

Date prepared: 6/3/16

Syllabus
University of New Orleans
Dept. of Philosophy

PHIL 3400: Metaphysics (3 credits)

SECTIONS 476 & 585

Contact Information

Instructor: Dr. Robert Stufflebeam
Office: UNO: LA 385
Office Hours: M-T-W-Th, 10:00 – 12:00 (and by appointment)
Office: (504) 280-7473
Email: rstuffle@uno.edu (add 'PHIL 3400' to subject line)
Course Webpages: [Moodle](#) login page

Required Texts

- [1] Crane, T. & K. Farkas (2004): *Metaphysics: A guide and anthology*. Oxford: OUP. [T]
ISBN 9780199261970.
- [2] Supplemental readings. [O]

Course Description

CATALOG DESCRIPTION: An examination of fundamental issues and problems in metaphysics, such as the nature of reality, universals, personal identity, persistence through change, space, and time.

COURSE OVERVIEW: Doing philosophy requires using reason to resolve a fundamental question. Fundamental questions about the *existence* of things, the *nature* of things, the *essence* of things, or of *reality* itself, are *metaphysical* questions. Metaphysics is the subfield of philosophy devoted to answering these sorts of questions. Metaphysical questions can be found not only throughout all of Western philosophy, they are found in every philosophical theory, approach, and subfield. Consequently, we shall make no attempt to survey the history of metaphysics, or, what Aristotle called 'first philosophy'. Rather, we shall focus on exploring some key metaphysical questions, including the following:

- What is the nature of necessity?
- Can God's existence be "proven" through reason alone? (the cosmological argument, the teleological argument, and the ontological argument)
- How can evil exist if God is both all-good and all-powerful? (the problem of evil)
- Is the world as it appears to us? Is there a difference between how things are and our ideas of them? (realism vs. idealism)
- What is the relation between the mind and the body? (the mind-body problem)
- What is the nature of identity?
- What makes you you? (the problem(s) of personal identity)
- What makes a person a person?
- What is the nature of identity? What is the nature of personal identity?
- Do persons have free will or are their actions determined?
- What exists? What is the nature of being? What does 'to be' mean?
- Do universals exist or only particulars?
- What is the nature of causation? (the problem of induction)

This course will be run like a virtual seminar. Accordingly, grades will be based on online discussions, a presentation, essay exams, and a philosophical research paper.

Student Learning Outcomes

Upon successfully completing this course, students will be able to do the following:

- to understand the nature of philosophy and its subfields
- to understand the nature of metaphysics and metaphysical questions
- to understand the difference between sufficient conditions, necessary conditions, and necessary *and* sufficient conditions
- to know how to construct a successful conceptual analysis
- to understand the difference between necessity and possibility, as well as possible world semantics
- to understand the nature of what God is supposed to be and the divine attributes
- to understand the classic cosmological, teleological, and ontological arguments for the existence of God, and their problems
- to understand the problems of evil and free will and how they arise from the nature of God
- to understand the philosophical concepts and problems associated with idealism vs. realism, universals vs. particulars, necessity vs. possibility, and free will vs. determinism
- to understand the nature of identity
- to understand the nature of both persons and personal identity, along with the problems associated with personal identity
- to understand the difference between monism and dualism
- to understand the mind-body problem
- to understand the nature of being and ontological commitments
- to present and to defend your own views regarding the issues above
- to read philosophical texts
- to recognize metaphysical issues
- to lead philosophical discussions
- to write a philosophical research paper

Grades

Grades will be based on a 100 point scale distributed as follows:

Requirement		Final grade	
One-minute arguments	(20%) 20 points	A	100 – 89.5 points
Exam 1	(30%) 30 points	B	89.4 – 79.5 points
Exam 2	(30%) 30 points	C	79.4 – 69.5 points
Essay	(20%) 20 points	D	69.4 – 59.5 points
		F	59.4 — 0 points

ONE-MINUTE ARGUMENTS: For each lecture I shall post a question in the one minute argument forums section on Moodle. Your responses to those questions (and to the responses of other students) will allow you become engaged with the material/issues covered in the lecture. Each student must post a response to these questions. Each response should be posted within 48 hours of the day the lecture should have been completed. Consider your responses to be "one-minute arguments." What that means is you will need to make a claim, give some evidence in support of that claim, and it should take me about 1 minute to read it. After posting your response, you may then post a response to someone else's response, continuing the discussion. Your one-minute arguments are worth **20%** of your final grade.

EXAMS: There will be **2** take home essay exams, each covering about half of the course material. You may use your text, notes, and student presentations, but ***you may NOT collaborate***. As in the paper, **you must properly cite sources of all work that is not your own**. Consult me for advice in case of uncertainty. The exams are worth **60%** of your final grade.

ESSAY: Each student will be required to write **1** philosophical research paper. I'm not asking for just any paper. I'm requiring a specific type of essay organized and written in a specific type of way. Hence, you will be required to do more than merely survey/explain a specific problem/issue; you will also be required to make your own claim and to defend it. The **10-12 page** paper must be based on a topic listed on Moodle or approved by me, written in accordance with the guidelines on Moodle, and submitted via Moodle. ***You may NOT use sources available only online***. Your essay is worth **20%** of your final grade.

What follows are my class policies. If for any reason you are unable to abide by these policies, you should withdraw from my course.

- ACADEMIC DISHONESTY:** Academic honesty is fundamental to the process of learning and to evaluating academic performance. Academic dishonesty will not be tolerated. Academic dishonesty includes, but is not limited to, the following: cheating, plagiarism, tampering with academic records and examinations, disseminating any part of an exam, falsifying identity, and being an accessory to acts of academic dishonesty. Refer to the Student Code of Conduct for further information. The Code is available on Moodle and online at <http://www.studentaffairs.uno.edu>. Each student is required to pledge that all completed work will be submitting according to the principles of academic integrity as defined in the statement on Academic Dishonesty in the UNO Student Code of Conduct
- AUDITS:** Whether an audit is successful will depend only on your class participation performance.
- DISABILITIES:** It is University policy to provide, on a flexible and individualized basis, reasonable accommodations to students who have disabilities that may affect their ability to participate in course activities or to meet course requirements. Students with disabilities should contact the Office of Disability Services as well as their instructors to discuss their individual needs for accommodations. For more information, please go to <http://www.ods.uno.edu>.
- INCOMPLETES:** Incompletes are **STRONGLY** discouraged. Should you need to take an incomplete, arrangements must be made with me well before the last class meeting.
- LANGUAGE:** Feel free to say anything to me or to your peers, but tailor your remarks so as not to be uncivil or abusive. I will not tolerate ANY abusive behavior in the one minute argument discussions, so do not engage in any personal attacks or name calling. (See my 'warning' below.)
- LATE-STARTS:** There are no special dispensations for late-start students.
- LATE WORK:** A one-min. argument will be penalized a letter grade for each week it is late. An exam will be penalized a letter grade for each day it is late. The essay will be penalized a letter grade for each day it is late. If you do not submit an assignment by the time I turn in grades, you will receive a '0' for that assignment.
- MAKE-UPS:** Since the exams will be take home, there will be no need for a make-up.
- PROCTORING:** To ensure academic integrity, all students enrolled in distance learning courses at the University of New Orleans may be required to participate in additional student identification procedures. At the discretion of the faculty member teaching the course, these measures may include on-campus proctored examinations, off-site or online proctored examinations, or other reasonable measures to ensure student identity. Authentication measures for this course may include Proctor U and any fees associated are the responsibility of the student. University of New Orleans partners with Proctor U, a live, online proctoring service that allows students to complete exams from any location using a computer, webcam, and reliable internet connection.
- WITHDRAWALS:** You may withdraw from this course for any reason. Withdrawal is strictly up to you and none of my business. Look in the course listings for the last day to withdraw without a penalty — a 'W' appearing on your transcript.

WARNING! *Doing philosophy requires a willingness to think critically. Critical thinking does not consist in merely making claims. Rather, it requires offering reasons/evidence in support of your claims. It also requires your willingness to entertain criticism from others who do not share your assumptions. You will be required to do philosophy in this class. Doing philosophy can be hazardous to your cherished beliefs. Consequently, if you are unwilling to participate, to subject your views to critical analysis, to explore issues that cannot be resolved empirically, or using computers, then my course is not for you.*

PHIL 3400 Game Plan

(subject to revision)

DAY			TOPIC/READING	LECTURE
(1)	Th	Jan. 14	Syllabus	01
(2)	T	Jan. 19	Doing metaphysics What is metaphysics?	02
(3)	Th	Jan. 21	[O] Stufflebeam: Statements and conceptual analysis	03
(4)	T	Jan. 26	[O] Stufflebeam: Arguments	04
(5)	Th	Jan. 28	Does God exist? [T] Aquinas: The five ways (pp. 31-33)	05
(6)	T	Feb. 02	[T] Paley: Selection from <i>Natural Theology</i> (pp. 34-40)	06
(7)	Th	Feb. 04	[T] Anselm: Selection from <i>Proslogion</i> (pp. 41-42)	07
(8)	Th	Feb. 11	[T] Mackie: Evil and omnipotence (pp. 45-55)	08
(9)	T	Feb. 16	Realism and idealism [O] Plato: The divided line	09
(10)	Th	Feb. 18	[T] Locke: Selection from <i>Essay concerning human understanding</i> (pp. 69-76)	10
(11)	T	Feb. 23	[T] Berkeley: Selection from <i>Three dialogues btw Hylas and Philonous</i> (pp. 77-100)	11
(12)	Th	Feb. 25	[T] Kant: Selection from <i>Critique of pure reason</i> (pp. 101-106)	12
(13)	T	Mar. 01	[O] Russell: Ch. IV - Idealism and Ch. XII - Truth and falsehood	13
(14)	Th	Mar. 03	[T] Dummett: Realism (pp. 120-132)	14
	W	Mar. 09	Exam 1 due by 11:55 p.m.	
(15)	Th	Mar. 10	Mind and body [T] Descartes: Selection from <i>Meditations on first philosophy</i> (pp. 611-618)	15
(16)	T	Mar. 15	[O] Locke: Identity and diversity	16
(17)	Th	Mar. 17	[O] Place: Is consciousness a brain process?	17
(18)	T	Mar. 22	[O] Ryle: Descartes' myth	18
(19)	T	Mar. 29	[T] Harman: Selections from <i>Thought</i> (pp. 623-628)	19
(20)	Th	Mar. 31	[T] Nagel: What is it like to be a bat? (pp. 648-658)	20
(21)	Th	Apr. 07	Identity [T] Chisholm: Identity through time (pp. 537-551)	21
(22)	T	Apr. 12	[T] Lewis: Selection from <i>On the plurality of worlds</i> (pp. 552-558)	22
(23)	Th	Apr. 14	[T] Parfit: Personal identity (pp. 560-577)	23
(24)	Th	Apr. 21	Lagniappe Causation [T] Hume: Selection from <i>Enquiry concerning human understanding</i> (pp. 382-389)	24
(25)	Th	Apr. 28	Universals [T] Armstrong: Selection from <i>Universals: An opinionated introduction</i> (pp. 235-248)	25
	W	May 04	Essay & Exam 2 are due by 11:55 p.m.	