

Metaphysics Philosophy 401

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Course Description – The goal of this course is survey-level knowledge of contemporary analytic metaphysics and familiarity with the tools of this growing field. To this end, we will start off by learning some of the fundamental tools of contemporary metaphysics—first-order logic (especially the theory of quantification), possible worlds and alethic necessity, and causation. When and only when we've come to familiarize ourselves with these things, we will turn to three case studies in contemporary metaphysics. First, ontology, or the study of what there is. Second, the concept of identity. And finally the notion of personhood. Depending on our progress, there may be time to do one other small topic in metaphysics. Choice of this topic will be determined by student interest and ability.

Course Prerequisites – At least one course in philosophy is required. At least one course in logic is recommended.

Texts *Metaphysics* edited by Jaegwon Kim, Dan Korman, and Ernest Sosa

Course Schedule – See STARS for a rough schedule, amenable to change at my discretion. Some readings on STARS are *'d. These are not as important, but should still be read.

Coursework – The work for the course will consist of nearly weekly short papers (10 in total), a presentation, and a final paper. You are expected to have a full draft of the final paper by week 12 of the course. It would be best if you were to talk with me about a topic some weeks before that so that we have time to vet your topic and consider possible additional readings. The weekly papers will be short—no more than 300 words, no less than 250—and are meant to aid in your understanding of these quite abstruse texts. They can consist of an objection, a detailed question about the reading, or an alternative view to the author's. The presentation is, well, a presentation. You are expected to lead the course for approximately 30 minutes, aided by a handout or slides. If you need special equipment to carry out your presentation, talk with me ahead of time.

I will expect attendance. Missing more than 9 hours of the Philosophy portion of this course without an accepted and valid excuse will result in a failing grade, regardless of your other grades.

Useful Resources – Stanford Encyclopedia of Philosophy
<http://plato.stanford.edu/>

Jim Pryor's Guide to Writing Philosophy
<http://www.jimpryor.net/teaching/guidelines/writing.html/>