

This course is primarily aimed at graduate students in their first or second year. Students in the course will read everything being read by the undergraduates in Professor Unger's metaphysics course concurrently offered at that level and also a good deal more.

Reading will be from several sources, the first two to be purchased, one distributed for free, the others as indicated:

1. A textbook, *Metaphysics* by Peter van Inwagen
2. An anthology, *Metaphysics: The Big Questions*, edited by van Inwagen and Dean Zimmerman. In the course plan, I'll refer to this as MBQ.
3. A Coursepack, to be distributed freely in the class to all enrolled.
4. Occasional photocopies of published material to be distributed in class
5. Material on Professor Unger's NYU Webpage, available in PDF form.
6. Sources on the Internet.

While the professor will begin each class with a little oral presentation, rarely will that last for more than ten minutes. Primarily, each class will consist of discussion.

Each student will write two papers for the course. Near the middle of the semester, each student will submit a short paper, 5-9 pages in stand double-spaced format, on a topic discussed in the course. If the professor deems the paper promising, the student will be encouraged to improve and expand it, and submit the result a few days after the last class: Such a paper should run from 12-16 pages. If the professor deems the paper not so promising, the student will write a second short paper, this one on another topic discussed in the course. Here's the course plan, to be followed flexibly, not rigidly.

Week 1: This week I'll try to sketch the metaphysical outlook with which we've been inculcated, by our culture and our early education. For some material relating to the sketch, but mostly for other reasons, in van Inwagen's *Metaphysics*, read chapter 1.

Among other things, this chapter will provide a helpful background for what's upcoming in the course, and for an appropriate attitude toward metaphysics, and toward philosophy, in general.

As well, students should go to Unger's webpage and read chapter 1 of his book-in-progress, *Beyond Emptiness*, the chapter titled "How Empty is Mainstream Philosophy?"

Week 2: This week our topic will be The Puzzle of Concrete Reality. For a discussion of this topic, read, in *Metaphysics: The Big Questions* (henceforth MBQ) Selection 52 (Lewis) pages 499-502 and 508-510, Selection 60 (Parfit) and Selection 61 (Swinburne). Additionally, from the Internet retriever and read: Roger White "Fine-Tuning and

Multiple Universes”, *Nous*, 2000. And, to be distributed in class, read material written for laymen by theoretical physicists.

Week 3: This week will be primarily devoted to the Problem of Free Will. For discussion, in *Metaphysics*, read chapter 12. And, in MBQ, read Selections 44 (Hobart) and 46 (Chisholm), 48 (van Inwagen). and Selection 49 (O’Connor).

Week 4: We will continue our discussion of the Problem of Free Will. To be distributed in class, read excerpts from Unger’s *All the Power in the World*. And, in MBQ, read Selection 16 (Prior) and Selection 49 (O’Connor).

Week 5: This will be the first week primarily devoted to what philosophers call The Mind-Body Problem: What are the main difficulties for the idea that each of us mental beings is a physical entity? In light of these difficulties, is it reasonable to think that we mental beings *aren’t* physical? Or, is it possible to disarm the difficulties, and to think we mental beings *are* physical? For this week’s discussion, in *Metaphysics*, read chapter 10. And, in MBQ, read Selection 41 (Chalmers), 35 (Chisholm), and 54 (Kripke) but only from bottom of page 535 to its end on page 539.

Week 6: This week, we will discuss internalism and externalism about so-called “mental content”, a view that many have thought deleterious to Dualism about Mind and Body. To be distributed in class, read selections from Putnam’s work. Then, from Unger’s Webpage, read chapter 2 of *Beyond Emptiness*, entitled “Thinkers and What They Can Think About”.

Week 7: While we will continue to discuss The Mind-Body Problem, we shall also become involved in a closely related issue, The Problem of Personal Identity. That Problem comprises such questions as:

Is it possible for you to survive the destruction of your body?

Is it possible for several people simultaneously to have, or to share, a single body?

For discussion, read chapter 11 of *Metaphysics* and, in MBQ, read 35 (Chisholm) - a repeat - and 36 (Shoemaker), 37 (Olson) and 38 (Parfit). To be distributed in class, read Roderick Chisholm’s “Questions about the Unity of Consciousness”.

Week 8: There’ll be more discussion of The Problem of Personal Identity and The Mind-Body Problem. In our Coursepack, read “The Story of a Brain” (Arnold Zuboff), and “I Do Not Exist,” (Peter Unger), (Some pages from) “Why There Are No People” (Unger) and (Some Pages from) “The Problem of the Many” (Unger). Also, read a long excerpt from Unger’s *All the Power in the World*.

Week 9: This week we'll do two main things:

1. We'll discuss idealism. For this discussion, read Chapter 3 of *Metaphysics*.
2. We'll discuss panpsychism. For this discussion, from the Internet read Galen Strawson, "Realistic Monism", *Journal of Consciousness Studies*, Vol. 13, no 10-11, and 2006.

Week 10: This week, we'll discuss the metaphysical status of (what we take to be) material objects:

Are there many material objects; or, is there just a single heterogeneous physical field?

If there are many material things, do some compose others, more complex than them; or, are there really just the many simple material objects, maybe just quarks and electrons?

Or, going the other way, are there really no material things at all; with so-called physical reality being just a sort of illusion, while the only real things are nonphysical minds?

For discussion, first read these items, largely repeats: In *Metaphysics*, read Chapter 2. On Unger's web-page, read ch. 5 "The Persistence of Material Individuals". From the Internet, retrieve and read: Material Coincidence – I Kit Fine "Coincidence and Form" Proceedings of the Aristotelian Society Supplementary Volume lxxxii, 2008.

Week 11: We'll continue our discussion of the metaphysical status of (what we take to be) material objects: In the Coursepack, read the few selected pages from Peter van Inwagen's *Material Beings*, "Contact". Then, on Ted Sider's web-page, read from his "Against Parthood", but only up through page 29 is required. And, then, on Unger's web-page, read ch. 6, "Empty Debates about Material Matters".

Week 12: This week we'll begin to discuss The Philosophy of Time.

For discussion, first, in *Metaphysics*, read Chapter 4, but only up through page 81.

Next, in MBQ read Selections 12 (Prior), (14) Broad and 16 (Prior); and, in the Coursepack, read the selection by J. J. C. Smart, "The Space-Time World".

Then, in MBQ, read Selections 27 (Lewis), 28 (Lewis) and 29 (Zimmerman).

Finally, on Ted Sider's web-page, read his "Recent Work on Identity over Time".

Week 13: We shall discuss some further questions concerning Time. For this discussion, from the Internet retrieve and read Kit Fine, "In Defense of Three-Dimensionalism". Then, on Unger's web-page, in ch 7 read those sections on questions concerning time. Finally, in the Coursepack, read the presented selection from Derek Parfit's *Reasons and Persons*, "Different Attitudes to Time".

Week 14: This last week will be devoted to some very general questions about what individuals there are and, in the terms I prefer, how an individual might be propertied and related (to other individuals.) For this week's discussion, first read, in *Metaphysics*, chapter 2. Next, in MBQ, read Selection (4) Russell, (5) Armstrong, 6 (Price) and Selection 7 (Williams). Then, to be distributed, read Stephen Schiffer, "Pleonastic Properties," Section 2.3 of his *The Things We Mean*. And, last, on Unger's web-page, read the section(s) of ch. 7 on (putative) properties.