

ACADEMIC SESSION 2010-2011

PH4042 The Metaphysics of Truth

Credits: 15; number of weeks: 12

PLEASE NOTE CAREFULLY:

The full set of school regulations and procedures is contained in the Undergraduate Student Handbook which is available online at <http://www.abdn.ac.uk/sdhp/ugradstudenthandbook/>. Students are expected to familiarise themselves not only with the contents of this leaflet but also with the contents of the Handbook. Therefore, ignorance of the contents of the Handbook will not excuse the breach of any school regulation or procedure.

You must familiarise yourself with this important information at the earliest opportunity.

COURSE CO-ORDINATOR/COURSE TEAM

Dr Luca Moretti

Office hours: Mon 13:00-15:00

Phone: 01224 272385

Email: l.moretti@abdn.ac.uk

Discipline Secretary:

Tracy Noden

KCG11b, King's Quad

01224 273986

t.noden@abdn.ac.uk

TIMETABLE

This course is held in weekly sessions, which are either lectures (60 minutes) or seminars (90 minutes).

Time and Place: **NK3 (New King's) Fridays at 14:00**

Students can view the University Calendar at

<http://www.abdn.ac.uk/sdhp/documents/weeknumbers2010-11.pdf>.

COURSE DESCRIPTION

The nature of truth constitutes one of the deepest philosophical problems ever. Is truth correspondence with external reality or mere coherence of all our ideas and representations together? Is truth a real property of our beliefs or, rather, a deflationary and redundant feature of them? Are there truths that we couldn't possibly know even if our cognitive powers were idealized? Is truth reducible to some kind of epistemic justification? The course aims to provide a systematic survey of the answers given to these and other questions by contemporary analytic philosophers. Relations between the answers and central issues in metaphysics and epistemology – such as the nature of objectivity and of epistemic justification – will also be investigated. |

COURSE AIMS

- To introduce students to the principal conceptions of truth in the contemporary debate in analytic philosophy.
- To give students insight into the central problems of theory of truth.
- To explore connections between problems in theory of truth and issues in other philosophical areas.
- To trace some recent developments in the relevant contemporary debate. |

INTENDED LEARNING OUTCOMES

- To understand the principal theories of truth in the contemporary debate and to appreciate their points of strength and weakness.
- To be able to explain key concepts in metaphysics and philosophical logic.
- To be able to read and critically discuss journal articles carefully and identify key arguments.
- To be able to articulate ideas clearly, confidently and systematically. |

LECTURE/SEMINAR PROGRAMME

Week 1 Lecture: Introduction and overview.

Week 2 Seminar: Realism and the Correspondence Theory

Week 3 Seminar: Realism and the Correspondence Theory

Week 4 Seminar: Coherence theories

Week 5 Seminar: Coherence theories

Week 6 Seminar: Pragmatism and Antirealism

Week 7 Seminar: Pragmatism and Antirealism

Week 8 Seminar: Tarski's Theory and its critics

Week 9 Seminar: Tarski's Theory and its critics

Week 10 Seminar: Deflationism and Minimalism

Week 11 Seminar: Deflationism and Minimalism

Week 12 Seminar: Pluralism

READING LIST

A *provisional* reading list, from which we might want to deviate as the course progresses, will be distributed via WebCT.

All articles of the core reading list will be taken from the following anthology: Michael P. Lynch (ed.). *The Nature of Truth – Classic and Contemporary Perspectives*. London: MIT Press (2001).

Though copies of this book will be on Heavy Demand, purchasing the anthology is strongly recommended.

SECONDARY READING

Two short but excellent introductions to contemporary metaphysics of truth are the entries:

'Truth' (<http://www.iep.utm.edu/truth/>), *Internet Encyclopedia of Philosophy*.

'Truth' (<http://plato.stanford.edu/entries/truth/>), *Stanford Encyclopedia of Philosophy*.

A much more comprehensive and detailed introduction is:

R. L. Kirkham (1992). *Theories of Truth*. London: MIT Press.

Two very good anthologies that contain influential articles not included in Lynch (2001) are:

S. Blackburn and K Simmons (eds.) *Truth*. Oxford: OUP (2000).

P. Greenough and M. P. Lynch (eds.) *Truth and Realism*. Oxford: OUP (2006).

Further reading material for the essay topics will be supplied in due course. |

TEACHING ARRANGEMENTS

| This is a student-led, seminar-based course. This means that ALL students will be expected to prepare fully for each session. Moreover, EVERY student will be expected to 'lead' *at least* one of the weekly seminars, beginning with a 20 minute presentation, followed by student-led discussion. |

REGULARITY OF ATTENDANCE

| Attendance is required. |

Absence from Classes on Medical Grounds

Candidates who wish to establish that their academic performance has been adversely affected by their health are required to secure medical certificates relating to the relevant periods of ill health (see General Regulation 17.3).

The University's policy on requiring certification for absence on medical grounds or other good cause can be accessed at:

www.abdn.ac.uk/registry/quality/appendix7x5.pdf

You are strongly advised to make yourself fully aware of your responsibilities if you are absent due to illness or other good cause. In particular, you are asked to note that self-certification of absence for periods of absence up to and including eleven weekdays is permissible. However, where absence has prevented attendance at an examination or where it may have affected your performance in an element of assessment or where you have been unable to attend a specified teaching session, you are strongly advised to provide medical certification (see section 3 of the Policy on Certification of Absence for Medical Reasons or Other Good Cause).

Additional information regarding medical absences, extenuating circumstances and exam absences can be found in the Student Handbook, pg 6-8.

CLASS CERTIFICATE

Failure to attend classes or failure to submit a piece of continuous assessment may result in your class certificate being refused.

Students who are refused a class certificate are withdrawn from the course and cannot take the prescribed degree assessment in the current session, nor are eligible to be re-assessed next session, unless and until they qualify for the award of a class certificate by taking the course again in the next session.

Students who attend and complete the work required for a course are considered to have been awarded a 'Class Certificate'. Being in possession of a valid Class Certificate for a course entitles a student to sit degree examinations for that course. From 2010/11 class certificates will be valid for two years and permit a total of three attempts at the required assessment within that two year period i.e. the first attempt plus up to two resits.

Full information on Class Certificates can be found in the Student Handbook, pg 6-7.

ASSESSMENT

50% examination and 50% essay. |

Please note: In order to pass a course on the first attempt, a student must attain a CAS mark of at least 6 (six) on each element of course assessment. Failure to do so will result in a grade of no greater than CAS 8 (eight) for the course as a whole.

Students can view the Common Assessment Scale (CAS) at

<http://www.abdn.ac.uk/sdhp/ugrad-degrees.php>.

ESSAYS

2500-3000 words. Essays should be in 12 point font with line spacing of at least 1½. The word limit is confined to plus or minus 10% and essays deviating in length from the norm will be subject to penalty. |

Students can also find advice on essay writing in the Student Handbook, pg 15-19.

ESSAY TOPICS

You are encouraged to choose your own topic. Please consult with the course-co-ordinator at least 2 weeks before the deadline. |

ASSESSMENT DEADLINES

The essays are due by 3pm on Thursday, 9 December 2010. |

SUBMISSION ARRANGEMENTS

Students must submit **one printed copy** to the School Office (KCG 11c), together with a completed [essay cover sheet](#) for the School of Divinity, History and Philosophy attached. **One further copy must** be submitted to TurnitinUK.

TURNITIN CLASS ID: 205831

PASSWORD (case-sensitive): PH4042 |

Please note: Failure to submit coursework to TurnitinUK will result in a mark of zero for the coursework.

TURNITIN USER INSTRUCTIONS

TurnitinUK is an online service which compares student assignments with online sources including web pages, databases of reference material, and content previously submitted by other users across the UK. **The software makes no decision as to whether plagiarism has occurred**; it is simply a tool which highlights sections of text that have been found in other sources thereby helping academic staff decide whether plagiarism has occurred.

Further information on TurnitinUK and instructions on how to submit an assignment to TurnitinUK can be obtained from the following area of the Student Learning Service website: <http://www.abdn.ac.uk/sls/plagiarism/>. These pages provide information and advice on avoiding plagiarism including the University's Definition of Plagiarism, a Checklist for Students, Referencing and Citing as well as information on TurnitinUK.

If students are having difficulty with a Turnitin account, please contact the discipline secretary at t.noden@abdn.ac.uk, or by going to KCG11b, King's Quad.

LATE SUBMISSION

LATE SUBMISSIONS WILL NOT BE ACCEPTED WITHOUT ADEQUATE DOCUMENTATION AND EXTENSIONS MUST BE REQUESTED BEFORE THE DUE DATE. |

Further information regarding late submission and extensions can be found in the [Student Handbook](#), pg 8-10.

ASSESSMENT FEEDBACK

The University recognises that the provision of timely and appropriate feedback on assessment plays a key part in students learning and teaching. The guiding principles for the provision of feedback within the University are detailed in the Institutional Framework for the Provision of Feedback on Assessment available at: www.abdn.ac.uk/registry/quality/appendix7x8.pdf.

PLAGIARISM

‘Plagiarism is the use, without adequate acknowledgement, of the intellectual work of another person in work submitted for assessment. A student cannot be found to have committed plagiarism where it can be shown that the student has taken all reasonable care to avoid representing the work of others as his/her own.’

Plagiarism is a serious offence everywhere, both within and outwith the academic community. All cases of suspected plagiarism will be reported to the Head of School in the first instance and cannot be discussed with or determined by a Tutor or Course Co-ordinator.

Please note that students MUST refer to the School's Undergraduate Student Handbook for more detailed information on what constitutes plagiarism, how to avoid it, and what the University's procedure is should plagiarism be suspected.

EXAMINATION

A 2-hour exam, in which the student will give written answers to 2 out of 7-8 questions, will take place at the end of the half session. |

Past exam papers can be viewed at <http://www.abdn.ac.uk/library/examdb/>. Further information regarding exams can be found in the Student Handbook, pg 20-23.

CLASS REPRESENTATIVES

We value students' opinions in regard to enhancing the quality of teaching and its delivery; therefore in conjunction with the Students' Association we support the operation of a Class Representative system.

The students within each course, year, or programme elect representatives by the end of the fourth week of teaching within each half-session. In the Philosophy discipline we operate a system of course representatives for Levels 1 & 2, and year representatives for Levels 3 & 4. Any student registered within a course or year that wishes to represent a given group of students can stand for election as a class representative. You will be informed when the elections for class representative will take place.

What will it involve?

It will involve speaking to your fellow students about the year you represent. This can include any comments that they may have. You will attend a Staff-Student Liaison Committee and you should represent the views and concerns of the students within this meeting. As a representative you will also be able to contribute to the agenda. You will then feedback to the students after this meeting with any actions that are being taken.

Training

Training for class representatives will be run by the Students Association. Training will take place in the fourth or fifth week of teaching each half-session. For more information about the Class representative system visit www.ausa.org.uk or email the VP Education & Employability vped@abdn.ac.uk. Class representatives are also eligible to undertake the STAR (Students Taking Active Roles) Award, further information about the co-curricular award is available at: www.abdn.ac.uk/careers.

THE CO-CURRICULUM

The co-curriculum enhances a student's employability and provides opportunities to develop and achieve Aberdeen Graduate Attributes. Co-curricular activities complement a student's degree programme and include: work placements, study abroad, enterprise and entrepreneurship activities, the BP Student Tutoring Scheme and the STAR (Students Taking Active Roles) Award initiative. Below are examples of credit-bearing co-curricular activities.

ERASMUS is an exchange programme funded by the European Commission which enables students to study or work in another European country as part of their degree programme. Eligible students will receive a grant to help with extra costs while abroad and a number of our partner institutions teach through English. For more information, visit www.abdn.ac.uk/erasmus/.

The University also has opportunities for students to study in a non-European country as part of their degree through the **International Exchange Programme** (www.abdn.ac.uk/undergraduate/international-exchange.php). International partners include universities and colleges in North America, Hong Kong and Japan. The University aims to ensure full academic recognition for study periods abroad, therefore the credits gained from study abroad will count towards the Aberdeen degree programme for students participating in both ERASMUS and the International Exchange Programme.

Work placements can also form an integral part of a degree programme and attract academic credit. Placements are available locally, nationally and internationally, lasting from a few weeks to a full year and are generally paid. Visit the Careers Service website for further placement information and to find available work placements.

Further information about the co-curriculum is available at: www.abdn.ac.uk/careers.

STUDENT SUPPORT

It is important that students check their university e-mail account regularly as this is the first method of contact by university staff members.

For information regarding *appeals*, students can refer to the Student Handbook, pg 25.

For information regarding *complaints or feedback*, students can refer to the Student Handbook, pg 11-12.

Additional information regarding student support can be found throughout the Student Handbook. Students can also contact [Student Support Services](#) or the [discipline secretary](#) if additional information is needed.