

PH997-20 Topics in Metaphysics and Epistemology

21/22

Department

Philosophy

Level

Taught Postgraduate Level

Module leader

Thomas Crowther

Credit value

20

Module duration

10 weeks

Assessment

100% coursework

Study location

University of Warwick main campus, Coventry

Description

Introductory description

PH997 Topics in Metaphysics and Epistemology

[Module web page](#)

Module aims

This module will offer students critical engagement with selected central topics in Metaphysics and Epistemology through the careful study and discussion of seminal articles in the area. Students will be expected to engage critically with the main arguments of the selected texts, and articulate their own views of the relative strengths and weaknesses of the arguments presented.

Outline syllabus

This is an indicative module outline only to give an indication of the sort of topics that may be covered. Actual sessions held may differ.

This module begins by discussing problems concerning material persistence through time, and the

disputes between 'endurantist' and 'temporal parts' ontologies. It goes on to consider questions about whether the debate between endurantists and their opponents has been satisfactorily conceived in the literature. In the second part of the module, attention turns to the philosophy of process: to different views about the nature of processes, the relation between processes and events, and to questions concerning whether processes 'endure' as material objects do on an endurantist ontology. We will assess whether reflection on the category of process enables us to better understand what 'endurance' and 'endurantism' is.

Syllabus

- Week 1. Introduction to the module
- Week 2. Problems of persistence
- Week 3. Presentism and persistence
- Week 4. A puzzle about endurance and endurantism
- Week 5. Introducing process and activity
- Week 6. No seminar
- Week 7. Mourelatos on processes, events and states
- Week 8. Processes as continuants
- Week 9. Against processes as continuants
- Week 10. Endurance and continuance again

Learning outcomes

By the end of the module, students should be able to:

- By the end of the module the student should be able to have a systematic and advanced understanding and knowledge of the texts covered in the module, the main arguments of the texts, and critical responses to those arguments.
- By the end of the module the student should be able to communicate at an advanced level clearly and substantively in speech and in writing on the questions addressed in the module. They should be able to provide critical analysis of the relevant texts.
- By the end of the module the student should be able to work autonomously to articulate their own view of the relative merits of arguments, methodologies and positions in the literature, and engage critically with other points of view.
- Students should be able to demonstrate the skills involved in philosophical discussion, they will have improved abilities to analyse and critically assess complex concepts and arguments. They will be able to communicate at an advanced level clearly and substantively in speech, as well as in writing, the philosophical arguments and concepts covered in the texts. They will be able to demonstrate sound judgement and initiative in selecting appropriate texts and methods for their investigation of a specifically circumscribed problem and should have acquired an advanced ability to pursue and organize philosophical research using a range of sources (print and electronic media), documenting research carefully, and showing the ability to engage independently in philosophical debate.

Indicative reading list

- D. Wiggins, 1995 'Substance' in Grayling (ed.)
- D. Wiggins. 2001. Sameness and Substance Renewed.

- D. Lewis. 1986. On the Plurality of Worlds
- Johnston, M. 1987 'Is there a Problem about Persistence?' Proceedings of the Aristotelian Society
- Zimmerman, Dean. 2005. 'Temporary Intrinsic and Presentism'. In S. Haslanger and R. Kurtz, (eds.) Persistence, Cambridge, Mass: M.I.T.
- Hofweber, T and Velleman, D. 2010. 'How to Endure', The Philosophical Quarterly.
- Vendler, Z. 1957. 'Verbs and Times', The Philosophical Review
- Mourelatos, A. 1978. 'Events, Processes and States', Linguistics and Philosophy
- Stout, R. 2016. 'The Category of Occurrent Continuants'
- Stout, R. 1997. 'Processes', Philosophy.
- Crowther, T. 2018. 'Processes as Continuants and Process as Stuff'. In Dorsch, F and Macpherson, F. (eds.) Phenomenal Presence. Oxford, O.U.P.
- Crowther, T. 2011. 'The Matter of Events', The Review of Metaphysics, Vol.65, No.1
- Crowther, T. (unpublished ms to be circulated) Endurance, Process and Consciousness.

Subject specific skills

- (i) The capacity to read classic and contemporary works of metaphysics, focused on identity, persistence and the nature of processes, and to understand key ideas in those texts.
- (ii) The capacity to explain key arguments found in classic and contemporary philosophical texts, focussing on the metaphysics of identity, persistence and the nature of process.
- (iii) To develop an appreciation of the strengths and weaknesses of these arguments, and to be able to communicate these strengths and weaknesses in written and oral work.
- (iv) To work effectively with peers in group-oriented work on metaphysics, and to communicate and think about metaphysics in a seminar environment

Transferable skills

- (i) To acquire the capacity to read demanding material effectively and critically.
- (ii) To develop the capacity to explain demanding ideas and arguments clearly, briefly and accurately.
- (iii) To think creatively about problems by deploying the capacity for clear thinking and reasoning
- (iv) To work collaboratively and sensitively with others in a group environment, and to develop the self-confidence to communicate effectively in a group environment.

Study

Study time

Type	Required
Lectures	9 sessions of 1 hour (4%)
Seminars	9 sessions of 1 hour (4%)
Private study	182 hours (91%)
Total	200 hours

Private study description

No private study requirements defined for this module.

Costs

No further costs have been identified for this module.

Assessment

You must pass all assessment components to pass the module.

Students can register for this module without taking any assessment.

Assessment group A2

	Weighting	Study time	Eligible for self-certification
Assessment component			
5000 word essay	100%		Yes (extension)

Reassessment component is the same

Feedback on assessment

Feedback on essays will be provided on the coversheet for the essay, addressing standard areas of evaluation and individual content.

Availability

Courses

This module is Option list A for:

- TPHA-V7PM Postgraduate Taught Philosophy
 - Year 1 of V7PM Philosophy
 - Year 2 of V7PM Philosophy