



PHI363: Metaphysics  
California Baptist University  
Spring 2020  
[UPDATED due to Covid-19]

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BUS 245 Office Hours: Tue: 9:30-12:15; Thu: 9:30-12:15.

Wednesdays in Wanda's Office Hours: Wed: 1-3:30.

Be sure to check out the course's Blackboard website, here:

<https://calbaptist.blackboard.com/webapps/login/>

**Here are Some Questions We'll be Exploring:** In virtue of what are you the same person over time? What does it mean for something to exist? Do abstract objects exist? When do simple material objects compose a complex material object? Are metaphysical questions substantive? What is time and space? In virtue of what do material objects persist through time? Do modal truths imply the existence of possible worlds? What is vagueness? What is causation? Can we have free will if the future is determined?

### **Required Texts:**

**Title:** *Metaphysics: An Introduction*

**Author:** Alyssa Ney

**ISBN-13:** 978-0415640756

### **PHI 363's Course Objectives:**

At the completion of this course, students will:

1. Understand and explain debates in metaphysics such as personal identity, ontology, material objects, free will, causation, modality, persistence, and metametaphysics.
2. Identify and critically evaluate major positions in metaphysics.
3. Analyze and evaluate arguments.
4. Propose relevant analyses and counterexamples to analyses.
5. Develop and demonstrate intellectual virtues and disciplines that are reflective of Christian higher education.
6. Express complex ideas and concepts in written and oral form with greater skill and competence.

## Grade Distribution:

1. MIDTERM EXAM (30%)
2. FINAL EXAM (30%)
3. PAPER (30%)
4. ENGAGEMENT (10%)

## Letter Grade Distribution:

$\geq 93$	A	73 - 76.99	C
90 - 92.99	A-	70 - 72.99	C-
87 - 89.99	B+	67 - 69.99	D+
83 - 86.99	B	63 - 66.99	D
80 - 82.99	B-	60 - 62.99	D-
77 - 79.99	C+	$\leq 59.99$	F

## Grade Breakdown:

- **Midterm and Final Exams (60%)**

- Your two exams will test your understanding of the 11 main course sections.
- Each exam will be 90% philosophy, and 10% logic. The philosophy portion will be a mixture of *review* questions (which will test your knowledge of the course material from lecture) and *evaluation* questions (which will test your ability to successfully defend your own thesis about a particular issue we discussed in class). The logic portion will test your ability to symbolize, translate, and check for the validity or invalidity of arguments.
- Anything discussed in the lecture is fair game for the exams.
- Exams will not be cumulative: they will only cover what has been covered in that particular section.
- You are free to work with one another in studying for an exam.
- Exams are closed book, closed notes.
- **No makeup exams will be given, unless for reasons concerning a medical or family emergency. You must make arrangements prior to the beginning of the exam.**

- **Paper (30%)**

- You'll write a 6-8 page paper. You'll pick either one theory or one argument relating to one of the 11 topics we will cover and you will evaluate it. I'll give you some sample topics to choose from but you are free to write on anything having to do with our 11 course topics, as long as you get prior approval from me. I'll give you more details after you learn some necessary background material in the first few weeks.

- **Engagement (10%)**

- **CBU Attendance Policy.** For every single course at CBU, ATTENDANCE IS REQUIRED BY THE UNIVERSITY and will be taken every class meeting. Unless prior approval is given, absences will adversely affect your final grade. Please arrive on time and plan to stay in your seat until class is dismissed.

- Attending class is a necessary condition for doing well with your participation grade. You are allowed to miss **2** lectures during the semester without penalty. Any further absences will result in point and/or grade deductions from the participation part of the overall grade.
- Attending every class lecture will automatically get you an 8/10. Talking, asking questions, and/or raising objections every once in a while in lecture will pop you up to a 9/10. A 10/10 is not easy to get: it will be given to those who are engaged and talkative all semester long.
- **SCM Policy Regarding Attendance.** Regular attendance is expected and required from students enrolled in all classes offered through the School of Christian Ministries. A student who accumulates equivalent to 3 weeks of missed class time (any combination of excused/unexcused absences) is subject to failure. Such a student is required to meet with the Dean of the School of Christian Ministries. A course of action must be agreed upon by the Dean, the Instructor, and the student in order for the student to complete the course. The Instructor will notify the Dean’s office when a student reaches the 3-week mark. The student will be notified via mail or e-mail to schedule an appointment before returning to class. Note that this policy makes no distinction between excused or unexcused absences. Three (3) tardies or early departures are equivalent to an absence.
- **There are no PowerPoint Slides in this class. You should take notes (this class is old school). Students are responsible for all missed work, regardless of the reason for absence. It is also the absentee’s responsibility to get all missing notes or materials from a classmate. During the first week of class, it is wise to get another classmate’s phone number to potentially get notes from them if you miss a class.**

### Course Policies:

- **Late-Work**

- **SCM Policy:** NO course assignments will be received or examinations taken after the scheduled due dates except for emergency causes (EITHER severe illness or critical accidental injury verified by appropriate medical notice or death or unanticipated crisis in immediate family). “Not being ready yet” is not an unforeseeable or uncontrollable situation. If the assignment will not be submitted or examination taken at the scheduled time, the student must contact the professor prior to that time to provide information regarding the circumstances prohibiting punctual completion of the assignment.
- **Make-up exams:** will only be administered in the Office of Student Success. To take a make-up exam, the student must get a Test Contract from the Office of Student Success (or download one, here: ), bring it to the professor, and then must make an appointment by calling the Office of Student Success. The contract must be submitted and an appointment made at least 24 hours before you can take the exam. Students must pay the Office of Student Success a five dollar out-of-sequence fee at the time he/she takes the exam. If a student is permitted more time as outlined above, work still must be completed or make-up examination taken within two weeks of the scheduled date (or the last regular class meeting of the semester, if that occurs first). A 5% late penalty will accrue for each day (not class session) an exam/assignment is late. If personal problematic circumstances are so extended or intensive as to prevent responsible participation in the course, the student is strongly advised to withdraw from the course.

- No work will be accepted to meet course requirements after the last day of class. The close of the semester is the last day of class.
- All exams must be taken and all written assignments must be turned in to receive any credit for the course. No exams may be taken or assignments submitted after the last day of the semester.

- **Incompletes**

- **CBU Policy:** A student may, only in cases of extreme and unforeseen emergencies, file a Petition for Incomplete Work to the dean of the school/college in which the course is offered. It is the responsibility of the student to initiate and complete the process for incomplete work prior to the end of the semester. An instructor’s verbal agreement to give an incomplete grade is insufficient; that is, an instructor cannot give an incomplete grade apart from the dean’s prior approval of the Petition for Incomplete Work. If an incomplete grade is not raised to a passing grade within six weeks of the close of the semester, the grade automatically becomes an F and credit for the course may be obtained only by repeating the course. An incomplete fee is charged for all approved incomplete petitions and an incomplete grade could adversely affect eligibility for financial aid.

- **Grades**

- Grades in the **C** range represent performance that **meets expectations**; Grades in the **B** range represent performance that is **substantially better** than the expectations; Grades in the **A** range represent work that is **excellent**.
- Grades will be updated on Blackboard.

- **Class Conduct**

- While this class contains a decent percentage of lecture, it is a highly discussion based course. It is expected that everyone in the classroom be friendly and charitable during classroom dialogue.

- **Students with Disabilities**

- Any student requesting academic accommodations based on a disability must register with CBU’s Disability Services ([Click Here](#)) each semester, to obtain a letter of verification. After obtaining this, deliver this directly to me.

- **Academic Honor Code Summary**

- In addition to skills and knowledge, CBU aims to teach students appropriate ethical and professional standards of conduct. The full text of the academic Honor Code is in the *Student Handbook*, section 22, though here are some excerpts:
- Plagiarism, cheating, and other forms of academic dishonesty or facilitating any such act are violations of the Honor Code and are not acceptable conduct at California Baptist University. Violations of the Honor Code include, but are not limited to, the following:
  1. Using any unauthorized assistance in taking quizzes, test, or examinations;
  2. Looking at or copying another student’s test or quiz answers;
  3. Taking a test or quiz in part or in whole to use or to give to others;

4. Providing any unauthorized assistance or aid to others in writing papers, completing assignments, taking quizzes, tests, and/or examinations;
  5. Using electronic communication equipment and/or any other unauthorized electronic device in completing assignments, taking quizzes, test, and/or examinations;
  6. Copying information from a source without proper attribution;
  7. Taking papers from other students, publications, or the Internet;
- Don't plagiarize. Chances are, you will get caught and it creates a headache for everyone involved. At a bare minimum, you'll end up failing the assignment/exam/paper. Violations of the academic honor code could result in your failing the course, depending on the seriousness of the offense.

### Support Systems:

1. CBU Counseling Center. *Available Here:*  
<https://calbaptist.edu/counseling-center/>
2. National Suicide Prevention Lifeline – 1 (800) 273-8255
3. Spiritual Life. *Available Here:*  
<https://calbaptist.edu/spiritual-life/>
4. Campus Recreation. *Available Here:*  
<https://calbaptist.edu/community-life/campus-recreation/>
5. Safety Services. *Available Here:*  
<https://calbaptist.edu/safety-services/>
6. Me! Please come and chat with me at office hours, any time!

### Tentative Course Outline:

The weekly coverage might change as it depends on the progress of the class. I'll always update you in class as to any changes to the reading. Philosophy literature can be difficult. I recommend reading the book slowly, rather than trying to speed-read it. Again, *the reading is not easy*, so do your best to read the chapter for the week and then we will work through the material together in class.

One chapter will be assigned per week (except for the first and seventh week, in which there will be no reading. For the remaining weeks, I recommend trying to knock out the chapter sometime at the beginning of the week (or even the weekend prior to the week), since it will serve as essential background to what we cover in class that week.

The tentative plan for the course is as follows.

*Week 1 (Jan 13): Personal Identity and Conceptual Analysis*

No Reading.

*Week 2 (Jan 20): Background Logic for Metaphysics*

Ney, *Metaphysics*, Chapter 0.

*Week 3 (Jan 27): Introduction to Ontology*

Ney, *Metaphysics*, Chapter 1.

*Week 4 (Feb 3): Abstract Objects*

Ney, *Metaphysics*, Chapter 2.

*Week 5 (Feb 10): Material Objects*

Ney, *Metaphysics*, Chapter 3.

*Week 6 (Feb 17): Material Objects (Continued)*

Ney, *Metaphysics*, Chapter 3 (Continued).

**Midterm Exam: February 20, in class.**

*Week 7 (Feb 24): A Brief History of Space and Time: Aristotle to Einstein*

No Reading.

*Week 8 (Mar 2): Time*

Ney, *Metaphysics*, Chapter 5.

*Week 9 (Mar 9): Time (cont)*

Ney, *Metaphysics*, Chapter 5.

*SPRING BREAK (Mar 16 and Mar 23): NO CLASS FOR TWO WEEKS.*

No Reading.

*Week 10 (Mar 30): Persistence*

Ney, *Metaphysics*, Chapter 6.

*Week 11 (Apr 6): Persistence (cont.) and Spacetime*

Matt Leonard, “Enduring through Gunk” (optional reading).

[Available Here \(click on me\)](#)

Matt Leonard, “What is it to be Located?” (optional reading).

[Available Here \(click on me\)](#)

*Week 12 (Apr 13): Modality*

Ney, *Metaphysics*, Chapter 7.

*Week 13 (Apr 20): Free Will*

Ney, *Metaphysics*, Chapter 9.

**Final Exam: April 23, taken on Blackboard during class time.**

**Paper Due to Blackboard: April 28, Tuesday, 8AM.**