



FACULTY OF ARTS  
DEPARTMENT OF PHILOSOPHY

**PHIL 667.5 Lec 60 – Topics in Philosophy of Science:  
“Fundamentality in Physics and Metaphysics”**

**Summer Term 2013**

**Course Outline**

**Seminars: Monday and Wednesday 10am-1245pm in SS 1253**

Instructor: Kerry McKenzie (Sponsor: Marc Ereshefsky)  
Office: SS 1214  
Phone: 403-220-3163  
Email: [kerry.mckenzie@ucalgary.ca](mailto:kerry.mckenzie@ucalgary.ca)  
Office Hours: 4-5pm Monday and Wednesday (or by appointment)

***Course Description***

This course focuses on some central questions in the metaphysics of fundamentality. In particular, we will consider the following three themes. (1) In virtue of what is something more fundamental than something else? (2) What, if anything, is fundamental in this world? (3) How do scientific and armchair approaches to these questions interact?

***Required Texts***

There is no required text for this course. Rather, I will be distributing (in class and / or on Blackboard) journal articles and book excerpts, as well as detailed handouts giving background where appropriate.

***Evaluation and Grading***

You will be required to fulfill four tasks to pass the course. There is no Registrar-scheduled final exam for this course.

Presentation of Reading. You will introduce the set reading for the class on two or perhaps three occasions (depending on numbers). Your aim is to present material that will stimulate class discussion around a central issue. Whether that will involve giving a synopsis of the reading will depend on the article, but do so where appropriate.

Critical Summaries. You will be required to produce a critical summary of some central issues in each of the following areas: (1) The definition of the levels hierarchy; (2) The existence of a fundamental level; (3) Structures vs Objects as the fundamental category; (4) The interplay between science and armchair metaphysics in the fundamentality debate. These should be between 1000 and 1500 words in length. Provide references where appropriate.

Paper proposal. The paper proposal will consist of two parts. The first part will explain and motivate the focus of your research by answering these questions. (1) What is the general topic area? (2) What are the main views on the topic? (3) What will your focus in that area be? The second part of your proposal will give a section-by-section outline of what you propose to write. Devote a paragraph to each section. This proposal will be discussed in detail with me and will serve as your research plan. The proposal should be no more than 1,250 words (approx. 5 pages double-space). Also attach a bibliography. It is perfectly acceptable to use no references other than those provided in class, but you are in no way limited to these. I have some suggested titles for your essay, but you are welcome to write on a topic of your choice **provided** it is cleared with me in advance.

Paper. Your paper should be between 4,000 and 5,000 words. This includes footnotes but not bibliography.

### **Due Dates and Grading**

Presentations		Pass / Fail
Critical Summaries	19 July, 26 July, 6 Aug, 13 Aug.	10 points each (40 total)
Paper Proposal	12 Aug	10 points
Paper	20 Aug	50 points

#### *Late Papers*

No late papers will be accepted without an appropriate excuse or contacting me in advance.

#### *Final Grading Scale*

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

#### *Style requirements*

All critical summaries must be submitted as hard copies (unless arranged with me in advance), 1.5 or double-spaced, with a full bibliography. Final papers must be emailed directly to me. Late papers will be subject to a 5 mark penalty and critical summaries a 1 point penalty, each per calendar day. Any work over the word limit will be returned and subject to a corresponding late penalty.