METAPHYSICS

Metaphysics concerns the ultimate nature of reality. This course is an intermediate survey of some central issues in metaphysics which may include: existence, resemblance, causation, possibility, matter, identity, change, space, and time.

PREREQUISITES
PHIL201 + 3 units of philosophy, or permission.

PLACE/TIME
COR A129, Mondays & Thursdays 1:00pm-2:20pm (Spring 2015)

INSTRUCTOR
Dr Mike Raven ( mike@mikeraven.net | http://mikeraven.net/)

OFFICE HOURS
CLE B323 Monday/Thursday 11:30-12:30, or by appointment.

WEBSITE
http://coursespaces.uvic.ca/course/view.php?id=2292

TEXTS
• CONEE & SIDER, Riddles of Existence: A Guided Tour of Metaphysics (New Edition) [CS]
• KIM, KORMAN, & SOSA (eds.), Metaphysics: An Anthology (2nd edition) [KKS]
• KRIPKE, Naming and Necessity

APPRAOCH

"Philosophy is the strangest of subjects: it aims at rigour and yet is unable to establish any results; it attempts to deal with the most profound questions and yet constantly finds itself preoccupied with the trivialities of language; and it claims to be of great relevance to rational enquiry and the conduct of our life and yet is almost completely ignored. But perhaps what is strangest of all is the passion and intensity with which it is pursued by those who have fallen in its grip." (Kit Fine)

Philosophy is a skilled activity which strives for clarity, precision, and rigor in our understanding of the world.

This philosophical skill is best learned by practice. One can no more learn philosophy without practice than one can learn to play a musical instrument without practice. And one can no more learn philosophy merely by reading it than one can learn to dance merely by reading about dancing. Thus, while the course focuses on some central philosophical questions, the main emphasis is on how to do philosophy: to think with clarity, precision, and rigor.

But clear, precise, and rigorous thought is inseparable from the clear, precise, and rigorous communication of thought. Your practice in philosophy will consist in reading the material, discussing the material in class, and communicating it in your written work. Assignments tend to be short, but the standards are high.

Philosophers might initially seem to use obscure technical terms disconnected from ordinary language, to fuss pedantically over insignificant details, and to get caught up in abstract disputes disconnected from everyday life. As a result, some students might initially find philosophy to be unfamiliar, difficult, and irrelevant. But this first impression is misleading. Technical terms are used to avoid unclarity and imprecision, details are fussed over to achieve the strictest rigor, and the abstract is focused on to guard against everyday biases.

Philosophy requires patience and discipline. But it can be rewarding, especially as one hones the skill of sharpening one's ideas and isolating the justifications for them—a skill which can be used in any academic discipline, and in ordinary life.
EVALUATION


ASSIGNMENTS

• 3 problem sets (90%) (Due: FEB 5, MAR 5, APR 6)
  (Typically short essay questions; but possibly longer essays too.)

PARTICIPATION

• Engaging with the course material in and out of class (10%)
  This includes (but is not limited to) discussion in class and with the instructor during office hours or over email.

LATENESS

If you do not expect to complete an assignment on time, submit what you have done on time. Except in extreme circumstances (instructor’s discretion), extensions require documentation of a legitimate reason before the due date and will not extend past when timely assignments are returned. Late work is penalized one letter grade per day late and does not receive comments.

CONDUCT

You agree to abide by a social contract of conduct by enrolling in this course:

CLASS

Attending and contributing to class helps train your philosophical skills. It is not just for your benefit, but also for your classmates. Please be respectful: be prepared to contribute, but do not interrupt, bully, ramble, distract, dominate, or insult your classmates. No unauthorized guests or audio/visual recordings of class.

CONTACT

You are encouraged to seek guidance in office hours, by email, or by appointment. Please be respectful: communicate professionally, allow ample time for replies, and do not expect replies to questions already answered by official sources (e.g. syllabus, website).

INTEGRITY

Plagiarism is not tolerated. Ignorance is no excuse. It is your responsibility to learn the university’s policies on academic integrity http://web.uvic.ca/calendar2014/FACS/UnIn/UARe/PoAcI.html.

SURVEY

Towards the end of term, you may complete an anonymous Course Experience Survey (CES). The survey provides your instructor with your feedback on this course, which can help improve it in future. When the survey becomes available, you should receive an email inviting you to complete it; but you can also access it directly at http://ces.uvic.ca (ensure your current email address is listed in MyPage: http://uvic.ca/mypage). Use your UVic netlink ID to access the survey. Your feedback is appreciated.

RESOURCES

ADVICE

The material is best learned by reflecting on the readings and class discussions, participating, and preparing for assignments in advance of the deadlines. Consult the instructor and these resources:
### Vocab

[http://www.jimpryor.net/teaching/vocab/](http://www.jimpryor.net/teaching/vocab/)

### Reading

[http://www.jimpryor.net/teaching/guidelines/reading.html](http://www.jimpryor.net/teaching/guidelines/reading.html)

### Writing


[http://www.jimpryor.net/teaching/guidelines/writing.html](http://www.jimpryor.net/teaching/guidelines/writing.html)


Bennett & Goroviz (1997) "Improving Academic Writing", Teaching Philosophy 20.

### Disabilities

Consult with the Resource Center and instructor at the beginning of the term for resources and accommodations.

### Schedule

This schedule is tentative; consult CourseSpaces for the official schedule.

Readings from marked † provide overviews of the topics subsequent articles concern; read them first, and then proceed with the subsequent articles.

Underlined (linked) readings are available freely online; click them to follow the link.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Existence</th>
<th>† CONEE&amp;SIDER, “Universals” [CS8]</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>(Jan 5,8,12,15,19,22)</td>
<td>• QUINE, “On What There is” [KK51]</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• CAMPBELL, “The Metaphysic of Abstract Particulars” [KK22]</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• ARMSTRONG, “Universals as Attributes” [KK24]</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• LEWIS, “New Work for a Theory of Universals” [KK23]</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• HAWLEY &amp; BIRD, “What are Natural Kinds?”</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Cause</th>
<th>† CONEE&amp;SIDER, “Possibility and Necessity” (pp.183-192) [CS9]</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>(Jan 26,29,Feb 2)</td>
<td>• HUME, A Treatise of Human Nature, Book I, Part iii, §2,14</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• ANSCOMBE, “Causality and Determinism” [KK28]</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• LEWIS, “Causation” [KK29]</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Modality</th>
<th>† CONEE&amp;SIDER, “Possibility and Necessity” (pp.192-198) [CS9]</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>(Feb 5,16,19,23,26)</td>
<td>• PLANTINGA, “Modalities: Basic Concepts and Distinctions” [KK14]</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• LEWIS, “A Philosopher’s Paradise” [KK16]</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• KRIFKE, Naming and Necessity</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• FINE, “Essence and Modality” [KK19]</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Objects</th>
<th>† CONEE&amp;SIDER, “Constitution” (pp.136-149) [CS7]</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>(Mar 2,5,9)</td>
<td>• GIBBARD, “Contingent Identity” [KK11]</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• BENNETT, “Spatio-temporal Coincidence and the Grounding Problem”</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• FINE, “Coincidence and Form”</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Persistence</th>
<th>† CONEE&amp;SIDER, “Constitution” (pp.149-155) [CS7]</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>(Mar 12,16,19,23)</td>
<td>• THOMSON, “Parthood and Identity Across Time” [KK35]</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• SIDER, “The Argument from Vagueness” [KK50]</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
• KOSLICKI, “The Crooked Path from Vagueness to Four-Dimensionalism”
• LEWIS, “The Problem of Temporary Intrinsics” [KKS37]
• HASLANGER, “Endurance and Temporary Intrinsics” [KKS38]

TIME
† CONEE & SIDER, “Time” [CS3]
• HINCHLIFF, “The Puzzle of Change”
• HAWLEY, “Metaphysics and Relativity”