



The Hebrew University of Jerusalem

Syllabus

Introduction to Metaphysics - 15018

Last update 14-11-2019

HU Credits: 4

Degree/Cycle: 1st degree (Bachelor)

Responsible Department: Philosophy

Academic year: 0

Semester: 1st Semester

Teaching Languages: Hebrew

Campus: Mt. Scopus

Course/Module Coordinator: Aaron Segal

Coordinator Email: aaron.segal@gmail.com

Coordinator Office Hours: Thursday 12:30-14:00

Teaching Staff:

Dr. Aaron Segal

Course/Module description:

We will explore the ultimate nature of reality in general, and of us in particular. Here are some of the questions we will discuss: Why is there anything at all? Are we free? Are we entirely material? Are there numbers? Is there a sense in which time genuinely passes? Is time travel possible? Are ordinary things like tables spread out in time like they are in space? And are metaphysical questions defective in some way? We'll find that the more we think about these questions, the more perplexing things seem.

Course/Module aims:

Familiarity with some metaphysical issues, puzzles, claims, and arguments; ability to critically evaluate metaphysical claims and arguments

Learning outcomes - On successful completion of this module, students should be able to:

See above

Attendance requirements(%):

80

Teaching arrangement and method of instruction: lecture

Course/Module Content:

- 1) Introduction to Metaphysics
- 2) What is there?
- 3) Time
- 4) Persistence
- 5) Human Ontology
- 6) Laws and Causation
- 7) Freedom
- 8) Applied Metaphysics
- 9) Why is there anything at all? Why this?
- 10) Objectivity

Required Reading:

Textbook: *Metaphysics*, 4th edition, Peter van Inwagen, Westview Press.

Articles:

1) John Carroll, "Nailed to Hume's Cross" and Jonathan Schaffer, "Causation and Laws of Nature: Reductionism,"

in Ted Sider (ed.), *Contemporary Debates in Metaphysics*, Blackwell Publishing, 2008. 65–108

2) John Hawthorne, "Three-Dimensionalism vs. Four-Dimensionalism" and Theodore Sider "Temporal Parts," in

Contemporary Debates in Metaphysics, Blackwell Publishing, 2008. 239–282

3) Jaegwon Kim, "Mind as Immaterial Substance: Descartes' Dualism," in *Philosophy of Mind*, Westview Press, 2010. 31–60.

□4) David Lewis, "Are We Free to Break the Laws," *Theoria*, 1981, 47(3): 113–121.

□5) David Lewis, "The Paradoxes of Time Travel," *American Philosophical Quarterly*, April 1976: 145–152.

□6) David Lewis and Stephanie Lewis, "Holes," in David Lewis, *Philosophical Papers: Volume I*, Oxford University Press, 1983. 3–9.

□7) Josef Melia, "On What There is Not," *Analysis*, October 1995: 223–29.

□8) John O'Leary Hawthorne and Andrew Cortens, "Towards Ontological Nihilism," *Philosophical Studies*, August 1995, 79(2): 143–165.

□9) Eric Olson, "The Paradox of Increase," *The Monist*, 2006, 89(3): 390–417.

□10) Eric Olson, "An Argument for Animalism," in Raymond Martin and John Barresi (eds.), *Personal Identity*, Wiley-Blackwell, 2003. 318–334.

11) □ Derek Parfit, "The Puzzle of Reality: Why does the Universe Exist?" in *Metaphysics: The Big Questions*, ed. Peter Van Inwagen and D. W. Zimmerman, Malden, Massachusetts: Blackwell.

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12) Peter Unger, "The Mental Problem of the Many," *Oxford Studies in Metaphysics*, v. 1, 195–222.

Additional Reading Material:

Course/Module evaluation:

End of year written/oral examination 75 %

Presentation 0 %

Participation in Tutorials 0 %

Project work 0 %

Assignments 25 %

Reports 0 %

Research project 0 %

Quizzes 0 %

Other 0 %

Additional information: