

PHIL 3401: METAPHYSICS  
Fall 2012

Professor Saam Trivedi  
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Class Meets: Tue & Thu 9:05-10:45 in 3305 Boylan  
Office Hours: Thu 1:15 – 2:15 PM

COURSE DESCRIPTION:

Metaphysics, broadly understood as the study of reality, is often described as being at the abstract heart of Philosophy, with important connections to other branches of Philosophy. In this class, we will discuss six central issues in metaphysics: the riddle of existence; realism and anti-realism; abstract entities; secondary qualities; events; and substance.

COURSE OBJECTIVES: The ability to analyze and evaluate a selection from a philosophical text, a philosophical theory, issue or argument.

REQUIREMENTS:

- (1) Two mid-term in-class exams, each worth c. 25% of your overall grade
- (2) One 6-10 page paper, worth c. 30%
- (3) Class attendance and participation, worth c. 20%

REQUIRED TEXT:

Steven Hales (ed.), *Metaphysics* (Wadsworth)

SCHEDULE OF READINGS:

As far as possible, I will aim to cover the readings assigned for the day in class. But in practice, we may go slower than planned as the readings are quite dense and abstract and require lots of time and thought!

8/28: Course-Introduction and Welcome.

The Riddle of Existence

8/30: Burke, "Introduction to Existence" (pp. 1-6)

9/4: Rescher, "On Explaining Existence" (pp. 7-26)

9/6: "

9/11: Parfit, "Why Is Reality as It Is?" (pp. 26-32)

9/13: Nozick, "Why Is There Something Rather than Nothing?" (pp. 33-46)

Realism and Anti-Realism

9/18: No classes

9/20: Blackburn, "Introduction to the Realism Debates" (pp. 47-51)

9/25: No classes

9/27: Dummett, “Realism and Anti-Realism” (pp. 52-62)

10/2: Putnam, “Why There Isn’t a Ready-Made World” (pp. 63-77)

10/4: ”

10/9: Sosa, “Putnam’s Pragmatic Realism” (pp. 77-90)

10/11: Devitt, “A Naturalistic Defense of Realism” + “Postscript” (pp. 90-106)

10/16: **Exam I**

#### Abstract Entities

10/18: Hale, “Introduction to Abstracta” (pp. 197-206)

10/23: Quine, “On What There Is” (pp. 206-16)

10/25: Carnap, “Empiricism, Semantics, and Ontology” + Church, “On Carnap’s...” (pp. 216-29)

10/30: Armstrong, “Universals as Attributes” (pp. 254-72)

11/1: ”

#### Secondary Qualities

11/6: Averill, “Introduction to Secondary Qualities” (pp. 273-77)

11/8: Armstrong, “The Secondary Qualities” (pp. 278-89)

11/13: Boghossian & Velleman, “Colour as a Secondary Quality” (pp. 290-306)

11/15: **Exam II**

#### Events

11/20: **Paper Topics Given Out.** Also Bennett, “Introduction to Events” (pp. 319-24)

11/22: No classes - Thanksgiving

11/27: Davidson, “The Individuation of Events” (pp. 325-35)

11/29: Kim, “Events as Property Exemplifications” (pp. 336-48)

#### Substance

12/4: Lowe, “Introduction to Substance” (pp. 371-6)

12/6: van Cleve, “Three Versions of the Bundle Theory” (pp. 376-84)

12/11: **Papers Due.** Also Rosenkrantz & Hoffman, “The Independence Criterion of Substance” (pp. 384-96)