# **Department of Philosophy**

# **Module descriptions 2024/25**

# **Level H (i.e. normally 3rd Yr.) Modules**

Please be aware that all modules are subject to availability.

For many of these modules, some experience of studying Philosophy may be required, and you should remember this when choosing your modules. If there is another module that you need to have studied before taking this, it will be stated in the module description.

Please note that at the time this document has been prepared (October 2024) the following information is provisional, and there may be minor changes between now and the beginning of 2024/25 academic year.

**Please note: Forms of assessment are currently undergoing review for 2024/25, and as a result the assessment information listed within this handbook may be subject to change.**

# **SEMESTER 2 MODULES**

## **LH Philosophy of Mathematics**

Module Code: 26094

Credit Value: 20

Semester: 2

Pre-requisites: **Student will need to have an appropriate experience of Logic. Please contact the module leader before selecting this module.**

**Module Description**

This module is an introduction to the central concepts, themes, and figures in philosophy of mathematics. We begin with a survey of the logical and mathematical notions presupposed in the main debates. We then study the most influential “isms” in this field: logicism, formalism, intuitionism, structuralism, realism, empiricism, and nominalism. The last lecture of the module provides an overview of recent controversies, focusing on the philosophy of set theory. The reading of primary sources will also give us the opportunity to become familiar with key historical thinkers such as Frege, Hilbert, Carnap, Gödel, and Dummett.

Suggested Reading:

Shapiro, Thinking about Mathematics, Oxford University Press, 2000.

Linnebo, Philosophy of Mathematics, Princeton University Press, 2017.

Benacerraf and Putnam (eds.), Philosophy of Mathematics: Selected Readings, Second Edition, Cambridge University Press, 1983.

Assessment

1 x 1 hour in class exam (30%)

1 x 3000 word essay (70%)

## **LH It’s About Time**

Module Code: 30950

Credit Value: 20

Semester: 2

Pre-requisites: None

**Module Description**

This module covers the contemporary issues in the metaphysics of time. Topics which will be covered will include topics such as:

•The Ontology of Time: Does the past exist? Does the future? Is it only the present which exists?

•Tense: Is the present moment metaphysically special?

•Timelessness: Might there be no time, contrary to what we see around us?

•Persistence: How do objects go from one time to another?

•Time Travel: Can anything go back in time? What would the world be like if it did?

•Other Disciplines: How does physics bear on the metaphysics of time? How does the philosophy of time bear on issues in the philosophy of religion?

Preparatory Readings:

Baron, S. and Miller, K. 2018. *An Introduction to the Philosophy of Time*, Polity Press.

Curtis, B. and Robson, J. 2016. *A Critical Introduction to the Metaphysics of Time*, Bloomsbury.

Le Poidevin, R. 2005. *Travels in Four Dimensions: The Enigmas of Space and Time*, Oxford University Press.

Assessment

Two parts:

(a) One 2000 word essay (50%)

(b) One 1 hour exam (50%)

## **LH Being Good and Doing Right**

Module Code: 26794

Credit Value: 20

Semester: 2

Pre-requisites: None

**Module Description**

What is the good life?  What moral requirements are there on us?  Should we aim to do whatever our moral duty is, or should we aim to be good people?  Questions like these are the subject-matter of moral theory.  This module will examine issues found in recent work in moral theory, including some of the following:

* Should we think that the consequences of our actions are all that matters to the morality of those actions?
* If this view (consequentialism) is true, what form does the best version of consequentialism take?
* Is there a contemporary version of Kantianism that is a more plausible moral theory?
* Are there good objections to both consequentialist and Kantian theories, such as the objection that someone who lived the way those theories require would not be a good person, or would not have a good life?
* Can a Kantian or a Consequentialist be a friend?
* What philosophical account can we give of friendship and love, and how might these relate to ethics?

In looking into these issues we are likely to stumble across other topics for discussion, such as the nature of happiness and well-being, the nature and importance of love and friendship in the good life, and the nature of virtue.  (In any given year, the precise issues covered may vary.)

Readings:

Crisp and Slote (eds.) Virtue Ethics (OUP, 1997).

Assessment

Two parts:

(a) 2000 word essay (50%)

(b) 2000 word essay (50%)

## **LH Topics in Philosophy of Religion**

Module Code: 26825

Credit Value: 20

Semester: 2

Pre-requisites: None

**Module Description**

This module covers a variety of topics in the philosophy of religion, focussing--thought not exclusively concerned with--contemporary issues. The topics covered will include some of the following:

•Various arguments for the existence of a deity, god, or divine being e.g. the Cosmological Argument (is there a first cause, or fundamental explanation, which requires God?), the Fine Tuning Argument (do the constants of the universe indicate that God designed the universe?), the Ontological Argument (can we reason from 'God is Perfect' to God existing on the grounds that, more or less, a non-existent God is imperfect?);

•Atheistic arguments e.g. the long-standing problem of evil whereby God cannot exist because of the presence of evil in the world. (Focus will be given to responses to the problem of evil, which may include contemporary responses such as the 'multiverse response' that God was obliged to create every possible universe, including our imperfect one, in order to create the perfect world.)

•The rationality of belief in God. Are theists justified in believing in God? Are atheists justified in not believing? Is agnosticism the only reasonable position? What role, if any, must evidence play in theistic belief?

•The nature of prayer, providence, and prophecy. Why pray if God already knows what you need and want? Is our free will compatible with God's foreknowledge of what we will do?

•The nature of the afterlife. What positive role could Hell play in existence? How can it be reasonable to punish an individual to eternal punishment, no matter how terrible the crime they committed? How can we come back to life once we have ceased to be? How can I go to Heaven if, as materialism says, I am nothing but a physical brain?

•The philosophical theologies of different religions e.g. the nature of the Trinity, the Incarnation, and Original Sin.

Preparatory Reading:

Everitt, Nicholas 2010: ‘The Divine Attributes’. Philosophy Compass. Vol. 5, no. 1, pp. 78–90.

Assessment

Two parts:

(a) One 1500 word essay (50%)

(b) One 1500 word essay (50%)

## **LH Reason and Belief**

Module Code: 31431

Credit Value: 20

Semester: 2

Pre-requisites: None

**Module Description**

On the epistemology side, our main focus is on the concept of epistemic justification: for a belief to count as knowledge, must it be justified by a foundation, or is justification holistic or infinitist? To have knowledge must a thinker be aware of her reasons or evidence, as traditional ‘internalists’ maintain, or should we seek a more naturalistic, ‘externalist’ conception, free of that assumption? Following that, we’ll consider some issues concerning distinctive sources of knowledge: e.g. perception, thought, memory, and/or testimony.

Knowledge is closely related to belief and reasoning, and so philosophical questions about the mind fit well with the theory of knowledge. In this part of the module we'll examine some of the following questions: How do beliefs and other psychological states represent the world outside? How do they relate to phenomenal properties, and are the latter distinctively problematic? In predicting and explaining the beliefs and thinking of other people, do we rely on a theory of how people reason, or do we simulate their thinking by putting ourselves in their shoes? To conclude the module, we'll discuss self-knowledge, a topic that brings philosophy of mind and epistemology elegantly together: how do you know what you believe?

Preparatory Readings:

• Lemos, N., *An Introduction to the Theory of Knowledge.*

• Crane, T., *Elements of Mind*.

Assessment

Two parts:

(c) One 2000 word essay (50%)

(d) One 2000 word essay (50%)