



UNIVERSITY OF  
CALGARY

FACULTY OF ARTS  
DEPARTMENT OF PHILOSOPHY

**PHIL 623.5 Lec 01**  
**Topics in Metaphysics (Scientific Metaphysics)**  
**Fall Term 2015**

**Wednesdays 12:00-2:45 pm in SS 1253**

**Course Outline**

***Instructor:*** Ken Waters  
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***Course Description***

The topic of this seminar is metaphysical inquiry informed by science. The seminar is organized into three parts. The first part will be devoted to introductory readings on scientific metaphysics. These readings will provide overviews of naturalistic metaphysics, accounts of how metaphysics might be informed by science, and discussions of the relationship between philosophy of science and metaphysics. The contents of the rest of the seminar will be set by student research projects. Students will identify their own topics during this part of the seminar. In the second part, students will present their topics and select readings for the class to read and discuss. In the third part of the course, students will read and discuss drafts of one another's research papers.

***Course Work***

**Written Preparations for Each Class**

One paragraph descriptions of a question that could be discussed in class. The question may be remedial, seeking an account of an important claim or argument in the reading that you could not follow. Or the question could be more critical in nature, alluding to a weakness in the reading. Or the question could be probing, identifying an issue that is raised by the reading or a possible implication of the reading. Your description should both describe the question and briefly explain why it is an important question.

### Topic Identification

A two page description of the topic you plan to research and write a paper on in this seminar. You should both describe the topic and explain why it would be a promising topic to work on. On a third page, provide a bibliography of at least three sources. For each source, add a sentence or two explaining why it is a good source for the topic.

### Research Proposal

A four or five page presentation of your research plan (not counting references). Your plan should identify your research question or problem, explain why it is important, and explain how you intend to address it. You should organize your proposal in two parts. The first part should explain and motivate the focus of your research by answering these questions: (i) What is the general topic area? (ii) What are the main views on the topic? (iii) What question or problem in this topic area will be the focus of your attention? The second part of the proposal should contain a section-by-section outline of how you plan to construct your research paper. Dedicate a paragraph describing each section of the proposed paper. This outline will serve as your research plan. It is just a tentative plan. The proposal should be no more than 5 pages long. At least 3 pages should be devoted to the first part of the proposal. The proposal must include references.

### Research Paper

The word maximum is 5,000 words (including footnotes, excluding references and any diagram notation). You are required to submit a rough draft as well as a final draft.

### Introduction and Discussion Leader for a Foundational Reading

The aim of presentations is to stimulate subsequent discussion, not to provide a summary of the contents of the reading. You should draw attention to what you think are the most provocative ideas, lines of reasoning, and arguments in the selection. Your presentation should motivate questions that we can discuss. You should conclude your presentation with those questions.

### Introduction and Discussion Leader for a Student-selected Reading

The aim of presentations is to explain the significance of the reading for your project and stimulate subsequent discussion, not to provide a summary of the contents of the reading. You should draw attention to what you think are the most provocative ideas, lines of reasoning, and arguments in the selection relevant to your research problem.

### ***Due Dates and Grading***

***Important note: there is a reading and written preparation due on the first class (September 9).***

No late assignments will be accepted without an appropriate excuse.

No registrar scheduled final will be given.

<b>Assignment</b>	<b>Due date</b>	<b>Points</b>
12 written preparations for class	Beginning of each class	12 points (1 apiece)

Topic Identification	Group A: Sept 30 Group B: Oct 7	10 points
Research Proposal	Group A: Oct 21 Group B: Oct 28	28 points
Rough Draft Research Paper point	Group A: Nov 1 Group B: Nov 13	Required, but no value
Final Research Paper	December 14	45 points
Intro to Foundational Reading	To be assigned	5 points
Intro to Student-selected Reading	To be assigned	Required, but no point value

Final grades will be awarded as follows

96-100 = A+	75-79 = B	55-59 = C-
90-95 = A	70-74 = B-	50-54 = D+
85-89 = A-	65-69 = C+	45-49 = D
80-84 = B+	60-64 = C	below 45 = F

**Readings**

Readings will be available on-line. There are no texts to purchase for this course.

The reading for the first class, September 9<sup>th</sup>, is Kincaid, Harold (2013) "Introduction: Pursuing a Naturalist Metaphysics" in *Scientific Metaphysics*, ed. Don Ross, James Ladyman, Harold Kincaid, 1 – 19. Cambridge, MA: MIT Press.

Subsequent readings will be announced throughout the semester.

**Course Schedule**

The first four classes (September 9, 16, 23, and 30) will be devoted to reading and discussing foundational readings on scientific metaphysics. The second four or five classes (October 7, 14, 21, 28, November 4) will be devoted to discussing student topic areas and readings related to these topic areas. The final three or four classes (November 4, 18, 25, December 2) will be devoted to discussing drafts of student research papers.

**Style and Citation Requirements**

All written work for this course should be submitted as hard copies and adhere to the formatting requirements of the journal *Philosophy of Science* with three exceptions:

1. Please put your name on the upper right corner of the first page of everything you turn in.
2. Include page numbers at the bottom of each page of any multipage submission.
3. You do not need to include an abstract for any assignment other than the rough and final drafts of the term paper.

The formatting requirements of *Philosophy of Science* can be found at:

<http://journal.philsci.org/formatting-guidelines>

### **Academic Honesty**

Cheating or plagiarism on any assignment or examination is regarded as an extremely serious academic offence, the penalty for which may be an F on the assignment, an F in the course, academic probation, or requirement to withdraw from the University. See the relevant sections on 'Academic Misconduct' in the current University Calendar. Intellectual honesty requires that your work include adequate referencing to sources. Plagiarism occurs when you do not acknowledge or correctly reference your sources. If you have questions about correct referencing, consult your instructor.

### **Academic Accommodation**

Students seeking an accommodation based on disability or medical concerns should contact Student Accessibility Services. SAS will process the request and issue letters of accommodation to instructors. For more information on support services and accommodations for students with disabilities, visit <http://www.ucalgary.ca/access/>. Students who require accommodation in relation to their coursework based on a protected ground other than disability should communicate this need in writing to their instructor. The full policy on student accommodations is available at [http://www.ucalgary.ca/policies/files/policies/student-accommodation-policy\\_0.pdf](http://www.ucalgary.ca/policies/files/policies/student-accommodation-policy_0.pdf)

### **D2L Help**

Desire2Learn is the University of Calgary's online learning management system. Go to <http://www.ucalgary.ca/it/services/d2l> for help.

### **Protection of Privacy**

The University of Calgary is under the jurisdiction of the provincial Freedom of Information and Protection of Privacy (FOIP) Act. The Department of Philosophy ensures the student's right to privacy by requiring all graded assignments be returned to the student directly from the instructor or teaching assistant.

### **Safewalk**

Call 403-220-5333 (24/7/365) for a Safewalk volunteer to accompany you safely to your destination on campus including parking lots, housing, and the LRT station or use a Campus Help Phone.