

PIU44041 and PIU44043 | Metaphysics

Credits:	PIU44041 (10 ECTS); PIU44043 (5 ECTS)
Contact Hours:	22 (11 x 2-hour seminars)
Pre-requisite:	None
Semester:	1
Module Leader and Lecturer	Professor John Divers
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Module Outline:

The metaphysical concern with being, at its most general, naturally includes questions of what there *is* and how things *are*. But what of the modal questions? What things *could there have been*? How might things have been? Are there some matters that *must be* so? Modal realists hold that modality is real: a full account of the world includes modal facts. Modal antirealists reject that view: whatever our modal thought is doing it is not representing modal features of reality.

Against some historical background, we investigate the debate between modal realists and their opponents as it has developed over the last 100 years, from the time of logical positivism to the present day. The central narrative will be built around the modal antirealist, Quine, and responses to his work.

Learning Outcomes

On successful completion of this module, students will be able to:

- Understand the main positions of modal realism and modal anti-realism
- Construct arguments for metaphysical views they wish to defend and criticize arguments for metaphysical views they wish to reject.
- Take an informed view of where they stand on the question of modal realism

Recommended Reading List

An extensive and detailed reading list will be made available at the start of the module. But among the essential readings for the early weeks of the course will be

Quine, W.V.O (1948). On What There Is. *Review of Metaphysics* 2, pp.21-38.
Reprinted in *From a Logical Point of View*. Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1–19.

Quine, W.V.O (1951). Two Dogmas of Empiricism, *Philosophical Review* 60.
Reprinted in *From a Logical point of View*, Cambridge MA, Harvard University Press (1953, 20-46)

These articles (in pdf format) are easily sourced online.

Assessment:

1 Essay (end of module) 50%: 1 Examination (end of module) 50%