

Nonfundamental Metaphysics

PHIL490/500 (AO1)

Metaphysics is often described as “the study of ultimate reality”, where “reality” contrasts with “appearance” and “ultimate” suggests a foundation from which all the appearances derive. This explains the prominence in the recent literature of “foundational metaphysics” and its fixation on the fundamental. And yet reality does not at first present itself to us via the fundamental, but rather via nonfundamental appearances of ordinary objects, artifacts, social phenomena, and the like. This seminar focuses on the metaphysics of nonfundamental items like these.

OUTCOMES	Improve philosophical skills (RUBRIC) with training on current metaphysical topics. ↳ Fulfills unit requirement for the Philosophy Major Program .
PREREQUISITES	PHIL203 (or equivalent) and 3 units of philosophy, or permission.
INSTRUCTION	Wednesday 2:30-5:20PM 🏢 CLE B315 FACE-TO-FACE
INSTRUCTOR	Professor Mike Raven (raven@uvic.ca • raven.site) 🏢 OFFICE HOURS • Wednesday 12:00-1:30PM CLE B323 (or by appointment)
LMS	bright.uvic.ca/d2l/home/392575 (Consult for updates and current course documents.)
TEXTS	📖 N/A

EVALUATION

GRADES	Completing all essential work (▶) completes the course. Omitting essential work earns a failing N course grade. Grades earned are assessed for craftsmanship (RUBRIC).		
WORK	▶ INTEGRITY	Integrity in Practice	DUE: LMS; ▶INT on SCHEDULE
	▶ TERM PAPER [1/2]	Essay assignment	DUE: LMS; ▶TP on SCHEDULE
	▷ CHECKPOINTS [1/3]	Best 8 of 11 submissions	DUE: in class; ✓ on SCHEDULE
	▷ ENGAGEMENT [1/6]	Weekly forum contribution: ≥6 posts and ≥6 replies for the term.	
GRACE POINTS	A grace point delays the due date of an essential work by 1 day. Each student begins with 5 grace points. These may be used in any combination without justification, but cannot be reused or traded. To use, state the number used when submitting your work.		
LATENESS	Submissions are penalized 5% per day past the due date. Submissions received after 5 days past the original due date become pass(50)/fail(49) and are not entitled to feedback.		

POLICIES

RESPECT	Enrolling binds you to a social contract with your instructor and classmates. Create a respectful, inclusive, and productive learning environment . Don't bully or distract others. Use devices only for class purposes. No guests without instructor's permission.
PREPARE	Know course documents. Read texts before class. Budget time for email replies.
ENGAGE	Class attendance is expected . Use office hours and tutorials.
INTEGRITY	Know UVic's academic integrity policies. GenAI is prohibited (unless explicitly allowed).
PLANS	Academic concessions must be by official request. Accommodation of religious observance must be in advance. Inform instructor of CAL plans (these are not blanket extensions and do not replace grace points, concessions, or other accommodations).
PRIVACY	Classes are not recorded/streamed. No unauthorized recording/streaming.
COPYRIGHT	Course content/materials are protected by copyright law .
INFO	Information for all students student conduct non-academic student misconduct equity and human rights sexualized violence discrimination and harassment
RESOURCES	Learn Anywhere Student Wellness IACE Ombudsperson

SCHEDULE

Required texts (•) must be read *before* each class. **Optional texts** (◻) are also most usefully read *before* each class.
Dates are tentative; consult LMS for updates. See www.uvic.ca/calendar/dates/ for important dates (last add/drop dates).

SOCIAL CONSTRUCTION		
JAN 8		• Schaffer, “On What Grounds What” • Barnes, “Going Beyond the Fundamental: Feminism in Contemporary Metaphysics” ◻ Raven, “Introduction”, <i>The Routledge Handbook of Metaphysical Grounding</i>
JAN 15	✓01	• Schaffer, “Social Construction as Grounding; or: Fundamentality for Feminists, a Reply to Barnes and Mikkola” ◻ Griffith, “Social Construction”
JAN 22	✓02	• Pagano, “Being Social, Being Socially Constructed, and Being Fundamental Relative to Social Reality”
JAN 26	►INT	
SOCIAL OBJECTS		
JAN 29	✓03	• Korman, “The Metaphysics of Establishments” • Ritchie, “Social Structures and the Ontology of Social Groups” ◻ Raven, “Physicalism and its Challenges for Social Ontology”
FEB 5	✓04	• Passinsky, “Norm and Object: A Normative Hylomorphic Theory of Social Objects”
ARTIFACTS		
FEB 12	✓05	• Thomasson, “Artifacts in Metaphysics” • Evnine, “The Historicity of Artifacts: Use and Counter-Use” ◻ Passinsky, “Artifacts, Artworks, and Social Objects”
FEB 26	✓06	• Koslicki, “Artifacts and the Limits of Agentive Authority”
MAR 5	✓07	• Raven, “Dynamics of Artifacts”
SOCIAL MODALITY		
MAR 12	✓08	• Passinsky, “Social Kind Essentialism” ◻ Koslicki & Raven, “Introduction”, <i>The Routledge Handbook of Essence in Philosophy</i> ◻ Raven, “A Puzzle for Social Essences”
MAR 19	✓09	• Barnes, <i>The Minority Body</i> , §1.5.4 • Epstein, <i>The Ant Trap</i> , chapter 6 • Raven, “Etic Theorizing Unanchored”
MAR 26	✓10	• Einheuser, “Counterconventional Conditionals”
SIDE QUESTS		
MAR 28	✓11	???
		(NEW ROOM: CLE C316)
APR 9	►TP	