

PI7104 | Metaphysics

Credits:	10 ECTS
Semester:	Michaelmas Term
Contact Hours:	22 hours
Prerequisites	N/A
Instructors:	Alison Fernandes
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Room:	5005 (Arts Block)
Office Hours:	By appointment

Module Outline:

In this module, students will explore contemporary issues in metaphysics, with a view to developing their own ideas about the nature and purpose of metaphysics. Metaphysics presents itself as the study of the fundamental nature of the world.

It promises to provide a guide to reality at its most objective and deepest. Yet debate over particular topics in metaphysics often involves quite different appeals to science, experience, intuition and explanation.

In this module, we'll examine metaphysical debates about scientific modalities (law, causation, chance), consider what standards are driving these debates, and in what sense these debates are substantive. We'll explore a range of positions, including 'deflationary' positions that take metaphysical debates to be non-substantive, and competing visions of what metaphysics is supposed to be.

Learning Outcomes:

The aim of this module is to provide students with subject specific knowledge and to equip them with the necessary skills for independent research. On successful completion of this module, students will be able to:

- Analyse and evaluate contemporary debates in metaphysics.
- Develop arguments concerning the role and purpose of metaphysics.
- Present their ideas in a clear and rigorous way both orally and in writing.
- Produce independent research that engages with contemporary literature and demonstrates original thinking on metaphysical issues.

Reading List:

See Blackboard

Course Requirements:

Students are required to complete a presentation (20% of overall mark) and an essay (80% of overall mark).

The essay has a word limit of 3000 words. Topics are to be agreed with me in advance.

The presentation schedule will be set at the first meeting. Presentations are to be 10-12 minutes long. Students are required to explain the most important arguments and claims of the relevant text and raise 1–3 additional original points for further discussion. Written presentation material (such as a handout or slides) that is viewable by the whole audience must be submitted at the time of the presentation. Presentations may cover the same topics as the essay.