

PHIL 122 Metaphysics

Summer 2023

Class

Day / Time: TuTh 1:00PM – 4:30PM

Location: Online

Lecturer

Name: Enoch Yim

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OH: TuTh 12:30PM – 1PM or by appointment

Course Description

This course will be a survey of topics in contemporary analytic metaphysics. Topics include causation, nature of time, universals and particulars, modality, and possible worlds. All required readings will be available online (via Canvas).

Student Learning Outcome

In this course, you will learn to demonstrate the ability to:

- identify the arguments and main ideas of authors in a variety of texts in metaphysics;
- critically discuss the topics raised by various thinkers in the field of metaphysics;
- construct well-reasoned arguments using metaphysical theoretical frameworks.

Requirements/Policy

Midterm (35%): You will be given a take-home exam. On the exam, you are expected to answer questions about the topics/ideas/articles that were assigned/lectured in the class. The answers will be expository. You are prohibited from using any academic sources other than the class materials.

Final (40%): You will write an argumentative or expository essay in response to one of the prompts assigned for the final essay. The prompts will be about any of the topics/ideas/articles that were assigned/lectured in the class. The word

limit is 2,000 (excluding citation and footnotes). With rare exceptions, you are allowed to write on a prompt of your own (in which case you should get a permission from me at least 1.5 weeks before the deadline).

Attendance (25%): You will be expected to attend and participate in all lectures and class activities and/or discussions. Noticeably good participation will result in extra credit point (plus $\leq 4\%$ in overall grade).

Reading: All required readings will be available online via Canvas. Please notify me as soon as you can if you do not have access to Canvas. Readings are expected to be done *prior to* each lecture.

Late Assignment: No late assignments are accepted except for highly exceptional cases such as medically emergency situations, family events, religious events, etc. If you need a deadline extension for assignments in respect to any of these highly exceptional cases, you should notify me *and* get a permission from me *before the original deadline*. You will receive no credit if you do not complete the assignment before the extended deadline.

Deadlines: **Midterm:** **08/14/23**
 Final: **09/01/23**

Grading Scale	B+ 89.9-87%	C+ 79.9-77%	D+ 69.9-67%
A 100-94%	B 86.9-84%	C 76.9-74%	D 66.9-64%
A- 93.9-90%	B- 83.9-80%	C- 73.9-70%	D- 63.9-60%

Disability Accommodations

UC Santa Cruz is committed to creating an academic environment that supports its diverse student body. If you are a student with a disability who requires accommodations to achieve equal access in this course, please submit your Accommodation Authorization Letter from the Disability Resource Center (DRC) to me privately, preferably within the first two weeks of the quarter. At this time, I would also like us to discuss ways we can ensure your full participation in the course. I encourage all students who may benefit from learning more about DRC services to contact DRC by email at enyim@ucsc.edu.

Academic Integrity

You are responsible for being familiar with UCSC's policies on plagiarism and proper sourcing. Plagiarism is a serious academic offense and will not be tolerated. For additional information on plagiarism, self-plagiarism, and how to avoid it, see, for example:

<https://guides.library.ucsc.edu/citesources/plagiarism>.

Reading/Lecture Schedule

Week 1: Causation

Tues—Regularity Theory

Fact, Fiction and Forecast, II & III, Nelson Goodman

“Regularity Theories” Stathis Psillos (*The Oxford Handbook of Causation*, Ch. 7)

“Causes and Conditions” J. L. Mackie

“Regularity and Inferential Theories of Causation” 1.1 ~ 1.3, SEP (recommended)

“Backward Causation” Paul Horwich (recommended)

Thurs—Counterfactual Theory

“Counterfactual Theories” L. A. Paul (*The Oxford Handbook of Causation*, Ch. 8)

“Causation” David Lewis

“Causation as Influence” David Lewis

“Counterfactual Theories of Causation” 1.1-1.3, 2-3, SEP (recommended)

Week 2: Nature of Time

Tues—Temporal Flow/A-series vs. B-series

“The Distinction of Past and Future”

<https://www.informationphilosopher.com/solutions/scientists/feynman/past_and_future.html> Richard P. Feynman

“What is entropy? – Jeff Phillips” Ted-Ed <https://youtu.be/YM-uykVfq_E> (recommended)

“That Mysterious Flow” Paul Davies (recommended)

“Entropy and Time” Arieh Ben-Naim (recommended)

“The Unreality of Time” J. Ellis McTaggart

“The River of Time” J. J. C. Smart

“The Myth of Passage” Donald C. Williams

Minding Time: A Philosophical and Theoretical Approach to the Psychology of Time, Carlos Montemayor (recommended)

Thurs—A-series vs. B-series (cont.)

“Temporality” Peter van Inwagen

“A Defense of McTaggart’s Proof of the Unreality of Time” Michael Dummett

“The Privileged Present: Defending an ‘A-Theory’ of Time” Dean Zimmerman

Week 3: Persistence/Identity & Universals/Particulars

Tues—Persistence/Identity

“Persistence through Time” Sally Haslanger (*The Oxford Handbook of Metaphysics*, Ch. 11)

“Endurance and Indiscernibility” Trenton Merricks (recommended)

“The Identity of Indiscernibles” Max Black

“Identity, Ostension, and Hypostasis” W. V. O. Quine

Universals: An Opinionated Introduction, Ch. 4, D. M. Armstrong
(recommended)

Thurs—Universals: Nominalism

“Universals and Resemblances” H. H. Price (*Thinking and Experience*, Ch. 1)

“On What There Is” W. V. O. Quine

Universals: An Opinionated Introduction, Ch. 2 & 3, D. M. Armstrong

“On the Elements of Being: I” Donald C. Williams (recommended)

Universals: An Opinionated Introduction, Ch. 6, D. M. Armstrong
(recommended)

“Philosophy and the Scientific Image of Man” Wilfrid Sellars (recommended)

Week 4: Universals/Particulars (cont.) & Necessity/Possible Worlds

Tues—Universals: Realism

The Problems of Philosophy, Ch. IX & X, Bertrand Russell

The Problems of Philosophy, Ch. I – VIII, Bertrand Russell (recommended)

Universals: An Opinionated Introduction, Ch. 5, D. M. Armstrong

“New work for a theory of universals” David Lewis

Thurs—Essence

Naming and Necessity, Lecture I, Saul Kripke

Naming and Necessity, Lecture II & III, Saul Kripke (recommended)

The Nature of Necessity, IV & V, Alvin Plantinga

Week 5: Necessity/Possible Worlds (cont.)

Tues—Possible Worlds

“Foundations” David Lewis (*Counterfactuals*, Ch. 4)

On the Plurality of Worlds, Ch. 1, 3 & 4, David Lewis (recommended)

The Nature of Necessity, VI, Alvin Plantinga (recommended)

“The plenitude of possibilities” Daniel Nolan (*David Lewis*, Ch. 3)

“Possible Worlds” Robert C. Stalnaker

Thurs—Inverted World

A Spirit of Trust, Ch. 5, Robert Brandom

A Spirit of Trust, Ch. 6, Robert Brandom (recommended)