



**BRISBANE COLLEGE OF THEOLOGY
UNIT OUTLINE**

**GRADUATE CERTIFICATE IN THEOLOGY
GRADUATE DIPLOMA IN THEOLOGY**

UNIT TITLE	INTRODUCTION TO PHILOSOPHY
UNIT CODE	H73060
UNIT STATUS	Core
HOST FIELD	H
PREREQUISITE/S	-
INCOMPATIBLES	-
CREDIT POINTS	10cp
REQUIREMENTS	3 hours per week contact and 7 hours per week study over a 13-week semester.
FREQUENCY OF OFFERING	Annually
PREPARED BY	Mr Richard Colledge
UNIT COORDINATOR	Dr Richard Colledge
TEACHING STAFF	Dr Richard Colledge
DATE PREPARED	14 September 2006

Rationale

Since the beginning of Christian thought theologians have been in constant dialogue with the western philosophical tradition. This mutually enriching and often passionate exchange continues to the present day. This unit provides both undergraduate and postgraduate theology students with a broad but rigorous problem-centred, issues-based introduction to philosophy in its various dimensions, focusing particularly on issues of relevance to theology. Such issues include: the nature of human being; the nature and function of knowledge, truth, and meaning; the discernment of value, particularly in the sphere of ethical thinking and practical morality; the problem of meaning for finite human beings; and problems raised by rational examination of the idea of God and religious traditions of thought. Engagement with a range of philosophical issues that directly impinge on theological discourse provides undergraduate and postgraduate students with a solid platform for further studies in philosophy and philosophical theology.

Relation to Program

This unit plays an important role in introducing postgraduate students to the western intellectual tradition through which, and against which, Christian theology has defined and understood itself and its mission to the world. The unit provides a series of important and useful contexts for reflection on Christian theology. It provides a thorough grounding in the methodology of philosophical thought and an introduction to key issues that are investigated in greater depth in subsequent units.

Aims

This unit aims to provide students with a sound foundational understanding of the content and methodology of philosophy, along with an appreciation of the relevance of philosophy to the study of theology.

Learning Outcomes	
At the end of this unit the students should be able to:	
1.	Demonstrate a developed understanding and appreciation of at least three major issues in the discipline of philosophy, and how these issues are of relevance to theological discourse.
2.	Critically discuss and evaluate the differing arguments of philosophers concerning such issues.
3.	Develop and articulate a coherent interim position concerning these issues.
4.	Demonstrate proficiency in dealing with both primary and secondary sources as well as some more advanced treatments of the issue at hand.
5.	Apply independent research skills.
6.	Demonstrate an understanding of basic logic, to the extent of being able to recognise and apply the key requirements of valid argumentation as well as to recognise and avoid the most common forms of formal and informal fallacious reasoning.

Content

1. *Introductory philosophy of mind*: debates concerning the nature of, and relationship between, mind, soul and body; and the contribution of cognitive psychology to a philosophical understanding of some possibly distinctive features of what we call 'mind'.
2. *The free will vs determinism debate*: the hard determinist, libertarian and compatibilist cases, and what is at stake in this debate; and some contemporary European philosophies of freedom.
3. *Introductory philosophy of gender*: debates concerning the nature of, and relationship between, sex, gender and culture.
4. *Introductory philosophy of perception*: the notion of an 'external world', the problem of solipsism.
5. *Introductory epistemology*: debates concerning the nature and function of knowledge and truth, and recent debate in hermeneutics concerning the construction of meaning.
6. *Logic*: the vocabulary of logic; the main categories of informal fallacy; basic propositional calculus.
7. *Introductory Ethics*: distinguishing meta-, normative and applied ethics; theory and implications of traditional models of normative ethics.
8. *Meaning in/of life*: theories of meaning and purpose in/of life; philosophical reflections on death; rational analyses of various claims concerning life beyond death.
9. *Introductory philosophy of religion*: the relationship between philosophy and theology; the scope of 'philosophy of religion'; arguments for and against the existence of God; philosophical assessment of the various models of God-world-humanity.

Organisation and Teaching Strategies

Each week a 2 hour (2x 50 min) lecture dealing with a particular issue in philosophy. These lectures introduce the major issues involved in the topic under consideration and flesh out some of the more important debates involved. While these lectures are introductory in nature, frequent asides (of a content and bibliographical nature) are made which indicate directions for possible further research. Lecture notes, distributed each week, contain sections dealing specifically with postgraduate content concerns.

During the third hour, students meet for the tutorial in which set readings that deal with the *previous* week's topic are discussed. Typically, the lecturer spends the first 20 minutes with the postgraduate group, recapping and extending the lecture material, directing students to suitable further reading, and discussing current research issues arising. In addition to readings shared with undergraduate students, postgraduate students typically have 4-6 additional tutorial readings, compiled in a separate "book of readings", which are

discussed in conjunction with the other readings. These additional readings are generally of a more advanced nature, and typically deal with primary sources from the history of philosophy.

In addition to the 3-hour face-to-face mode, all students are encouraged to make use of electronic means of communication with the lecturer and with other enrolled students. The lecturer will advise students how this will be carried out.

Assessment

	Type of assessment	No of words	Weighting %	Due date	Learning Outcomes covered
1	<p><i>Critical Reflections</i></p> <p>The critical reflection is designed to stretch the postgraduate student's grasp of two major issues in philosophy with reference to two of the tutorial readings. The two topics chosen should be drawn from different sections of the unit and should avoid the topic dealt with in the major essay. Each reflection should be around 1500 words long. The reflections should:</p> <p>(a) provide an outline concerning what the tutorial reading is essentially about (2-4 paras);</p> <p>(b) introduce a second reading located by the student that touches on similar issues and which provides a different argument (2-4 paras); and</p> <p>(c) provide an explanation of where the student currently sits in terms of the issues raised in the two readings discussed (e.g., are there any perceived flaws in reasoning in either reading; and what are the most convincing points made and why?).</p> <p>These two pieces are written in the student's own time during the semester, and are submitted before or on the final night of lectures.</p>	3000 max, (1500 ea)	40%	TBA	1, 2, 3.
2	<p><i>Logic Take-Home Exam:</i></p> <p>The take-home exam in logic is designed to assess students' understanding and ability to apply the basics of logical theory. The exam is distributed at the end of the contact time dealing with logic, and is due two weeks later. Students are typically asked to identify both formal and informal logical fallacies in given arguments, as well as to symbolise and classify given arguments and thereby assess their validity. The postgraduate exam overlaps to a fair degree with the undergraduate paper, but also contains several more challenging questions.</p>	TBA	20%	TBA	6
3	<p><i>Major essay:</i></p> <p>The student is to research more deeply and then critically discuss one clearly defined philosophical problem covered in the unit, and present his/her work in a well-structured and coherent essay. While an extensive list of research topics is provided, students are encouraged to frame a research question of their own which emerges out of their reading. For this task, the student needs to critically discuss and evaluate a range of views on the issue at hand, having researched the issue at some depth, before offering a coherent</p>	3000	40%	Week 14	1, 2, 3, 4, 5

interim position of his/her own concerning these issues. The higher standards of scholarship expected of postgraduate students are indicated in the wording of the objectives (above). The essay is written in the student's own time, and is submitted during or before the exam block.				
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Generic Attributes

- An understanding of how other disciplines relate to the discipline of theology.
- The ability to define and analyse problems.
- Commitment to truth, accuracy, honesty, accountability and ethical standards.
- Willingness to deal with ambiguity and to initiate and participate in change as appropriate.
- The ability to collect, analyse and organise information and ideas and to convey those ideas clearly and fluently, in both written and spoken forms.
- The ability to retrieve, evaluate and use relevant information.
- Consolidation and adaptation of academic skills and knowledge acquired in previous undergraduate and postgraduate studies.
- Development of skills underpinning scholarly discourse in philosophy and theology.
- Development of skills needed to undertake significant graduate-level research in philosophy and theology.

BIBLIOGRAPHY

Textbooks

Recommended:

Perry, J., Bratman, M (eds), *Introduction to Philosophy*, Oxford: Oxford University Press. 1999
 Warburton, N, *Philosophy: The Basics*, London: Routledge. 1996.

Academic & General Resource Requirements

References – Books

Birch, C, *On Purpose*, Sydney: NSW University Press. 1990.
 Bowie, GL, *Twenty Questions: An Introduction to Philosophy*, Harcourt Brace. 1992.
 Bunnin, N, Tsui-James. E-P. (eds), *The Blackwell Companion to Philosophy*. Oxford: Blackwell. 1996.
 Crabbe, JC, *From Soul to Self*, London & New York: Routledge. 1999.
 Fenstermaker. S, West. C., *Doing Gender, Doing Difference: Inequality, Power, and Institutional Change*, New York: Routledge. 2002.
 Harrison-Barbet, A, *Mastering Philosophy*, London: Macmillan. 1990.
 Heil, J, *Philosophy of Mind :A Contemporary Introduction*, London & New York: Routledge. 1998.
 Macquarrie, J, *In Search of Humanity*, NY: Crossroad. 1985.
 Mitchell, H, *In Pursuit of Wisdom*, Belmont CA: Wadsworth. 2002.
 Moore, BN, Bruder, K, *Philosophy: The Power of Ideas*, Mountain View CA: Mayfield. 1993.
 Morris, T, *Philosophy for Dummies*, Foster City, CA: IDG Books. 1999.
 Morton, A, *Philosophy in Practice: An Introduction to the Main Questions*, Oxford: Blackwell. 1996.
 Moylan, M (ed), *Perspectives in Philosophy*, Philadelphia: Harcourt Brace. 1993.
 Murphy, Nancey C, *Reasoning and Rhetoric in Religion*, Valley Forge, PN: Trinity Press International. 1994.
 Nagel, T, *Mortal Questions*, CUP. 1991.
 Phillips, DZ, *Introducing Philosophy: The Challenge of Scepticism*, Oxford: Blackwell. 1996.
 Preston. N, *Understanding Ethics*, Sydney: Federation Press. 1996.
 Schmitt, FF, *Truth: A Primer*, Boulder, CO: Westview Press. 1995.
 Sterba, JP, *Ethics: The Big Questions*, Malden, MA: Blackwell. 1998.
 Taylor, R, *Metaphysics*, Eaglewood Cliffs, N.J: Prentice Hall. 1992.
 Teichman, J, Evans, KC, *Philosophy: A Beginner's Guide*, Oxford: Blackwell. 1991.

References – Journal Articles

Adams, EM, "The Meaning of Life", *International Journal for the Philosophy of Religion*, Vol 51, 71-81. 2002.

- Colledge, R, *Freedom and Responsibility*, The Catholic Leader, 29 Sept, 2003.
_____, *How do we know God really exists?*, "The Catholic Leader", 27 July, 2003.
- De Pater. W, "Sense and Nonsense in Talking about God", *St Louis Quarterly*, Vol 6 (1), 1968, 7-48.
- Maddox. RL, "Contemporary Hermeneutic Philosophy and Theological Studies", *Religious Studies*, Vol 21 (4), 1985, 517-29.
- Sperry. R, "Mind-Brain Interaction: Mentalism, Yes; Dualism, No", *Neuroscience*, Vol 5, 1980, pp. 195-206.
- Tracy. D, "The Hermeneutics of Naming God", *Theological Quarterly*, Vol 57 (4), 1991, 253-64. (PG)
- Wynn. M, "Some Reflections on Richard Swinburne's Argument from Design", *Religious Studies*, Vol 29, 325-35.

References – Online and Other IT Resources

- Xreferplus. Digital Reference Library. <http://www.xrefer.com/>
(Includes a search facility for the *Oxford Companion to Philosophy*)
- A Dictionary of Philosophical Terms and Names. <http://www.philosophypages.com/dy/>
- The Internet Encyclopedia of Philosophy. <http://www.utm.edu/research/iep/>
- Natural Born Cyborgs: Minds, Technologies, and the Future of Human Intelligence*, Radio National's "All in the Mind" program. Aired 25 January 2004. Transcript and audio stream available at:
<http://www.abc.net.au/rn/science/mind/>
- Is the Visual World a Grand Illusion?*, Radio National's "All in the Mind" program. Aired 18 January 2004. Transcript and audio stream available at: <http://www.abc.net.au/rn/science/mind/>