

Spring 2022
Metaphysics
Philosophy 310—01

Professor:

Charles Joshua Horn, Ph.D.

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Office Location: CCC 418

Office Hours: Monday, Wednesday, 1:30pm—2:00pm; Friday, 10:00am—11:00am; By Appointment

Zoom Office Hours: Tuesday, 9:30am—10:30am; By Appointment

<http://charlesjhorn.webstarts.com/index.html>

Class Information:

Class Time: CCC 9:30am—10:45am

Class Location: CCC 126

Course Description:

Metaphysics is the study of the ultimate nature of reality. Broadly speaking, metaphysicians address questions about what exists and its nature, including God, consciousness, free will, identity, possibility, causation, space and time, and ontology, just to name a few. Rather than try to offer a broad overview of topics that sacrifice depth for breadth, we will focus our attention in this class on just a few of these topics. In particular, the course will be divided into sections focusing on four different sets of puzzles: (a) Identity and Change, (b) Necessity, Essence, and Possible Worlds, (c) Causation and Conditionals, (d) Free Will.

Although the class will focus on issues in contemporary metaphysics, the issues will be placed in a historical framework. Some of the questions to be examined in this course will be:

1. How can something persist through time and remain the same thing?
2. Do temporal parts exist in addition to spatial parts?
3. How are the causal relata? Events, agents, or something else?
4. What is the difference between a regularity and counterfactual account of causation?
5. What does it mean to say that something *could have happened*?
6. What are the different accounts of possible worlds?
7. What is free will?
8. Is free will consistent with a deterministic conception of the universe?

Text:

Rental:

1. E.J. Lowe, *A Survey of Metaphysics*
Oxford University Press
ISBN: 9780198752530
1. Robert Kane, *A Contemporary Introduction to Free Will*
Oxford University Press
ISBN: 978-0195149708

Course Goals:

By carefully examining some of the deepest metaphysical issues related to the nature of identity, causation, modality, and free will students will gain a deeper appreciation and understanding of themselves and the world of which they live.

Expectations:

Students are expected to check into Canvas daily in order to check for class announcements, complete assignments, use the discussion board, etc. Students are expected to attend every class and remain for the entire time. Do not come late or leave early. Students must complete the necessary readings prior to class and be prepared for discussion and participation. Students will treat other students with respect. This means, turning off all electrical equipment, including cell phones, laptops, and tablets. Students must also address their peers in a respectful tone. It is important to note that the nature of this class will inevitably result in disagreements among colleagues; however, it is essential to maintain respect toward one another despite disagreement.

Face Coverings: At all UW-Stevens Point campus locations, the wearing of face coverings is mandatory in all buildings, including classrooms, laboratories, studios, and other instructional spaces. Any student with a condition that impacts their use of a face covering should contact the [Disability and Assistive Technology Center](#) to discuss accommodations in classes. Please note that unless everyone is wearing a face covering, in-person classes cannot take place. This is university policy and not up to the discretion of individual instructors. Failure to adhere to this requirement could result in formal withdrawal from the course.

Other Guidance: Please monitor your own health each day using [this screening tool](#). If you are not feeling well or believe you have been exposed to COVID-19, do not come to class; email your instructor and contact Student Health Service (715-346-4646). As with any type of absence, students are expected to communicate their need to be absent and complete the course requirements as outlined in the syllabus.

- Maintain a minimum of 6 feet of physical distance from others whenever possible.
- Do not congregate in groups before or after class; stagger your arrival and departure from the classroom, lab, or meeting room.
- Wash your hands or use appropriate hand sanitizer regularly and avoid touching your face.
- Please maintain these same healthy practices outside the classroom.

Grading Criteria:

Canvas will automatically calculate and update grades as the semester progresses. To calculate your grade, take your score in the “Total” column on Canvas and divide by 100. Then use the scale below. The goal for the class is to try to earn as many points as possible. Any points earned over these 100 points will count as extra credit. Assignments can be made up beyond the due dates for both unexcused and excused absences. For unexcused absences, a late penalty may be imposed. Late work must be complete within one week of the assignment due date.

1. Four Exams: 80 Points Total
 - a. Exams will be constituted by short answer questions.
2. One Class Introduction: 20 Points Total
 - a. Each student must individually introduce a reading from the course schedule. Each presentation should last around 10-15 minutes. The presentation is *not* a summary of the material. Instead, it is a way to offer your own analysis about the reading. Presentations will be chosen on the first day of class.
3. One “Philosophy at UWSP” Bonus Quiz 5 Points Total
 - a. There will be a short quiz on the advantages of studying philosophy at UWSP!

“Pass” Range			“Fail” Range	
(70—100 Points)			(<70 Points)	
“A” Range	“B” Range	“C” Range	“D” Range	“F” Range
	B+ (87—89)	C+ (77—79)	D+ (67—69)	F (<60)
A (94—100)	B (84—86)	C (74—76)	D (60—66)	
A- (90—93)	B- (80—83)	C- (70—73)		

Academic Integrity:

Cheating, fabrication, plagiarism or helping others to commit these acts will not be tolerated. Academic dishonesty will result in severe disciplinary action including, but not limited to, failure of the student assessment item or course, and/or dismissal from the University. Additional information can be found at:

<http://www.uwsp.edu/stuaffairs/Documents/RightsRespons/SRR-2010/rightsChap14.pdf>

Disability Information:

Students with disabilities should register with the ADA coordinator on campus and let me know at the beginning of the semester. I would be happy to accommodate you in any way that I can. Just let me know. More information can be found at:

<http://www.uwsp.edu/stuaffairs/Documents/RightsRespons/ADA/rightsADAPolicyInfo.pdf>

Course Schedule:

UNIT I: IDENTITY AND CHANGE

Week 1	(January 23—January 29)	
January 24	Course Introduction; What is Metaphysics?	
January 26	Lowe, Ch. 2: Identity over Time and Change of Composition	23—40
Week 2	(January 30—February 5)	
January 31	Lowe, Ch. 2: Identity over Time and Change of Composition	23—40
February 2	Lowe, Ch. 3: Qualitative Change and the Doctrine of Temporal Parts	41—58
Week 3	(February 6—February 12)	
February 7	Lowe, Ch. 3: Qualitative Change and the Doctrine of Temporal Parts	41—58
February 9	Lowe, Ch. 4: Substantial Change and Spatiotemporal Coincidence	59—76
Week 4	(February 13—February 19)	
February 14	Lowe, Ch. 4: Substantial Change and Spatiotemporal Coincidence	59—76
February 16	Exam I	
Online Tasks	Exam I	

UNIT II: NECESSITY, ESSENCE, AND POSSIBLE WORLDS

Week 5	(February 20—February 26)	
February 21	Lowe, Ch. 5: Necessity and Identity	79—95
February 23	Lowe, Ch. 5: Necessity and Identity	79—95
Week 6	(February 27—March 5)	
February 28	Lowe, Ch. 6: Essentialism	96—114
March 2	Lowe, Ch. 6: Essentialism	96—114
Week 7	(March 6—March 12)	
March 7	Lowe, Ch. 7: Possible Worlds	115--136
March 9	Lowe, Ch. 7: Possible Worlds	115--136
Week 8	(March 13—March 19)	
March 14	Van Inwagen, “Two Concepts of Possible Worlds” Adams, “Theories of Actuality”	Canvas Canvas
March 16	Exam II	
Online Tasks	Exam II	
Week 9	(March 20—March 26)	
	Spring Break	

UNIT III: CAUSATION AND CONDITIONALS

Week 10	(March 27—April 2)	
March 28	Lowe, Ch. 8: Counterfactual Conditionals	137—154
March 30	Lowe, Ch. 8: Counterfactual Conditionals	137—154
Week 11	(April 3—April 9)	
April 4	Lowe, Ch. 9: Causes and Conditions	155—173
April 6	Lowe, Ch. 9: Causes and Conditions	155—173
Week 12	(April 10—April 16)	
April 11	Lowe, Ch. 10: Counterfactuals and Event Causation	174—191
April 13	Lowe, Ch. 10: Counterfactuals and Event Causation	174—191
Week 13	(April 17—April 23)	
April 18	Makeup Day	
April 20	Exam III	
Online Tasks	Exam III	

UNIT IV: FREE WILL

Week 14	(April 24—April 30)	
April 25	Kane, Ch. 1: The Free Will Problem	1—11
April 27	Kane, Ch. 2: Compatibilism	12—22
Week 15	(May 1—May 7)	
May 2	Kane, Ch. 3: Incompatibilism	23—31
May 4	Kane, Ch. 4: Libertarianism, Indeterminism, and Chance	32—39
Week 16	(May 8—May 14)	
May 9	Kane, Ch. 5: Minds, Selves, and Agent Causes	40—52
May 11	Kane, Ch. 6: Actions, Reasons, and Causes	53—66
	Kane, Ch. 7: Is Free Will Possible?	
	Hard Determinists and Other Skeptics	67—79
Online Tasks	Philosophy at UWSP Extra Credit Quiz	

FINALS WEEK

Week 17	(May 15—May 21)	
	Final Exam—Complete on Canvas (Wednesday 5/18/22, 8:00am—10:00am)	