



Metaphysics [PY3075] (Prerequisite: PY1070)

Introductory reading

Aune, B. *Metaphysics: The Elements*. (Oxford: Basil Blackwell, 1985).

van Inwagen, P. *Metaphysics*. (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1993).

Sample examination questions

1. Times can be thought of as past, present and future or as earlier and later. Is one of these ways of thinking about time more fundamental than the other?
2. What, if anything, is wrong with thinking of time on the model of a river?
3. What do all red things have in common?
4. 'Triangularity is a shape.' 'Red is more similar to orange than to blue.' Can the truth of such statements be explained only if there are universals?
5. Is there any good reason for thinking that there are events?
6. Are some individuals more basic than others?
7. Is an army truly a substance?
8. What makes a thing the kind of thing it is?
9. Are there essential properties?
10. Can arguments be given to establish that your pen is not a bundle of ideas?
11. Can a fully objective view of human beings account for the subjective qualities of mental states?
12. 'The physical world is entirely objective. But consciousness is essentially subjective. So consciousness cannot be physical.' Discuss.
13. Are causes sufficient for their effects? Are they necessary for those effects?
14. 'A cause has its effects in virtue of its properties. So causation cannot be a relation simply between particulars.' Discuss.
15. What makes a thing the same thing at one time and place as at another time and place? How is it possible for an object to change over time and still, in some sense, be the same object?
16. 'If I were to divide into two people tomorrow, neither of the resulting people would be me. But this would not be as bad as death.' Is this true? If so, why? If not, why not?
17. If 'free choice' is to be better than something random, must determinism be true?