

**DEPARTMENT OF PHILOSOPHY
TRENT UNIVERSITY**

**PHIL 3220H: Metaphysics
2017 FA
Peterborough**

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Course Description:

Metaphysics concerns, roughly, the nature and structure of reality — which things exist, which features they have, and how they relate to one another. In this course, we will examine a number of metaphysical questions, including:

- What kinds of stuff is the world made of?
- How do we explain the fact that objects share properties in common? Do property *types* exist?
- How do we individuate objects?
- What is it to be a particular property?
- What is the nature of causation?
- What sorts of metaphysical dependence relation exist? What is the nature of metaphysical dependence?

Required Texts:

Michael Loux's *Metaphysics: Contemporary Readings*, 2nd Edition. Routledge. (**Not** to be confused with Michael Loux's *Metaphysics: A Contemporary Introduction*!)

Blackboard:

We will be using an online learning management tool called Blackboard. The syllabus, course announcements, assignments and related materials, as well as some readings will be posted there, so it is important that you learn how to use it. Please talk to me immediately if you are having any trouble using this tool.

Course Format:

Please check <http://www.trentu.ca/timetable/> to confirm times and locations.

Type	Day	Time	Location
Seminar	WED	1:00-1:50pm	GCS 105
Seminar	FRI	9:00-10:50am	DNA B110.2

Learning Outcomes:

I have developed the course to address several learning outcomes. By the end of the course a successful student should:

- a developed knowledge of many key concepts, methodologies and theoretical approaches, along with knowledge of the historical background and current advances, in metaphysics.
- an ability to gather, review, evaluate and interpret information concerning metaphysics.
- an ability to review, present and develop lines of argument, orally and in writing, pertaining
- to metaphysics.

Course Evaluation:

Type of Assignment	Weighting	Due Date
Participation (attendance, in-class discussion, in-class low stakes writing assignments)	20%	Ongoing
First Essay (an 8-10 page written paper on one of several topics to be distributed in advance of the due date)	25%	October 20
Presentation (One 20-30 minute oral presentation, summarizing and raising questions or criticisms about the reading)	20%	Ongoing
Second Essay (an 8-10 page written paper on one of several topics to be distributed in advance of the due date)	35%	December 1

Week-by-week schedule:

Note: This schedule is subject to change.

Note: BB stands for Blackboard and MP stands for our textbook, *Metaphysics*.

Date	Topic	Readings
SEP 08	Introduction	No reading
SEP 13	Introduction	Bryant, "What's Metaphysics All About?" <i>IAI</i> . < https://iainews.iai.tv/articles/what-is-metaphysics-all-about-auid-870?access=ALL >
SEP 15	Substance	Descartes, <i>Second Meditation</i> Descartes, <i>Sixth Meditation</i> < http://www.earlymoderntexts.com/assets/pdfs/descartes1641.pdf >
SEP 20	Substance	Correspondence between Descartes and Princess Elisabeth of Bohemia, 6.v.1643, 21.v.1643, 10.vi.1643, 28.vi.1643, 1.vii.1643 < http://www.earlymoderntexts.com/assets/pdfs/descartes1643_1.pdf >
SEP 22	Substance	Leibniz, <i>Monadology</i> < http://www.earlymoderntexts.com/assets/pdfs/leibniz1714b.pdf >
SEP 27	Universals	Michael Loux, "The Problem of Universals" (MP, 3-13) Plato, <i>Parmenides</i> 126-135 (BB)
SEP 29	Universals	David Armstrong, "Universals as Attributes" (MP, 65-94)
OCT 04	Universals	David Lewis, "New Work for a Theory of Universals" (BB)
OCT 06	Universals	Katherine Hawley & Alexander Bird, "What Are Natural Kinds?" (BB)
OCT 11	Particulars	Edwin Allaire, "Bare Particulars" (MP, 114-120)
OCT 13	Particulars	Max Black, "The Identity of Indiscernibles" (MP, 104-113)
OCT 18	Particulars	James Van Cleeve, "Three Versions of the Bundle Theory" (MP, 121-133)
OCT 20	Particulars	Anna-Sofia Maurin, "An Argument for the Existence of Tropes" (BB) First essay due
OCT 25 & 27, No Class (Reading Week)		

NOV 01	Causation	David Hume, "Selections from Book I of <i>A Treatise of Human Nature</i> " (MP, 251-257)
NOV 03	Causation	Helen Beebee, "Hume on Causation: The Projectivist Interpretation" (BB) David Lewis, "Causation" (MP, 326-340)
NOV 08	Causation	Elizabeth Anscombe, "Causality and Determination" (MP, 284-301)
NOV 10	Time	John McTaggart, "Time" (MP, 350-362) C.D. Broad, "Ostensible Temporality" (MP, 362-368)
NOV 15	Time	Arthur Prior, "The Notion of the Present" (MP, 379-384)
NOV 17	Time, Identity	J.J.C. Smart, "The Space-Time World" (MP, 384-393) Derek Parfit, "Personal Identity" (MP, 464-484)
NOV 22	Identity	David Lewis, "Survival and Identity" (MP, 485-509)
NOV 24	Grounding	Jonathan Schaffer, "On What Grounds What" (BB) Karen Bennett, "By Our Bootstraps" (BB)
NOV 29	Grounding	Shamik Dasgupta, "On the Plurality of Grounds" (BB)
DEC 01	Grounding	Jessica Wilson, "No Work for a Theory of Grounding" (BB) Second essay due
DEC 06	Overflow, summary and wrap-up	No reading

Class Policies

Classroom Behaviour:

- Be respectful. Our classroom should be a place where everyone feels comfortable contributing to discussion.
- If you're bursting with questions and comments all the time, great! Just make sure you share the discussion. Let others speak, too.
- Give your attention to the person speaking (no side-conversations, no texting, no Facebooking, etc.).
- Be on time. If you must be late, try to enter the classroom in the least distracting manner possible.
- Cell phones, laptops, and other noise-making devices should be silenced.

Letter Grades:

A+	90-100%	B+	77-79%	C+	67-69%	D+	57-59%
A	85-89%	B	73-76%	C	63-66%	D	53-56%
A-	80-84%	B-	70-72%	C-	60-62%	D-	50-52%
F	0-49%						

Attendance:

Repeated, unexcused absences and latenesses will affect your grade negatively. You must be present for all exams. Make-up exams will only be given to students with documented extenuating circumstances.

24-Hour Rule:

When an assignment or exam is returned to you, please wait at least 24 hours before contacting me about your grade.

Email:

I get a lot of email, so please email me just when necessary. Make sure the answer to your question isn't already on the syllabus. If you have a question that might require a long answer, see me in my office hours.

Please note that I don't discuss grades by email. If you wish to discuss a grade, please make an appointment with me.

Safe Assignment:

Assignments must be submitted electronically to the SafeAssign drop box in Blackboard. SafeAssign utilizes plagiarism-checking software. Further information about SafeAssign will be provided on the class Blackboard site.

Late Assignments:

Unless you have some well-documented excuse and my prior permission, late assignments will be subject to the following penalty:

2% deducted on the first day of lateness, 5% additional deduction for each subsequent day of lateness (including weekends). These penalties add up fast!

I will not accept assignments that are more than one week late. If you fail to hand in an assignment within one week of the deadline, your grade for that assignment will be 0.

Department Policies

Final departmental deadline for submission of work:

No term work will be accepted for evaluation in the Philosophy Department later than one week after the last day of classes. The last day by which work will be accepted for fall term half courses is Wednesday, December 13, 2017. One week after the last day of classes is also the deadline for the filing of Request for Incomplete Standing Forms to the Chair with all the relevant documentation.

Note: Most instructors will have deadlines well before this final departmental deadline. It is the student's responsibility to be familiar with instructor's deadlines and deadline policies.

University Policies

Academic Integrity:

Academic dishonesty, which includes plagiarism and cheating, is an extremely serious academic offence and carries penalties varying from failure on an assignment to expulsion from the University. Definitions, penalties, and procedures for dealing with plagiarism and cheating are set out in Trent University's *Academic Integrity Policy*. You have a responsibility to educate yourself – unfamiliarity with the policy is not an excuse. You are strongly encouraged to visit Trent's Academic Integrity website to learn more: www.trentu.ca/academicintegrity.

Access to Instruction:

It is Trent University's intent to create an inclusive learning environment. If a student has a disability and documentation from a regulated health care practitioner and feels that he/she may need accommodations to succeed in a course, the student should contact the Student Accessibility Services Office (SAS) at the respective campus as soon as possible.