

PHIL 181: Metaphysics
Section 01: MW 1:30-2:45
Douglass Hall 208

- Instructor:** Prof. Thomas F. Pyne
- Office Hours:** MW 10:30-11:30
Other times by appointment.
- Office Location:** Mendocino 3022
- Phone:** (Office) 278-7288
(Philosophy Department) 278-6424
- Email:** pynetf@csus.edu
Faculty Website: <http://www.csus.edu/indiv/p/pynetf/>
- Required Text:** [1] Peter Van Inwagen & Dean W. Zimmerman, editors.
Metaphysics: The Big Questions. Second Edition. Basil
Blackwell (Oxford, 2008). 978-1-4051-2586-4
[2] “Metaphysics Toolkit”
- SacCT:** www.csus.edu/sacct/
- Faculty Website:** www.csus.edu/indiv/p/pynetf/

Course Description

Examines argument concerning the nature of reality. Representative topics include: substance, space, time, God, free will, determinism, identity, universals. Emphasis is on contemporary formulations. **Prerequisite:** 6 units in philosophy or instructor permission. **Units:** 3.0.

Course Objectives

- The course is designed to give a systematic introduction to philosophical problems that are *metaphysical*; to show what distinguishes metaphysical problems from other philosophical problems.
- We will then investigate a restricted sampling of metaphysical problems under active investigation in the present.
- This investigation will involve study of solutions by contemporary philosophers.
- Finally, the course will require some metaphysical investigation by the student, as well as some writing.

Students will be expected to:

- Demonstrate a developed ability to read and understand contemporary philosophical texts.
- Evaluate critically the concepts and arguments contained in the texts;
- Write argumentative papers applying philosophical concepts and reasoning to issues in metaphysics;
- Students will demonstrate their achievement of the course objectives and expectations through:
 - Reading comprehension quizzes on each reading assignment;
 - Exams which test for a deeper understanding of metaphysical issues, as well as of the arguments for or against the different sides; students will show their understanding via essay answers;
 - Participation in in-class and online discussion;
 - Composition of analytic critical essays on contemporary works in metaphysics.

Course Delivery

While PHIL 181 will be in most ways a standard lecture/discussion class, it will be ‘web-assisted.’ That is, we will be using some features of the SacCT course management system.

SacCT 9.1 is a program designed for on-line college courses. Among other things, it serves as a location for course material, lecture notes, tests, papers, and discussions.

I will make important course content available, including lecture notes and other supplementary material.

You will be taking quizzes and exams, participating in discussions, and submitting papers through SacCT 9.1. In addition, you may communicate with me, as well as with other students in the class, through the SacCT Mail facility.

SacCT has an interesting new feature called ‘Smarthinking.’ Since I grade on writing, you might want to submit your essays to get some evaluation before submitting them to me. Be aware, though, that it can take twenty-four hours to get an evaluation, so plan accordingly.

Access the Course

You will use your Saclink account to log into the course from the [SacCT Login page](http://www.csus.edu/sacct/) (www.csus.edu/sacct/).

If you do not have a Saclink account yet, please refer to the [Get a Saclink Account](http://www.csus.edu/saclink/settingUp.stm) page (http://www.csus.edu/saclink/settingUp.stm) to create a saclink account online.

To get started using SacCT 9.1, visit the [Student Resources](http://www.csus.edu/sacct/student/) webpage (http://www.csus.edu/sacct/student/) where you can access Online Tutorials, Frequently Asked Questions, and other help resources.

Communications

The course will use the communication tools built into SacCT:

- Announcements: It’s a good idea to check for announcements from time to time during the semester

- Mail: You may send me (or a classmate) a message via the ‘Mail’ function. I will try to respond promptly.
- Discussions: You will be expected to participate in discussions, whether in class or through the ‘Discussions’ function in SacCT.
- Calendar: Exams and due dates for papers will all appear in the Calendar.

Technical Requirements

To access a course in SacCT 9.1 you will need access to the internet and an internet browser (Internet Explorer, Safari, Chrome,...). To ensure that you are using a supported browser and have required plug-ins please run the Check Browser from your SacCT course. Refer to the [SacCT Browser Settings Guide](#) page for instructions.

For help or to report a problem with SacCT 9.1 you can:

- Visit the [Student SacCT FAQ’s webpage](#)
- Submit a [SacCT Problem Form](#)
- Contact the University Help Desk at (916) 278-7337

Work for the Course

1. Quizzes on Reading Assignments (20 pts)

You will be responsible for the readings assigned for a particular class day. While you will be responsible for the whole reading, I may indicate in the ‘Course Schedule’ (below) that you should pay particular attention to some part of it. As a result, it may happen that other parts will not be treated in class. You will be responsible for them anyway, and I will respond to questions regarding them.

The quiz for a given reading assignment must be taken by the beginning of the class period for which it is assigned.

I will open the window for the reading assignment a week in advance; the window will close at class time.

2. Three Exams (15 pts each) Exams will be a combination of objective questions plus some short essays. The questions will be on the readings, lectures, and discussions.
3. Two analytical essays (15 pts each) on selected readings.
4. Discussion Contributions (5 pts)
You will be expected to make regular contributions to discussion, either in the class period itself or in the online ‘Discussion’ conducted in SacCT.

Assignment Submission Instructions

Analytical Essays

Analytical Essays will be submitted in SacCT. In writing the essay, follow the instructions for analytical essays found in the Philosophy Department website. Look under “Guidance” for [“Writing Guidelines.”](#)

You will find another document there that will help, since it gives you some hints as to what we look

for. It's called "[Grading Standards](#)."

In addition, look carefully at the rubric by which the essays will be graded. The rubric can be found on the page for each writing assignment. Click on the box "View Rubric." Keep it in mind as you write.

Papers will be submitted in SacCT. To submit an essay in SacCT:

- Enter [SacCT](#).
- Open the main page for PHIL 181.
- On the Course Menu select 'Assignments';
- Open the correct assignment; you will see the text of the assignment itself as well as the due date and time.
- Clicking the little triangle next to "*Type Submission*" opens a box in which you can write your essay. (You'll probably want to produce it in your own word processing software first and then copy it in. Be sure to revise it once you do, since you may lose some editing.)
- Once you are satisfied with how your essay looks in that box, click 'Submit' (Important);
- A success message should appear: "This assignment is complete. Review the submission history."
- Late papers will be lowered one point for every day past the due date. I leave the window open for submitting a paper for five days after its due date. After that the paper will not be accepted.

Discussions

- Philosophy involves discussion and argument. It's the best way to explore philosophical questions, the best way to learn how to philosophize. So I will expect you to participate in the discussions. You will either receive full credit for participation (5%) or no credit, depending on how seriously you take your responsibility to make contributions. If I notice that you are not participating, I will let you know that I expect more.
- To participate in an online discussion:
 - Enter SacCT;
 - Open 'Discussions' (under 'Course Tools' on the left margin);
 - Click on one of the topics; you will be able to read the other contributions;
 - You can contribute to the discussion by clicking 'Create Message'.

Online Quizzes

Reading Quizzes: There will be a reading quiz on every assignment. A reading quiz will consist of five to ten multiple-choice questions designed so that a careful reader should be able to answer them. The quiz will 'open' a week before it is due; it will be due at the beginning of the first class period in which the reading will be discussed.

To take a reading quiz in SacCT:

Enter [SacCT](#).

- Open the main page for PHIL 181;
- Open 'Assessments' (under 'Course Tools' on the left margin of the main page);

– Answer the questions (make sure you ‘submit’ each question as well as the entire exam). You will have only one chance to take the quiz, so check your answers before submitting.

Exams: The exam window will open a week before it is due. You must take the exam during that time.

To take an exam in SacCT, follow the instructions for taking a reading quiz. The difference between an exam and a quiz will be the time constraints. You will have 75 minutes to take the midterm, two hours (120 minutes) to take the final. In addition, there will be some essay questions in the exams.

Grading

Exams: Exams will be graded **15 – 0**.

Analytical Essays: Each essay will be graded **15 – 0**. The basis for the grade can be found in the ‘rubric’ for the essay in SacCT.

Reading Quizzes: Reading quizzes will receive a grade of **1** (full credit), **.5** (inadequate comprehension), or **0** (not taken).

Discussion: Discussion participation will receive either complete credit **5** or none **0**. Periodically, I will post progress reports on your participation in the Gradebook. These progress reports are indications of what you would get at the end of the semester if you continue your present course. That grade does not ‘count’; it’s just information.

Final Grade: The final grade for the course will be determined by the sum of the exams, quizzes analytic essays, and discussion.

Grading Criteria

Score	Letter Equivalent
100-94	A
93-92	A-
91-90	B+
89-84	B
83-82	B-
81-80	C+
79-74	C
73-72	C-
71-70	D+
69-64	D
63-62	D-
61-	F

Viewing Grades in SacCT

For reading quizzes you will be able to see your score as soon as you have submitted your quiz. For exams, and papers I will post the grades as soon as I have finished grading them. You can see your grades during the semester by going to 'MyGrades' in SacCT.

Course Policies

Attendance

I expect attendance at every class meeting. If for some excellent reason you cannot make class, let me know – preferably in advance. If this is impossible, let me know by 5:00 on the day you miss, preferably by an e-mail message within SacCT. I will lower you a grade increment for every absence in which you fail to contact me the same day.

Class meetings will begin at 1:30 pm with a roll. Be on time. Anticipate. Excuses don't cut it: I will treat a pattern of late arrival as an unexcused absence.

I expect attention to the material during class periods. If there is a class discussion, I will serve as moderator; please wait to be recognized before making a contribution.

If you wish to ask a question, answer a question, or make a contribution to the class, please ask to be recognized. There is no excuse for conducting a private discussion during class time. I will treat a pattern of talking in class as an unexcused absence.

Make-Up Exams and Quizzes

Since you may take exams and quizzes at your convenience, there will be consequences for missing the deadline – whatever the circumstances.

The reading quizzes will remain open for two days after they are due, closing at 1:30. There will be a penalty of .25 for each day late.

Exams will also remain open for two days after they are due, closing at 1:30. There will be a penalty of 1 point for each day late.

The opening and due dates and times will be listed in the Calendar.

If your internet connection is unreliable, or you suspect it may be unreliable, plan to take the exam in one of the labs on campus.

Late Work

For essays, I will leave the assignment window open for five days after the due date. The grade will be lowered a point for every day past the deadline.

Electronic Thingummies

Put your laptop under your seat during class. Set your phone on vibrate and put it away.

Since you will be getting my class notes, you will not need to take elaborate notes yourself. If you want to remind yourself of something during class bring a pencil and paper (remember them?).

Unless you need something electronic to keep you alive, don't use it in class.

University Policies

Academic Honesty

Students are expected to be familiar with the University's Academic Honesty, Policy & Procedures. The policy on Academic Honesty and other information regarding student conduct can be accessed from the [University Policy Manual](#).

The University has very helpful information on plagiarism at the [Library's Plagiarism Website](#).

Cheating on an assignment will be treated as a missed assignment. I reserve the right, after following the academic dishonesty procedures, to report it to the Student Conduct Officer.

Originality is an over-rated virtue in undergraduate writing, ranking well below unity, clarity, and cogency of argument. You can borrow other people's ideas and arguments all you like. You just need to *cite* them when you do. Use any method of citation you find comfortable and convenient. (I like MLA myself.) Don't borrow their *words*: you mustn't submit an essay consisting of a bunch of quotations. Since you can borrow ideas, you have no excuse for plagiarism except laziness.

Reasonable Accommodation Policy

If you have a disability and require accommodations, you need to provide disability documentation to Services for Students with Disabilities (SSWD). For more information please visit the [SSWD website](#) (<http://www.csus.edu/sswd/>). They are located in Lassen Hall 1008 and can be contacted by phone at (916) 278-6955 (Voice) (916) 278-7239 (TDD only) or via email at sswd@csus.edu.

Please discuss your accommodation needs with me after early in the semester – within the first week. It is difficult and time-consuming to make certain accommodations in SacCT. If you wait until the first quiz or paper is due to announce your disability it may simply not be *humanly* possible to make the accommodation. You will then just have to do the best you can.

A tendency toward procrastination is not a recognized disability.

University Resources

The CSUS Writing Center

The Writing Center provides encouraging, focused, and non-judgmental one-to-one tutorials in writing. Their tutors can help with writing at all points in the process, from initial planning and organizing through developing and revising a paper. You can bring the assignment to them for help.

Sac State Library

The Sac State Library's webpage is <http://library.csus.edu>.

To find a book or periodical, click on "Eureka: Library Catalogue" under "Resources and Collections" or go directly to <http://eureka.lib.csus.edu/>

For a largely undergraduate institution, the Sac State library's holdings and resources in philosophy are pretty good. I particularly recommend Sac State librarian Lisa Roberts' website "Philosophy: Resources." Two ways to find it: through "Research Guides" under "Resources and Collections", or go directly to <http://library.csus.edu/guides/robertsl/philoguide.htm>

Student Computing Labs

To access SacCT from campus, or use any of the other campus online resources, you can use the IRT managed student computer labs on campus. See [University Learning Labs Website](#) for information about locations, hours, and resources available.

Course Schedule

Introduction: Metaphysical Questions Among Philosophical Questions What we are supplying are really remarks on the natural history of human beings; we are not contributing curiosities however, but observations which no one has doubted, but which have escaped remark only because they are always before our eyes. <i>Wittgenstein, Philosophical Investigations</i>			
Week	Topic	Readings	Due Dates
Week 1 M 8/27 W 8/29	M: Introduction, What is a Philosophical Question? Quine's Criterion of Ontological Commitment W: Ontology: Reduction and Supervenience	M: "Introduction," 1-7; Quine, "On What There Is," 28-40 W: "Metaphysics Toolkit," 1-16	M: W: Reading Quiz 1: Quine, "On What There Is"
Week 2 M 9/3 W 9/5	M: Labor Day Holiday W: Ontology: Elimination and Emergence	M: W: Metaphysics Toolkit,"16-18;	M: W: Exam 1 Window Opens 2:45 PM
Week 3 M 9/10	M: Ontology: A Live Example	M: Lewis, "Holes," 22-28	M: Reading Quiz 2: Lewis, "Holes"

Part I: The Nature of Space and Time 6.4312 The solution of the riddle of life in space and time lies <i>outside</i> space and time. Wittgenstein, <i>Tractatus Logico-Philosophicus</i> Time is an illusion. Lunchtime doubly so. Adams, <i>The Hitchhikers Guide to the Galaxy</i>			
W: 9/12	W: Is Space a Something or a Nothing?	W: Martin Gardner, "The Fourth Dimension," 165-168	W: Reading Quiz 3: Gardner Exam 1 Due 1:30 PM
Week 4 M 9/17	M: How Many Dimensions are There?	M: Van Cleve, "Incongruent Counterparts and Higher Dimensions," 168-175	M: Reading Quiz 4: Van Cleve
W 9/19	W: Is Time a Something or an Illusion?	W: McTaggart, from <i>The Nature of Existence</i> , 116-123	W: Reading Quiz 5: McTaggart
Week 5 M 9/24	M: Spacetime as a Four-Dimensional Manifold	M: Williams, "The Myth of Passage," 149-161	M: Reading Quiz 6: Williams, "The Myth of Passage"
W 9/26	W: Broad's Theory of Time	W: Broad, "The General Problem of Time and Change," 141-149	W: Reading Quiz 7: Broad, "The General Problem....";
Week 6 M 10/1	M: Presentism	M:; Prior, "The Notion of the Present," 129-131; Prior, "Changes in Events and Changes in Things," 131-141; Prior, "Some Free Thinking About Time," 161-164	M: Reading Quiz 8: Prior, "The Notion of the Present"; Prior, "Changes in Events and Changes in Things"; Prior, "Some Free Thinking About Time"
Part II: The Will 4.1362 The freedom of the will consists in the impossibility of knowing actions that still lie in the future. We could know them only if causality were an <i>inner</i> necessity like that of logical inference. Wittgenstein, <i>Tractatus Logico-Philosophicus</i>			
W 10/3	W: 'Hard' Determinism vs 'Soft'	W: Baron Holbach, "We are Never Free," 413-419; Hobart, "Free Will as Involving Determination," 420-432	W: Reading Quiz 9: Holbach, "We are Never Free"; Hobart, "Free Will as Involving Determination"

Week 7 M 10/8	M: Compatibilism vs Incompatibilism	M: Van Inwagen, "The Consequence Argument," 450-456; Van Inwagen, "The Mystery of Metaphysical Freedom," 456-465	M: Reading Quiz 10: Van Inwagen, "The Consequence Argument"; Van Inwagen, "The Mystery of Metaphysical Freedom"
W 10/10	W: A Revised Compatibilism	W: Frankfurt, "Alternate Possibilities and Moral Responsibility," 471-479; Frankfurt, "Freedom of the Will and the Concept of a Person," 480-492	W: Reading Quiz 11: Frankfurt, "Alternate Possibilities and Moral Responsibility"; Frankfurt, "Freedom of the Will and the Concept of a Person"
Week 8 M 10/15	M: The Theory of Agency	M: Chisolm, "Human Freedom and the Self," 441-450; O'Connor, "The Agent as Cause," 465-471	M: Reading Quiz 12: Chisolm, "Human Freedom and the Self"; O'Connor, "The Agent as Cause" Analytical Essay 1 due Monday, October 15, 11:30 PM
The Furniture of Reality 1.1 The World is the totality of facts, not of things. Wittgenstein, <i>Tractatus Logico-Philosophicus</i>			
III. Universals			
W 10/17	W: The Problem of Universals: <i>Universalia ante Res</i> ; <i>Universalia in Rebus</i> Nominalism and Other Reductive Strategies	W: ["Metaphysics Toolkit" 9-14; Inwagen & Zimmerman, 'Introduction,' 7-13; Armstrong, "Universals and Attributes," 59-67	W: Reading Quiz 13: "Metaphysics Toolkit," Van Inwagen & Zimmerman, "Introduction"; Armstrong, "Universals and Attributes"
Week 9 M 10/22	M: Resemblance v. <i>Universalia in Rebus</i> ; Trope Theory	M: H.H. Price, "Universals and Resemblances," 67-84; D.C. Williams, "The Elements of Being," 84-96	M: Reading Quiz 14: Price, "Universals and Resemblances"; Williams, "The

W 10/24	W: Resemblance v. <i>Universalis in Rebus</i> ; Trope Theory	W: H.H. Price, "Universals and Resemblances," 67-84; D.C. Williams, "The Elements of Being," 84-96	Elements of Being" W: Exam 2 Window Opens 2:45 PM
IV. Individuals Moreover every substance is as it were an entire world and a mirror of God, or rather of the whole universe. <i>Leibniz, Discourse on Metaphysics</i>			
Week 10 M 10/29	M: The Problem of Individuals: Leibniz's "Identity of Indiscernibles"	M: Max Black, "The Identity of Indiscernibles," 96-105	M: Reading Quiz 15: Black, "Identity of Indiscernibles"
W 10/31	W: Leibniz's Identity of Indiscernibles Refuted	W: Max Black, "The Identity of Indiscernibles," 96-105	W: Exam 2 Due 1:30 PM
Week 11 M 11/5	M: The Two Spheres Problem Updated	M: Zimmerman, "Distinct Indiscernibles and the Bundle Theory," 105-111	M: Reading Quiz 16: Zimmerman, "Distinct Indiscernibles"
V. Identity 6.371 The whole modern conception of the world is founded on the illusion that the so-called laws of nature are the explanations of natural phenomena. <i>Wittgenstein, Tractatus Logico-Philosophicus</i>			
W 11/7	W: The Ship of Theseus; The 'Error Theory' of Identity Through Change	W: Arnauld and Nicole, "Of Confused Subjects which are Equivalent to Two Subjects..." 239-241	W: Reading Quiz 17: Arnauld & Nicole, "Of Confused Subjects"
Week 12 M 11/12	M: Veterans' Day Holiday	M:	M:
W 11/14	W: Can Objects Change by gaining or losing parts?	W: Olson, "The Paradox of Increase," 241-263	W: Reading Quiz 18: Olson, "Paradox of Increase"
Week 13 M 11/19	M: The Paradox of Increase (cont.)	M: Olson, "The Paradox of Increase," 241-263	M:

Part VI: Realism and Anti-Realism

4. 2211 Even if the world is infinitely complex, so that every fact consists of infinitely many states of affairs and every state of affairs is composed of infinitely many objects, even so there must be objects and states of affairs.

Wittgenstein, *Tractatus Logico-Philosophicus*

You can't get behind the rules, because there isn't any *behind*.

Wittgenstein, *Philosophical Grammar*

W 11/21	W: Putnam's 'Internal' Realism	W: Putnam, "After Metaphysics, What?" 547-552; Putnam, "Truth and Convention," 552-558	W: Reading Quiz 19: Putnam, "After Metaphysics" Putnam, "Truth and Convention"
Week 14 M 11/26	M: Conceptual Relativism	M: Sosa, "Nonabsolute Existence and Conceptual Relativity," 558-566; Sosa, "Addendum to "Nonabsolute Existence and Conceptual Relativity," 566-568	M: Reading Quiz 20: Sosa, "Nonabsolute Existence and Conceptual Relativity"; Sosa, "Addendum"
W 11/28	W: Sosa's Conceptual Relativism (cont.)	W:	W:
Week 15 M 12/3	M: Strange Kinds and Ordinary Objects	M : Korman, "Strange Kinds" [See notes]	M: Exam 3 Window Opens 2:45 PM
W 12/5	W: Concluding Reflections	W: [Lecture]	W:
Finals Week M 12/10	M:	M:	M: Exam 3 Due 2:45 PM
W 12/12	W:	W:	W: Analytical Essay 2 due Wednesday, December 14, 11:30 pm

The descriptions and due dates are subject to change for pedagogical reasons.

Good luck in all your courses this semester!