

## Metaphysics (with fewer borders!)

Tuesdays, 13:00-15:30

Office hours: Tuesdays 16:00, and by appointment

**Overview:** This class is designed to improve your ability to think clearly and critically about issues in metaphysics; since it is a class that all philosophy graduate students must take, I will try to make it as interesting and exciting as possible. But my primary aim is to help you to think *more broadly* about what it means to do metaphysics. People from a wide range of cultures, with a wide range of differing assumptions, have found themselves doing metaphysics for a long time; we will try to think about why people from different backgrounds have found themselves doing metaphysics, and we will try to think about why different starting points yield different metaphysical hypotheses. (In taking this course, you should also find yourself prepared to write a successful comprehensive exam, since this is something that most of you will have to do).

**Writing:** The course will be writing intensive. You are required to write a brief responses (max: 600 words) to something we have read every week. These assignments are due by midnight on Monday, and they are intended to foster critical engagement with the things we are reading. They can do this by linking ideas from the reading to other ideas you are working on; they can offer an objection to one of the arguments we are addressing; or they can attempt to extend an idea from the reading to a novel domain. To be frank, I don't care *what* you write about, so long as you are engaging with the readings, and trying to see what possibilities they afford. Each seminar member will also write a short paper (max 3000 words). This paper should address an argument or position we discuss in class, and a successful paper will be the sort of thing you can submit for a presentation at the APA (American Philosophical Association), or a similar conference. In past semesters, I have worked with students to write successful conference papers, and I am happy to do so again!

**Accessibility and diversity:** One finds a great deal of diversity in teaching and learning styles in a modern university. These styles may not always mesh in ways that are conducive to the success and wellbeing of everyone in a course. But there are often ways of improving things. I am happy to discuss the structure of the course, and to try to make it more accessible to everyone in the class. So please talk to me if things could be better. I sincerely think that every student is entitled to a meaningful and stimulating classroom experience! Disabled students and students on record with the university as requiring particular accommodations, please let me know that this is the case, in confidence, during the first few weeks of the semester—and please take advantage of the services provided by the university. And if you find that additional accommodations are necessary, please let me know.

### Tentative reading schedule (number of pages in blue):

Grounding and social construction
5 September: Kelly Trogdon, "An introduction to grounding" (18); Jessica Wilson, "No work for a theory of grounding" (42); (optional) Karen Bennett, "Construction area (no hard hat required)" (24)
12 September: Mari Mikkola, "Doing ontology and doing justice" (25); Elizabeth Barnes, "Going beyond the fundamental" (15); Jonathan Schaffer, "Social construction as grounding" (15)
19 September: Robin Andreasen, "Race: Biological reality or social construct?" (13); Sally Haslanger, "A Social constructionist account of 'race'" (11); Esa Diaz-Leon, "In Defence of Historical Constructivism about Races." (15)
26 September: Roberta Millstein, "Thinking about populations and races in time" (6); Quayshawn Spencer, "Philosophy of race meets population genetics" (9); Adam Hochman, "Replacing Race" (26); (optional) Melissa Wills, "Are clusters races?" (22)

<b>Persistence and identity</b>
<b>3 October:</b> <b>Katherine Hawley</b> , How things persist (Chapters 1-3) (100)
<b>10 October:</b> <b>Katherine Hawley</b> , How things persist (Chapters 4-6) (108)
<b>17 October:</b> <b>Jonardon Ganeri</b> , “Self-intimation, memory, and personal identity” (15); <b>Evan Thompson</b> , “Self-no-self? Memory and reflective awareness” (18); <b>Matt MacKenzie</b> , “Enacting the self” (23)
<b>24 October:</b> <b>Miri Albahari</b> , “Nirvana and ownerless consciousness” (34); <b>Monima Chadha</b> , “Time-series of ephemeral impressions” (17); <b>Amber Carpenter</b> , “Person’s keeping their karma together” (32)
<b>The nature of time and its relation to temporal experience</b>
<b>31 October:</b> <b>John McTaggart</b> , “The unreality of time” (18); <b>Heather Dyke</b> , “The evolutionary origins of tensed language & belief” (17); <b>Craig Callender</b> , “Is time an illusion” (7)
<b>7 November:</b> <b>David Lewis</b> , “Counterfactual dependence and time’s arrow” (21); <b>Adam Elga</b> , “Statistical mechanics and the asymmetry of counterfactual dependence” (17); <b>Tim Maudlin</b> , “Remarks on the passing of time” (16)
<b>14 November:</b> <b>John McFarlane</b> , “Future contingents and relative truth” (16); <b>Berit Brogaard</b> , “Sea battle semantics” (10); <b>Elizabeth Barnes &amp; Ross Cameron</b> , “Back to the open future” (25)
<b>21 November:</b> <b>Holly Anderson</b> , “The Development of the ‘Specious Present’” (23); <b>Laurie Paul</b> , “Temporal experience” (27); <b>Akiko Frischhut</b> , “What experience cannot teach us about time” (12)
<b>28 November:</b> <b>K. K. Bunseki Fu-Kiau</b> , “Ntangu-Tandu-Kolo: The Bantu-Kongo Concept of Time” (18); <b>Joseph K. Adjaye</b> , “Time, Identity, and Historical Consciousness in Akan” (23); <b>Kassim Kone</b> , “Time and Culture among the Bamana/Mandinka and Dogon of Mali” (17)
<b>5 December:</b> <b>Terence D’Altroy</b> , “Killing mummies” (17); <b>Lisbet Bengtsson</b> , “The concept of time/space in Quechua” (7); <b>Rafael Núñez &amp; Eve Sweetser</b> , “With the future behind them” (44)