

Metaphysics

(PHIL-4386)

Spring 2019

Professor: Daniel Giberman

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Office Hours: by appointment (email me at least 24 hours prior to requested time)

Section: 001

Time and Place of Class Meetings: T/Th 11:00-12:20 Preston Hall 100

Description of Course Content: This course is a non-exhaustive survey of topics central to contemporary analytic metaphysics: ontology, modality, properties, objects, mereology, persistence, spacetime, and grounding. Readings include work by Quine, Lewis, Armstrong, Sider, Haslanger, Schaffer, and more. Evaluation will consist of a short paper, a midterm examination, a longer final paper, and a final examination, on each of which students will be assessed for conceptual clarity, communicative economy, and critical reasoning.

Student Learning Outcomes: Students will gain mastery of core debates in contemporary analytic metaphysics through discussion and assignments that will bolster their skills of argumentation; clear thought, speech, and writing; and penetrating yet charitable critical analysis. They also will be exposed to certain ways in which core metaphysics overlaps foundational issues in empirical science.

Required Textbooks:

1. *Metaphysics: an Anthology, 2nd Edition*, Kim, Korman, and Sosa (Eds.) Blackwell (hereafter 'M')

Other readings may be found via Blackboard or easily online. They are marked with '*'.

Descriptions of major assignments and examinations:

Short Paper (3 pp., presenting and critically assessing one argument from a course reading)

Midterm Exam (multiple choice, short answer, short essay)

Final Exam (same basic format as midterm)

Final Paper (6-8 pp., presenting and critically assessing a debate from one or more course readings)

Attendance: Students are expected to come to every lecture on time and fully prepared by having carefully read the assigned text(s) for that lecture (see below section on expectations for out-of-class study). I do not plan to take attendance, though see below on how participation may affect one's final course grade. University students are adults and tuition is expensive. If it's not worth it to someone to show up, it's not worth it *for* him or her to show up. That said, I will give pop quizzes occasionally to ensure that students are reading the assigned material before lecture. Quiz grades will be part of participation assessment.

No Screened Devices: Students are not allowed to use screened devices (laptops, tablets, phones, etc.) during lecture. Exceptions will be made only for students who have a compelling and independently established reason to use such devices for learning purposes (for (non-exclusive) example: students with appropriate disability documentation).

Grading:

Short Paper (10%)

Midterm (20%)

Final Exam (30%)

Final Paper (40%)

Participation (TBD—may raise or lower final course grade by as much as 5%)

Expectations for Out-of-Class Study: Students should prepare for each lecture by giving the corresponding reading assignment at least two hours of careful reading, i.e. focused, sustained, and perhaps repeated reading in a quiet setting, with questions and objections noted. Students should expect to spend at least 3 hours per page *outside class* on each paper and another 15-20 hours *outside class* preparing for each exam. These estimates are in addition to the time required to read the course material in preparation for each lecture.

Note on Out-of-Class Group Work: You are welcome to form study groups if you wish. However, each individual must complete and submit his or her own papers and exam.

Course Schedule and Readings:

Jan. 15: Introduction (no assigned reading)

Ontology

Jan. 17: W.V.O. Quine: "On What There Is" (M)

Jan. 22: Rudolf Carnap: "Empiricism, Semantics, and Ontology" (M)

Jan. 24: Matti Eklund: "The Picture of Reality as an Amorphous Lump"* (blackboard)

Modality

Jan. 29: Alvin Plantinga: "Modality: Basic Concepts and Distinctions" (M)

Jan. 31: David Lewis: "A Philosopher's Paradise" (M)

Feb. 5: Robert Stalnaker: "Possible Worlds" (M)

David Lewis: selection from *On the Plurality of Worlds*: "The Ersatzist Programme"* (blackboard)Properties and SubstanceFeb. 7: Chad Carmichael: "Universals"* in *Philosophical Studies*, 2010 (jstor)

Feb. 12: David Armstrong: "Universals as Attributes" (M)

Feb. 14 W.V.O. Quine: "Soft Impeachment Disowned"* (blackboard)

Michael Devitt: "Ostrich Nominalism or Mirage Realism?"* (blackboard)

David Armstrong: "Against Ostrich Nominalism: A Reply to Devitt"* (blackboard)

➤ SHORT PAPER 1 ASSIGNED

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Feb. 19: Gonzalo Rodriguez-Pereyra: "Nominalism in Metaphysics" — up to and including section 4.1
(*Stanford Encyclopedia of Philosophy*—free online)

Feb. 21: Keith Campbell: "The Metaphysic of Abstract Particulars" (M)

Anna-Sofia Maurin: "Tropes" — up to and including section 3.2

(*Stanford Encyclopedia of Philosophy*—free online)

Feb. 26: David Lewis: "New Work for a Theory of Universals" (M)

Feb. 28: Michael Loux: selection from *Metaphysics: A Contemporary Introduction** (blackboard)
Ted Sider: "Bare Particulars"* (https://tedsider.org/papers/bare_particulars.pdf)
➤ SHORT PAPER 1 DUE IN CLASS

Mar. 5: Review for midterm (no new reading assigned)

Mar. 7: **Midterm Exam**

Mar. 11-15: Spring Break

Substance and Objects

Mar. 19: Keith Campbell: selection from *Abstract Particulars** (blackboard)
Jonathan Schaffer: "Spacetime, the One Substance"* (jstor)

Mar. 21: Peter Simons: selection from *Parts: A Study in Ontology** (blackboard)
Hud Hudson: "Simples and Gunk"* (blackboard)

Mar. 26: Peter Van Inwagen: "When are Objects Parts?" (M)

Persistence

Mar. 28: David Lewis: "The Problem of Temporary Intrinsics" (M)
Mark Heller: "Temporal Parts of Four-Dimensional Objects" (M)

Apr. 2: Sally Haslanger: "Persistence Through Time"* (blackboard)

Apr. 4: Daniel Giberman: "Bent, Not Broken: Why Exemplification Simpliciter Remains a Problem for Eternalist Endurantism"*
(<https://link.springer.com/article/10.1007%2Fs10670-016-9852-4>)

Apr. 9: Ted Sider "All the World's a Stage" (M)

Apr. 11: Daniel Giberman: "On Stage with Gunk"*
(<https://www.tandfonline.com/eprint/uRsREnuBiWWRE7PDeChF/full>)
➤ STUDENTS SHOULD BE WORKING ON FINAL PAPERS!!

Grounding

Apr. 16: David Lewis: introduction to *Philosophical Papers*, v. II* (blackboard)
Jaegwon Kim: "Explanatory Knowledge and Metaphysical Dependence"* (jstor)

Apr. 18: Jonathan Schaffer: "On What Grounds What" (M)

Apr. 23: Jessica Wilson: "No Work for a Theory of Grounding"*
(<http://individual.utoronto.ca/jmwilson/Wilson-No-Work-for-a-Theory-of-Grounding.pdf>)

Wrap-Up

Apr. 25: Final Paper "Workshop" (no assigned reading—BUT ATTENDANCE IS MANDATORY!)
➤ Bring a hard copy of completed first draft of final paper for in-class discussion/feedback

Apr. 30: Daniel Giberman: "A Reason for the Non-Specialist to Care About the Metaphysics of Properties and Persistence"* (blackboard)
➤ FINAL PAPER DUE

May 2: Review for final exam

[Final exam takes place at whichever location/time the university assigns.]

Note: *I reserve the right to adjust this schedule in any way that serves the educational needs of the students enrolled in this course.* DG

University Policies:

Attendance: At The University of Texas at Arlington, taking attendance is not required but attendance is a critical indicator in student success. Each faculty member is free to develop his or her own methods of evaluating students' academic performance, which includes establishing course-specific policies on attendance. As the instructor of this section, [insert your attendance policy and/or expectations, e.g. "I will take attendance sporadically" or "I have established the following attendance policy: ..."] However, while UT Arlington does not require instructors to take attendance in their courses, the U.S. Department of Education requires that the University have a mechanism in place to mark when Federal Student Aid recipients "begin attendance in a course." UT Arlington instructors will report when students begin attendance in a course as part of the final grading process. Specifically, when assigning a student a grade of F, faculty report the last date a student attended their class based on evidence such as a test, participation in a class project or presentation, or an engagement online via Blackboard. This date is reported to the Department of Education for federal financial aid recipients.

Drop Policy: Students may drop or swap (adding and dropping a class concurrently) classes through self-service in MyMav from the beginning of the registration period through the late registration period. After the late registration period, students must see their academic advisor to drop a class or withdraw. Undeclared students must see an advisor in the University Advising Center. Drops can continue through a point two-thirds of the way through the term or session. It is the student's responsibility to officially withdraw if they do not plan to attend after registering. **Students will not be automatically dropped for non-attendance.** Repayment of certain types of financial aid administered through the University may be required as the result of dropping classes or withdrawing. For more information, contact the Office of Financial Aid and Scholarships (<http://www.uta.edu/aao/fao/>).

Disability Accommodations: UT Arlington is on record as being committed to both the spirit and letter of all federal equal opportunity legislation, including *The Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA)*, *The Americans with Disabilities Amendments Act (ADAAA)*, and *Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act*. All instructors at UT Arlington are required by law to provide "reasonable accommodations" to students with disabilities, so as not to discriminate on the basis of disability. Students are responsible for providing the instructor with official notification in the form of a **letter certified** by the Office for Students with Disabilities (OSD). Only those students who have officially documented a need for an accommodation will have their request honored. Students experiencing a range of conditions (Physical, Learning, Chronic Health, Mental Health, and Sensory) that may cause diminished academic performance or other barriers to learning may seek services and/or accommodations by contacting:

The Office for Students with Disabilities, (OSD) www.uta.edu/disability or calling 817-272-3364. Information regarding diagnostic criteria and policies for obtaining disability-based academic accommodations can be found at www.uta.edu/disability.

Counseling and Psychological Services, (CAPS) www.uta.edu/caps/ or calling 817-272-3671 is also available to all students to help increase their understanding of personal issues, address mental and behavioral health problems and make positive changes in their lives.

Non-Discrimination Policy: *The University of Texas at Arlington does not discriminate on the basis of race, color, national origin, religion, age, gender, sexual orientation, disabilities, genetic information, and/or veteran status in its educational programs or activities it operates. For more information, visit uta.edu/eos.*

Title IX Policy: The University of Texas at Arlington ("University") is committed to maintaining a learning and working environment that is free from discrimination based on sex in accordance with Title IX of the Higher Education Amendments of 1972 (Title IX), which prohibits discrimination on the basis of sex in educational programs or activities; Title VII of the Civil Rights Act of 1964 (Title VII), which prohibits sex discrimination in employment; and the Campus Sexual Violence Elimination Act (SaVE Act). Sexual misconduct is a form of sex discrimination and will not be tolerated. *For information regarding Title IX, visit www.uta.edu/titleIX or contact Ms. Jean Hood, Vice President and Title IX Coordinator at (817) 272-7091 or jmhood@uta.edu.*

Academic Integrity: Students enrolled all UT Arlington courses are expected to adhere to the UT Arlington Honor Code:

I pledge, on my honor, to uphold UT Arlington's tradition of academic integrity, a tradition that values hard work and honest effort in the pursuit of academic excellence.

I promise that I will submit only work that I personally create or contribute to group collaborations, and I will appropriately reference any work from other sources. I will follow the highest standards of integrity and uphold the spirit of the Honor Code.

UT Arlington faculty members may employ the Honor Code in their courses by having students acknowledge the honor code as part of an examination or requiring students to incorporate the honor code into any work submitted. Per UT System *Regents' Rule* 50101, §2.2, suspected violations of university's standards for academic integrity (including the Honor Code) will be referred to the Office of Student Conduct. Violators will be disciplined in accordance with University policy, which may result in the student's suspension or expulsion from the University. Additional information is available at <https://www.uta.edu/conduct/>.

Electronic Communication: UT Arlington has adopted MavMail as its official means to communicate with students about important deadlines and events, as well as to transact university-related business regarding financial aid, tuition, grades, graduation, etc. All students are assigned a MavMail account and are responsible for checking the inbox regularly. There is no additional charge to students for using this account, which remains active even after graduation. Information about activating and using MavMail is available at <http://www.uta.edu/oit/cs/email/mavmail.php>.

Campus Carry: Effective August 1, 2016, the Campus Carry law (Senate Bill 11) allows those licensed individuals to carry a concealed handgun in buildings on public university campuses, except in locations the University establishes as prohibited. Under the new law, openly carrying handguns is not allowed on college campuses. For more information, visit <http://www.uta.edu/news/info/campus-carry/>

Student Feedback Survey: At the end of each term, students enrolled in face-to-face and online classes categorized as "lecture," "seminar," or "laboratory" are directed to complete an online Student Feedback Survey (SFS). Instructions on how to access the SFS for this course will be sent directly to each student through MavMail approximately 10 days before the end of the term. Each student's feedback via the SFS database is aggregated with that of other students enrolled in the course. Students' anonymity will be protected to the extent that the law allows. UT Arlington's effort to solicit, gather, tabulate, and publish student feedback is required by state law and aggregate results are posted online. Data from SFS is also used for faculty and program evaluations. For more information, visit <http://www.uta.edu/sfs>.

Final Review Week: for semester-long courses, a period of five class days prior to the first day of final examinations in the long sessions shall be designated as Final Review Week. The purpose of this week is to allow students sufficient time to prepare for final examinations. During this week, there shall be no scheduled activities such as required field trips or performances; and no instructor shall assign any themes, research problems or exercises of similar scope that have a completion date during or following this week *unless specified in the class syllabus*. During Final Review Week, an instructor shall not give any examinations constituting 10% or more of the final grade, except makeup tests and laboratory examinations. In addition, no instructor shall give any portion of the final examination during Final Review Week. During this week, classes are held as scheduled. In addition, instructors are not required to limit content to topics that have been previously covered; they may introduce new concepts as appropriate.

Emergency Exit Procedures: Should we experience an emergency event that requires us to vacate the building, students should exit the room and move toward the nearest exit. When exiting the building during an emergency, one should never take an elevator but should use the stairwells. Faculty members and instructional staff will assist students in selecting the safest route for evacuation and will make arrangements to assist individuals with disabilities.

Active Shooter: The safety and security of our campus is the responsibility of everyone in our community. Each of us has an obligation to be prepared to appropriately respond to threats to our campus, such as an active aggressor. Please review the information provided by UTA Police regarding the options and strategies we can all use to stay safe during difficult situations. <https://police.uta.edu/activeshooter>

Student Support Services: UT Arlington provides a variety of resources and programs designed to help students develop academic skills, deal with personal situations, and better understand concepts and information related to their courses. Resources include [tutoring](#), [major-based learning centers](#), developmental education, [advising and mentoring](#), personal counseling, and [federally funded programs](#). For individualized referrals, students may visit the reception desk at University College (Ransom Hall), call the Maverick Resource Hotline at 817-272-6107, send a message to resources@uta.edu, or view the information at <http://www.uta.edu/universitycollege/resources/index.php>.