

PIP88041 — Metaphysics

Module Information	
Module Code	PIP88041
Module Title	Metaphysics
Department	Philosophy
Module Personnel	Jade Hadley
Academic Year	2026-27
Credit Weighting	10
Semester	1
Contact Hours	22

Module Content	
Module Description	The Principle of Sufficient Reason (PSR) states that for every fact, F, there is (or must be) a sufficient reason why F, rather than $\sim F$, is true. In effect, it is the demand that every fact have an <i>explanation</i>. While often implicit in ancient and medieval thought, it was during the early modern period that the PSR was explicitly formulated and utilized as a foundational principle of metaphysical theorizing. After falling out of favour in the 19th and 20th centuries, the PSR has seen a resurgence of interest among contemporary metaphysicians. This course considers the PSR through both a historical and a contemporary lens. We will see the ways in which the PSR heavily influenced the trajectory of the history of philosophy, while also assessing its modern legacy—specifically how the PSR intersects with live debates in contemporary metaphysics, including the nature of grounding and fundamentality.
Module Learning Aims	This module will offer an overview of the historical legacy and contemporary significance of the Principle of Sufficient Reason (PSR).
Learning Outcomes	Students will become familiar with how historical figures (like Spinoza, Leibniz and Du Châtelet) understood the PSR, as well as how the principle is treated in a contemporary setting (by

Module Content

	philosophers such as Della Rocca). Students will develop the skills to critically engage with both classic and contemporary texts, and to effectively communicate their own ideas both in discussion and writing.
Indicative Reading / Resources	Readings will be made available at the start of term. In the meantime, the following provides an excellent starting point: Melamed, Yitzhak Y. and Martin Lin, "Principle of Sufficient Reason", <i>The Stanford Encyclopedia of Philosophy</i> (Summer 2023 Edition), Edward N. Zalta & Uri Nodelman (eds.), URL = https://plato.stanford.edu/archives/sum2023/entries/sufficient-reason/ .

Assessment

Assessment Components	1 essay (100%)
Assessment Details	- 3,000-4,000-word essay. Students may write on a topic of their choice, but the topic must be agreed with me in advance.

Additional Information

Prerequisites	None
Co-requisites	None
Any other information	