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PHILOSOPHY DEPARTMENT STAFF AND RESEARCH INTERESTS

The Philosophy Department's teaching and research spans the main areas of analytic philosophy. Though our approach is slanted towards the thematic, there is a strong interest in the history of the subject. In addition to its core academic activities, the Department is also a resource for other departments and faculties, providing educational and consultation services in bioethics, business ethics, aesthetics and other areas. Members of the Department also provide expertise for various university committees, most especially a number of university ethics committees.

Professor and Head of Department:

- B. WEISS, BSc (Hons) Dunelm PGCE Lond PhD St. Andrews
Areas of interest: Philosophies of language, logic and mathematics, realism and anti-realism.

Professor

- D. BENATAR, BSocSc (Hons) PhD Cape Town
Areas of interest: moral and social philosophy, applied ethics, some philosophy of law and philosophy of religion.

Senior Lecturers:

- E. GALGUT, BA (Hons) MA Witwatersrand MA Cape Town PhD Rutgers
Areas of interest: philosophy of psychology; aesthetics / philosophy of literature; philosophy of psychoanalysis; animal rights
- J. RITCHIE, BA (Hons) Oxon MPhil PhD LSE
Areas of interest: philosophy of science and metaphysics.
- G. FRIED, BA (Hons) Cape Town MPhil PhD Cantab
Areas of interest: the use of formal methods (e.g. social choice theory, game theory) in philosophy, and - more broadly - reflection on the aims and methods of philosophy; philosophy of mathematics; history of philosophy; aesthetics.
- G. HULL, BA (Hons) Cantab MPhil PhD Lond

Areas of interest: Metaethics, Philosophy of Action, Political and Social Philosophy, 19th and 20th Century German Philosophy (including Hegel, Nietzsche, Marxism)

- T. ANGIER, BA (Hons) Cantab MPhil Lond PhD Cantab PhD Toronto

Areas of interest: Ancient Philosophy (especially Ancient Greek Ethical and Political Theory); Ethics; 19th Century Philosophy; Aesthetics

Lecturers:

- R NEFDT, BA(Hons) MSocSc Cape Town MSc Amsterdam PhD St Andrews

Areas of interest: Philosophy of Language, Epistemology, Linguistics, Logic, Cognitive Science, African Philosophy

Administrative Officer:

- M. ERASMUS

Administrative Assistant:

- E. GUBB

Senior Secretary

- L. DAVISON

DEPARTMENT RESEARCH CULTURE

In addition to pursuing their own individual research projects, members of the Department meet regularly to discuss issues of philosophical interest. The key to this is a regular departmental seminar, where a staff member, invited speaker or postgraduate student presents a paper, followed by discussion. Postgraduate students are both expected to participate actively in such discussion and, at Masters and Doctoral level, to present their own work in this forum.

The Department has hosted a number of international conferences in recent years: *Quotidian Ethics* in 1999; *Analytic Existentialism* in 2001; *The Space of Reasons* in 2004; *Ethics and Africa* in 2006; *Bearing and Rearing Children: The Ethics of Procreation and Parenthood* in 2008; *On Hacking's Styles of Thinking* in 2011; the annual meeting of the Philosophy Society of Southern Africa in 2012; the *Social Equality* conference in 2014; the Spring Colloquium in 2015; *Philosophy in Africa and Africa in Philosophy* seminar series in 2016. In 2017 the Department hosted another international conference on *Virtue, Skill and Practical Reason*.

The Department regularly hosts academic visitors both from other departments in South Africa and departments internationally. Visitors generally present research papers, and engage with students, particularly at post-graduate level.

Another forum for discussion is the monthly Philosophy Society. The Society aims to foster and promote philosophy and philosophical thought in the greater Cape Town area, by providing a forum for extra-mural philosophy lectures and discussions. Details can be found on the departmental website (<http://www.philosophy.uct.ac.za/>).

In addition, reading and discussion groups are established on an *ad hoc* basis to pursue themes of common interest when these arise. Many of these involve, or are even initiated by, our graduate students.

THE POSTGRADUATE PROGRAMME

- *Honours in Philosophy*

The coursework component of the Honours programme consists of four modules. Under normal circumstances, these modules will be those offered by the Department. (Exceptions to this can be granted if a strong case for taking modules outside the Department is made, to the satisfaction of the Head of Department). Together, the four taught courses constitute 75% of the final mark.

The programme also requires the student to complete a research essay of not more than 10 000 words. This essay may be written on any topic of interest to the student, on condition that the Department has the capacity to provide supervision in that area and that the topic is approved by either the Postgraduate Convenor or the Head of Department. In the past, some students have chosen to write their research essays on a topic from their coursework, which they explore in more detail. Other students have written on new topics not covered in coursework. Just to give you a sense of the variety of possible topics, here are some recent options: Plato's theory of punishment; just war theory; evolutionary debunking arguments; our moral relation with animal predators; identity politics; and the reality of socially constructed human kinds. Note that these are treated more like long essays rather than theses for the purposes of supervision – i.e. supervision will be provided but typically drafts will not be read.

The research essay/project is weighted at 25% of the final result and must be submitted by no later than 28th October. In the past, most Honours students have elected to complete their research essay during the summer break. The Faculty requires students who do not submit by 28th October to request an extension. However, this concession, which should be sent to the Postgraduate Convenor, is routinely approved. Provided that the essay is handed in by the 19th December students will not have to pay any additional fees.

To be awarded the degree not less than 50% must be obtained for each component of the programme – so you'd need to pass all the courses and the research essay. Normally the course lasts one calendar year, although some students may be required by the Department to take their Honours over an eighteen-month or two-year period.

- *Masters in Philosophy by coursework*

Four taught masters courses are taken, these will each typically involve writing three essays, each of about 3000 words. In addition, a dissertation of approximately 25 000 words is to be written under supervision. Coursework is weighted at 50% of the final result, and the minor dissertation is weighted at 50% of the final result. To be awarded the degree, not less than 50% must be obtained for each component of the programme. (For dissertation deadlines – see below).

- *Research Masters in Philosophy*
- *PhD in Philosophy*

Examination is by dissertation/thesis alone. A Masters dissertation should not exceed 50 000 words in length. A doctoral thesis should not exceed 80 000 words in length. (For dissertation deadlines – see below).

Masters/PhD Dissertation Deadlines:

For a Masters-by-coursework, you must register for a minor dissertation; for a Masters-by-thesis or a PhD you must register for a major dissertation. Either way, a *candidature form*, available from the Faculty graduate office, must be completed before you can register for the dissertation component of the course. In addition, you and your supervisor will have to complete a *Memorandum of Understanding* that sets out shared expectations and requirements for supervision of the dissertation.

Note: if your thesis is handed in after the start of the first semester in any year, you will need to re-register for that year and will incur extra fees.

At Masters level your dissertation is marked by two external examiners. Since these need to be sourced, the graduate office requires you to complete an *intention to submit* form that functions as an alert for the faculty, so that they can source and contact external examiners, as well as inform you of the procedures and requirements of the actual hand-in of

the thesis. This form should be submitted four weeks before your thesis submission.

At PhD level your thesis is marked by three external examiners. As with the Masters degree, an *intention to submit* form needs to be submitted in advance, and this initiates the process of confirming the appointment of your examiners. PhD examinations take place under the auspices of the Doctoral Degrees Board, which is a University level body.

For both Masters and Doctoral degrees it is important that both the intention to submit form and the thesis itself are handed in by the specified dates, if you are to stand a good chance of having your result by the time graduation takes place. You should note, however, that there are no guarantees, since external examiners may take longer than expected to return their reports.

- *Honours and Masters in Politics, Philosophy and Economics*

This is a joint programme offered by the Departments of Philosophy, Political Studies and Economics.

General Convenor: Dr G Hull (Philosophy)
Politics Advisor: A/Prof Zwelethu Jolobe
Economics Advisor: Prof Eftychia Nikolaidou

The PPE programme is an interdisciplinary programme incorporating courses and research in the three disciplines of Politics, Philosophy and Economics. Students entering the programme must identify their primary disciplinary focus in order to be placed in a home department.

While all PPE students will complete at least one course in each of the disciplines, their research essay (Honours project or Masters minor dissertation) will be based in their home department. Registration for PPE, and supervision of the research essay, must comply with the home department's requirements.

For further details - including entry requirements, course structure and application procedures - go to:

<http://www.philosophy.uct.ac.za/philosophy/postgraduate/introduction>

COURSE OFFERINGS FOR 2021

In any given year the Department of Philosophy offers a number of courses, although the precise content and range depend on student interest and uptake. The details are finalised in a meeting with graduate students held at the beginning of the academic year. Please note that many of the courses aim to build upon undergraduate work in the area and admittance to the course at the discretion of course convenor. Below are the potential course offerings for 2021, depending on staff and student preferences. Whilst provisional, they should give a good indication of what is on offer.

Courses at a glance:

First Semester	Second Semester
PHI4023F / PHI5023F History of Philosophy	PHI4022S / PHI5008S Moral Philosophy
PHI4017F/ PHI5015F Aesthetics	PHI4016S / PHI5004S Truth and Meaning
PHI4018F/ PHI5007F Philosophy of Science	PHI4015S / PHI5010S Topics in Theoretical Philosophy
	PHI4021S / PHI5009S Topics in Rational Decision Making
PHI4004H / PHI5006H Philosophical Texts	

NOTE: Apart from PHI4004H/ PHI5006H Philosophical Texts, all the above courses have the following requirements: participation in weekly seminars, and three essays of approximately 3000 words each.

Course Descriptions:

PHI4012F / PHI5012F Philosophy of Psychology

Convenor: Dr E. Galgut

[Not in 2021]

Topics may vary from year to year, but will almost always include some discussion concerning the nature of folk psychological explanation. Does folk psychology present the best theory of the mind? Is another kind of theory even possible? Topics to be examined may include: personal identity; personhood; personal-sub-personal distinction; psychoanalysis and the theory of mind; the picture of the mind as rational; repression; self-deception; the dynamic unconscious. If there is sufficient interest, the relation between art and the mind may be examined.

PHI4015S / PHI5010S Topics in Theoretical Philosophy

Convenor: Dr R Nefdt

Semester 2

This course will explore a number of concerns lying at the intersection of issues in philosophy of language, epistemology and the philosophy of mind. Topics vary from year to year, and may include some of the following: the nature of concepts, the distinction between sentience and sapience, rule-following, the normativity of the mental and the relationship between perspectivity, objectivity and knowledge.

PHI4017F / PHI5015F Aesthetics

Convenor: Dr E. Galgut

Semester 1

This course will examine various issues in contemporary analytic aesthetics, which may include a sub-set of the following: expression, formalism, metaphor, the ontological status of art, narrative, the relationship between art and morality, the relationship between art and truth, the beautiful and the sublime, the pathetic fallacy, aesthetic emotions, emotional responses to works of fiction, the imagination, and art and psychoanalysis.

PHI4021S / PHI5009S Topics in Rational Decision Making

Convenor: Dr G. Fried

Semester 2

How should we make decisions? This problem confronts groups of people who must find a procedure that allows for dissent while still reaching some fair and definite choice. It also challenges agents who need to consider the motives and possible actions of their competitors. Various theories offer formal and informal accounts of rational choice in a range of contexts. We will consider and evaluate some of these theories, and apply them to cases of social, political, and individual decision-making.

PHI4022S / PHI5008S Moral Philosophy

Convenor: Prof D Benatar

Semester 2

This course will explore a connected set of topics in the area of moral philosophy. In some years the subject matter will be theoretical and will examine one or more ethical theories or general questions in moral philosophy. In other years, the course will have a more applied orientation and will be devoted to a range of practical moral problems in some or other area of applied ethics.

PHI4023F / PHI5025F History of Philosophy

Convener: Dr T Angier Semester 1

This course critically examines a cluster of topics from the history of philosophy. Topics will vary from year to year. If the course focuses on the work of one philosopher (e.g. Plato, St. Augustine, Descartes, Spinoza, Kant, Kierkegaard, Heidegger, Sartre), competing interpretations of several key writings by this figure will be studied as well as those writings themselves. The course might alternatively focus on a particular school of thought or tradition rather than just one past philosopher: e.g. Ancient Greek approaches to Teleology; Scholastic Metaphysics; Early Modern theories of Legitimacy and the State; the Idealism of Kant, Fichte, Schelling and Hegel; French Existentialist theories of Freedom; Critical Theory and the development of Western Marxism. In this case, as well as assessing the different arguments and views studied, the course will examine how philosophers from different times and places have (mis)interpreted and reacted to one another's work

PHI4004H / PHI5006H Philosophical Texts

Convenor: Dr E Galgut

By arrangement

This course involves a guided reading of certain key philosophical texts over a period of year. Students are required to select two of the texts offered during the given year. The course is jointly offered by the members of the Philosophy Department and teaching takes the form of tutorials that structure and guide the student's own close reading of the texts. The emphasis is firmly on self-study and first-hand engagement with the set text itself.

The course will be assessed by two 3,000-word essays on *each* of the set texts. Note that although the course continues over the year, it has the weighting of a *single* semester course.

PHI4025F / PHI5003F Contemporary Metaphysics

Convenor: Dr J. Ritchie

[Not in 2021]

This course will explore a range of issues in contemporary metaphysics. Topics covered will include some of the following: the nature of space and time; problems of identity and substance; physicalism, consciousness and supervenience; and modality, laws and dispositions. The course will also include some reflection on the possibility and possible limits of obtaining substantial knowledge from armchair reflection.

PHI4016S/PHI5004S Truth and Meaning

Convenor: Prof B. Weiss

Semester 2

This is a course on truth and meaning. Sometimes truth will take centre stage; sometimes meaning; but often they'll share the limelight. The relation between truth and meaning will be one of our major preoccupations. It seems we use language to describe a world independent of our talk about it: sentences, or statements are true just when they represent the way things are in that talk-independent world. So truth links with this conception of objectivity. But also it seems that one understands a sentence or statement when one knows just when it is true. So truth links with conceptions of meaning and understanding too. How best should we make sense of these ideas? Indeed, can we ultimately make good sense of them?

PHI5005S/PHI4010S Formal Logic

Convenor: Prof B. Weiss

[Not in 2021]

The course presupposes an understanding of sentential and predicate logic, as taught in the undergraduate programme. It begins by presenting those logical systems again in a slightly more systematic manner and then looks at the theory *about* the logical systems themselves. We prove that they are sound – all proofs correspond with valid arguments – and complete – all valid arguments correspond with proofs. We then look at a method of proof encapsulated in truth trees, which takes consistency rather than validity as central. Finally we look at some systems of modal logic, which attempt to make explicit the logic of notions such as necessity and possibility. Assessment is by means of two tests and an essay.

PHI4018F/PHI5007F Philosophy of Science

Convenor: Dr J. Ritchie

Semester 1

This course will explore some core issues in contemporary philosophy of science. Topics covered will include some of the following: contemporary theories of confirmation; the realism-anti-realism controversy; models, theories and representation in science; naturalised philosophy of science; reductionism, physicalism and the unity of the sciences; and issues in the philosophy of physics including the interpretation of quantum theory.

APPLICATION PROCEDURE

In addition to meeting the requirements for Faculty admission (set out in the Humanities Faculty Postgraduate Handbook), admission to graduate study in the Philosophy Department is at the discretion of the Head of Department. This decision is made in consultation with a departmental committee established to consider such applications, and decisions are primarily based on academic performance thus far. In normal circumstances, a necessary prerequisite for admission to a philosophy programme at any rank is a high level of academic performance in studies at a previous rank. For example, a high level of performance in a major in Philosophy, or its equivalent, is a necessary prerequisite for admission to the Honours programme.

In order to be considered for admission to a postgraduate programme, you need to complete a formal UCT application form. This form is available on the UCT website. The application form needs to be completed and submitted online. The admissions office processes and forwards the application to the Humanities Faculty, who then pass it on to the Philosophy Department.

All applicants are asked to submit the following as part of their application:

- A sample of academic writing
- A brief CV and covering letter stating your intention to apply.
- A research proposal (in the case of research-based Masters and PhD applications only)

External candidates – those who are either not currently a postgraduate in the Philosophy Department or those who have not completed (or are not currently completing) their major in Philosophy at UCT – will also be asked to include the following:

- certified copies of their degree certificate/s
- certified copies of their full academic transcript/s
- names and contact details of two referees.

Please note that consideration of the application will only begin once we have received a completed application package. Once a *complete* application package is received, it is considered by the departmental postgraduate committee and a decision is forwarded to the applicant via

the Humanities Faculty. In normal circumstances, the turnabout from submission to decision is around 3-4 weeks. Incomplete application packages will *not* be considered and adds significantly to this turnaround time

The formal closing date is 31 October (for South Africans) and 30 September (for non-South Africans). Late applications may be considered where capacity allows for this.

POSTGRADUATE TEACHING OPPORTUNITIES

Many of our postgraduate students are offered the opportunity of acting as tutors ('teaching assistants') for the undergraduate courses taught in the department. Not only is this an opportunity for graduate students to earn some extra money, it provides an excellent way to develop invaluable organisational and presentational skills, as well as further enhancing mastery over the material taught at undergraduate level.

Tutors are given some training in the Department and are encouraged to take up the training offered by the Faculty. Course lecturers and convenors provide 'on the job' support. So you won't be left to fend for yourself.

We thus strongly encourage graduate students to apply for the available tutoring positions in the department, and, all things being equal, we give first priority to our graduate students when filling these positions. That said, entry into our graduate programmes does not guarantee that you will be offered a teaching position, as this will depend on other factors such as availability, prior educational experience and feedback solicited from previous teaching experiences.

POSTGRADUATE FUNDING

Although admittance to the programme does not guarantee funding, there are a variety of postgraduate funding opportunities for which you can apply. These are administered by UCT's Postgraduate Funding Office. Please note: sources of funding have tight deadlines for application, some as early as June or July in the year preceding commencement of studies. Further, these sources typically require an offer of acceptance for the proposed course of study *before* they will accept an application. It is, therefore, in your interest to apply to the Department as early as possible, to ensure that the widest array of funding opportunities are available to you.

Application details, forms and a brochure detailing funding opportunities may be found here:

<http://www.uct.ac.za/apply/funding/postgraduate/applications/>

FURTHER INFORMATION

- General details on **how to apply** to the university can be obtained from the UCT website: www.uct.ac.za or from the Postgraduate Officer at Humanities Faculty on (+27 21) 650 2691 or by email at hum-postgrad@uct.ac.za.
- **International students** should contact the International Students Admission Programme Office (IAPO) by email at int-iapo@uct.ac.za.
- Enquiries regarding **scholarships and bursaries** should be directed to the UCT Postgraduate Funding Office on (+27 21) 650 3622 or by email at pgfunding@uct.ac.za.
- Further information regarding the **programme** can be obtained from the departmental website:
- <http://www.philosophy.uct.ac.za/philosophy/postgraduate/introduction> . Additional questions can be sent to the Philosophy Department's postgraduate convenor.

PHILOSOPHY DEPARTMENT CONTACT DETAILS

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Postgraduate Convenor

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