Quiz:

Which of the following items exist?

(a) Angels  
(b) Chairs  
(c) You  
(d) Your height  
(e) Redness  
(f) None of the above  
(g) All of the above

Most of us believe that at least one of these objects exists. But believe it or not, some philosophers have argued that the answer is (g). And some have even defended (f). When we disagree about what there is, we are having a disagreement about ontology. In this class, we will study historical and contemporary treatments of ontology. We will consider what it takes to be a thing or object. We will consider “fictional” entities, like Harry Potter (and maybe even the number one or Redness) as well as merely possible entities like the Earth’s second moon. We will wonder whether chairs, rocks, dogs, and humans exist, and if so, whether they have the natures and persistence that we assume they have. We will examine such concepts as essence, accident, substratum, property, and part. We will also think about the temporal dimension of things, as well as the nature of time itself.