

Example C:

Weekly Quiz (MCQ), Open-book

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Module Outline

Module: GET1029 — Life, the Universe and Everything
Faculty: Arts and Social Sciences

Number of Students: ~450

Module Description

The course exposes students to academic philosophy by engaging with a variety of philosophical issues and arguments—from the ethical to the political, the epistemological to the metaphysical. Some of the questions we will consider include: Is there really a difference between right and wrong, and if so, where do we draw the line? Is it morally acceptable to consume factory-farmed animal products? Do you have an obligation to assist those in dire need before spending on luxuries for yourself? Does the government have the right to make you pay for things you don't want? Can it really be fair to hold people responsible for what they do, given that they're products of forces over which they ultimately have no control? Does God exist? Does your ability to think and feel mean that you have an immaterial spirit, or are you just a highly organized collection of atoms? Do we have any good reason to think we are not living in a computer simulated world, and if not, how should that influence our world-view? Working through these questions gives students an opportunity to expand their horizons, sharpen their minds, and strengthen their powers of independent thinking.

Assessment task(s)

Grading

Tutorial Attendance — 5%

Tutorial Participation — 5%

*Weekly Quizzes (MCQ) x 10 — 36% (Best 9 of 10)

Special Project (in groups of 5) — 12%

Peer Review and Surveys — 2%

Final Exam (MCQ; open book) — 40%

(Note: The weightage of each component is not finalised.)

**Following provides an account of the development process of the assessment task on “Weekly Quizzes”*

10 Quizzes, 1 for each (weekly) topic. Each quiz consists of 8 MCQs hosted on IVLE. You will have 1 week to complete, always in the week after the lecture, and in the same week as the tutorial for that topic. You can make multiple attempts but only the final attempt is counted. You are allowed and encouraged to discuss the question with your peers. Questions for clarification are welcome, and answers are posted to the course blog for everyone to see as “hints”. After the end of the quiz, a full explanation for each question is posted to the course blog.

Development Process

The quiz questions are drafted by tutors, finalized by the module coordinator, after discussion with the tutors. The full interaction the tutors and the module coordinator for a whole quiz of 8 MCQs that are meant for the 10th and final topic in the module can be viewed via this google doc link: <https://goo.gl/MFnAqx>.

Within the same google doc, there are three links on the top of the first page which shows the hints for the MCQs (updated as students send in questions), and explanations for the MCQs (published after the quiz closed).

Following shows an example of this process extracted from the google doc link,

6.
Abe, Ben, Charlie and Dave attempt to help Vince, our part-time barista at Humble Origins, understand the Principle of Indifference, which is an important part of Nick Bostrom's Argument. Abe, Ben and Charlie each give an example of what they think is an application of the principle:

Abe: "I know I'm an NUS undergraduate, but there are some 28,000 undergraduates in NUS and 24,000 undergraduates in NTU. So in reality, it is a little bit more likely for me to be an NUS undergraduate rather than an NTU undergraduate."

Ben: "Jess is either somewhere in the Central Library, or at the loan counter of the Central Library, or where the Philosophy books are shelved in the Central Library. Since I don't know what's the likelihood of her being in one place rather than another, I should assign a probability equal to $\frac{1}{3}$ to each of the three locations."

Charlie: "Helen likes Peter and Paul equally. Consequently, she is indifferent between going out with either of them, though going out with one means not going out with the other, and she isn't considering going out with anyone else at this point in time."

Who gave a proper application of the principle?


A. Ben only.
B. Abe and Ben.
C. Ben and Charlie.
D. **Neither Abe, Ben nor Charlie.**

Bern: More confirmation as I don't want to inadvertently mislead - Abe isn't right as this isn't directly the Principle of Indifference any longer, whereas Jess isn't right since the three options are not equipossible - somewhere in the CL is gonna be hella huge as compared to the other two options.

LOY: Abe has much better evidence that he is an NUS student than an NTU student, to put it mildly. The POI can't apply under such circumstances. For Jess--being somewhere in the CL is not mutually exclusive with being at the loan counter of the CL, or being at the philosophy books section. The POI presented in lecture requires that the options be mutually exclusive and jointly exhaustive.

Bern: Alright. I'll definitely make sure to emphasise that restriction - I focused a bit too much on equipossibility. In the Abe case, I am slightly concerned some of them would think they are required to just work off the info in the statement and thus neglect that Abe already knows which uni he's enrolled with. At the same time, I'm wondering if that's something that we can wait and see on - whether it turns out a bit like the Gene case last quiz...

LOY: Simplified further.

Bern: Mild spelling edits.  (Ctrl) ▾

Rationale of Assessment Choice

The process is designed with the below features in mind:

- Self-diagnostics for students (both in the doing and after receiving the scores). Platform for instructors to gauge student learning and coordinate remedial focus.
- Platform incentivizing student peer discussions.
- Closing the loop with detailed quiz explanations; which also becomes focus of peer discussion.
- Scalable assessment (large numbers, machine marking, scalable instructor interventions)

This way of doing the diagnostics-loop maximizes student engagement—not just at the individual level, but also among peers—while preserving scalability.