

PY4659

# Why Does the World Exist?

Semester 2 2024-25

30 Credits

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## KEY MODULE INFORMATION

**Lectures:** Wednesdays 10-12pm, Younger Hall, Seminar Room 2

**Seminars:** *Starting in Week 2*

Thursdays 10-11am, Younger Hall, Seminar Room 3

Thursdays 11-12pm, Younger Hall, Seminar Room 3

### Your Team:

**Module convenor and lecturer:** Adam Etnon ([ae45@st-andrews.ac.uk](mailto:ae45@st-andrews.ac.uk))

Office hour: Thursday, 9-10am, or by appointment. Room B18 in Edgecliffe.

### Assessment:

• Seminar Presentation (15%):	<b>Varying</b>
• Lecture & Seminar Questions, (20%):	<b>Continuous</b>
• Reflection (20%):	<b>10 March</b>
• Essay Proposal (Required, unassessed)	<b>14 April</b>
• Essay (45%):	<b>12 May</b>

## **GENERAL INFORMATION**

**Module Description:** This module explores a fundamental question in philosophy and science: why does the world exist, or why is there anything at all? We will look at arguments about whether or not the question is a sensible one, whether, if so, it is answerable, and what knowledge we can draw upon in attempting to answer it. Besides its intrinsic interest, the question touches other deep issues in philosophy—the nature of explanation, the notion of ultimate purpose, the fundamental nature and structure of reality, the existence of supernatural beings, the presence of objective value in the universe, and so on. We will look at various approaches to the central question from within and without the Western philosophical tradition.

### **Intended Learning Outcomes:**

By the end of the module, students will be able to:

- Discuss a range of answers to the title question.
- Critically reflect on readings and come up with probing questions.
- Reflect analytically on complex philosophical texts.
- Produce a sophisticated philosophical argument on the main question, referring to and critically analysing a range of relevant sources.

### **Graduate Attributes:**

- The module will contribute to **leadership skills** by asking students who give tutorial presentations to introduce a topic and take a leading role in facilitating discussion.
- The module will contribute to **diversity awareness** by pursuing a multicultural approach to philosophy, fostering dialogue across a range of cultural and religious traditions.
- The module will contribute to a **global outlook** by engaging with world religions and comparative philosophy from Europe, the Middle East, North America, East Asia, and India.

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**Module requirements:** Adequate reading, demonstrable engagement with the module content, regular attendance at seminars and lectures, submission of all coursework, are all compulsory requirements of this module. Please carefully read the information regarding attendance [in the handbook here](#).

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**Workload:** This module is worth 30 credits; hence it should typically occupy half of your working week, i.e., approximately **18 hours per week, of which 3 are spent in class**. You will neither achieve the grade of which you are capable, nor gain much satisfaction from the course, unless you plan your study accordingly.

An indicative division of the 15 non-class hours per week on this module might be: 2-4 hours on doing the reading and preparing for your seminar and 11-13 hours on researching and writing your essay(s) and any other assignments the module includes. Naturally, this is subject to variation based on your reading speed and other factors.

## **ASSESSMENT**

**Weighting and components:** see first page above.

**Marking and grading** is on the University 20-point scale. **For a full description of marking bands and grade classification**, see the [Marking Criteria in the handbook](#). **Note that all marks are provisional until confirmed by the end-of-semester module boards.** For more information about the role of external examiners and module boards, please see the [University policy on assessment](#).

1. Seminar Presentations (~500 words, spoken)

*Due Date: **TBD***

*Weighting: 15%*

Students will present on their own or in teams for the 9 seminars (students will be asked to sign up for presentations during Week 1).

Students will **not** be required to provide handouts or visual aids for their presentation, although they can provide a single page handout if they like. The exercise will be to imitate the lecture format (described below), by walking the class through **2-3 passages** selected from the reading as being of particular interest, explaining what is interesting/difficult in these passages, and inviting discussion from others. As part of this, it is crucial that the presenter ask probing questions to the class which will prompt conversation. It's a good idea to prepare several questions about each passage, to this end. Have a look at the discussion question task, below, to get a rough idea of what a good discussion question looks like.

Students will be assessed on how well their session serves to deepen understanding of the reading by the group, and on how constructive the discussion they facilitate is. Generally, presentations are graded on the quality of delivery (20%), exegetical accuracy (40%), and thoughtfulness or critical insight (40%)

2. Discussion Questions (20 questions, up to 50 words each)

*Due Date: **Every Tuesday 12pm (noon)***

*Weighting: 20%*

Each student will be asked to submit **two discussion questions** each week: one on a lecture reading, and the other on the seminar reading (The sole exception to this is

in Weeks 1 & 11, when there is no seminar or, in the case of Week 11, no assigned seminar reading) The questions must demonstrate that you've read the relevant text carefully and thought about how to interpret or criticize it, or how to connect some aspect of it to a relevant issue. These questions are meant to generate class **discussion**, and may well be raised and attributed to you in both lectures and seminars, so it is important that the question is posed as a productive **contribution** to discussion. This means crafting the question in a way that includes some idea(s) about how it might be answered.

So, for example, if you have an interpretive question, don't simply ask "What does *X* mean by *P*?" That would foist all the interpretive work onto your classmates! Instead, perhaps try to explain the *reason(s)* you're so unsure what *X* means by *P* as well as what you think *X might* mean by *P*, and *why*. That kind of thoughtful question, which invites others into your line of reasoning, will work much better as a trigger for, and contribution to, discussion in class. The same goes for a critical question. If you object to *X*'s claim that *P*, don't just say this: explain *why*, by making some effort to consider how *X*'s arguments fail to address your concerns, and consider a possible reply on *X*'s behalf. 50 words is not a lot, of course, so you can only go into so much detail. But make the most of it!

The questions will be marked on a 2-point scale—2 points for a question that shows you have carefully read and thought hard about the text, 1 point for a question that doesn't quite show this, and 0 points for non-submission, or a completely trivial/irrelevant question.

If there are two or more readings for a lecture or seminar in one week, the submitted question need only address *one* of the readings (though it can also address all or both!)

Lecture and seminar questions must both be submitted by **Tuesday, 12pm (noon)**, in each week of term, **including Week 1**. There will be a submission portal available for this on MMS.

**Note:** You **must** include a word count with your questions. Questions submitted **late** will be capped at a mark of 1. Penalties will only be waived in extraordinary circumstances.

Students will receive an overall mark out of 20 for their combined lecture/seminar questions.

### 3. Reflection (up to 1000 words)

*Due Date: **Monday, 10 March, 12pm (noon)***

*Weighting: 20%*

This reflective exercise involves choosing one of the readings from the module (lecture, seminar, or supplementary) that you find interesting and writing a critical

reflection on it. Imagine that you are talking about the reading with a friend who is interested in the subject but isn't taking this module. You are explaining what the reading says and also what you think about it. Does it contain an argument that you find convincing or unconvincing? Does it give answers to difficult questions that you find satisfying? What questions does it leave unanswered? Has it changed the way you think about the subject?

Criteria: The criteria for this assignment will be essentially the same as for an essay. So, consider this practice for the final essay. Generally, research papers will be assessed on the basis of: (i) lucidity, (ii) effort, (iii) independence of thought, (iv) argumentative charity; and (v) comprehension of the relevant readings.

4. Essay Proposal (up to 250 words)

*Due Date: **Monday, 14 April, 12pm (noon)***

*Weighting: (Required but not assessed)*

The purpose of the essay proposal is for you to have a chance to check in with the module convener about your final essay plan. Describe the essay you plan to write, in as brief terms as possible (and in no more than 250 words), and you will be provided with feedback on MMS within a two-week period.

5. Final Essay (up to 2250 words)

*Due Date: **Monday, 12 May, 12pm (noon)***

*Weighting: 45%*

The purpose of the final essay is for students to critically reflect on a key question or argument discussed in the course materials, or closely related thereto.

*Criteria:* Generally, research papers will be assessed on the basis of (i) lucidity, (ii) effort, (iii) relevance to the chosen question, (iv) independence of thought, (v) argumentative charity; and (vi) comprehension of the relevant readings. For help and advice on writing philosophy assignments, please see the [guide in the handbook](#).

**Please note the following requirements for the essays:**

- Essays must be submitted via MMS.
- Essays must be word-processed and double-spaced. **Please use the essay template provided on the Moodle page for the module. No other format will be accepted.** In particular, you **must** submit any coursework **in Word format** only (the exception is logic assignments that may require LaTeX typesetting).
- Essays will be marked anonymously so **do not include your name** anywhere in the document.
- On the first page of your essay, write your matriculation number, the module name and number, your tutor's name, the essay question you've answered, and the word count.

- Essays must not exceed 2250 words; The word count must include everything **except bibliography and title page**; that is to say, the word count must include all footnotes, quotations, etc.
- Please note that we implement the word count policy very strictly indeed. Where the word limit is exceeded, ***even by one word***, the following penalties will be applied:
- **1 mark for work that is over-length to any extent, then a further 1 mark per additional 5% over.**
- Your **bibliography** must give full details of all sources consulted. If you quote from or paraphrase any of those sources in your essay, you must give clear references that allow the sources to be identified in the bibliography. Further information about academic integrity and plagiarism can be found in the University's [Good Academic Practice](#) policy and our [Undergraduate Handbook](#).

## **ESSAY TITLES**

There is only one essay title for this module: *Why does the world exist?*  
Students are responsible for framing and interpreting the question appropriately.

## **SEMINARS**

Seminars are a crucial part of the module. Each seminar will be based on one or two readings (usually one). The seminar presenter(s) will lead the group through passages they have selected from the readings, providing commentary and inviting discussion. When there are multiple presenters, they will have to agree beforehand on how to divide up the reading, though different presenters can cover the same passages from different angles if they like. Students will also be encouraged to raise their submitted seminar questions for discussion with the class, and sometimes these will be explicitly called out by the lecturer.

Please note the following rules for respectful conversation: <https://www.st-andrews.ac.uk/philosophy/students/handbooks/undergraduate/constructive-and-respectful-discussion-in-philosophy/>

## **STUDENT FEEDBACK**

You will have opportunities to give feedback on this module throughout the semester, including via your class reps at the SSCC meeting in week 5, and the end-of-semester Module Evaluation Questionnaires. Your comments are extremely valuable to your lecturers. In response to your feedback in previous years, we have made the following changes to this module:

- Reduced the number of readings assigned every week.

## LECTURE/SEMINAR PLAN

**Format:** Lectures for this module will be run more like seminars, in that they will focus on the collective “close reading” of assigned texts. The lecturer will present key passages from the assigned text(s), and invite students to comment on, critique, interpret, and analyze these passages, as part of the class discussion. The lecturer will also draw on and quote submitted lecture questions to facilitate the discussion.

## LECTURE PLAN & ESSENTIAL READINGS

Each lecture will focus on a distinct answer (or non-answer) to the main question *why does the world exist?*

### 1. Because it's a brute fact

Jan 29

#### Lecture Reading

- Derek Parfit, “The Puzzle of Reality: Why Does the Universe Exist?” in *Metaphysics: The Big Questions* (Oxford: Blackwell, 1998), eds. P.V. Inwagen & D.W. Zimmerman, pp. **418-427**.
- Richard Swinburne, “Response to Derek Parfit” in *Metaphysics: The Big Questions* (Oxford: Blackwell, 1998), eds. P.V. Inwagen & D.W. Zimmerman, pp. **427-429**.

Jan 30

#### No Seminars in First Week!

### 2. “Well, once upon a time...”

Feb 5

#### Lecture Reading

- Hesiod, “Theogony” in *The Poems of Hesiod: Theogony, Works and Days, and The Shield of Herakles* (Oakland: University of California Press, 2017), tr. Barry B. Powell, pp. **31-45** [Selection].
- Karl R. Popper, “The Myth of the Framework” in *The Myth of the Framework: In Defense of Science and Rationality* (London: Routledge, 1994), Secs. I-VII, pp. **33-44** [Selection].
- Mircea Eliade, “The Structure of Myths” in *Myth and Reality* (New York: Harper & Row, 1963), tr. Willard R. Trask, ed. Ruth N. Anshen, Ch. 1, pp. **1-20**.

Feb 6

#### Seminar Reading

- Barbara Graziosi, “Birth: Archaic Greece” in *The Gods of Olympus: A History* (London: Profile Books, 2013), Part I, Chs. **1-3**.

### 3. It couldn't have come from nothing

Feb 12

Lecture Reading (Class Guest: Dr. Alex Long)

- Parmenides, "On Nature" in "Parmenides of Elea", *The Presocratic Philosophers: A Critical History with a Selection of Texts* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1983, Second Edition), eds. G.S. Kirk, J.E. Raven, & M. Schofield, Ch. 8, pp. **239-254**. --- [feel free to read on to page 262 if you like, but this won't be covered in class].
- James Warren, "Parmenides" in *Presocratics* (New York: Routledge, 2014), Ch. 5, pp. **77-103**.

Feb 13

Seminar Reading

- Leucippus & Democritus, fragments in 'The Atomists: Leucippus of Miletus and Democritus of Abdera' in *The Presocratic Philosophers: A Critical History with a Selection of Texts* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1983, Second Edition), eds. G.S. Kirk, J.E. Raven, & M. Schofield, Ch. 15, pp. **402-429**.

### 4. It came from nothing

Feb 19

Lecture Reading (Guest Lecture: Dr. Alex Douglas)

- Donald F. Duclow: "Divine Nothingness and Self-Creation in John Scotus Eriugena" in *The Journal of Religion* (1977), Vol. 57, No. 2, pp. **109-123**.

Feb 20

Seminar Reading

- Ellen Marie Chen, "Nothingness and the Mother Principle in Early Chinese Taoism" in *International Philosophical Quarterly* (1969), Vol. 9, No. 3, pp. **391-405**.

### 5. Because it's *always* existed

Feb 26

Lecture Reading

- Aristotle, *Metaphysics* (Indianapolis/Cambridge: Hackett, 2016), tr. C.D.C. Reeve, Book XII, Chs. 1-7, pp. **198-207** (Also see relevant notes on pp. 512-531).
- Jonathan Lear, *Aristotle: The Desire to Understand* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press: 1988), Ch. 6.7, pp. **293-309**.

Feb 27

Seminar Reading

- David Sedley, "Aristotle" in *Creationism and its Critics in Antiquity* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2007), Ch. 6, pp. **167-204**.

### 6. Because it's good for it to exist



- March 12      Lecture Reading (Class Guest: Dr. Jason Carter)
- Plato, *Timaeus* (27e-31b) in *Complete Works* (Indianapolis: Hackett, 1997), ed. J.M. Cooper, pp. **1234-1237**. [You can also read from pp. 1124-1234 for an enjoyable introduction].
  - Sarah Broadie & Anthony Kenny, 'The Creation of the World' in *Proceedings of the Aristotelian Society, Supplementary Volume* (2004), Vol. 78, No. 1, pp. **65-92**.

- March 13      Seminar Reading
- Sarah Broadie, 'The Separateness of the Demiurge' in *Nature and Divinity in Plato's Timaeus* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2011), Ch. 1, pp. **7-27**.

## 7. Because something is more probable than nothing

- March 19      Lecture Reading
- Peter Van Inwagen, 'Why is There Anything at All?' in *Proceedings of the Aristotelian Society* (1996), 70, pp. **95-110**.
  - E.J. Lowe, 'Why is There Anything at All?' in *Proceedings of the Aristotelian Society* (1996), 70, pp. **111-120**.

- March 20      Seminar Reading
- Guido Imagiure, "Something Rather than Nothing" in *Philosophy* (2022), Vol. 97, No. 1, pp. **1-22**.

## 8. Because we exist

- March 26      Lecture Reading
- John Leslie, "Anthropic Explanations" in *Universes* (London: Routledge, 1989), Ch.6, pp. **127-149**.
- March 27      Seminar Reading
- Roger White, "Fine-Tuning and Multiple Universes" in *Nous* (2000), Vol. 34, No. 2, pp. **260-276**.

## 9. Living without an answer: part one

- April 2      Lecture Reading
- Susan Wolf, 'The Meanings of Lives' in *Varieties of Value: Essays on Morality, Meaning, and Love* (Oxford: Oxford University press, 2015), Ch. 6, pp. **89-107**.
  - Albert Camus, 'The Myth of Sisyphus' in *The Myth of Sisyphus* (New York: Penguin, 1979), pp. **107-111**.

April 3

Seminar Reading

- Michael Zhao, “Meaning, Purpose, and Narrative” in *Nous* (2024), Early View, pp. **1-23**.

**10. Independent Learning Week**

**11. Living Without an answer: part two**

April 16

Lecture Reading

- Guy Kahane, “Our Cosmic Insignificance” in *Nous* (2014), Vol. 48, No. 4, pp. **745-772**.

April 17

Seminar Reading

- Charles Taylor, “Disenchantment-Reenchantment” in *The Joy of Secularism: 11 Essays for How we Live Now* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2011), ed. George Levine, Ch. 2, pp. **57-73**.

**12. It doesn’t exist!**

April 23

Lecture Reading

- Jan Westerhoff, “An argument for ontological nihilism” in *Inquiry: An Interdisciplinary Journal of Philosophy* (2024), Vol. 67, No. 1, pp. **513-559**.

April 24

No Seminars – Essay Discussion

## **ADDITIONAL READINGS & RESOURCES**

### **1. Because it's a brute fact**

- Jim Holt, "Confronting the Mystery" & "Philosophical Tour d'Horizon" in *Why Does the World Exist? An Existential Detective Story* (New York: Liveright, 2012), Chs. 1 & 2, pp. 3-13, 17-36.
- Tyron Goldschmidt, 'Understanding the Question' in *The Puzzle of Existence: Why is There Something Rather Than Nothing?* (New York: Routledge, 2013), ed. T. Goldschmidt, Ch. 1, pp. 1-21.
- Richard Dawkins, "The Anthropic Principle: Cosmological Version" in *The God Delusion* (London: Bantam, 2006), pp. 141-151.

### **2. 'Well, once upon a time...'**

- Robert A. Segal, *Myth: A Very Short Introduction* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2004)
- Robert A. Segal, "Myth and Science: Their Varying Relationships" in *Religion Compass* (2009), Vol. 3, No. 2, pp. 337-358.
- Anthony Aveni, *Creation Stories: Landscapes of the Human Imagination* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2021)
- Ruth Benedict, *Patterns of Culture* (London: Mentor Books, 1960).
- Ruth Benedict, *Zuni Mythology: Two Volumes* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1935).
- Ruth Benedict, *Tales of the Cochiti Indians* (Washington: US Government Printing Office, 1931)

### **3. It came from nothing**

- Ellen Marie Chen, 'The Origin and Development of Being (Yu) from Non-Being (Wu) in the *Tao Te Ching*' – <https://doi-org.ezproxy.st-andrews.ac.uk/10.5840/ipq197313338>
- Robert Neville, 'From Nothing to Being: The Notion of Creation in Chinese and Western Thought' – <http://www.jstor.com/stable/1399009>
- May Sim, 'The Question of Being, Non-Being, and "Creation Ex Nihilo" in Chinese Philosophy' – <https://www-jstor-org.ezproxy.st-andrews.ac.uk/stable/j.ctt2851mv.6>
- Zhihua Yao, 'Typology of Nothing: Heidegger, Daoism, and Buddhism' <https://scholarworks.sjsu.edu/cgi/viewcontent.cgi?article=1006&context=comparativephilosophy>
- David Chai, 'Daoism and Wu' – <https://compass.onlinelibrary.wiley.com/doi/10.1111/phc3.12171>

### **4. It couldn't have come from nothing**

- David Furley, *The Greek Cosmologists: Volume I* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1987), Ch. 4.3-4.4, 9, & 10, pp. 36-49, 115-151.
- David Sedley, 'The Atomists: Democritus' in *Creationism and its Critics in Antiquity* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2007), Ch. V.1, pp. 133-139.
- Barbara Sattler, 'Parmenides' System: The Logical Origins of His Monism' in *Proceedings of the Boston Area Colloquium in Ancient Philosophy* (Leiden: Brill, 2010), eds. G.M. Gurtler & W. Wians, Vol. 26, pp. 25-70. <https://www.st-andrews.ac.uk/~bs21/ParmenidesBACAP.pdf>
- Charles H. Kahn, 'The Thesis of Parmenides' in *The Review of Metaphysics* (1969), Vol. 22, No. 4, pp. 700-24. --- [see also the ensuing exchange with Mourelatos and Stein, if you like] – <https://www.jstor.org/stable/20124945>
- Sylvia Berryman, 'Ancient Atomism' in *Stanford Encyclopedia of Philosophy* (2016) <https://plato.stanford.edu/entries/atomism-ancient/>
- John Palmer, 'Parmenides' in *Stanford Encyclopedia of Philosophy* (2020). <https://plato.stanford.edu/entries/parmenides/>

#### 5. Because it's always existed

- Aristotle, *Physics* (Indianapolis/Cambridge: Hackett, 2018), tr. C.D.C. Reeve, Book 8, pp. 138-174.
- Aristotle, *De Caelo* (Indianapolis/Cambridge: Hackett, 2018), tr. C.D.C. Reeve, Book 1, Chs. 11-12, & Book 2, pp. 26-34, 34-62.
- Richard Sorabji, *Time Creation, and the Continuum: Theories in Antiquity and the Early Middle Ages* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2006), Ch. 17.
- Christopher Shields, *Aristotle: Second Edition* (New York: Routledge, 2014), Ch. 5.5.

#### 6. Because it is good for it to exist

- David Furley, *The Greek Cosmologists: Volume I* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1987), Ch. 12, pp. 169-177.
- David Sedley, 'Plato' in *Creationism and its Critics in Antiquity* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2007), Ch. IV, V, pp. 93-132, 132-167.
- John Leslie, 'The Theory that the World Exists because it Should' – <https://www.jstor.org/stable/20009361>
- Tim Mulgan, 'Beyond Theism and Atheism: Axiarchism and Ananthropocentric Purposivism' – <https://compass.onlinelibrary.wiley.com/doi/epdf/10.1111/phc3.12420>

#### 7. Because something is more probable than nothing

- Gonzalo Rodriguez-Pereyra, 'Why is There Something Rather Than Nothing? A Probabilistic Answer Examined' in *Philosophy* (2018), Vol. 93, No. 4, pp. 505-521 – <https://www.cambridge.org/core/journals/philosophy/article/why-is-there-something-rather-than-nothing-a-probabilistic-answer-examined/185A281C407601319878C91DD74345A5>
- Henri Bergson, "The Idea of 'Nothing'" in *Creative Evolution* (Mineola: Dover, 1998), pp. 272-298 – [https://www.gutenberg.org/files/26163/26163-h/26163-h.htm#Page\\_272](https://www.gutenberg.org/files/26163/26163-h/26163-h.htm#Page_272)
- Gonzalo Rodriguez-Pereyra, 'There Might be Nothing: The Subtraction Argument Improved' in *Analysis* (1997), Vol. 57, No. 3, pp. 159-166.
- E.J. Lowe, 'Metaphysical Nihilism and the Subtraction Argument' in *Analysis* (2002), Vol. 62, pp. 62-73.
- Efid, D. and Stoneham, T. 'Is Metaphysical Nihilism Interesting?' in *Pacific Philosophical Quarterly* (2009), 90(2): 210–231.
- Jim Holt, 'A Brief History of Nothing' in *Why Does the World Exist? An Existential Detective Story* (New York: Liveright, 2012), Ch. 3, pp. 41-63.
- Thomas Baldwin, 'There Might be Nothing' in *Analysis* (1996), Vol. 56, No. 4, pp. 231-238 – <https://www.jstor.org/stable/3328513>

#### 8. Because *we exist*

- Nick Bostrom, *Anthropic Bias: Observation Selection Effects in Science and Philosophy* (New York & London: Routledge, 2002)
- Ian Hacking, "The Inverse Gambler's Fallacy: The Argument from Design. The Anthropic Principle Applied to Wheeler Universes" in *Mind* (1987), Vol. 96, No. 383, pp. 331-340.
- Quentin Smith, "Anthropic Explanations in Cosmology" in *Australasian Journal of Philosophy* (1994), Vol. 72, No. 3, pp. 371-382.
- Patrick A. Wilson, "The Anthropic Principle" in *Cosmology: Historical, Literary, Philosophical, Religious and Scientific Perspectives* (New York: Routledge, 2008), ed. Noriss Hetherington, Ch. 26, pp. 505-515.

#### 9, 10, & 11. Living Without an Answer

- Susan Wolf, *Meaning in Life and Why it Matters* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2010).
- Joel Feinberg, 'Absurd Self-Fulfillment' in *Freedom and Fulfillment: Philosophical Essays* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1992), pp. 297-331.
- Michael Smith, 'Is That All There is?' in *The Journal of Ethics* (2006), Vol. 10, No. 1/2, pp. 75-106.
- Thomas Nagel, 'The Absurd' in *The Journal of Philosophy* (1971), Vol. 68, No. 20, pp. 716-727.
- Charles Taylor, *A Secular Age* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 2007).

**12. It doesn't exist!**

- Jan Westerhoff, 'On The Nihilist Interpretation of Madhyamaka – <https://www.jstor.org/stable/44157309>
- Mark Siderits, *Buddhism as Philosophy* (Hackett, 2021), ch.8 – <http://library.st-andrews.ac.uk/record=b3224544~S5>
- Jan Westerhoff, *The Non-Existence of the Real World* (OUP, 2020) – <http://library.st-andrews.ac.uk/record=b3064787~S5>

**Other Answers...**

**A. Because it was created**

- Wesley J. Wildman, 'How to Resist Robert Neville's Creatio ex Nihilo Argument' – <https://www.jstor.org/stable/10.5406/amerjtheophil.36.1.0056>
- Robert Neville, 'Comments on Wesley Wildman's "How to Resist Robert Neville's Creatio ex Nihilo Argument"' – <https://www.jstor.org/stable/10.5406/amerjtheophil.36.1.0065>
- David L. Hall, 'The Culture of Metaphysics: On Saving Neville's Project (From Neville)' – <https://www.jstor.org/stable/27944030>
- Siger of Brabant, *Question on Creation Ex Nihilo* – [https://academic.mu.edu/taylorr/Aquinas\\_in\\_Context\\_Fall\\_2015/Siger\\_of\\_Brabant,\\_Question\\_on\\_Creation\\_Ex\\_Nihilo.html](https://academic.mu.edu/taylorr/Aquinas_in_Context_Fall_2015/Siger_of_Brabant,_Question_on_Creation_Ex_Nihilo.html)
- Richard Swinburne, "How the Existence of God Explains the World and its Order" in *Is There a God?* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2010), Ch. 4, pp. 44-63.
- Adolf Grunbaum, "The Pseudo-Problem of Creation in Physical Cosmology" in *Philosophy of Science* (1989), Vol. 56, No. 3, pp. 373-394.
- Jim Holt, *Why Does the World Exist? An Existential Detective Story* (New York: Liveright, 2012), Ch. 4, pp. 63-80.
- John F. Wippel, 'Thomas Aquinas on the Ultimate Why Question: Why Is There Anything at All Rather than Nothing Whatsoever?' – [https://www-jstor-org.ezproxy.st-andrews.ac.uk/stable/j.ctt2851mv.8#metadata\\_info\\_tab\\_contents](https://www-jstor-org.ezproxy.st-andrews.ac.uk/stable/j.ctt2851mv.8#metadata_info_tab_contents).
- Thomas Aquinas, *Summa Contra Gentiles*, Book 2, Chs.6, 15, 16, 17, 18, 19, 23 – <https://isidore.co/aquinas/ContraGentiles2.htm#6>
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