

## Course Number

PHI 332

## Course Title

Metaphysics

## Credits

3

## Prerequisites

ENG 102, 105 or 108 with C or better; Minimum 25 hours

## Instructor's Note

You will find this class challenging if you have not previously taken coursework in philosophy. Further, students who have previous coursework in philosophy in topics related to logic and argumentation (PHI 103, PHI 300, PHI 333) or courses on other topics related to Metaphysics and Epistemology including the History of Philosophy (PHI 314, PHI 328, PHI 329, PHI 330, PHI 334) will be better prepared for this course than students who have only taken courses in other areas of philosophy.

If this is your first philosophy course, or you have limited experience with courses like this, you are welcome in the class, but you will need to dedicate extra time to this course during the Introductory Unit in order to understand some of the background concepts about logic and argumentation we're using. All students should be prepared to learn a new vocabulary for discussing metaphysics and ontology during the Introductory Unit.

## Faculty

Name: Dr. Jeff Watson  
Office: Online  
Office Phone: 480-727-4022  
FAX: 480-965-0310 (ATTN: Jeffrey Watson)  
Email address: DrWatson@asu.edu  
Office hours: For Availability & Appointments go to [links.asu.edu/Watson](https://links.asu.edu/Watson)



I am a Lecturer in the School of Historical, Philosophical, and Religious Studies at Arizona State University.

My research focuses on accounts of of Emergence in the the Philosophy of Mind. I've presented my work at meetings of the American Philosophical Association and elsewhere. My personal web page, including my C.V., can be found at [jeffreyjohnwatson.com](http://jeffreyjohnwatson.com)

I also have research interests in Ethics and Metaphysics.

I love teaching philosophy, and hope that through this class you come to appreciate it too.

## Catalog Description

Problems pertaining to the nature of reality. Topics may include nature of person, minds, substance, universals, space, time, causation, and modality.

## Course Overview

In this course, we will study the logic of the universes – not merely our contingent, actual universe, but the logic of every possible universe which might have been. We will consider topics like identity, composition, change, necessity, possibility, essence, causation, counterfactuals, events, action, agency, space, time, motion, reality, and existence.

Metaphysics might be better termed “controversial topics in logic.” Whereas the first-order logic studied in a symbolic logic course is relatively uncontroversial (if  $P$  or  $Q$ , and not  $Q$ , then  $P$ ), the higher-order logic studied in metaphysics includes debatable topics like whether a thing can maintain its identity despite a change in its parts, what ‘properties’ are, or whether time is real.

In one sense, this is the most impractical course you could ever possibly take. Since we are considering what could have been, not just what is, many of the scenarios we discuss will seem bizarre and completely irrelevant to the world that is. In another sense, this is the most practical course you could ever possibly take. The concepts we will discuss are the everyday, basic building blocks of nearly every sentence ever spoken: they’re the parts behind the scenes that people usually take for granted. By refusing to take them for granted, and understanding how they work, you should be able by the end of this course to better evaluate claims that make use of these concepts, and be more organized in the way you think about the (actual) universe you (happen to) live in.

## **Course Goals**

By the end of this course, students should be able to:

- Recognize major topics, positions, and views in metaphysics
- Explain major topics in metaphysics to someone else
- Apply their knowledge of topics in metaphysics to popular debates
- Organize their understanding of the world using the categories in metaphysics
- Formulate an argument on a topic in metaphysics

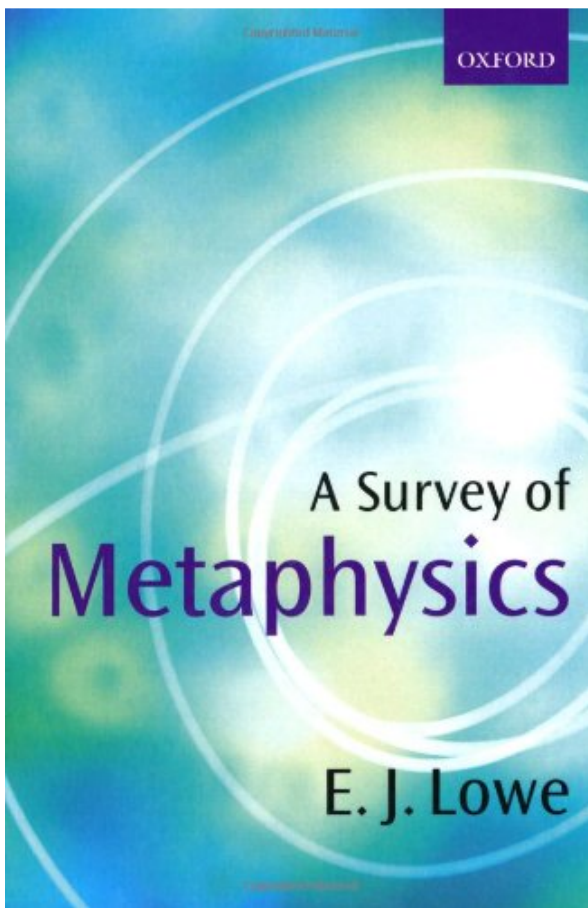
## **Textbook Information**

There is one required book for this course and one strongly recommended textbook. Although I will only test on the required book, the recommended book will help with understanding the required book, especially if philosophy is new to you. Detailed information is listed below. All other required readings will be provided.

## **Required Textbook**

Lowe, E.J. A Survey of Metaphysics. Oxford University Press. 2002.

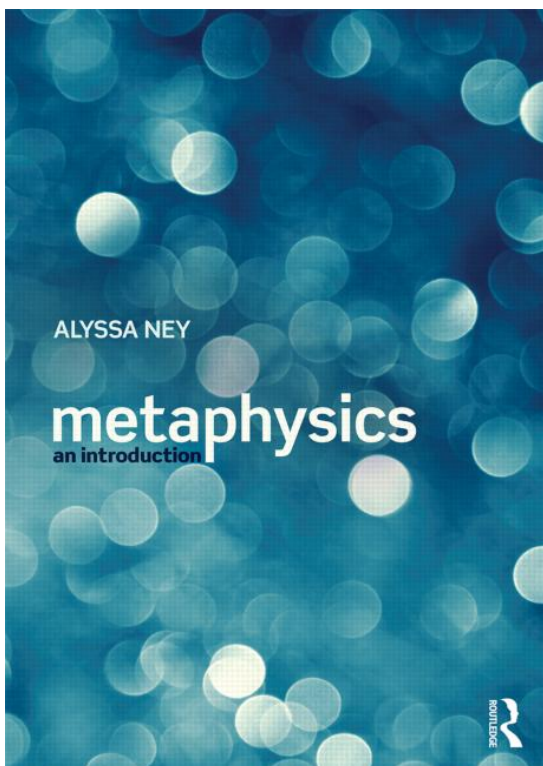
ISBN: 978-0198752530



### Recommended Textbook

Ney, Alyssa. *Metaphysics: An Introduction*. Routledge. 2014.

ISBN: 978-0415640756



### Course Topics, Schedule & Grading

ACTIVITIES/ASSIGNMENTS	POINTS	DUE DATE (11:59pm AZ time)
<b>INTRODUCTION</b>		
Introduce Yourself	5	3/15
Syllabus Quiz	5	3/15
Logic Quiz	10	3/17
Core Concepts Quiz	30	3/17
<b>UNIT 1: WHAT IS METAPHYSICS?</b>		
Discussion Board Posts (Initial Post & 2 Replies)	10 (5 pts initial + 2.5 pts/reply)	3/22 (initial)- 3/24 (replies)
Reflection (Yellowdig) (Initial Post/Pin & 1 Comment)	10* (8 pts pin + 2 pts comment)	3/23 (reflection) - 3/24 (comment)
Quizzes (Multiple Choice Portion & Essay Portion)	50 (25 pts MC + 25 pts essay)	3/24
<b>UNIT 2: IDENTITY</b>		
Discussion Board Post & Replies	10	3/29-3/31
Yellowdig Reflection & 1 Comment	10	3/29-3/31
Quizzes (MC & Essay)	50	3/31
Choose Term Paper Topic	5	3/31
<b>UNIT 3: NECESSITY</b>		
Discussion Board Post & replies	10	4/5-4/7
Yellowdig Reflection & 1 Comment	10	4/5-4/7
Quizzes (MC & Essay)	50	4/7
Term Paper Outline &Bibliography	10	4/7
<b>UNIT 4: CAUSATION</b>		
Discussion Board Post & Replies	10	4/12-4/14
Yellowdig Reflection & 1 Comment	10	4/12-4/14
Quizzes (MC & Essay)	50	4/14
Term Paper Summary	15	4/14
<b>UNIT 5: ACTIONS</b>		
Discussion Board Post & Replies	10	4/19-4/21
Yellowdig Reflection & 1 Comment	10	4/19-4/21
Quizzes (MC & Essay)	50	4/21
<b>UNIT 6: SPACE AND TIME</b>		

Discussion Board Post & Replies	10	4/26-4/28
Yellowdig Reflection & 1 Comment	10	4/26-4/28
Quizzes (MC & Essay)	50	4/28

#### UNIT 7 (Supplemental)

Debrief Video Discussion	20 Ex.C.	5/3
Quiz (MC)	replaces lowest MC quiz	5/3
Quiz (Essay)	replaces lowest Essay Quiz	5/3

#### FINAL DAYS

Final Exam Part I	150	5/3
Final Exam Part II	100	5/3
Final Term Paper	250	5/3

**TOTAL  
POINTS 1000**

\* Yellowdig points for the course add up to 60.

### Grading

Grade	Percentage	Points Range	Meaning
A+	99 - 100%	995 - 1035	
<b>A</b>	94 - 99%	935 - 984	Outstanding
A -	90 - 93%	895 - 934	
B+	87 - 89%	865 - 894	
<b>B</b>	84 - 86%	835 - 864	Very Good
B-	80 - 83%	795 - 834	
C+	77 - 79%	765 - 794	
<b>C</b>	67 - 76%	665 - 754	Acceptable
D	64 - 66%	635 - 664	Below Standard
<b>E</b>	1 - 64%	1 - 634	Failing
<b>EN</b>	0%	0	No Attempt

### Grades on Discussion Boards & Writing Assignments

Discussion Boards and Writing Assignments are primarily grading on whether they satisfy requirements. They use a different grading scale.

Grade	Percentage	Meaning

S+	102.5%	Above and Beyond Satisfactory
<b>S</b>	100%	Satisfactory
S-	80%	Not Quite Satisfactory
<b>U</b>	65%	Unsatisfactory
<b>F</b>	50%	Failing
<b>N</b>	0%	No Attempt

An adequate initial post or pin is typically at least 250 words, and an adequate reply or comment is at least 30 words. Please cite the lectures, textbook, or any other sources used. Please review these [Discussion Board Guidelines](#).

### Other Grades

W: Students may withdraw on their own prior to the withdrawal deadline established on the ASU [Academic Calendar](#) to receive a grade of W. The ability to withdraw after the withdrawal deadline is limited to certain circumstances; contact an academic advisor for more information about withdrawing if the deadline has passed.

I: This class offers the grade of I or "incomplete" in situations where the withdrawal deadline has passed, and a student who is currently passing the course has a serious, major life event, as evidenced by appropriate documentation, which hinders their ability to complete the course. Before contacting me about an "I" grade, I would suggest you first contact an academic advisor or academic coach for more information to see if this might be a suitable option for you.

### Grading Procedure

Grades reflect your performance on assignments and adherence to deadlines. Many assignments make use of 'rubrics' which provide a guide to your score in the absence of detailed feedback. Graded assignments will typically be available within 7 days of the due date via My Grades, provided they were submitted on time. Please do not e-mail me about your grade until the 7 day window has passed. Do e-mail me if you'd like more detailed feedback on your grade on an assignment. (Note that assignments submitted late during the grace period will be graded when time is available.)

Note that any assignment which is submitted will earn at least 1 point. If you receive '0' points for an assignment, that means I have no record of receiving it. Double-check to make sure you submitted it, and if you did, then contact me right away.

### Communicating With the Instructor

This course uses a discussion board called "Hallway Conversations" for general questions about the course. Prior to posting a question, please check the syllabus, announcements, and existing posts. If you do not find an answer, post your question. You are encouraged to respond to the questions of your classmates.

Email questions of a personal nature to me directly. You can expect a response within 48 hours.

I am available to talk in more depth via video chat (Google Hangouts) or phone call, but e-mail me for an appointment in advance.

### Online Course

This is an online course. There are no face-to-face meetings.

### Email and Internet

ASU email is an [official means of communication](#) among students, faculty, and staff. Students are expected to read and act upon email in a timely fashion. Students bear the responsibility of missed messages and should check their ASU-assigned email regularly.

You should use your ASU e-mail, not your personal e-mail, for any communication or assignments related to this course.

***All instructor correspondence will be sent to your ASU email account.***

### Course Time Commitment

According to the Arizona Board of Regents, this three-credit course requires approximately 135 hours of work. **Please expect to spend around 18 hours each week preparing for and actively participating in this course.** If you find you need to spend more than 18 hours a week on this course, please contact me.

### Late or Missed Assignments

Notify the instructor **BEFORE** an assignment is due if an urgent situation arises and the assignment will not be submitted on time. Published assignment due dates (Arizona Mountain Standard time) are firm. Please follow the appropriate University policies to request an [accommodation for religious practices](#) or to accommodate a missed assignment [due to University-sanctioned activities](#).

My Grading Policy on Late assignments is as follows:

1. **Grace Period.** There is a 48-hour grace period past the official due date on all quizzes, exams, and assignments -- *with the exception of any extra credit* which must be on time for credit. You may submit late assignments during the grace period without penalty. You do not need to e-mail me about the circumstances. Do not rely on the grace period to routinely submit assignments late. I do not accept late work after the grace period except as described below, since it is over 48 hours late. (Note that assignments submitted during the grace period may not be graded for up to a week, depending on my schedule).

2. **Foreseeable Late Work.** If you know ahead of time that there is even a serious **risk** you will have to submit work late, **contact me in advance**. If you contact me *reasonably far* in advance (not at the last minute), and the issue is appropriately serious - for example, pregnancy, extended work-related travel, requirements of military or public service, funeral arrangements, essential school or volunteer activities, surgery, needing to appear in court, or so on - I can be pretty flexible. But if you contact me after you've missed the deadline because of one of these things, it's too late.

3. **ASU-Caused Technical Issues.** Most technical issues can be handled within the grace period. However, if there is an ongoing technical issue which keeps you from completing an assignment on time, then you should contact Technical Support:

855-278-5080 or Live Chat via the "Technical Support" tab on Blackboard.

If technical support can't help, then you need to obtain a **case number** from them. Forward me the case number and a description of the event, and I can allow you to submit work past the deadline. Note that you should save your work regularly while writing essays for online quizzes.

4. **Emergency Policy.** If you have an documented serious medical, personal, or family **emergency** which arises prevents you from completing the work on time, and which you couldn't foresee in advance, I will allow you to complete the work late within a period I deem reasonable. You can provide me with the documentation by FAX or as an attachment to an e-mail. You should contact me as soon as you can, even if the documentation takes a week or more to get to me. If the details are very personal or confidential and you don't feel comfortable sending me documentation by e-mail, you should obtain a letter on your behalf from [ASU's Student Advocacy and Assistance](#) which I will count in place of documentation.

5. **Special Circumstances.** Per ASU policy, I make additional accommodations for students who need them due to (i) being deployed in Active US Military Service, (ii) participating in University-sponsored activities, and (iii) observance of [religious holidays](#). I also recognize that there may be more unique personal circumstances, which I can attempt to accommodate if I know about them in advance.

### Time Limits on Quizzes

Check the quiz settings carefully before beginning the quiz. Some quizzes may automatically submit when the time limit is reached; other quizzes may permit you to continue working even after the time limit is reached. If a quiz permits you to continue working after the time limit, note that there will be a penalty for going over-time depending on how long overtime you went: 5 minutes overtime is unlikely to incur much if any penalty, whereas 1 hour overtime is unlikely to receive any credit.

### Submitting Assignments

All assignments, unless otherwise announced, **MUST** be submitted to the designated area of Blackboard. Do not submit an assignment via email unless instructed to do so.

### Drop and Add Dates/Withdrawals

This course adheres to a compressed schedule and may be part of a sequenced program, therefore, there is a limited timeline to [drop or add the course](#). Consult with your [Academic Advisor](#) to add or drop this course or to withdraw. If you add the the course, contact the instructor immediately to get caught up. You do not need to contact the instructor to drop the course, although you're encouraged to contact the instructor if you intend to withdraw. If you are considering a withdrawal, review the following ASU policies: [Withdrawal from Classes](#), [Medical/Compassionate Withdrawal](#), and a [Grade of Incomplete](#).

### Grade Appeals

Grade disputes must first be addressed by discussing the situation with the instructor. If the dispute is not resolved with the instructor, the student may appeal to the department chair per the [University Policy for Student Appeal Procedures on Grades](#).

### Student Conduct and Academic Integrity

ASU expects and requires its students to act with honesty, integrity, and respect. Required behavior standards are listed in the [Student Code of Conduct and Student Disciplinary Procedures](#), [Computer, Internet, and Electronic Communications policy](#), [ASU Student Academic Integrity Policy](#), and outlined by the [Office of Student Rights & Responsibilities](#). Anyone in violation of these policies is subject to sanctions.

Students are entitled to receive instruction free from interference by other members of the class. An instructor may withdraw a student from the course when the student's behavior disrupts the educational process per [Instructor Withdrawal of a Student for Disruptive Classroom Behavior](#).

Appropriate online behavior (also known as *netiquette*) is defined by the instructor and includes keeping course discussion posts focused on the assigned topics. Students must maintain a cordial atmosphere and use tact in expressing differences of opinion. Inappropriate discussion board posts may be deleted by the instructor.

The Office of Student Rights and Responsibilities accepts [incident reports](#) from students, faculty, staff, or other persons who believe that a student or a student organization may have violated the Student Code of Conduct.

## College of Liberal Arts & Sciences Statement

Academic honesty is expected of all students in all examinations, papers, laboratory work, academic transactions and records. The possible sanctions include, but are not limited to, appropriate grade penalties, course failure (indicated on the transcript as a grade of E), course failure due to academic dishonesty (indicated on the transcript as a grade of XE), loss of registration privileges, disqualification and dismissal. For more information, see <http://provost.asu.edu/academicintegrity>

## Instructor's Policy On Academic Integrity

I, the instructor of this course, take matters of academic integrity very seriously. In particular, representing work as your own which is not your own - including failing to cite an internet resource that you rely upon, paraphrase, or copy and paste whole sentences or phrases from in your work - carries the consequence of **failing the entire course**. The reason for this policy is simple: most of our assignments involve writing, and if you plagiarize or use unattributed sources on one assignment, then I have no way to be certain your other work is not also plagiarized. Further, in the absence of mitigating circumstances, I report cases of blatant and unapologetic academic integrity violations to the Associate Dean of the College of Liberal Arts and Sciences, which may impose a grade of XE or may impose further penalties for repeated violations across your courses.

### Citations

As part of academic integrity, you must **cite everything** which you obtain **from any source** except your own ideas, **on every assignment**. Citations are required on essay questions on weekly quizzes, discussion board posts, writing assignments, and the final paper. Citing sources isn't just a matter of integrity, it's a matter of being a good member of the academy - it shows that you know where an idea came from. Note that I provide a shortened citation style (listed under 'Academic Integrity' or 'Citation Policies' on Blackboard) to make this quick and painless for you.

### Respondus Monitor

The final exam for this course uses RespondusMonitor. Respondus monitor takes a video and audio recording of the exam environment in order to ensure the integrity of the exam. To take the final exam, you will need access to a computer with a microphone and web camera. You will also need a photo ID (for example, a driver's license) in order to verify your identity. Please notify the instructor in advance of differences the instructor should be aware of. Students with limited vision should consult with the instructor about accessibility issues prior to taking the exam.

## Prohibition of Commercial Note Taking Services

In accordance with [ACD 304-06 Commercial Note Taking Services](#), written permission must be secured from the official instructor of the class in order to sell the instructor's oral communication in the form of notes. Notes must have the notetaker's name as well as the instructor's name, the course number, and the date.

## Course Evaluation

Students are expected to complete the course evaluation. The feedback provides valuable information to the instructor and the college and is used to improve student learning. Students are notified when the online evaluation form is available.

## Syllabus Disclaimer

The syllabus is a statement of intent and serves as an implicit agreement between the instructor and the student. Every effort will be made to avoid changing the course schedule but the possibility exists that unforeseen events will make syllabus changes necessary. Please remember to check your ASU email and the course site often.

## ASU Title IX Policy Statement

*Title IX is a federal law that provides that no person be excluded on the basis of sex from participation in, be denied benefits of, or be subjected to discrimination under any education program or activity. Both Title IX and university policy make clear that sexual violence and harassment based on sex is prohibited. An individual who believes they have been subjected to sexual violence or harassed on the basis of sex can seek support, including counseling and academic support, from the university. If you or someone you know has been harassed on the basis of sex or sexually assaulted, you can find information and resources at <https://sexualviolenceprevention.asu.edu/faqs>*



*As a mandated reporter, I am obligated to report any information I become aware of regarding alleged acts of sexual discrimination, including sexual violence and dating violence. ASU Counseling Services, <https://eoss.asu.edu/counseling>, is available if you wish discuss any concerns confidentially and privately.*

## Accessibility Statement

In compliance with the Rehabilitation Act of 1973, Section 504, and the Americans with Disabilities Act of 1990, professional disability specialists and support staff at the Disability Resource Center (DRC) facilitate a comprehensive range of academic support services and accommodations for qualified students with disabilities.

Qualified students with disabilities may be eligible to receive academic support services and accommodations. Eligibility is based on qualifying disability documentation and assessment of individual need. Students who believe they have a current and essential need for disability accommodations are responsible for requesting accommodations and providing qualifying documentation to the DRC. Every effort is made to provide reasonable accommodations for qualified students with disabilities.

Qualified students who wish to request an accommodation for a disability should contact their campus DRC.

### Tempe Campus

<http://www.asu.edu/studentaffairs/ed/drc/>  
480-965-1234 (Voice)  
480-965-9000 (TTY)

### Polytechnic Campus

<http://www.asu.edu/studentaffairs/ed/drc/>  
480-727-1165 (Voice)  
480-727-1009 (TTY)

### West Campus

<http://www.west.asu.edu/drc/>  
University Center Building (UCB), Room 130  
602-543-8145 (Voice)

### Downtown Phoenix Campus and ASU Online

<http://campus.asu.edu/downtown/DRC>  
University Center Building, Suite 160  
602-496-4321 (Voice)  
602-496-0378 (TTY)

## Computer Requirements

This course requires a computer with Internet access and the following:

- A couple of web browsers ([Chrome](#), [Internet Explorer](#), [Mozilla Firefox](#), or [Safari](#))
- [Adobe Acrobat Reader](#) (free)
- [Adobe Flash Player](#) (free)
- Microphone (required) and speaker

In addition, the final exam for this course requires the use of Respondus Monitor. (Respondus Monitor is *not* RPNOW). There is no charge to you for using Respondus Monitor, but it requires you to download and use Respondus Lockdown Browser. You will need access to a standard Mac or PC computer with a **microphone** and **web camera** and the ability to **download Respondus Lockdown Browser** in order to take the final exam. **Chromebooks are not compatible with Respondus.** Students using Chromebooks will need access to a secondary, standard PC or Mac computer to take the final exam.

You are expected to have a Word Processing Program capable of producing .doc or .docx files. For better or worse, MS Word is the standard in education and it will be for all of your classes. Please submit all term-paper related assignments in .doc or .docx format. (Discussion boards should not be submitted in MS Word format). See here to get MS Word for Free: <https://ucc.asu.edu/techstudio/2014/11/14/microsoft-office-365-free-asu-students/>

## Technical Support

This course uses Blackboard to deliver content. It can be accessed through MyASU at <http://my.asu.edu> or the Blackboard home page at [myasucourses.asu.edu](http://myasucourses.asu.edu)

To monitor the status of campus networks and services, visit the System Health Portal at <http://syshealth.asu.edu/>.

To contact the help desk you have two options:

- Call 855-278-5080
- Live chat through the "technical support" tab on Blackboard

## Student Success

This is an online course. To be successful:

- check the course daily

- read announcements
- read and respond to course email messages as needed
- complete assignments by the due dates specified
- communicate regularly with your instructor and peers
- create a study and/or assignment schedule to stay on track