

## METAPHYSICS: THE PHILOSOPHIC STUDY OF ULTIMATE REALITY

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PHIL XXX-XX · Semester Year · Meeting Time · Meeting Place

**Instructor:** Joe Ulatowski  
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**Office Hours:** MWF or TR  
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**Required Texts:** Jaegwon Kim and Ernest Sosa (eds.), *Metaphysics: An Anthology* (London: Blackwell Publishers, 1999) ISBN 063120279X

Robin LePoidevin and Murray MacBeath (eds.), *The Philosophy of Time* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1993) ISBN 0198239998

**Course Description:** Metaphysics is the philosophic study of ultimate reality. The aim of this course is to introduce students to the complexities of issues in metaphysics, particularly in two areas ontology and the problems of space and time. First, ontology concerns what there is. We will examine and evaluate arguments for what kinds of things exist. We will ask, among other questions: why do we think these things exist? Do objects that exist need to be empirically accessible? What becomes an integral part of resolving the ontological problem is the issue of time. Second, we will examine the issue of time. What is time? Is there such a thing as time? Do objects endure? By investing some time studying these fundamental issues, we hope that enlightenment will reveal the nature of ultimate reality.

**Requirements:** Actually doing philosophy involves class discussion, in which students dialogue back and forth with the instructor and with each other. This class will be a seminar style course that places a premium on class discussion. Since this is the case, attendance is vital for success in the course.

**Presentation.** The student will complete a one-page summary of a reading designated by the instructor. The student should outline at least one argument in the reading and demonstrate that s/he has a command of the argument. If too confused by the argument, then summarize what you think the main argument of the reading is and present a few questions or criticisms of the main argument.

**Examinations.** There will be one take home mid-term examination, and one in-class final examination. The final exam will be comprehensive. The instructor also reserves the right to give an unannounced quiz at any time, though this is uncommon.

**Final Paper.** The student will be expected to complete one 10-12 page paper on a topic of the student's choice. More information, i.e., suggested topics,

will be distributed sometime toward the middle of the semester. The student must submit a brief prospectus of the paper by DUE DATE, a bibliography by DUE DATE, and a detailed outline by DUE DATE.

*Failure to complete any of these requirements will severely effect the your grade.*

**Policies:**

*Cheating.* Cheating on any course requirement shall not be tolerated. Cheating includes, but is not limited to, copying from one's own clandestine notes, from someone else's paper, or quoting or paraphrasing an author without crediting the source (plagiarism). If the student is caught cheating, then s/he will receive a 0 on the work and will be subject to disciplinary action.

*Students with Disabilities Act.* The Americans with Disabilities Act requires that reasonable accommodations be provided for students with physical, cognitive, systemic, learning, and psychiatric impairments. Please contact the instructor at the beginning of the course to discuss any such accommodations that you may require for this course. For more information, the student should contact the Center for Disability Services.

*Notice.* The student is advised. All material contained herein, including course design, content, lectures, correspondence, Internet content, and written material, is the intellectual property of the instructor. In addition, the instructor reserves the right to change, revise, or alter any portion of this syllabus at any time, at his sole discretion, for any reason, without further notification to the student. This syllabus is in accordance with the [university of college handbook].

**Grading:**

There are no averages in this class, so put your calculators away. Grades will be determined according to a linear point scale. The more points you accumulate the higher your grade. In-class participation is worth a total of 100 points, each presentation is worth 50 points (100 total points available), each one-page summary of the major argument in an assigned paper is worth 25 points (250 total points available), and the final paper is worth a total of 200 points. The total number of points available equals 650.

The grading scale is as follows: 585 for an A-, 520 for a B-, 455 for a C-, 390 for a D-. Anyone who fails to earn 390 points fails the class.

**Course  
Schedule &  
Assignments:**

The table below outlines the approximate dates on which each topic will be discussed. Some topics will require additional time, particularly more discussion time, so this is not a schedule set in stone. This fact emphasizes the importance of attending class regularly as well as the importance of participating in class discussion.