



UNIVERSITY OF CALGARY
FACULTY OF ARTS
Department of Philosophy

PHIL 523-01
Advanced Topics in Metaphysics
Fall 2022
Tu.Tr. 2-3:15, SS 1253

COURSE OUTLINE

Instructor Name: David Liebesman
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Office: SS1253 (Office hours will be held online)
Office Hours: Tues. 12:30-2 or by appointment
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COURSE INFORMATION

Some objects seem to be a result of human thought and interaction: e.g. restaurants, money, and universities. Such social entities, however, are puzzling in a variety of ways. Social objects can come into existence by virtue of mere human decision. They seem to violate fundamental laws of physics: a social object may instantly move across the street in virtue of the owners signing a new lease. And despite these oddities, social objects seem to be material objects that we can causally interact with. In this course we'll examine a variety of social objects with the aim of understanding how they can have such puzzling properties. We'll discuss social groups, establishments, money, social essences, games, and artworks.

PREREQUISITE(S)

6 units in courses labelled Philosophy, of which, 3 units must be from [Philosophy 201](#), [395](#), [421](#), [423](#), [461](#), [463](#), [467](#), [481](#), [483](#) and 3 units must be at the 400 level or above.

COURSE OBJECTIVES/LEARNING OUTCOMES

- Knowledge of the key issues in the metaphysics of objects.
- Knowledge of the different theories of social ontology.
- Ability to critically digest, interpret, and analyze contemporary articles in metaphysics pertaining to social metaphysics.
- Ability to develop and defend original positions.
- Ability to engage in constructive, respectful, oral and written argumentation.

REQUIRED/RECOMMENDED TEXTBOOKS, READINGS AND MATERIALS

- Articles will all be available via D2L

COURSE ASSESSMENT AND EVALUATION

Assessment Components and Grading Schemes

- Four short papers (approx. 600 words), due on Sep. 27th, Oct. 18th, Nov. 1th, and Nov. 22nd, and submitted via D2L (15% of the grade each, 60% total). Students are permitted to revise at most one of their short papers for an improved grade. The due date for the revised paper is Nov. 29th.

- One discussion question per class posted to the D2L discussion board (10% of the grade total). These discussion questions must be posted by 9 A.M. the day of the class meeting.
- One longer paper (approx. 3,500 words), final draft due on Dec 15th and submitted via D2L. Rough draft due on Dec. 6th and peer review due on Dec 8th. (1% for the rough draft, 1% for the peer review, and 28% for the final draft, for a total of 30% of the final grade).
- Late assignments will be penalized 1/3 letter grade per day unless arrangements with the professor are made in advance of the due date.

Exams

- No final exam.

IMPORTANT DEPARTMENTAL, FACULTY AND UNIVERSITY INFORMATION

The following information is MANDATORY. You may choose to include additional policies, to be reviewed by the Department Head during the approval process.

Academic Accommodations

It is the student's responsibility to request academic accommodations according to the University policies and procedures. The student accommodation policy can be found at ucalgary.ca/legal-services/sites/default/files/teams/1/Policies-Student-Accommodation-Policy.pdf.

Students needing an Accommodation because of a disability or medical condition should communicate this need to Student Accessibility Services in accordance with the Procedure for Accommodations for Students with Disabilities: ucalgary.ca/legal-services/sites/default/files/teams/1/Policies-Accommodation-for-Students-with-Disabilities-Procedure.pdf. Students needing an Accommodation in relation to their coursework or to fulfil requirements for a graduate degree, based on a protected ground other than disability, should communicate this need, preferably in writing, to their instructor.

Absence or Missed Course Assessments

Students who are absent from class assessments (tests, participation activities, or other assignments) should inform their instructors as soon as possible. If the reason provided for the absence is acceptable, instructors may decide that any arrangements made can take forms other than make-up tests or assignments. For example, the weight of a missed grade may be added to another assignment or test.

Student Support and Resources

Full details and information about the following resources can be found at ucalgary.ca/current-students/student-services

- Wellness and Mental Health Resources
- Student Success Centre
- Student Ombuds Office
- Student Union (SU) Information
- Graduate Students' Association (GSA) Information
- Emergency Evacuation/Assembly Points
- Safewalk

Academic Advising

If you are a student in the Faculty of Arts, you can speak to an academic advisor in the Arts Students' Centre about course planning, course selection, registration, program progression and more. Visit the Faculty of Arts website at <https://arts.ucalgary.ca/current-students/undergraduate/academic-advising> for contact details and information regarding common academic concerns.

For questions specific to the philosophy program, please visit arts.ucalgary.ca/philosophy. Further academic guidance is available by contacting Jeremy Fantl (Undergraduate Program Director jfantl@ucalgary.ca) or David Dick (Honours Advisor dgdick@ucalgary.ca).

Writing Assessment and Support

The assessment of all written assignments—and, to a lesser extent, written exam responses—is based in part on writing skills. This includes correctness (grammar, punctuation, sentence structure, etc.), as well as general clarity and organization. Research papers must include a thorough and accurate citation of sources. Students are also encouraged to use Writing Support Services for assistance. For more information, and other services offered by the Student Success Centre, please visit ucalgary.ca/student-services/student-success.

Required Technology

In order to successfully engage in their learning experiences at the University of Calgary, students taking online, remote, and blended courses are required to have reliable access to the following technology:

- A computer with a supported operating system, as well as the latest security, and malware updates;
- A current and updated web browser;
- Webcam (built-in or external);
- Microphone and speaker (built-in or external), or headset with microphone;
- Current antivirus and/or firewall software enabled;
- Broadband internet connection.

Most current laptops will have a built-in webcam, speaker and microphone.

Responsible Use of D2L

Important information and communication about this course will be posted on D2L (Desire2Learn), UCalgary's online learning management system. Visit <https://ucalgary.service-now.com/it> for how-to information and technical assistance.

All users of D2L are bound by the guidelines on the responsible use of D2L posted here: <https://elearn.ucalgary.ca/commitment-to-the-responsible-use-of-d2l/>. The instructor may establish additional specific course policies for D2L, Zoom, and any other technologies used to support remote learning. Instructional materials, including audio or video recordings of lectures, may not be posted outside of the course D2L site. Students violating this policy are subject to discipline under the [University of Calgary's Non-Academic Misconduct policy](#).

Media Recording

Please refer to the following statement on media recording of students: https://elearn.ucalgary.ca/wp-content/uploads/2020/05/Media-Recording-in-Learning-Environments-OSP_FINAL.pdf

Academic Misconduct/Honesty

Cheating or plagiarism on any assignment or examination is as an extremely serious academic offense, the penalty for which will be an F on the assignment or an F in the course, and possibly a disciplinary sanction such as probation, suspension, or expulsion. For information on academic misconduct and its consequences, please see the University of Calgary Calendar at ucalgary.ca/pubs/calendar/current/k.html.

Intellectual honesty requires that your work include adequate referencing to sources. Plagiarism occurs when you do not acknowledge or correctly reference your sources. If you have questions about referencing, please consult your instructor.

University Policies

The Instructor Intellectual Property Policy is available at ucalgary.ca/legal-services/sites/default/files/teams/1/Policies-Intellectual-Property-Policy.pdf

The University of Calgary is under the jurisdiction of the provincial Freedom of Information and Protection of Privacy (FOIP) Act, as outlined at <https://www.ucalgary.ca/legal-services/access-information-privacy>. The instructor (or TA) must return graded assignments *directly* to the student UNLESS written permission to do otherwise has been provided.

All students are required to read the University of Calgary policy on Acceptable Use of Material Protected by Copyright (<https://www.ucalgary.ca/legal-services/sites/default/files/teams/1/Policies-Acceptable-Use-of-Material-Protected-by-Copyright-Policy.pdf>) and requirements of the copyright act (<https://laws-lois.justice.gc.ca/eng/acts/C-42/index.html>).