

UNIVERSITY of BERGEN
DEPARTMENT OF
PHILOSOPHY

FIL 220/320, Spring 2018
METAPHYSICS

Lecturer Prof. Sorin Bangu
Time Wed. 16.15-18.00. Start 17.01.2018

Location Sydneplassen 12/13, Room 130

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Please check your uib.no student email account regularly, as well as the course website on mitt.uib

<http://www.uib.no/en/course/FIL220>

Course description

The main aim of this course is to cover several central topics in metaphysics. In chronological order, we'll introduce you into the mysteries of *causation* (how is it different from mere correlation?), *freedom and determinism* (do we have free will?), *laws of nature and necessity* (are all regularities around us just coincidences?), *personal identity* (what makes you, you?), *mental states* (the mind-body problem), as well as the riddles of *(non-)existence* (are there things that don't exist?). The course doesn't presuppose extensive philosophical knowledge, but familiarity with the basic vocabulary of analytic philosophy is helpful.

Readings

- J. Carroll & N. Markosian *An Introduction to Metaphysics*. Cambridge Univ. Press, 2010 [hereafter: **CarMa**]. Available at Akademika.
- Selection of papers freely available as PDFs on mitt.uib

Evaluation

- Two written assignments to be submitted electronically (in INSPERA) before deadlines set by the department.
- The first assignment is between 1500 and 2000 words (excluding table of contents, list of references, etc.) = 30 % of the final grade. Unsupervised.
- The second assignment is between 2500 and 3000 words (excluding table of contents, list of references, etc.) = 70 %. Supervised. One *must* attend the supervision to be allowed to submit the second paper.
- MA students: same as above + 1000 words more each essay.
- Each student chooses her or his own topic from a list of preassigned themes. The topic has to be approved by the professor in advance
- Both assignments can be written in English or Norwegian.

COURSE OUTLINE (tentative)

Readings – all obligatory unless explicitly mentioned as recommended only = [R]

I. Introduction: What is Metaphysics? (1 lecture)

- CarMa, Ch. 1 *Intro*

II. Causation (ca. 2 lectures)

- CarMa Ch. 2
- Psillos, S. 'Hume on causation' Ch. 1 in S. Psillos *Causation and Explanation*. Acumen Publishing 2002. pp. 19-56
- Hume, D. Excerpts from *A Treatise of Human Nature*. Available online at <http://www.gutenberg.org/files/4705/4705-h/4705-h.htm>
Book I, part 1, sect. I, IV, V, and part 3, sect. I to IV and XIV
- Hume, D. Excerpts from *An Enquiry Concerning Human Understanding* <http://www.gutenberg.org/files/9662/9662-h/9662-h.htm>
Sections II. to VII. [R]

III. Freedom and Determinism (ca. 2 lectures)

- CarMa, Ch. 3
- Kane, R. 'The Contours of Contemporary Free Will Debates'. Pp. 3-41 in R. Kane (ed.) *The Oxford Handbook of Free Will*. Oxford Univ. Press, 2005.
- Pereboom, D. 'Living Without Free Will: The Case for Hard Incompatibilism'. Pp. 477-88 in Kane (2005)
- Frankfurt, H. 'Freedom of the Will and the Concept of a Person'. *Journal of Philosophy*, Vol. 68, No. 1 (Jan. 14, 1971), pp. 5-20
- Ayer, A. J. 'Freedom and Necessity'. Pp. 374-379 in Feinberg, J (ed.) *Reason and Responsibility*. Dickenson Publishing Company, Inc. Encino, Calif. and Belmont, Calif., 3rd ed., 1975 [R]
- Chisholm, R. 'Responsibility and Avoidability' P. 373-374 in Feinberg (1975) [R]
- Chisholm, R. 'Human Freedom and the Self'. Pp. 391-397 in Feinberg (1975) [R]

IV. Laws of Nature and Necessity (ca. 2 lectures)

- CarMa Ch. 4
- Plantinga, A. 'Modality. Basic Concepts and Distinctions'. Ch. 11 in Kim, J. and E. Sosa (eds.) *Metaphysics. An Anthology*. Blackwell, 2004. Pp. 135-149.
- Psillos, S. 'The Regularity View of Laws' Ch. 5 in S. Psillos *Causation and Explanation*, pp. 137-159.
- Psillos, S. 'Laws as Relations Among Universals' Ch. 6 in S. Psillos *Causation and Explanation*, pp. 159-179
- Psillos, S. 'Alternative Approaches to Laws' Ch. 7 in S. Psillos *Causation and Explanation*, pp. 179-211 [R]

V. Personal Identity (1 lecture)

- CarMa Ch. 5
- Garrett, B. 'What are we?' Ch. 2 in Garrett *What is this thing called Metaphysics?* (Routledge, 2006, 2nd ed.)
- Parfit, D. 'Divided Minds and the Nature of Persons' In Blakemore & Greenfield *Mindwaves* (Blackwell, 1987)

VI. Mental states (1 lecture)

- CarMa Ch. 6
- Chalmers, D. 'Consciousness and its place in nature' Ch. 5 in *The Blackwell Guide to Philosophy of Mind* (2007) - selections

VII. Material Objects and their Properties – Existence, Persistence (2 lectures)

- CarMa Ch. 8 & 9 (selections)
- Quine, 'On What There Is' Ch. 1 in Kim, J. and E. Sosa (eds.) *Metaphysics. An Anthology*. Blackwell, 2004. Pp. 4-13.
- Russell, B. 'Existence and Description' Ch. 3 in Kim, J. and E. Sosa (eds.) *Metaphysics. An Anthology*. Blackwell, 2004. Pp. 23-36. [R]

VIII. Current views on space, time and matter (1 lecture)

- Handout

IX. Recap. Q&A