

Module Title:	Metaphysics
Module Code:	504 PMET
Level:	5
Credit rating:	20 credits
Duration:	200 hours
Teaching hours:	40
Academic Responsibility:	Christiano Turbil MA

Module aims:

- To encourage familiarity with current debates about metaphysics
- To encourage critical reflection on nature of metaphysics
- To alert students to the implications which metaphysics has for religion
- To enable students to critically assess the nature of metaphysical/ontological phenomena.

Module Content:

Metaphysics is a broad area of philosophy marked out by two types of inquiry. The first aims to be the most general investigation possible into the nature of reality: are there principles applying to everything that is real, to all that is? – if we abstract from the particular nature of existing things that which distinguishes them from each other, what can we know about them merely in virtue of the fact that they exist? The second type of inquiry seeks to uncover what is ultimately real, frequently offering answers in sharp contrast to our everyday experience of the world. Understood in terms of these two questions, metaphysics is very closely related to ontology, which is usually taken to involve both ‘what is existence (being)?’ and ‘what (fundamentally distinct) types of thing exist?’

Learning Outcomes:

By the end of this module students should be able to

1. demonstrate a systematic understanding of the principle aspects of metaphysics and be able to offer a coherent appreciation of that branch of philosophy and its principle exponents.
2. critically dialogue philosophically about metaphysics and meaning
3. Critically reflect, assess and offer problem solving solutions to aspects of their work both in this area of study and others by adopting a systematic philosophical approach.

Learning and Teaching Strategies:

The module will be taught through a variety of teaching methods: delivered lectures, question/discussion, power point presentation, philosophical text, response and discussion, problem setting and possible solutions from students, presentations by students (with feedback from peers), at least one of the presentations will involve the students working in groups.

Assessment:

This module will be assessed through two 2,500 word essays

Indicative Essay Titles

1. Is it necessarily the case that the past and the future differ in some important, ontological respect?
2. Analyse and critically assess the criterion of ontological commitment
3. Assess Duns Scotus's Modal Argument for the existence of a First Principle and critically assess whether or not it is an effective and reasonable metaphysical position to hold today.
4. The *problem of universals* is an ancient problem in metaphysics concerning the nature of universals, or whether they exist. Part of the problem involves the implications of language use and the complexity of relating language to ontological theory. Is the *problem of universals* still a relevant issue in metaphysical discourse today?

Illustrative Bibliography

Butcharov P., *Being qua Being. A theory of identity, existence, and predication*. Bloomington: Indiana University Press 1979.

Divers J., *Possible worlds*. London: Routledge 2002

Grossmann R., *The existence of the world: an introduction to ontology*. London, New York: Routledge 1992.

Henry, L., Some Questions of Ontology (*The Philosophical Review* 81, 1972, pp. 3-42; reprinted in *Analysis and Metaphysics* vol. 4, 2005)

Jaegwon K., and Ernest S.,: *A Companion to Metaphysics*, Blackwell Publishers, Oxford 1996

Loux M. J., *The possible and the actual. Readings in the metaphysics of modality*. New York: Cornell University Press 1979.

Martinich A., *A Companion to Analytic Philosophy*. Oxford: Blackwell Publishers 2001.

Moreland J. P., *Universals*. Montreal & Kingston: Mc-Gill-Queen's University Press 2001.

Stroll A., *Twentieth-century analytic philosophy*. New York: Columbia University Press 2000.