

PHIL 215: INTRODUCTION TO METAPHYSICS

Instructor: Jennifer Wang

E-mail: jwang@philosophy.rutgers.edu

Time: 11:30am-12: 50pm, MR

Location: Scott Hall 219

Office Hours: 10:30-12:00pm, W in 1 Seminary Place Rm. 201

Course Description

This course serves as an introduction to metaphysics, with an emphasis on contemporary readings. Broadly construed, metaphysics concerns the most general questions one can ask about the world and our place in it: What sorts of entities really exist? What are their features (constitution, persistence, etc.)? What is the universe like (space, time, laws)? and so on.

Textbook

Metaphysics: The Big Questions, 2nd Ed., van Inwagen and Zimmerman; other readings will be available on Sakai (sakai.rutgers.edu).

Requirements

You will be required to write ten response papers, two papers, and a draft of the final paper, attend all classes and do the assigned readings. Response papers must be submitted by 5 p.m. the day before class via Sakai.

Attendance and Participation Policy

Attendance will be taken at the beginning of each class. Good attendance and frequent participation will count in favor of a student when determining final grades, as per the grading scheme.

Late Submission Policy

Late submissions of response papers will not be accepted, period. Late submissions of other papers carry letter grade penalties.

Honor Policy

You may discuss ideas with others, but do not paraphrase, quote without citing, or otherwise misrepresent work that is not yours as your own.

Grading

- ▶ 20% **Short paper**
- ▶ 50% **Final paper**
- ▶ 25% **Response papers**
- ▶ 5% **Attendance and Participation**

Topics

Universals, objectual identity, time, personal identity, causation, free will and determinism, God and the universe

Schedule

			Topic	Reading Assignment	Evaluations
Week 1	R	1/21			
	M	1/25	Arguments		
Week 2	R	1/28	Arguments		
	M	2/1	Universals	Conee, Introduction	
Week 3	R	2/4	Universals	Armstrong, Williams	
	M	2/8	Universals	Black	
Week 4	R	2/11	Universals	Black	
	M	2/15	Universals	Zimmerman	
Week 5	R	2/18	Objectual identity	Chisholm	
	M	2/22	Objectual identity	Sider 1-7	
Week 6	R	2/25	Objectual identity	Sider 7-20	
	M	3/1	Time	Prior, Broad	
Week 7	R	3/4	Time	Williams, Prior	
	M	3/8	Personal identity	Shoemaker	
Week 8	R	3/11	Personal identity	Williams	Short papers due
	M	3/15	SPRING BREAK		
Week 9	R	3/18	SPRING BREAK		
	M	3/22	Personal identity	Swinburne	
Week					
10	R	3/25	Causation	Hume, Reid Russell	
	M	3/29	Causation	Stebbing 300-305	
Week					
11	R	4/1	Free will and determinism	Hobart (compatibilism)	
	M	4/5	Free will and determinism	Chisholm (incompatibilism)	
Week					
12	R	4/8	Free will and determinism	van Inwagen	
	M	4/12	Free will and determinism	Frankfurt	
Week					
13	R	4/15	God and the universe	James, Parfit	
	M	4/19	God and the universe	Parfit cont'd, Swinburne	Paper drafts due
Week					
14	R	4/22	God and the universe	Aquinas fifth way, Paley	
	M	4/26	God and the universe	Clarke, Rowe	Paper comments due
Week					
15	R	4/29	God and the universe	Anselm	
	M	5/3	God and the universe	Malcolm	Final papers due