MEETING INFORMATION

Room: TBA  
Time: Tuesdays at 9.40  
Instructor: Marga Vega, mvega@dspt.edu  
Office Hours: By appointment

DESCRIPTION

Metaphysics is the part of philosophy that attempts to get behind all appearances and to arrive at reasoned judgments about how things really are. This course presents a comprehensive introduction to Aristotelian and Thomistic metaphysics. Topics included are the nature of metaphysics as a science and its subject matter, the analogy of being, actuality and potentiality, causality, substance, individuation, the composition esse-essentia, the transcendentals. In all these topics we will keep in mind the history of Metaphysics from Parmenides to Heidegger to examine the scope of Metaphysics as science, its object and the treatment of the problem of metaphysics.

COURSE ORGANIZATION- METHODOLOGY

This is a hybrid course that combines online and in-class teaching. A weekly lecture delivered electronically before the Thursday meeting. A second in-class session will take place on Thursdays.

ONLINE LECTURE

During the online session, the student will follow the audio slide show presentation and read the referenced texts.

IN CLASS SESSION

• We will discuss the topics of the online lecture and readings.  
• The instructor will add more comments or materials related to the online lecture.  
• We will review Clark’s questions at the end of the assigned chapter.  
• We will devote sometime to questions on the online lecture.  
• Each student will bring up a topic for discussion from the readings. Some readings will be presented by some the students (Feser’s book).
STUDENT LEARNING GOALS

1. Acquire systematic knowledge of the main topics of Metaphysics (Institutional Goal A1: Integrative Thinking and A2: Intellectual Humility). To achieve this goal the student will follow the online lectures and complete the reading of the handbook *The One and the Many*, by C.W. Norris. The student will take an exam to ensure that a basic knowledge of the metaphysical notions has been acquired.

2. Become familiar with Aristotle's and Aquinas’ texts on the nature of Metaphysics (Institutional Goal A2: Intellectual Humility). To achieve this goal the student will read up on the assigned readings for Aquinas and Aristotle.

3. Learn about different traditions and schools of thought and how they solved the problems presented by Metaphysics (Institutional Goal A1: Integrative Thinking, and A2: Intellectual Humility). To achieve this goal the student will read the book *Being and Some Philosophers* by E. Gilson. The student will have the opportunity to deepen on other historical and contemporary readings in Metaphysics.

4. Develop critical thought on metaphysical questions (Institutional Goal A3: Self-direction and B: Effective Leadership). To achieve this goal the student will write a critical review paper.

5. Improve writing and argumentative skills in Philosophy (Institutional Goal A1: Integrative Thinking and B: Effective Leadership). To achieve this goal the student will be encouraged to ask questions in class, relate topics of Metaphysics with her/his own interests, background and other philosophical disciplines. Participation during discussion sessions is required. Student presentations and papers will help consolidate philosophical skills and learn philosophical methods.

STUDENT LEARNING OUTCOMES

1. To goal 1. The student will exhibit command of metaphysical notions like act and potency, substance and accidents, causation, essence and existence, transcendentals, as well as of the principles and methods of Metaphysics.

2. To goal 2. The student will be knowledgeable of Aristotle’s and Aquinas’ writings on metaphysics.

3. To goal 3. The student will be able to assess the differences in metaphysical approach of the Ancient and Medieval Metaphysics, Modern and Contemporary Metaphysics.

4. To goal 4. The student will be able to present the key points of the subject in a way that shows knowledge of the basic questions and personal criticism.

5. To goal 5. The student will be proficient in the way of articulating a philosophical problem, critically assessing the arguments and providing her personal input.

ASSIGNMENTS

In this course the student is expected to

- READ THE REQUIRED READINGS EVERY WEEK and take notes for discussion.
- TAKE THE ONLINE LECTURE. Take notes for discussion. Read the referenced texts.
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- ATTEND IN CLASS SESSION and present notes for discussion as well as questions from Clark’s book.
- READ “Being and Some Philosophers”. There will be a question about this book in the midterm exam and presentations at the end of the semester. 10% of the grade.
- MIDTERM EXAM. April 3rd. 40% of the grade. There will be study questions to prepare for this exam.
- WRITE A PAPER. Due May 15th. 50% of the grade. The paper is a critical review of a published paper provided by the instructor. The paper will assess a certain position on a topic and critically support, object or implement the views defended on it. The instructor will provide a list of papers to choose from. The Goals of the paper are:
  - To become familiar with secondary literature and scholarship in Metaphysics, as well as the latest research topics in the area.
  - To learn the craft and skill of scholarly papers by reviewing one of them.
  - To develop writing and argumentative skills.
  - To encourage the student’s own thinking and critical appraisal.
  - The paper will be a "critical review paper".
  - The paper should have an argumentative nature not merely expository.

**READINGS & BIBLIOGRAPHY**

**REQUIRED BOOKS**


**FURTHER REQUIRED READINGS**

- Aquinas, T. *Commentary to Aristotle’s Metaphysics*. Excerpts
- Aquinas, T., *On Being and Essence*
- Aquinas, T. *On the Principles of Nature*
- Aristotle. Metaphysics Gamma (Book IV), chp. 2-6, *Metaphysics* Zeta (Book VII)
- More brief texts from Aristotle and Aquinas will be provided.
RECOMMENDED READINGS (Not Required)
- Descartes, R. *Meditations on First Philosophy*, Fifth Meditation
- Heidegger, M. *What is Metaphysics?*
- Habermas, J. *Postmetaphysical Thinking*, MIT, 1994, Chp. 1, sections 1, 2 and section 3, pp. 3-55.
- Ockham, W., *Ordinatio*, I, dist. 2, q. 6.
- Parmenides. *On Nature*
- Plato. *Phaedo*
- Plato. Parmenides
- Scotus, D. *Ordinatio*, II, dist. 3, pars 1
- Spinoza, B. *Metaphysical Thoughts*, *Essence, Existence*

WORKS OF REFERENCE


## SCHEDULE OF CLASSES

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<tr>
<th>Date</th>
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<tr>
<td>Week 1</td>
<td>Lecture 1</td>
<td>What is Metaphysics</td>
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|              |                   | • Clark, Ch. 2.  
|              |                   | • Anderson, Ch. 1.  
|              |                   | • Aquinas, *Com. Meta.*, Bk. I, 1, 2, 3; and Bk. II, 1, 2; Bk. III, 4; Bk. IV, 1, 2, 3; Bk. VI, 2; Bk. XI, 2, 3. |
|              | Lecture 2         | The Method of Metaphysics                                                                                                               |
|              |                   | • Clark, Ch. 3  
|              |                   | • Anderson c. 2 & 4  
|              |                   | • Aquinas, *Com. Meta.*, Bk. III, I, 2, 3, 5, 6, 7, Bk. VI, 1; Bk. XI, 7.  |
|              | Lecture 3         | Metaphysics and Science                                                                                                                 |
|              |                   | • Clark Ch. 1  
|              |                   | • Aquinas, *Com. Meta.*, Bk. VI, I, 1; Bk. XI, I, 7.  |
| Week 2       | Lecture 14        | Transcendentals                                                                                                                         |
|              |                   | • Clark Ch. 4, 16, 17, 18  
|              |                   | • Anderson Ch. 5-9  |
|              | Lecture 4         | The First Principles                                                                                                                   |
|              |                   | • Aristotle’s *Metaphysics*, Bk. 4  
|              |                   | • Aquinas, *Com. Meta.*, Bk. III, 15; Bk. IV, I, 4, 5, 6; Bk. V, I, 1; Bk. XI, I, 1, 4, 5. |
| Week 3       | Lecture 5         | Act and Potentiality                                                                                                                    |
|              |                   | • Clark Ch. 7  
|              |                   | • Feser Ch. 1  
|              |                   | • Aristotle, *Metaphysics*, Bk. IX.  
|              |                   | • Aquinas, *Com. Meta.*, Bk. V, 14; Bk IX, 1-10.  |
|              | Lecture 6         | Causality I                                                                                                                             |
|              |                   | • Clark, Ch. 6 and 9  
|              |                   | • Feser, Ch. 2  
| Week 4       | Lecture 7         | Causality II                                                                                                                            |
|              |                   | • Clark, Ch. 12 and 13  
|              |                   | • Feser, Ch. 2  
|              | Lecture 8         | Individuation                                                                                                                           |
|              |                   | • Clark Ch. 10  
|              |                   | • Wippel, 351-375  |
| Week 5       | Lecture 9         | Categories                                                                                                                              |
|              |                   | • Anderson, Ch. 3  
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| Week 7       | Lecture 10 | Substance            | Clark, Ch. 8  
               |             |                      | Feser Ch. 3   
               |             |                      | Aristotle, *Metaphysics* Bk. VII  
               |             |                      | Aquinas, *Com. Meta.*, Bk. III, 9, 10, 12; Bk. V, 10, Bk. XII 1-3. |
| Week 8       | Lecture 11 | Accidents            | Clark Ch. 11  
| Week 9       |            | Spring Break         | No assigned readings |
| Week 10      |            | MIDTERM              | No assigned readings |
| Week 11      | Lecture 12 | *Esse* and Essence I | Clark Ch. 5  
               |             |                      | Feser, Ch. 4   
               |             |                      | Aquinas, *De Ente et Essentia* |
| Week 12      | Lecture 13 | *Esse* and Essence II | Clark, Ch. 19  
               |             |                      | Wippel, “Essence-Esse Composition and the One and the Many”, 132-176 |
| Week 13      | Lecture 15 | Natural Theology     | Clark, Ch. 14  
               |             |                      | Anderson, Ch. 10   
               |             |                      | Aquinas, *Summa Theologia*, Part I, q. 12 |
|              |            | God’s Existence      | Aquinas, *Com. Meta*, Bk. II, 3-4; Bk. 12, 5-8, 11, 12  
               |             |                      | Aquinas, *Summa Contra Gentes* I, 10-13 |
|              |            | God’s Essence        | Aquinas, *Summa Contra Gentes*, Bk. I |
| Week 14      | Discussion | Gilson: Being and Some Philosophers | *Being and Some Philosophers* |
| Week 15      | Discussion | Gilson: Being and Some Philosophers | *Being and Some Philosophers* |
| Week 16      | EXAM WEEK  |                      | No assigned readings |