

PHIL40013 Uncertainty, Vagueness and Disagreement

Credit Points:	12.50
Level:	4 (Undergraduate)
Dates & Locations:	This subject is not offered in 2014. Standard
Time Commitment:	Contact Hours: 2 (1x 2 hour seminar each week) Total Time Commitment: An average of 10 hours each week.
Prerequisites:	None.
Corequisites:	None.
Recommended Background Knowledge:	Students in this subject must have completed a Bachelor of Arts degree or equivalent.
Non Allowed Subjects:	None.
Core Participation Requirements:	For the purposes of considering request for Reasonable Adjustments under the disability Standards for Education (Cwth 2005), and Students Experiencing Academic Disadvantage Policy, academic requirements for this subject are articulated in the Subject Description, Subject Objectives, Generic Skills and Assessment Requirements of this entry. The University is dedicated to provide support to those with special requirements. Further details on the disability support scheme can be found at the Disability Liaison Unit website: http://www.services.unimelb.edu.au/disability/
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Subject Overview:	<p>This subject tackles issues around information and when it is hard to deal with, because it is uncertain, imprecise or contested. We are often confronted by situations where we are uncertain, when our ideas are imprecise or ambiguous, and when we otherwise disagree and cannot seem to resolve this disagreement. What can we say and do in these situations? How are we to understand the distinctive features of uncertainty, vagueness and disagreement? How can we make decisions in the midst of incomplete information? When should we attempt to make vague notions precise, and when should we live with imprecision? When should we attempt to resolve disagreement, and when should we agree to disagree? These are questions are both practically pressing and deeply connected with our views of truth, knowledge, reality and meaning: some of the fundamental issues of philosophy. We will draw on techniques from semantics and epistemology, probability and logic, learn how they might be used, and critically evaluate their strengths and weaknesses.</p> <p>In this subject, students will be introduced to recent approaches for understanding these difficult phenomena, and will critically analyse their strengths and weaknesses, putting each in its intellectual context. We will also apply these techniques to a range of scenarios selected from topics of interest to the students in the class.</p> <p>On successful completion, students will be familiar with techniques from semantics, epistemology, probability theory and logic, designed for the representation of information and its clarification, and will be able to apply them to different situations.</p> <p>Students familiar with formal semantics and logic will have opportunities to extend and apply this knowledge in the course, but a background in logic is not necessary to participate fully and successfully in this subject.</p>
Learning Outcomes:	<p>students who successfully complete this subject will:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> # learn to master different techniques used to represent and evaluate uncertainty, vagueness and disagreement # acquire the ability to critically reflect on the successes and failings of each proposed account

Assessment:	Two topical studies of 500 words (total 25%), for class presentation, within the first 8 weeks of the semester, and a research essay of 4000 words (75%) due at the end of semester. Hurdle Requirement: Students are required to attend a minimum of 75% of classes in order to pass this subject. Assessment submitted late without an approved extension will be penalised at 2% per working day. After 5 working days late assessment will not be marked. In-class tasks missed without approval will not be marked. All pieces of written work must be submitted to pass this subject
Prescribed Texts:	To be advised.
Breadth Options:	This subject is not available as a breadth subject.
Fees Information:	Subject EFTSL, Level, Discipline & Census Date, http://enrolment.unimelb.edu.au/fees
Generic Skills:	students who successfully complete this subject will: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> # high-level written and oral communication skills through contribution to class discussions and presentations, the completion of exercises and assignments, and wide reading issues of the representation and manipulation of ideas and information. # skills in working with a range of ways to present information, both formal and informal, precise and imprecise. # skills in research, including the application of different formal techniques to clarify and and analyse difficult and imprecise material; and # skills in time management and planning through managing workloads for recommended reading, tutorial presentations and assessment requirements.
Links to further information:	http://www.philosophy.unimelb.edu.au/
Related Majors/Minors/Specialisations:	Philosophy Philosophy Philosophy