

Graduate Metaphysics Course

course number here

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<u>Assignments</u>		<u>Grade Scale</u>												
Big Paper:	60%	F	D-	D	D+	C-	C	C+	B-	B	B+	A-	A	A+
Presentation:	20%	0	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12
Short Papers:	20%													

Required Text

Jaegwon Kim and Ernest Sosa, eds. *Metaphysics: An Anthology*. Malden, Mass: Blackwell, 1999.

Course Description

This course will focus on several central issues in contemporary philosophical debates in metaphysics. Some of these issues will include the nature of substances and properties, the metaphysical issues for the modalities of necessity and possibility, the analysis of causation, identity across time, and the realism/anti-realism debate.

Big Paper Requirement

Students will write a 15-20 page paper for the course that focuses on one of the readings or topics for this course. This paper will count for 60% of the student's overall grade. More specific instructions about the paper will be given in class. Students are strongly encouraged to consult the instructor for advice and help in writing their papers.

Participation & Presentation & Short Papers

Given the difficult nature of many of the readings and topics covered in this course, students are expected to attend class regularly. Each student will give a class presentation (about 15 minutes) that focuses on critical questions for the assigned reading that day, which will count as 20% of their overall grade in the course. Additionally students will be required to write four short papers that critically respond to one aspect of the reading (for example, one argument from the reading). These papers will be around 2-3 double-spaced pages. More information will be provided in class about the due date and expectations for these papers. Each short paper is worth 5% of the student's overall grade.

Minimal Passing Requirement

In order to pass the course students must meet three basic requirements: (1) they must turn in the big paper; and (2) they must attend at least three-fourths of classes. *Those who do not meet these conditions are subject to fail the course regardless of their overall average.*

Tentative Reading Schedule

Week 1: Existence

Quine, "On What There Is"
Carnap, "Empiricism, Semantics, Ontology"

Week 2: Existence

Russell, "Existence and Description"
Parsons, "Referring to Nonexistent Objects"

Week 3: Existence

Quine, "Ontological Relativity"

Week 4: Identity

Black, "The Identity of Indiscernibles"
Kripke, "Identity and Necessity"

Week 5: Identity

Gibbard, "Contingent Identity"

Week 6: Modality

Plantinga, "Modalities: Basic Concepts and Distinctions"

Week 7: Modality

Lewis, "Counterparts or Double Lives?"
Armstrong, "The Nature of Possibility"

Week 8: Universals and Properties

Armstrong, "Universals as Attributes"
Lewis, "New Work for a Theory of Universals"

Week 9: Universals and Properties

Shoemaker, "Causality and Properties"

Week 10: Persistence of Persons

Chisholm, "The Persistence of Persons"
Shoemaker, "Persons and their Past"

Week 11: Persistence of Persons

Parfit, "Personal Identity"
Swinburne, "Personal Identity"

Week 12: Causation

Mackie, "Causes and Conditions"
Lewis, "Causation"

Week 13: Reduction

Fodor, "Special Sciences"
Kim, "Multiple Realization and the Metaphysics of Reduction"

Week 14: Supervenience

Kim, "Supervenience as a Philosophical Concept"

Week 15: Realism and Antirealism

Putnam, "Pragmatic Realism"
Alston, "Yes Virginia, There is a Real World"