

# Chapter 4: Understanding Metaphysics

## BIG IDEAS

### Background

The central focus of this unit is the question What is real? In other words, What is the nature of reality? This is one of the main questions of metaphysics, and it will be considered in this unit. Heraclitus said that you can't step into the same river twice because new waters are always flowing in on you. From this we can glean two of the other major metaphysical issues that shape this unit: Is everything always changing? Or is there some structure or pattern that supports change but is not itself changeable? These major questions lead to more focused discussions of personal identity, the meaning of life, the existence of a Supreme Being, and the question of mind and its relation to matter.

Chapter 4 discusses the nature of reality and being (ontology) and broadly outlines some of the main terms, theories, and schools of thought. This sets the stage for the exploration in Chapter 5 of metaphysical problems centred on the philosophy of mind and the correlated issues of personal identity, artificial intelligence, and the relationship of the mind to the body. Chapter 6 focuses on metaphysical issues such as the existence of God, the meaning of life, and why we are here, and asks students to evaluate and formulate their own responses to these fundamental human issues.

### About Chapter 4

Metaphysics is often considered the first philosophy—although philosophers are still debating this point—and is therefore a good place to begin after the foundational unit. Students will discover throughout this chapter, unit, and textbook that metaphysics is deeply intertwined with epistemology, ethics and political philosophy, the philosophy of science, aesthetics, and logic.

The investigation of metaphysics should be personal. Answers to metaphysical questions do not come from applying a formula or following a set of guidelines, but from thinking about the questions and discussing them with others. Having students develop their own answers can make a difference to how they live and how they look at the world.

The chapter begins with a discussion of the main metaphysical theories (idealism, materialism, monism, dualism) and continues with a discussion of Plato's theory of Forms, Taoism, and other major ideas. It concludes by asking students to consider their understanding of reality (being) by asking Martin Heidegger's fundamental question: Who are you going to be?

Some of the big questions explored in Chapter 4 include:

- What is reality?
- What is the nature of being?
- What do you think is real?
- What is your relationship to reality?

By the end of the chapter, students will have become familiar with many of the main metaphysical theories about and explanations of reality. They should realize that these questions are of a personal nature and are only confronted and answered by personal reflection.

### Features

In this chapter, the following features are included to help students make personal connections and/or deepen their understanding of metaphysics. You may use all or some of these features as explained below.

- There are a number of common, opposing metaphysical theories concerning what is real. (SE pp. 90-92)
- There are various philosophical approaches to understanding the distinction between appearance and reality. (SE pp. 94-105)
- Eastern metaphysics (Buddhism, Taoism) can be compared with Plato's theory of Forms. (SE pp. 97-101)
- Substance, or what everything is made of, is discussed by Descartes as being divided into thinking and extensive substance and by Spinoza as being one unified substance. (SE pp. 101-103)
- Heidegger argued that each person is defined by possibilities of Being. From this historically determined range of possibilities we can project ourselves into the future, determining who will become. (SE pp. 105-107)

Feature	Student Textbook Page	Opportunity for Assessment	Strategies for Classroom Use
Your Unit Challenge	87	Peer sharing and assessment of initial questions about metaphysics.	Post students' questions, then have pairs of students share their questions and responses. Consider having students answer one another's questions at the outset, then at the conclusion of the unit. highlight major shifts in their thinking.
Thought Experiment	104	Students answer questions 1 and 2 on their own, then divide into two groups to debate the issues.	Use these questions to encourage students to explore their own ideas about what is and is not real.
Viewpoints	106	Have students answer questions 1 and 2 in small groups, then share their responses with the class.	Use this feature to highlight the relevance of philosophy and metaphysics to other fields or areas of life. For example, discuss current political unrest and the dissatisfaction with the economic status quo.

## Teaching Plan 1 (SE pp. 88-97)

### Learning Goal

Understanding the main theories of metaphysics as presented by some major philosophers, and critically analyzing these theories. Analyzing Plato's "Allegory of the Cave" and understanding Plato's metaphysics (theory of Forms). Beginning to develop the ability to communicate some of these ideas through a poster or slide (Prezi) presentation.

### Activity Description

Teaching Plan 1 contains two lessons that set the stage for teaching the main metaphysical theories of reality more fully in Teaching Plan 2. Teaching Plan 1 also sets the stage for further discussions of metaphysics by developing the necessary vocabulary.

After a brief introduction to the main theories of metaphysics (SE pp. 90-94), students further their learning by revisiting Plato's "Allegory of the Cave" (SE p. 11) and discussing Plato's theory of forms (SE pp. 95-97).

At this stage, students should have begun the unit challenge, in which they develop a question about metaphysics. To continue setting the stage for the culminating activity, have students work in groups to answer the questions on BLM 4.2 Metaphysical Questions.

### Assessment Opportunities for Chapter Questions

The table below summarizes assessment opportunities for selected chapter questions, including questions in the Chapter Review, which are relevant to this teaching plan.

Assessment Type	Assessment Tool	Feature Questions	Section Questions	Chapter Review Questions
Assessment as Learning	Comparing Haudenosaunee Metaphysics to other approaches and explore anti-colonialism (see SE pp. 404-407)	1-2, SE p. 92		
Assessment for Learning	Comparing metaphysical idealism and materialism, monism and dualism		2, SE p. 92	
Assessment as Learning	Reflections on what is real and how we change over time		1, SE p. 92; p. 94	
Assessment as Learning	Investigating Plato's theory of Forms		1-3, SE p. 97	
Assessment as Learning	Further inquiry: Descartes and dreaming			10, SE p. 109
Assessment as Learning	Connecting reading to the environmental movement			11, SE p. 109

## Resources Needed

Make copies of these Blackline Masters:

- BLM 4.1 Philosophers T-Chart
- BLM 4.2 Metaphysical Questions
- BLM 4.3 Unit Challenge Think-Pair-Share Worksheet
- BLM 4.4 Exit Cards
- BLM 4.5 Unit 2 Culminating Activity: Metaphysical News Report
- BLM A Venn Diagram
- BLM C Comparison Chart

## Possible Assessment of Learning Task

See Teaching Plan 2 for this chapter's assessment of learning task.

## Assessment (For/As Learning)

As teachers move through each chapter, opportunities will be highlighted to provide assessment for/as learning in preparation for assessment of learning at the end of each chapter.

Task/ Project	Achievement Chart Category	Type of Assessment	Assessment Tool	Peer/ Self/ Teacher Assessment	Learning Skill	Student Textbook Page(s)	Blackline Master
Philosophers T-chart	Knowledge	As	T-chart	Self	Independent work	90-94	BLM 4.1
Metaphysical Questions	Knowledge; Communication	As	Discussion	Self; peer	Collaboration		BLM 4.2 BLM 4.3
Exit cards	Communication; Knowledge	For	Exit card diagnostic	Self	Independent work	90-92	BLM 4.4
"Allegory of the Cave" visual	Knowledge; Application; Communication	As		Self; peer	Collaboration	95-97	

## Prior Learning Needed

Familiarity with Plato's "Allegory of the Cave" (SE pp. 11-12)

## Teaching/Learning Strategies

1. What is metaphysics? One way of answering this question is by applying the term, seeing what it means in use instead of trying to find its eternal essence or ideal form. (This is an example of different approaches to *ontology*, the explanation of origins and search for meaning. Plato sought essences, whereas Wittgenstein argued that essence is given over by grammar and the usage of words.) What, for instance, is an example of a metaphysical theme in a movie? Watch some of the videos below (available on YouTube) to prompt students' thoughts about different forms of spiritual celebration.

AVATAR - Saving Grace - Ceremony (Na'vi subtitles)

Avatar // The Flow of Energy

Compare the two videos above with this video of dance in Bali:

BALI: Exotic Kecak Cult Monkey Dance Ritual

## Timing

225 minutes  
(three 75-minute classes)

## Learning Skills Focus

- Collaboration (group formation for Culminating Activity)
- Independent work (preliminary investigation into poster/slide presentation assignment)
- Initiative (taking interest and exploring theories of metaphysics)

The film *Baraka* opens with a beautiful presentation of nature and different varieties of human spirituality. (These two clips are available on YouTube.)

Baraka - Kecak

baraka part 1

2. Have students begin working on the Unit Challenge (see SE p. 87). Distribute BLM 4.2 and have students work in small groups to answer and discuss the questions. Then ask them to develop a metaphysical question and answer it using their current knowledge (BLM 4.3).

Next, ask students to use the comparison chart (BLM C) to compare and contrast the different commonly advanced metaphysical theories: idealism, materialism, monism, and dualism (SE pp. 90-91; see question 2, SE p.92).

3. Ask students, Are you materialist or idealist? Use the video by Dr. Stephen Hicks below (available on YouTube) to stimulate thought on this dichotomy. Modern pragmatists like Dewey would caution against such dualistic thinking, which forces us into an either/or decision.

Contrasting Realist to Idealist Philosophy (Clips 1-5)

Idealists and materialist come in different “flavours.” Plato is an example of a rationalist idealist (see SE p. 246), whereas George Berkeley is an example of an empiricist idealist (see SE p. 254). For Plato, what we see here on earth is not real, but a corruptible copy of the ideal Forms in the permanent or realm of Being (SE p. 94). For Berkeley, things here on Earth exist insofar as we see them, or insofar as God sees them. Marx (see SE pp. 137 and 147) is an example of materialist for whom idealistic religion is “the opiate of the masses,” whereas Paul and Patricia Churchland (see SE p. 124) are materialists in the sense that they seek physical, neurological explanations for mental phenomena such as thoughts and emotions.

Apply the concepts on SE pp. 90-91 to Haudenosaunee Metaphysics, as presented briefly in the feature on SE p. 92 (see question 1). Use a Venn diagram (BLM A) to demonstrate how this worldview might share aspects of both idealism and materialism, monism and dualism. Conduct further research on the Haudenosaunee Code and other First Nations beliefs, such as those found in the following resources (available online):

“Imagination and the Ecology of the Sacred,” Joe Sheridan and Dan Longboat, Faculty of Environmental Studies, York University, Toronto, Ontario. (<http://www.ierg.net/conf/2003/proceeds/Sheridan.pdf>)

“Five Branches of Hodinohso:ni/Rotinsonshyonni Philosophy: Cultural Underpinnings of the Indigenous Knowledge Centre” (December 2009) (<http://www.snpolytechnic.com/WEBSITE-IKC%20document%20Five%20Branches%20of%20Haudenosaunee%20Philosophy.pdf>)

“Haundenosaunee Lives,” Wendy J. Gonyea, *Indigenous Policy Journal*, vol. XX, no. 3 (<http://indigenouspolicy.org/Articles/VolXXNo3/HaudenosauneeLives/tabid/69/Default.aspx>)

*Living in Two Worlds* (Video about balancing spiritual and mundane life, including interviews with various First Nations peoples in North America) (<http://www.worldwisdom.com/public/resources/default.aspx?Category=American%20Indian&ID=190L&sid=12&iid=9&plid=0&p2id=0>)

Consider connecting these metaphysical beliefs to the traditional healing practices used, showing how metaphysics can provide a foundation for a way of life based on how people care for each other and the land on which they live (see SE pp. 368-70). The resource below is available online.

4. Have students complete exit cards (BLM 4.4) to explain the basic difference between metaphysical idealism and materialism, and to identify the difference between dualistic and monistic metaphysical theories (see SE pp. 90-92).

**Acc** After collecting the exit cards, diagnose students who struggle with the content. Pair up students who submitted strong and weak responses to provide assistance to those who are struggling.

5. Change and Oneness (SE p. 93): The quote from Heraclitus (6th c. B.C.), “all is in flux” (*panta rhei*) is the centrepiece of this chapter, and the theme is threaded into other units. The philosopher Cratylus famously took the quote one step further, arguing that we can never step into the same river once: by the time the heel catches up with the toes, the river of life has moved on. Unfortunately, that belief results in extreme scepticism; Cratylus avoided answering questions by waving his finger, gesturing that no answer can be given. The problem with the flux theory is that it threatens to undermine firm knowledge of the world. Heraclitus was one of the first to argue that we need to turn away from empirical evidence and use our reason (the *logos*) to fathom the underlying order of the seemingly chaotic universe. This is why the epistemology unit opens with Heraclitus’ saying that “eyes and ears are bad witness” (see SE p. 239), setting up the investigation of Plato’s rationalism. As we learn on SE p. 282, one of the central problems of 20th century epistemology is finding some *bedrock* stability for knowledge amidst the flux, even if it is impermanent and contingent on history (see also historical strata or *epistemes*, giving us an “order of things,” SE p. 285 and 288). In the ethics unit we see that Heraclitus was one of earliest to say that, despite the turmoil of life, we are responsible for creating our own fate by fashioning our own character (SE p. 193, see also BLM 8.2). The theme of self-determination and “becoming who we are” arises again at the end of the metaphysics unit (SE p. 155, pp. 178-180).
6. Process philosophy (SE p. 93): One way of initiating thought about process philosophy is to interrogate the myth that we replace every cell in our body every seven to ten years. Although we do replace many or even most cells in the body at varying rates, the ones we most associate with our consciousness are more durable (in life, at least, and some would say in death as well). See the following resource for more details:

<http://askanaturalist.com/do-we-replace-our-cells-every-7-or-10-years/>

Another way to prompt thought along these lines is to consider what would really happen if, as seen in the TV show *Star Trek*, people were “beamed” aboard starships using transporters. To achieve this, the person would be heated up to billions of degrees, reducing them to a stream of free quarks (i.e., subatomic particles) that would be replicated onboard the ship (if this energy could be brought safely through the hull without causing it to blow up). The “real” person has been cooked, and an exact replica has boarded the ship in their place. Is it the same person, or just a copy? (See SE p. 118 for a discussion of persons and identities as metaphysical topics of investigation.) Would you allow yourself to be beamed, knowing this? (See also *The Physics of Star Trek*, Lawrence M. Krauss, New York: Harper-Collins, 1995.) This idea is also explored in the film *The Fly* (1986), in which a scientist merges his genes with those of fly while undergoing transport, transforming him into a mutant hybrid (the trailer is available on YouTube). And what was Franz Kafka trying to show about life in his story *The Metamorphosis*, in which Gregor Samsa wakes up one morning as a dung beetle?

The Fly (1986 Trailer)

How is the genre of fiction related to metaphysics? In stories about preternatural creatures (werewolves, vampires, mutant superheroes, etc.) we confront the question of whether there is a true human nature, and whether this is an enduring quality (species essence) or one that varies over time and cultures. A culture's bestiary of imaginary creatures (griffins, unicorns, flying monkeys, etc.) plays against the backdrop of its ideas about nature and ordinary states of being, as these creatures transgress the boundaries of the natural order. Contemporary Hungarian materialist philosopher Slavoj Žižek (who students usually find interesting to listen to) questions whether the concept of nature has become meaningless. Watch the following interview from *Ecology without Nature* to generate discussion:

<http://www.nextnature.net/2008/12/slavoj-zizek-ecology-without-nature/>

See also the following video interviews, available on YouTube:

Slavoj Zizek in Examined Life

Slavoj Zizek - Nature does not exist

Zizek: I am not a human. I am a monster.

In Chapter 5, we question the relationship between gender and nature (see SE p. 121, question 3), and at the end of Chapter 6 we contemplate Nietzsche's superman and the social-political risks of eugenics (see SE p. 156-57, questions 11 and 15). At the core of these reflections are metaphysical questions of *authenticity*, which we explore later in Chapter 4 with Heidegger (SE p. 107).

Parmenides' monism is based on a formal argument, using *a priori* reasoning (SE p. 94). For clarification of *a priori* reasoning, or rational arguments that do not require empirical evidence in their demonstration, see SE pp. 247 and 254. For background on Parmenides, show the class the following video, available on YouTube:

Western Philosophy Documentary Section [1/3] part 2/6

**Acc** For more background on Parmenides, see

<http://www.nndb.com/people/777/000087516/> and also "Parmenides' Principle," Allan Randall, on PhilPapers: <http://philpapers.org/rec/RANPP>.

The (seemingly) simple answers given by the Pre-Socratics are a good introduction to the big questions addressed in this Chapter. Following a discussion of the theories (SE pp. 90-94), have students complete a T-chart (BLM 4.1) identifying the philosophers from the video clip and relating each of them to the theories discussed.

**Acc** See the following online resources for extension activities:

How can I be both "awake" and "think about nothing" at the same time?

(<http://www.zen-deshimaru.com/EN/teaching/questions/question2.html>)

"Nothingness," Stanford Encyclopedia of Philosophy (<http://plato.stanford.edu/entries/nothingness/>)

7. Plato's Forms (SE p. 95): Ask students what a circle is (or a triangle, or another simple shape). Then ask them to draw one on the board. Point out that no matter how precise they are and no matter what kind of instruments they use, they cannot draw a perfect circle, nor have they ever seen one. (You may want to watch the video World Freehand Circle Drawing Champion, which can be found on YouTube.) Despite this, we know what a circle is. Similarly, ask them to define love or justice. They will struggle and give lots of examples, but not a real definition. Read and discuss the section on Forms (SE pp. 95-97). Explain that Plato would say we know what things like circles and justice are because we are familiar with (or reminded of) the Forms of circle and justice, even though we have never seen them in the world in which we live (the world of objects). Things like circles and justice partake of the



Form of circle or justice. The Forms give objects their essence. The Forms exist in a world that is separate from the world of objects in which we live. Have students work in pairs to answer questions 1 and 2 on p. 97. For a discussion of Plato's formalist theory of art, see SE pp. 477 and 496-499. For a discussion of formal relationships between mathematics and beauty in art and architecture, see SE pp. 525-528.

8. Have students reread the "Allegory of the Cave" (SE pp. 11-12) and then watch the video *The Cave: An Adaptation of Plato's Allegory in Clay*, which is available on YouTube. How does Plato's notion of the ideal realm of Being compare with Heraclitus' idea that nature is like a river, in constant flux or flow (see Figure 4-2, p. 88 and Figure 4-5, p. 97). How does Plato's theory of Forms serve as an example of metaphysics? How is Plato's metaphysics comparable to world religions such as Buddhism, Christianity, Hinduism, Islam, and Judaism? In small groups, have the class answer question 3 p. 97.

Link metaphysics to epistemology by referring students to a discussion of the *divided line* in Plato's theory of knowledge (see SE pp. 246-247). For further resources about epistemology, see the following online resources:

[http://highered.mcgraw-hill.com/sites/0073386685/student\\_view0/chapter7/philosophy\\_web\\_resources.html](http://highered.mcgraw-hill.com/sites/0073386685/student_view0/chapter7/philosophy_web_resources.html)

Matrix Trilogy Smash Trailer (available on YouTube)

Matrix Philosophy - The Cave (available on YouTube)

The complete Philosophy and the Matrix documentary is also available on YouTube, portions of which are suggested in Teaching Strategy 1 for Chapter 5:

Philosophy and the Matrix: Return to the Source [FULL DOCUMENTARY]

For resources about illusion and reality themes in metaphysics, see

<http://highered.mcgraw-hill.com/sites/0073386685/sitemap.html>

Strange New World is an interactive philosophical simulation that takes you into a Matrix-like world:

[http://www.philosophersnet.com/games/matrix\\_start.htm](http://www.philosophersnet.com/games/matrix_start.htm)

On the theme of living our lives within a simulacra, see the following videos, available on YouTube:

Philosophy and the Matrix - Baudrillard

Baudrillard - The Murder of the Real (1/6)

Baudrillard - ideas and concepts

Hyper- Reality (a short film shot with a 40D)

Hyper Reality

9. Introduce the culminating activity. Hand out the instructions for the Unit 2 culminating activity: BLM 4.5. Go over the rubric to ensure students know what is required before they begin, and that they know when the project is due. Ask students for ideas about what they could work on for the activity.

## Text Answers

### Page 92: Section questions

1. Push and prod the students to explain what made them question reality. How did they resolve the issue? Could they resolve it? Were they influenced by religion?

2. Use a chart (e.g., BLM C) or other graphic organizer to show the differences and relationships.

Term	Definition	Representative Thinker(s)
Idealism	Reality is discovered through the mind. The physical objects we experience are a function of the mind or spirit, best understood through the mind instead of how they appear.	Plato, Quantum mechanics (ideas of the universe as a computer storing information in matter)
Materialism	Reality is physical, or basically consists of matter.	Marx
Monism	Everything we see has one underlying substance, which may be either infused with spirit (e.g., God) or neutral (e.g., elementary particles).	Spinoza, many pre-Socratic philosophers and world religions
Dualism	Reality consists of two fundamentally different things: mind (or spirit, soul, psyche) and inert matter.	Descartes

### Page 92: Haudenosaunee Metaphysics

1. Haudenosaunee Metaphysics combines elements of idealism and materialism, similar to Spinoza's monism where nature (all matter) is infused with a divine spirit (God).
2. Colonialism resulted in the destruction of many indigenous cultures and the spiritualism that preceded the arrival of Europeans. Christianity supplanted or distorted these earlier belief-systems. Traditionalists seek to recover what was lost, drawing on what can be ascertained from elders in what was an oral culture. By comparison, if Plato had not written down Socrates' ideas, we would not have his philosophy to contemplate today. See another view of Aboriginal monism through traditional healing practices (SE p. 353).

### Page 94: Section questions

See the reflections on cellular regeneration in the Teaching Strategies above. In terms of changes we can more easily track, adolescence is a time of profound growth, reminiscent of the Heraclitean flux. Old friendships are dropped and new ones created as we alter our personality and shift preferences. Underneath the changes there may be something enduring, however, which gives us a sense of identity and continuity. Parmenides' One may underlie the many faces we adopt as we age.

### Page 97: Section questions

1. Encourage students to pick interesting modern objects, such as an MP3 player. This discussion could lead to the question of the origin of Forms. For example, Has the Form of an MP3 player always existed?
2. On one hand, Plato says that knowledge of what is real comes to us via reason and that what is real is the timeless world of Forms, which are outside the world of objects (material), so he is an idealist. But, some would argue, he claims that there is a world of Forms and that the Forms are real, so he is also a realist. He is not a materialist as he claims that the world of objects is always changing and decaying, so it is not real.
3. See the *divided line* in Plato's theory of knowledge (SE pp. 246-247). This explanation appears in Book 6 of *The Republic*, where Plato is describing how the philosopher differs from ordinary people in that he sees things more clearly, investigating all "things human and divine" (see SE p. 3). In Book 7, after delivering the allegory (which is actually in dialogue form as a conversation between Socrates and Plato's brother, Glaucon), Plato unveils his "synopsis" of education (which is "liberal" in the sense of being both for free persons and liberating), giving us the complete curriculum we still have today (see SE pp. 294-296).



## Teaching Plan 2 (SE pp. 97-107)

### Activity Description

Beginning with a conversation about Buddhist thought, along with Taoism, this activity will introduce the students to a distinctly different view than the traditional Western train of thought that is exemplified by the early Greeks. This will be followed by a look at substance as explained by the rationalist philosophers Descartes and Spinoza, and then an examination of Heidegger's existentialist view. These lessons, in conjunction with Teaching Plan 1, set the stage for the assessment of learning for this chapter.

### Learning Goal

Students will become familiar with further explanations of reality: Buddhist, Taoist, Spinoza's substance, and Heideggerian existentialism.

### Assessment Opportunities for Chapter Questions

The table below summarizes the assessment opportunities for the questions in this chapter.

Assessment Type	Assessment Tool	Feature Questions	Section Questions	Chapter Review Questions
Assessment as Learning	Text answers, discussion, class presentations	1, p. 104 1 and 2, p. 106	1 and 2, p. 99	6-9, 12, 13, pp. 108-109,
Assessment as Learning	Think-pair-share		p. 101	
Assessment as Learning	BLM C Comparison Chart		p. 103	
Assessment as Learning	Four-corners debate		1, p. 104	
Assessment for (or of) Learning	Discussion; Being Journal		1 and 2, p. 107	
Assessment for Learning	Text answers			1-5, p. 108

### Resources Needed

Make copies of these Blackline Masters:

- BLM C Comparison Chart
- BLM J Journal Writing Guide

### Timing

225 minutes  
(three 75-minute classes)

### Possible Assessment of Learning Task

Journal writing could focus on the problem of Being (use BLM J). Have students submit their answers to questions 1 and 2 on p. 107. See the summative vocabulary quiz for Chapters 4 and 5 at the end of Chapter 5 (BLMs 5.1.1, 5.1.2, and 5.2), and the unit test at the end of Chapter 6 (BLM 6.1).

### Learning Skills Focus

- Responsibility (for news report and preparation for the quiz at the end of Chapter 5)
- Independent work
- Organization

### Assessment (For/As Learning)

As teachers move through each chapter, opportunities will be highlighted to provide assessment for/as learning in preparation for assessment of learning at the end of each chapter.

Task/ Project	Achievement Chart Category	Type of Assessment	Assessment Tool	Peer/ Self/ Teacher Assessment	Learning Skill	Student Textbook Page(s)	Blackline Master
Taoism Think-pair-share	Knowledge; Communication	As	Class discussion	Self; peer	Independent work	100-101	
Experience Machine Four-Corners Activity	Knowledge; Application; Communication	As	Class discussion	Self; peer	Independent work	104	

## Prior Learning

Not applicable.

## Teaching/Learning Strategies

1. Introduce Buddhism by watching the following videos, which can be viewed on YouTube (see also Chapter 7, Teaching Plan 1 for other videos on Buddhism, such as *The Story of India*):

A Day in the Life of a Zen Monk – EmptyMind Films (This is a trailer for *The Zen Mind*, a film about the daily life of a Zen monk in a large soto-zen monastery in Japan.)

Zen Buddhism: The Nature of the Self (In this video Zen Master John Daido Loori talks about the nature of the self at Zen Mountain Monastery in Mount Tremper, New York.)

Discuss how Buddhist thought seeks less to understand reality and more to co-exist with it by attempting to rid the mind of questions. Have students debate question 2 on p. 99. Point out connections with ethics. See Buddhist metaphysical grounding for ethics, the five-fold path (SE p. 171). Also, a question on the unit test (BLM 6.1) asks students to connect metaphysics (including religions) to ethics.

2. Refer students to the following online source for Chuang-Tse's primary documents in Taoist readings: Being & non-Being; Change, Death, Transformation; Knowledge, Names, Distinctions; Heaven (t'ien) & the Natural (jiran); and Wu-Wei: non-Action (see also SE p. 488):

<http://www.scribd.com/doc/22526293/Readings-From-Taoism>

Ask, How does the Yin and Yang symbol (Figure 4-7, SE p. 101) capture the basic ideas of Taoist philosophy? Then, watch one or more of the following videos about Taoism (they can be viewed on YouTube):

Taoism Explained

What is Taoism? - Bobba

Alan Watts – What is Tao?

Comparative Religion – Taoism

The True Tao and the Tao of Convenience

After watching the videos, have the class answer the section questions on p. 101 using a think-pair-share strategy.

3. Discuss substance (see SE pp. 101-103). Simply put, the key distinction between Descartes and Spinoza is how many substances they think exist. For Descartes, there are two kinds of substances (1) *res cogitans*, thinking substance or mind, and (2) *res extensa*, extended substance or body. Descartes further divides thinking substance into finite (human) and infinite (God). Spinoza disagrees with Descartes' plurality of substances; for him, there is only substance: infinite substance.

Have students read the quotation from Spinoza on p. 103 and discuss what it means. Given that definition, there can only be one substance. If there were more than one substance, it would not be independent, and thus not be conceived by and exist in itself. Have students answer the section questions on p. 103, possibly using BLM C. Students will encounter the concepts of monism and dualism again in Chapter 5, with reference to the mind (SE p. 126-127), and they will have a vocabulary quiz at the end of Chapter 5 (BLMs 5.1.1 and 5.1.2).

For video resources on Jacques Derrida, see the following (available on YouTube):

Derrida (Documentary) 1/9 (Derrida speaking in French, with subtitles;  
English commentary)

Derrida (Documentary) 2/9 (biographical information and commentary, in  
English)

4. Have students read the Viewpoints feature on p. 106 about Jacques Derrida. Then have them complete questions 1 and 2, working alone, in pairs, or in small groups. For a primary document reading (available online), see  
Derrida, Jacques, “Différance.” *Margins of Philosophy*, trans. Alan Bass, Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1982. 1-28. (<http://www.rlwclarke.net/courses/LITS3304/2011-2012/09Derrida,Differance.pdf>)
5. Compare the experience machine described in the feature on p. 104 with the film *The Matrix*. Read the feature, then watch the Ultimate Matrix trilogy 6 min trailer on Dailymotion’s Web site. Have students determine whether or not they would hook themselves up to the experience machine using a four-corners activity. There are four possibilities: (1) definitely yes, (2) maybe, (3) probably not, and (4) definitely not. Assign one of these four options to each corner of the room, and have students go to the corner representing their choice. Discuss students’ choices, asking students to justify their decisions. Students can move to a different corner if they change their minds upon hearing from the others in the class.
6. Have students read about Heidegger and existentialism (see SE pp. 105-107). Then discuss the passage in the text (SE p. 107) that reads “It is entirely up to you to come to terms with how you are going to be. You have to decide whether to be yourself or to let others dictate how you are going to be. No one can take over your task of how to work out the question of Being. No one can confront your own mortality for you.” How does this understanding of Being relate to the idea of freedom?

**Acc** See the Heidegger glossary in Chapter 11, Teaching Plan 1, Teaching Strategy 7 and see the discussion of Heidegger’s resolution of the subject-object duality on SE pp. 276-277.

Heidegger also describes how our everyday (“factual”) state is one of “entrapment” or “falling prey” to the public “they self” and its “idle chatter” (Martin Heidegger, *Being and Time*, trans. Joan Stambaugh (Albany: State University of New York Press, 1996), , I.V. pp. 35-38). Our most basic state is inauthenticity, he says, noting that this does not mean that inauthenticity represents a lower plane of existence: “authentic existence is nothing which hovers over entangled everydayness, but is existentially only a modified grasp of everydayness” (BT, I.V.38,§179, p.167). This transitional movement between entanglement and its modified grasp, our (Dasein’s) state of being-in-the-world, is described by Heidegger as “plunging” and “eddyding.”

The phenomena pointed out of temptation, tranquilizing, alienation, and self-entangling (entanglement) characterize the specific kind of being of falling prey. We call this kind of “movement” of Da-sein in its own being the plunge. Da-sein plunges out of itself into itself, into the groundlessness and nothingness of inauthentic everydayness. But this plunge remains concealed from it by the way things have been publicly interpreted so that it is interpreted as “getting ahead” and living “concretely.”

The kind of movement of plunging into and within the groundlessness of inauthentic being in the they constantly tears understanding away from authentic possibilities and into tranquilized supposition of possessing or attaining everything. Since the understanding is thus constantly torn away from authenticity and into the they (although always with a sham of authenticity), the movement of falling prey is characterized as eddyding. (*Being and Time*, I.V.38, § 178, pp. 166-167.)

Thus, Da-sein must explicitly and essentially appropriate what has already been discovered, defend it against illusion and distortion, and ensure itself of its discoveredness again and again. All new discovery takes place not on the basis of complete concealment, but takes its point of departure from discoveredness in the mode of illusion. Beings look like . . . , that is, they are in a way already discovered, and yet they are still distorted. (*Being and Time*, I.VI.44, § 222, p. 204)

The eddying between concealment and unconcealment, however, is not something we accomplish finally, as though we could leave the world (as in Plato's "Allegory of the Cave"): "Being-in-the-world as taking care of things, is taken in by the world which it cares of." (*Being and Time*, I.II.13, § p. 57) Dwelling together with things already implies falling-prey, or being taken in and entrapped in the world. Rare moments of authenticity come from wrestling from beings their essence (i.e., recognizing their potentiality for being). In this eddying, "truth" is the unconventional product (*poiesis*) of "unconcealment" (truth, *a-lētheia*) – what Heidegger likens to a kind of robbery. This opening ("worlding of earth") is the continual work of artists and poets, who gather things into the clearing of being. See Heidegger on art (SE p. 489) and also Martin Heidegger, "The Origin of the Work of Art," "What are Poets For?" and "Building Dwelling Thinking," in *Poetry, Language, Thought*, trans. Albert Hofstadter, New York: Harper Collins, 1971.

Share this quotation with students: "The event of appropriation is that realm, vibrating within itself, through which man and Being reach each other in their nature, achieve their active nature by losing those qualities with which metaphysics has endowed them." (Martin Heidegger, *Identity and Difference*, trans. and with an introduction by Joan Stambaugh (New York: Harper & Row, 1969), p. 37) Use the Selfhood and Subjectivity handout (BLM 12.4) to set up discussion: Is the self an artichoke or an onion? Is there a core (essence, soul), or are we socialized through and through, from the outside in (layer upon layer of socialization and normalization)? The handout also positions philosophers around Pindar's famous saying, "Become who you are." Influenced by Heidegger and Nietzsche, French post-structuralist philosopher Michel Foucault reinterpreted Pindar's phrase as "Become who you are not." Neo-Nietzschean self-stylization is something we can perform through what Foucault calls arts or technologies of the self. He traces these back to Socrates, who taught us to "know thyself" but also to "care for your self." See the following video, available on YouTube:

Michel Foucault - The Culture of the Self, First Lecture, Part 1 of 7

See also the following background documentaries about the concept of "becoming who one is" (available on YouTube):

Socrates on Self-Confidence (parts 1-3)

Nietzsche on Hardship 1 of 3

Nietzsche's philosophy, our Reality and The Matrix

Human, All Too Human (BBC) - Jean Paul Sartre: Part 3

## Text Answers

### Page 99: Section questions

1. If by valid, one means that the distinction can be measured and tested in a conventional way, then it is empty. It must be empty as it is discussing a reality that lies outside of the conventional and as such, cannot be validated in the usual way.
2. The answer here hinges on whether one takes the Western (Judaean-Christian) view that understanding (and controlling?) nature (the universe?) is the purpose of humans, or the Buddhist position, suggesting that craving (desire) is the root of all suffering.

### Page 101: Section questions

See the discussion of *wu-wei*, or action through non-action (and lack of formal technique) in ancient Chinese aesthetics (SE p. 488). Try using bold brush strokes or mandalas (like the ying and yang symbol, Figure 4-7, SE p. 101, but generating an original concept) to convey your ideas. See the discussion of intuition as a way of knowing in Chapter 10 (SE p. 261), and see Emerson's essay on "Self-Reliance" in BLM 10.6.

### Page 103: Section questions

For Descartes, substance is divided into two categories: extensive and thoughtful. It results in what is called the mind-body duality, where the body belongs to the former and the mind the latter type. Spinoza was a monist, seeing nature as infused with a divine substance he called God (in his *Ethics*, quoted on SE p. 349-350).

### Page 104: Thought Experiment: The Experience Machine

1. Similar to the question of whether it is better to take the blue pill and evade reality in the Matrix, or the red pill to face the truth, most would agree that more pleasure will be obtained from the former but more satisfaction in the latter. It is similar to the question of whether you would want to know your partner is cheating, or continue to live happily under a delusion. Not wanting to be duped, most will chose the truth over an illusion, but there is no absolute leverage point for deciding which is the best path to take.
2. The question of whether what is real is just what goes on in one's head can be related to Putnam's brain-in-a-vat through experiment, on SE pp. 259-260. As a pragmatist and non-dualistic thinker (siding neither with idealism or materialism) he answers "no," as we are indeed linked to the causal nexus of our surrounding environment, which also contributes meaning to our thoughts and words. See Chapter 5, SE pp. 122-126 for more on the mind as a material thing, similar to a computer or processor.

### Page 106: Viewpoints: Jacques Derrida

1. Derrida is one of the central figures of 20<sup>th</sup> century philosophy, but he is also one of its most controversial. As readers of his work may come to appreciate, there was much criticism of Derrida's obtuse writing style, heavily influenced by Heidegger's, prompting some philosophers to object that what he was writing was nonsense or quasi-philosophy. Several prominent philosophers objected publically to Derrida receiving an award, showing just how marginal they regarded him as a member of the academic philosophical community. More information about criticisms of Derrida's work is available at

[http://www.martinfrost.ws/htmlfiles/mar2008/jacques\\_derrida.html#3\\_Criticisms\\_of\\_Derridas\\_work\\_](http://www.martinfrost.ws/htmlfiles/mar2008/jacques_derrida.html#3_Criticisms_of_Derridas_work_)

2. In literature courses, and possibly even in their Grade 12 English class, students may come across the concept of deconstruction. Here is a source available through Questia (which some school libraries may have):

*Deconstruction in a Nutshell: A Conversation with Jacques Derrida*, Jacques Derrida, John D. Caputo, New York: Fordham University Press, 1997. (<http://www.questia.com/library/book/deconstruction-in-a-nutshell-a-conversation-with-jacques-derrida-by-jacques-derrida-john-d-caputo.jsp>)

Another way of picking up the conversation is through blogs, offering readings such as the following:

Derrida for Dummies (December, 2011) (<http://litlove.wordpress.com/2011/12/01/derrida-for-dummies/>)

Here is a recent lecture (from Yale Open Courses series, 2009) in a Theory of Literature course discussing Derrida (available on YouTube):

10. Deconstruction I

11. Deconstruction II

For historical context and relations to other philosophers, listen to this lecture (available on YouTube):

Derrida's Deconstruction Of Philosophy (1 of 2)

**Page 107: Section questions**

1. For Heidegger, Being is human existence, an existence that cannot be (and should not) be defined or pinned down by an essence (or definition). Being (human existence) is constantly questioning and creating itself. In contrast, "beings" are objects and things that are defined by what they are; by their essence. Being is constantly approaching what it is and re-defining itself. It has no essence. For Plato, Being is the Forms, which are unchanging and perfect; they are essences.
2. Point out Heidegger's notion of inauthenticity; the playing of a role or the adoption of a way of being that fails to question what is going on. This will help the students to pay attention to what they are doing and the need to question themselves and what they are doing rather than adopting an essence or definition.

**Pages 108-109: Chapter Review**

1. Table for comparing idealists and materialists

Monist		Dualist	
Parmenides	Reality is ultimately one unified, all-encompassing thing (matter or mind)	Plato	Reality consists ultimately of two fundamentally different kinds of things or properties: mind and matter, or mental states and physical states.
Buddhism		Descartes	
Taoism			
Spinoza			

Neither monist nor dualist: Heidegger

2. Table for comparing idealists and materialists

Idealist		Materialist	
Parmenides	Reality is mental, or intelligent, or thought-like.	Heraclitus	Reality ultimately consists of matter, or mental states and physical states.
Plato			
Buddhism			

3. As mentioned in the answer to feature question 1, SE p. 92, Haudenosaunee Metaphysics combines elements of idealism and materialism, similar to Spinoza's monism where nature (all matter) is infused with a divine spirit (God). See the references provided for further research in Teaching Plan 1.
4. Here are some points of comparison and contrast:

**Plato:** An idealist philosopher who believed the real was found through the mind, in the realm of Forms, not here on Earth where we see only replicas of things (SE pp. 95-97).



**Spinoza:** A spiritual-materialist, he said there is one infinite and indivisible substance underlying everything, and this is coterminous with God (SE p. 102).

**Nagarjuna:** The only ultimate truth is that there is no ultimate truth or reality. Even this theory of emptiness is empty (SE p. 99).

5. Students' answers will vary depending on the philosopher they choose.
6. As prompts for this question as to what is real, we looked at whether nature is real (Žižek), whether our identity is real (Heidegger and Foucault), whether things are real or just commodities and symbols in a Matrix-like simulacra (Baudrillard), and whether our boundaries between animals and humans (nature and custom/culture) or between the genders is real (i.e., nature versus nurture questions). Ask students to sort out the answers given by others in the class in terms of whether they are idealist or materialist, monist or dualist.
7. Students will offer their own interpretation of Heraclitus' saying. See the discussion of this passage at the beginning of Teaching Plan 1.
8. Students are directed to select a text referred to in the chapter and offer a written or creative interpretation of a passage, explaining the metaphysical views on reality. Answers will vary. Here are online references to the texts mentioned.

*Tao Te Ching*, Written by Lao-tzu, from a translation by S. Mitchell (<http://academic.brooklyn.cuny.edu/core9/phalsall/texts/taote-v3.html>)

*Mula Madhyamaka Karika*, by Nagarjuna, translated by Stephen Batchelor (<http://www.boeddhaforum.nl/index.php?topic=146.0>)
9. Students are asked to speculate on why metaphysics is called "first philosophy." See the discussion of this topic in the Teaching Strategies for the Levinas feature in Chapter 6 (SE p. 149). Aristotle used the term (*proton philosophia*) to indicate that metaphysics is foundational for other subjects, including ethics and epistemology but also natural science.
10. See the discussion of Descartes' methodical doubt on SE pp. 251-252 and 268-270. See also the dream of Zhuangzi (Chuang Tsi) in which he was a butterfly, and his quandary as to whether he was actually a butterfly dreaming that he was a man (SE p. 258, question 1).
11. Students are asked to investigate the concept of spiritual materialism, both within First Nations traditions and other philosophies, and consider whether it has influenced the environmental movement. The feature on the Asante worldview may be of help here (SE pp. 334-335) as well as Armstrong's spiritual paradigm shift in ecology (SE p. 352). Geneticist and environmentalist David Suzuki's book *The Sacred Balance* (Vancouver: Greystone Books, 2002), is another case in point. See "Rediscovering the sacred balance" on his website:

<http://www.davidsuzuki.org/blogs/science-matters/2011/01/rediscovering-the-sacred-balance/>

See also the discussion of Norval Morrisseau's spiritual vision (theosophy) on SE p. 507.
12. For the role play between Plato and Nagarjuna, students could create puppets or paper figures on sticks to assist with the theatrics. The exercise might also be done in writing or as an audio recording.
13. The question calls for further research into criticism of Spinoza's concept of divine substance. Here are some resources:

Spinoza's Concept of "Substance" (<http://www.timirving.com/philosophy/essay-spinoza.aspx>)

On Freedom: Heidegger (and Deleuze) on Spinoza, James Luchte (<http://luchte.wordpress.com/on-freedom-heidegger-and-deleuze-on-spinoza/>)

"Hegel's Interpretation of Spinoza's Concept of Substance," E Shmueli, 1970 (<http://www.jstor.org/pss/40019158>)

Spinoza: God, Nature, and Freedom (<http://www.philosophypages.com/hy/4h.htm>)

Descartes, Spinoza, Leibniz: The Concept of Substance in Seventeenth-Century Metaphysics, by J.A. Cover ([http://findarticles.com/p/articles/mi\\_hb3545/is\\_n3\\_v49/ai\\_n28667946/](http://findarticles.com/p/articles/mi_hb3545/is_n3_v49/ai_n28667946/))

The following video documentaries are available on YouTube:

Steven Nadler talk on Spinoza - Part 1 of 2

Steven Nadler talk on Spinoza - Part 2 of 2