Writing Assignments

In light of the second listed goal for the course, there will be a series of writing assignments throughout the term, each three pages long (double-spaced). There will be a different prompt (or prompts) for each of the course's six units. Students are required to respond to four of those prompts. Students have the option of submitting more than four papers; if more than four papers are submitted, the instructor will drop the lowest

paper scores.

Assignments should be emailed to the instructor by the beginning of class period on the assigned due date; the due dates will be announced in class. Students will lose a third of a letter grade for each day a paper is late. To facilitate grading, include only your PID number (and not your name) at the top of the document. For helpful advice on writing philosophy papers, see Jim Pryor's introduction: www.jimpryor.net/teaching/guidelines/writing.html.

Technology

In order to promote classroom discussion, no laptops, tablets, phones, etc. are permitted during class except by instructor permission.

Course Schedule

The professor reserves the right to make changes to the syllabus, depending on the progress of the discussion in the class. If there are changes, I will make note of them in class and will send out an email about the changes.

Date	Topic
	WORLD
M 6/20	The external world and our relation to it. <i>Reading:</i> syllabus, Sakai handout.
T 6/21	The impulse towards objectivity, and its limits. <i>Reading:</i> Thomas Nagel (1976). <i>The View from Nowhere</i> , chapter 5, pp. 67-74. James Pryor, "Writing Philosophy Papers." Sakai handout.
W 6/22	Functional identification. <i>Reading:</i> David Chalmers (2005). The Matrix as Metaphysics. In Grau (ed.), <i>Philosophers Explore the Matrix</i> . Sections 1-8.
R 6/23	Idealism vs. realism. <i>Reading:</i> Robert Smithson (manuscript). Edenic Idealism (excerpts). Sakai handout.
	FREE WILL
F 6/24	Incompatibilism and moral responsibility. <i>Reading:</i> Galen Strawson (1994). The Impossibility of Moral Responsibility.
M 6/27	Incompatibilism: the metaphysical background. <i>Optional reading:</i> Derk Pereboom (1995). Determinism Al Dente. Sakai handout.
T 6/28	Compatibilism: why does freedom matter? <i>Reading:</i> Selections from the work of Frederick Douglass; George Moses Horton, "On Liberty and Slavery," Emma Lazerus, "The New Colossus," Abraham Lincoln, "Gettysburg Address."
W 6/29	Sanity and the deep self. <i>Reading:</i> Susan Wolf (1987). Sanity and the Metaphysics of Responsibility.

SPACE AND TIME

- R 6/30 Absolute vs. relational theories of space
Optional reading: Tim Maudlin (2010). *Philosophy of Physics: Space and Time*, pp. 4-24. Sakai handout.
- F 7/1 From absolute space to galilean spacetime, writing philosophy papers.
Optional reading: Tim Maudlin (2010). *Philosophy of Physics: Space and Time*, pp. 36-46.
- T 7/5 The metaphysics of time.
Reading: Ned Markosian (2014). Time. In *Stanford Encyclopedia of Philosophy* (excerpts). Sakai handout.
- W 7/6 Time travel: single timeline, alternate timelines
Reading: David Lewis (1976). The Paradoxes of Time Travel (excerpts). Sakai handout
- R 7/7 Review session for units 1-3.

PERSONAL IDENTITY

- F 7/8 Overview, a taxonomy, primitivist views.
Reading: John Perry (1978). *A Dialogue on Personal Identity and Immortality* (Night 1). Sakai handout.
- M 7/11 Brute physical views, psychological continuity views.
Reading: John Perry (1978). *A Dialogue* (Night 2). Sakai handout.
- T 7/12 Psychological continuity views.
Reading: John Perry (1978). *A Dialogue* (Night 23). Sakai handout.

MIND

- W 7/13 The hard problem of consciousness, the explanatory gap argument, a taxonomy.
Reading: David Chalmers (2010). *The Character of Consciousness*. Ch. 1. Sakai handout.
- R 7/14 The knowledge argument.
Reading: Frank Jackson (1982). Epiphenomenal Qualia. Sakai handout.
- F 7/15 The conceivability argument.
Reading: Robert Kirk (2015). Zombies. In *Stanford Encyclopedia of Philosophy*, sections 1-3. Sakai handout.

EXISTENCE

- M 7/18 Empty names, non-existent objects.
Reading: Bertrand Russell (1999). Existence and Description. In Kim & Sosa (eds.), *Metaphysics: An Anthology* (First Edition).
- T 7/19 Empty names, non-existent objects.
Reading: Terence Parsons (1979). Referring to Nonexistent Objects (excerpts).

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W 7/20 Fine-tuning arguments.
Reading: Laura Garcia (2010). Teleological and Design Arguments. In *A Companion to Philosophy of Religion* (Second Edition). Derek Parfit (2004). Why Anything? Why This? In Crane & Farkas (eds.), *Metaphysics: A Guide and Anthology*. (First half). Sakai handout.

R 7/21 Review session

M 7/25 (8-11am) **FINAL**