

Propuesta de curso

1. Nombre del profesor: Dr Simon Thunder

2. Nombre del curso: Topics in Contemporary Analytic Metaphysics

3. Campos de conocimiento en los que podría ser anunciado (máximo dos):

Metafísica y Ontología

4. Breve descripción del curso (temas y objetivos):

This course will be run primarily in English, though students may contribute in class and write their assessments in Spanish

This module will provide an advanced survey of some important and fascinating issues in contemporary analytic metaphysics. Metaphysics, simply put, is the study of the nature of reality. Analytic metaphysics aims to undertake this study in a rigorous way that prioritises clarity and the importance of argument.

Among the sorts of questions that we'll ask in our study of metaphysics in this course are:

- How should we understand time? Does time really flow? Is reality dynamic, or static?
- Do past and future objects that do not exist *now* nevertheless exist (in the same way that Australia does not exist *here* but nevertheless exists)?
- Do properties like *redness* or *wisdom* exist? If so what are they?
- Do mathematical objects like *sets* or *numbers* exist? If so, what are they?
- What is it about reality that makes it true that Joe Biden could have been a Republican but false that Joe Biden could have been a banana?
- Do tables really exist, or are there really only just swarms of sub-atomic particles?
- What does the world have to be like for there to exist money?
- Is a football team something more than just its members?
- What is the relationship between a plurality of things and those things?
- Can sense be made of the idea that reality contains both fundamental and non-fundamental aspects?

We'll consider and critically evaluate various prominent views on the right answers to these sorts of questions, as well as trying to come up with our own answers. Along the way we'll reflect on some of the *tools* of contemporary metaphysics, i.e. some of the considerations that metaphysicians take to count either for or against particular views (e.g. simplicity, fit with intuition, appeal to the sciences, etc.). At the end of the module students will have gained an insight into metaphysical views and arguments concerning a range of topics that are important in contemporary analytic metaphysics, and will have developed a number of important broader philosophical skills.

Objetivo general:

To apply analytic philosophical methods to make progress on questions that are important in contemporary analytic metaphysics.

Objetivos particulares:

To learn about and critically analyse contemporary metaphysical views.

To develop argumentative skills.

To develop skills in reaching well-justified conclusions on metaphysical and ontological questions, in dialogue with contemporary analytic metaphysicians.

Temas:

- Time and Change
- Abstract Objects
- Modality
- The Metaphysics of the Social World
- Composition and Material Constitution
- Simplicity as a Criterion for Theory Choice
- The Metaphysics of Groups
- The Metaphysics of Pluralities
- Fundamental and Non-Fundamental Reality

5. Bibliografía (obligatoria y complementaria):

I'll provide more information nearer the time as to which readings you'll be required to complete for which week, and which of the complementary readings go with which topic. Here, though, is a representative alphabetised list:

Obligatoria:

Bennett, K. (2004) 'Spatio-Temporal Coincidence and the Grounding Problem'
Philosophical Studies 118(3): 339-371

Brogaard (2006) 'Two Modal-isms: Fictionalism and Ersatzism'

Colyvan (2001) Ch 1 'Mathematics and its Applications' in his *The Indispensability of Mathematics*

Effingham (2018) 'Mereological Nominalism' in *Philosophy and Phenomenological Research*

Korman, D. (2020) 'Ordinary Objects' in E. Zalta (ed.) *The Stanford Encyclopedia of Philosophy* <https://plato.stanford.edu/entries/ordinary-objects/>

Korman (2020) 'The Metaphysics of Establishments'

Selections from Lewis, D. (1986) *On the Plurality of Worlds* Oxford: Blackwell

Selections from Loux and Crisp (2017) *Metaphysics: A Contemporary Introduction* 4th edition New York: Routledge

Markosian, N. (2008) 'Restricted Composition' in Hawthorne, Sider, and Zimmerman (eds.) *Contemporary Debates in Metaphysics* Oxford: Blackwell

Miller (2013) 'Presentism, Eternalism, and the Growing Block'

Ritchie (2015) 'The Metaphysics of Social Groups'

Rudder Baker, L. (2008) 'A Metaphysics of Ordinary Things and Why We Need It' *Philosophy* 83: 5-24

Schaffer, J. (2015) 'What Not to Multiply Beyond Necessity' *Australasian Journal of Philosophy*

Selections from Sider, T. (2001) *Four-Dimensionalism* Oxford: OUP

Sider, T. (2007) 'Parthood' *Philosophical Review* 116(1): 51-91

Sider, T. (2013) 'Against Parthood' in Bennett, Zimmerman (eds.) *Oxford Studies in Metaphysics* vol 8: 236-293

Selections from van Inwagen, P. (1990) *Material Beings* Ithaca: Cornell University Press

Wasserman, R. (2021) 'Material Constitution' in Zalta (ed.) *The Stanford Encyclopedia of Philosophy* <https://plato.stanford.edu/entries/material-constitution/>

Complementaria:

Baxter, D. (1988) 'Identity in the Loose and Popular Sense' *Mind* 97(388): 575-582

Bennett, K. (2009) 'Composition, Colocation, and Metaontology' in Chalmers, Manley, Wasserman (eds.) *Metametaphysics* Oxford: Clarendon Press 38-76

Bennett, K. (2015) 'Perfectly Understood, Unproblematic, and Certain: Lewis on Mereology' in Loewer and Schaffer (eds.) *A Companion to David Lewis* Wiley ch. 16

- Bennett, K. (2017) *Making Things Up* Oxford: OUP
- Boolos, G. (1984) 'To Be is to be a Value of a Variable (or to be Some Values of Some Variables)' in *Journal of Philosophy*
- Carmichael, C. (2015) 'Toward a Commonsense Answer to the Special Composition Question' *Australasian Journal of Philosophy* 93(3): 475-490
- Casullo, A. (1988) 'A Fourth Version of the Bundle Theory' *Philosophical Studies* 125-139
- DeRossett, L. (2020) 'What is Conservatism?' *Analysis* 80(3): 514-533
- Effingham, N. (2012) 'Endurantism and Perdurantism' in Barnard and Manson (eds.) *Continuum Companion to Metaphysics* 170-197
- Fairchild, M. (2019) 'The Barest Flutter of the Smallest Leaf: Understanding Material Plenitude' *Philosophical Review* 128(2) 143-178
- Fairchild, M. (2020) 'Varieties of Plenitude' *Philosophy Compass* 15(3): 1-11
- Gallois, A. (2016) 'Identity Over Time' in Zalta (ed.) *The Stanford Encyclopedia of Philosophy* <https://plato.stanford.edu/entries/identity-time/>
- Haslanger, S. (2003) 'Persistence Through Time' in Loux, Zimmerman (eds.) *The Oxford Handbook of Metaphysics* Oxford: OUP 315-354
- Hawley, K. (2014) 'Ontological Innocence' in Cotnoir and Baxter (eds.) *Composition as Identity* Oxford: OUP 70-89
- Hawley, K. (2023) 'Temporal Parts' in Zalta (ed.) *The Stanford Encyclopedia of Philosophy* <https://plato.stanford.edu/entries/temporal-parts/>
- Kantin, H. (2020) 'Why Compositional Nihilism Dissolves Puzzles' *Synthese* 197: 4319-4340
- Le Bihan, B. (2013) 'Why a Gunk World is Compatible with Nihilism about Objects' *Studia Philosophica Estonica* 6(1) 1-14
- pp. 81-87 in Lewis, D. (1991) *Parts of Classes* Oxford: Blackwell
- Markosian, N. (1998) 'Brutal Composition' *Philosophical Studies* 92(3) 211-249
- McDaniel, K. (2001) 'Tropes and Ordinary Physical Objects' *Philosophical Studies* 104: 269-290
- Merricks, T. (2003) *Objects and Persons* Oxford: OUP

- Noonan, H. (1993) 'Constitution is Identity' *Mind* 102(405): 133-146
- Rea, M. (1998) 'Temporal Parts Unmotivated' *Philosophical Review* 107(2): 225-260
- Rettler, B. (2018) 'Mereological Nihilism and Puzzles About Material Objects' in *Pacific Philosophical Quarterly* 99: 842-868
- Rudder Baker (1997) 'Why Constitution is Not Identity' *Journal of Philosophy* 94(12) 599-621
- Rudder Baker, L. (2007) *The Metaphysics of Everyday Life: An Essay in Practical Realism* Cambridge: CUP (for a précis of the book in Rudder-Baker's own words, see <https://people.umass.edu/lrb/files/bak03metM.pdf>)
- Rudder Baker, L. (2008) 'A Metaphysics of Ordinary Things and Why We Need It' *Philosophy* 83: 5-24
- Sider, T. (1993) 'Van Inwagen and the Possibility of Gunk' *Analysis* 53(4): 285-289
- Sider, T. (1996) 'All the World's a Stage' *Australasian Journal of Philosophy* 74: 433-453
- Sider, T. (1997) 'Four Dimensionalism' *Philosophical Review* 106(2): 197-231
- Sider, T. (2008) 'Temporal Parts' in Sider, Hawthorne, Zimmerman (eds.) *Contemporary Debates in Metaphysics* Blackwell 241-262
- Thunder, S. (2023) 'There is No Reason to Replace the Razor with the Laser' *Synthese*
- Thunder, S. (2023) 'Composite Objects are Mere Manys' in Bennett, Zimmerman (eds.) *Oxford Studies in Metaphysics* vol 13 20-50
- Unger, P. (1980) 'The Problem of the Many' *Midwest Studies in Philosophy* 5(1): 411-467
- Van Inwagen, P. (1994) 'Composition as Identity' *Philosophical Perspectives* 8: 207-220
- Wallace, M. (2011) 'Composition as Identity: Part 1' *Philosophy Compass* 6(11): 804-816
- Wallace, M. (2011) 'Composition as Identity: Part 2' *Philosophy Compass* 6(11): 817-827
- Wasserman, R. (2002) 'The Standard Objection to the Standard Account' *Philosophical Studies* 111(3): 197-216
- Wasserman, R. (2004) 'The Standard Objection to the Standard Account' *Nous* 38(4): 693-710
- Weatherson, B. (2023) 'The Problem of the Many' in Zalta (ed.) *The Stanford Encyclopedia of Philosophy* <https://plato.stanford.edu/entries/problem-of-many/>

6. Criterios de evaluación:

- Essay
- Attendance and participation

7. Propuesta de día y horario:

Jueves 10-12

8. Sede:

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