CONTEMPORARY METAPHYSICS: METAPHYSICS AND SCIENCE
PHILOSOPHY 8030

Fall 2014

I.	**PROF. POLGER**

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Office Hours: open door and by appointment   (fax) 556.2939

II.	**LOCATION & TIME**

210 McMicken Hall   Weds, 2:00-4:50

III.	**COURSE OBJECTIVES**

The objective of this course is to familiarize graduate students with important recent work in metaphysics, particularly as it relates to the ontology of the sciences. Topics include properties, causation, laws, dispositions, and dependence or grounding.

IV.	**TEXTS**

There are four required books, some of which are available in PDF via Blackboard or via the UC Library:

(1) David M. Armstrong, *Universals: An Opinionated Introduction*, Westview Press, 1989

(2) Stephen Mumford and Matthew Tugby (eds.), *Metaphysics and Science*, Oxford University Press, 2013

(3) L. A. Paul and Ned Hall, *Causation: A User's Guide*, Oxford University Press, 2013

(4) Karen Bennett, *Making Things Up*, Oxford University Press, author's manuscript

I will also be assigning some chapters from this collection:

(5) Ernest Sosa and Michael Tooley (eds.), *Causation*, Oxford University Press, 1993

V.	**ASSIGNMENTS**

There will be two kinds of assignments for this class:

A. Final Papers. All students will prepare a paper written according to American Philosophical Association (APA) Eastern Division submission standards (online). The most crucial bit of information about the format is that the *approximate* and *maximum* length is 3,000 words (approximately 10-12 typed double-spaced pages.) I will provide suggestions and guidelines for paper structures and topics, but the topic must be distinct from your presentation topic.

Graduate students beyond their first year may propose to write a paper of 4,000-6,000 words, or a co-authored paper (with another advanced student in the class) of 7,000-9,000 words. (I do not

promise to accept all proposals.) The details of such a paper will be negotiated with me on a case by case basis.

B. Presentations. Presentation assignments will be made in class, and in advance. Students will each make three presentations to the class. For the first two presentations, presenters will teach the class about the article of chapter. This should include: (a) a concise overview of the reading assigned for presentation that is informed by the other required and non-required readings, and outside literature as necessary; (b) identification of the strengths and weaknesses of the author's argument(s); (c) evluation of the most useful and most problematic parts of the article or chapter.

For the third presentation, presenters should make the overview especially concise and focus on delineating the useful and problematic portions of the text, and using those insights to draw connections to other work and develop orginal ideas.

Every presentation should be accompanied by a handout of no more than three single-sided pages. (You should accomplish this by efficiency, not by using 6 point font. You can copy them two-sided; the point is that the total should not be more than three sides.) Powerpoint slides will not be permitted for this purpose. You will be graded on your presentation style as well as content.

If, in preparing for your presentations, you discover that some reading other than but related to the one assigned (e.g., by the same author, commenting on the assigned reading, recently published on the same topic) is better or more appropriate, you may suggest that we change the assigned reading. For best effect, you should suggest this more than a week in advance so that other students have time to read the thing(s) you suggest.

Late assignments will be penalized at a rate of 30% per calendar day, starting the moment that the assignment is due.

V. GRADES

Grades for this class will be based on four factors. These will contribute to the final grade as follows:

Presentation 1	10%
Presentation 2	10%
Presentation 3	15%
Paper	65%

In addition there is an expectation of class participation which may modulate your final grade by as much as one increment from its computed value, e.g., turn either a B+ or an A into an A-.

Attendance is mandatory. If you miss two meetings, your final grade will be penalized 20%. If you miss three meetings, then unless you can document extraordinary circumstances you will fail the class if you do not withdraw.

VI.   **THE FINE PRINT**

You are responsible for knowing and following all University and College regulations, for example with respect to registration, drop or withdrawal, and grading status. It goes without saying, but we will nevertheless, that this course will be conducted according to the University's Student Code of Conduct. Any student who is academically dishonest will *at least* fail the course; further actions may be taken. Please familiarize yourself with the University's guidelines on academic integrity, online at <http://www.uc.edu/studentlife/conduct/guide.html>.

Any student who, because of a disabling condition, needs special arrangements to meet course requirements must contact us *immediately* so that the appropriate arrangements can be made. (All disabilities must be documented with the University and us.)

Any student who requires accommodation for religious observances must notify the instructor in advance.

You are expected to show respect for your classmates and the instructors. This means that you will turn off telephones before class, and only use laptop computers and other electronic devices for class-related activities. Checking email, sending and receiving text messages, and listening to music are not among the permitted class-related activities.

The readings and schedule are subject to change. You should expect to be treated with respect and fairness by the instructor and by your classmates.

Contemporary Metaphysics: Metaphysics of Science

Autumn 2014

1. Aug 27.   David Lewis, New Work for a Theory of Universals, pp. 343-370
Mumford and Tugby, Metaphysics and Science, Introduction

2. Sept 3.   David Armstrong, Universals, chs. I-3

3. Sept 10.   David Armstrong, Universals, chs. 4-6

4. Sept 17.   Metaphysics and Science, Part III: Natural Kinds
Helen Beebee, Emma Tobin, L. A. Paul

5. Sept 24.   Metaphysics and Science, Part I: Laws
John Roberts, Jim Woodward, Marc Lange

6. Oct 1   Ernest Sosa and Michael Tooley, Causation, Introduction
J. L. Mackie, Causes and Conditions
Michael Scriven, Defects of the Necessary Condition Analysis of Causation
Jaegwon Kim, Causes and Effects: Mackie on Causation

7. Oct 8.   L. A. Paul and Ned Hall, Causation, chs. 1-2

8. Oct 15.   L. A. Paul and Ned Hall, Causation, chs. 3-4

9. Oct 22.   L. A. Paul and Ned Hall, Causation, chs. 5-6

10. Oct 29.   Metaphysics and Science, Part II: Dispositions and Causes
Andreas Hütteman, Jennifer McKitrick

11. Nov 5.   Karen Bennett, Making Things Up, chs. 1-3
PSA starts on Nov 6

12. Nov 12.   Karen Bennett, Making Things Up, chs. 4-5

13. Nov 19   Karen Bennett, Making Things Up, chs. 6-7
This meeting will be rescheduled for an alternative time

14. Nov 26   No Class

15. Dec 3   Metaphysics and Science, Part IV: Emergence
Jessica Wilson
This meeting will be rescheduled for an alternative time