

672-364 Metaphysics

Credit Points:	12.50
Level:	3 (Undergraduate)
Dates & Locations:	This subject is not offered in 2009.
Time Commitment:	Contact Hours: Thirty-two contact hours per semester: two 1-hour lectures per week for the first 11 weeks and a 1-hour tutorial per week beginning the third week of semester Total Time Commitment: 2.5 contact hours/week, 6 additional hours/week. Total of 8.5 hours per week.
Prerequisites:	At least one first-year philosophy subject, or permission from the Head of School or the subject coordinator.
Corequisites:	None
Recommended Background Knowledge:	None
Non Allowed Subjects:	None
Core Participation Requirements:	<p><p>For the purposes of considering request for Reasonable Adjustments under the Disability Standards for Education (Cwth 2005), and Student Support and Engagement Policy, academic requirements for this subject are articulated in the Subject Overview, Learning Outcomes, Assessment and Generic Skills sections of this entry.</p> <p><p>It is University policy to take all reasonable steps to minimise the impact of disability upon academic study, and reasonable adjustments will be made to enhance a student's participation in the University's programs. Students who feel their disability may impact on meeting the requirements of this subject are encouraged to discuss this matter with a Faculty Student Adviser and Student Equity and Disability Support: http://services.unimelb.edu.au/disability</p></p> </p>
Contact:	Assoc Prof Christopher Cordner ccordner@unimelb.edu.au
Subject Overview:	This subject introduces students to contemporary metaphysics, or more precisely to that branch of the subject known as ontology: traditionally described as 'the study of being'. We shall study the subject principally by examining the work of contemporary philosophers in the analytical tradition, such as the Americans WVO Quine and David Lewis. Typical of the topics discussed are the range of existing things: in what sense, if any, do minds, persons, numbers, fictional entities, and merely possible things exist, side by side with familiar material objects? We shall look at the role of identity criteria and of the possession of causal powers in deciding such issues. A further question concerns the existence of general things ('universals', such as redness) over and above the particular things in which they are instanced. On completing this subject, students should have a critical knowledge of the main issues in contemporary analytical metaphysics, and be in a position to go on to more advanced work in the area.
Objectives:	Students who successfully complete this subject will <ul style="list-style-type: none"> # acquire an understanding of the main issues in contemporary metaphysics, as discussed in the analytical philosophical tradition; # learn to critically assess these issues; # learn to appreciate the significance of metaphysics in the broader philosophical contexts.
Assessment:	A written assignment of 2000 words 50% (due mid-semester), tutorial participation 3%, and a 2-hour written examination (not open-book) 47% (at the end of the semester).
Prescribed Texts:	A subject reader will be available from the Bookroom at the beginning of semester
Breadth Options:	This subject potentially can be taken as a breadth subject component for the following courses: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> # Bachelor of Biomedicine (https://handbook.unimelb.edu.au/view/2009/J07) # Bachelor of Commerce (https://handbook.unimelb.edu.au/view/2009/F04) # Bachelor of Environments (https://handbook.unimelb.edu.au/view/2009/A04) # Bachelor of Music (https://handbook.unimelb.edu.au/view/2009/M05)

	<p># Bachelor of Science (https://handbook.unimelb.edu.au/view/2009/R01)</p> <p># Bachelor of Engineering (https://handbook.unimelb.edu.au/view/2009/355-AA)</p> <p>You should visit learn more about breadth subjects (http://breadth.unimelb.edu.au/breadth/info/index.html) and read the breadth requirements for your degree, and should discuss your choice with your student adviser, before deciding on your subjects.</p>
Fees Information:	Subject EFTSL, Level, Discipline & Census Date, http://enrolment.unimelb.edu.au/fees
Generic Skills:	<p>Students who successfully complete this subject will</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> # acquire the ability to comprehend and evaluate complex argumentative text; # have learnt to appreciate the importance of subtle differences of detail in theoretical dispute, and their ramifications; # have learnt to think in highly abstract and theoretical terms.
Notes:	Previously available as The Structure of Reality. Students who have completed The Structure of Reality are not eligible to enrol in this subject.
Related Majors/Minors/Specialisations:	<p>Philosophy</p> <p>Philosophy Major</p>