

Philosophy 541: Topics in Metaphysics

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Topics

- Personal Identity
- Freedom and Determinism
- Time
- Mereology
- Lynne Rudder Baker, *The Metaphysics of Everyday Life*
- Kathrin Koslicki, *The Structure of Objects*

Required Texts

- Theodore Sider, John Hawthorne, and Dean W. Zimmerman (eds.), *Contemporary Debates in Metaphysics* (Blackwell, 2008).
- Meghan Sullivan, "The Minimal A-theory," *Philosophical Studies* **158** (2012), pp. 149-174.
- L.A. Paul, "Logical Parts," *Nous* **36** (2002), pp. 578-596.
- Lynn Rudder Baker, *The Metaphysics of Everyday Life* (Cambridge University Press, 2009).
- Kathrin Koslicki, *The Structure of Objects* (Oxford University Press, 2010).

Recommended Texts

- John W. Carroll and Ned Markosian, *An Introduction to Metaphysics* (Cambridge University Press, 2010).
- Rebecca Copenhaver, [Reid on Memory and Personal Identity](#) (SEP article).
- Kadri Vihvelin, [Arguments for Incompatibilism](#) (SEP article).
- Linda Wetzel, [Types and Tokens](#) (SEP article).

Course Requirements

- **Midterm Exam** – a take-home exam, to be turned in electronically (PDFs only) by Oct. 11th at 5:00 PM (worth 40% of final grade)
 - Four 4-page essays (for undergrads, 3-page essays are okay), one on each of our first four topics
 - Normal fonts and margins (around 300-400 words/page)
 - Approximately two thirds of each essay should consist of summarizing the relevant issue and spelling out the views of the authors we have read, and approximately one third of each essay should consist of telling the truth about these issues
 - Think "presidential briefing"

- **Final Exam** – a take-home exam, to be turned in electronically (PDFs only) by Dec. 13th at 5:00 PM (worth 60% of final grade)
 - Two 12-page essays (for undergrads, 8-page essays are okay), one on Baker, one on Koslicki
 - Normal fonts and margins (around 300-400 words/page)
 - Approximately one half of each essay should consist of carefully spelling out the views of the relevant author, and approximately one half should consist of a critical evaluation of those views
 - Think “critical essay”

Policy on Late Exams

After 5:00 PM on the due date, an exam is considered one day late, until 5:00 PM the following day, when it is considered two days late, and so on. The penalty for late exams is one full letter grade (for example, from an A- to a B-) per day.

Required Readings

- **Personal Identity:** Judith Jarvis Thomson, “Persons and Bodies” [CDM]; Derek Parfit, “Persons, Bodies, and Human Beings” [CDM]
- **Freedom and Determinism:** Robert Kane, “Incompatibilism” [CDM]; Kadri Vihvelin, “Compatibilism, Incompatibilism, and Impossibilism” [CDM]
- **Time:** Dean Zimmerman, “The Privileged Present: Defending an “A-Theory” of Time” [CDM]; J.J.C. Smart, “The Tenseless Theory of Time” [CDM]; Meghan Sullivan, “The Minimal A-theory”
- **Mereology:** James Van Cleve, “The Moon and Sixpence: A Defense of Mereological Universalism” [CDM]; Ned Markosian, “Restricted Composition” [CDM]; L.A. Paul, “Logical Parts”
- **Baker:** Chapters 1-11.
- **Koslicki:** Chapters I-IV, VII-IX.

Schedule

Sep	10	Course intro
	17	Personal Identity
	24	Freedom and Determinism
Oct	1	Time
	8	Mereology
	11	Midterm exams due at 5:00 PM
	15	Baker, Chapters 1-4
	22	Baker, Chapters 5-7
Nov	29	No class
	5	Baker, Chapters 8-11
	12	Koslicki, Chapters I-III
	19	Koslicki, Chapter IV
	26	No class
Dec	3	Koslicki, Chapters VII-IX
	10	Course wrap-up
	13	Final exams due at 5:00 PM