

PHIL 4603: Metaphysics
University of Arkansas; Fall 2007

Professor: Eric Funkhouser
Office hours: MW 2:30 – 4:00 p.m., and by appointment
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Class website: <http://comp.uark.edu/~efunkho/metaphysicsF07.html>
All class handouts, and some additional information, will be posted on this website. So, be sure to check it out from time to time.

Class meeting time: MWF 11:30 a.m. – 12:20 p.m.
Classroom: Old Main 203

I. Text (Required)

Kim, Jaegwon and Ernest Sosa, eds. 1999. *Metaphysics: An Anthology*.
(Malden, MA: Blackwell Publishing).

This book is available at the campus bookstore.

II. Course Description

Metaphysics concerns itself with the most fundamental features of reality. In contrast with the physical sciences, it continues to rely (for better or worse) on a more *a priori* methodology. Here are some examples of metaphysical questions:

- What things *really* exist? (The Ontological Question) Does God exist? Numbers? Propositions?
- What is the basic ontological structure of our physical world?
- What is the nature of space-time?
- Do only particulars exist?
- What is the nature of causation?
- What does it mean to have a free will, and are we free?
- Can objects persist through change, and if so how?

- What does it mean to be a person?
- How are our minds related to our brains?
- Is there a way the world *really is*, apart from how it is perceived and conceptualized?

We will not tackle all of these questions. Instead, we will limit ourselves to the following topics: identity, existence, modality, persistence through time, personal identity, causation, and realism/anti-realism.

III. Online Resources

The class website listed above will contain additional information that will help you prepare for lectures, papers, and exams. I will put some lecture notes online for each class. You can download and print out these notes on your own. Do note, however, that these notes will not replace in-class note-taking and attendance. Some additional information and links will also be posted on this website.

IV. Grading

Your course grade will be determined as follows:

- 2 exams:
 - Take-home midterm: 25%
 - In-class final exam: 25%
- 2 papers:
 - Shorter paper (approx. 5 to 7 pages): 20%
 - Longer paper (approx. 10 to 12 pages): 30%

Note: There will be a slight difference between the undergraduate and graduate student versions of the exams. Quizzes, class attendance, and participation may make some contribution to your grade as well.

V. Miscellaneous

- Assignments are due as listed on the schedule below. Late assignments will not be accepted, but for *extreme circumstances*. Even in these extreme circumstances (death in family, hospitalization, imprisonment, etc.) you should notify me *before* the assignment is due. This holds for exams as well.
- Academic dishonesty (e.g., plagiarism or cheating on tests) is taken very seriously. Any violation may result in the most severe repercussions allowed by the University. For the University policy on academic dishonesty, see: <http://www.uark.edu:80/campus-resources/rlee/honesty.html>

- If you require special accommodations for test-taking and/or paper-writing, inform me of them by the first week of class (with proper documentation) so that the proper arrangements can be made.

- Inclement weather policy: Assume, until and unless you hear otherwise from me, that class will *not* be canceled due to inclement weather (even if the university's inclement weather policy is in effect). If class must be canceled due to the weather, or for any other reason, I will send out a class email as soon as possible. In the worst case scenario, I will simply have a notice posted in the classroom.

VI. Schedule and Reading Assignments

Readings and assignments are due *by* the date on which they are listed. All readings, but for one, are from our anthology. This schedule is subject to change.

Topic: Identity

M Aug 20: None/Introduction
W Aug 22: What is Metaphysics?
Background Terminology and Distinctions
F Aug 24: Black, "The Identity of Indiscernibles", pp. 66–71

M Aug 27: Kripke, "Identity and Necessity", pp. 72–89
W Aug 29: Perry, "The Same *F*", pp. 90–99
F Aug 31: Gibbard, "Contingent Identity", pp. 100–115

Topic: Existence

M Sept 3: **NO CLASS LABOR DAY**
W Sept 5: Quine, "On What There Is", pp. 4–12
F Sept 7: Carnap, "Empiricism, Semantics, and Ontology", pp. 13–22

M Sept 10: Yablo, "Does Ontology Rest on a Mistake?"
<http://www.mit.edu/~yablo/om.pdf>
W Sept 12: Russell, "Existence and Description", pp. 23–35
F Sept 14: None

Topic: Modality

M Sept 17: Plantinga, "Modalities: Basic Concepts and Distinctions", pp. 135–148
Shorter Paper Due
W Sept 19: Chisholm, "Identity through Possible Worlds", pp. 149–153
F Sept 21: Lewis, "Counterparts or Double Lives?", pp. 154–171

M Sept 24: None
W Sept 26: Adams, "Primitive Thisness and Primitive Identity", pp. 172–183
F Sept 28: None

Topic: Persistence Through Time

- M Oct 1: Chisholm, "Identity through Time", pp. 273–283
W Oct 3: Quine, "Identity, Ostension, and Hypostasis", pp. 284–290
F Oct 5: None

M Oct 8: Thomson, "Parthood and Identity across Time", pp. 301–311
W Oct 10: Heller, "Temporal Parts of Four-Dimensional Objects", pp. 312–326
F Oct 12: None

Topic: Personal Identity

- M Oct 15: Chisholm, "The Persistence of Persons", pp. 331–337
Midterm Due
W Oct 17: Shoemaker, "Persons and their Pasts", pp. 338–354
F Oct 19: None

M Oct 22: Williams, "The Self and the Future", pp. 355–364
W Oct 24: Parfit, "Personal Identity", pp. 365–376
F Oct 26: None

M Oct 29: Johnston, "Human Beings", pp. 393–407
W Oct 31: Swinburne, "Personal Identity: The Dualist Theory", pp. 377–392
F Nov 2: None

Topic: Causation

- M Nov 5: Mackie, "Causes and Conditions", pp. 413–427
W Nov 7: None
F Nov 9: Davidson, "Causal Relations", pp. 428–435

M Nov 12: Lewis, "Causation", pp. 436–443
W Nov 14: Tooley, "The Nature of Causation: A Singularist Account", pp. 458–482
F Nov 16: None

Topic: Realism/Anti-Realism

- M Nov 19: Putnam, "Pragmatic Realism", pp. 591–606
W Nov 21: **NO CLASS THANKSGIVING HOLIDAY**
F Nov 23: **NO CLASS THANKSGIVING HOLIDAY**

M Nov 26: Sosa, "Putnam's Pragmatic Realism" pp. 607–619
W Nov 28: Alston, "Yes, Virginia, There Is a Real World", pp. 620–633
F Nov 30: Blackburn, "Morals and Modals", pp. 634–648

M Dec 3: Review
Longer Paper Due

Final Exam: Monday, December 10th; 7:30 – 9:30 a.m., in our regular classroom