

Philosophy 354: METAPHYSICS

Professor Barbara Hannan Cooke
University of New Mexico
Spring Semester 2012

Class meets: MWF 10:00 to 10:50, CENT. Engineering Center, Rm. TBA

Prof. Hannan's Office: Humanities 561

Office Hours: MWF 11:00 to 11:50

Secretary/messages: 277-2405

e-mail: bhannan@unm.edu

Texts:

Keith Campbell, *Metaphysics: An Introduction* (First published in 1976; now out of print, but I have arranged for you to be able to buy it through University Readers.com; see ordering instructions e-mailed to you.)

Jaegwon Kim and Ernest Sosa, editors, *Metaphysics: An Anthology* (latest edition).

Course Description:

This is a course on metaphysics in the analytic tradition, in which metaphysics is seen as an inquiry into the nature of reality continuous with empirical science. We will first take a brief look at the history of metaphysics from ancient Greece through the 19th century. Next, we will look at logical empiricism in the 20th century, and its failure to eliminate metaphysics as meaningless. The logical atomism of the early Wittgenstein and Russell will be examined as a return to the metaphysical strategy taken in Aristotle's *Categories* (basing a scheme of ontological categories on a suitably purified language). Quine's analytic ontology will be examined in the same vein. We will also look at classical atomism as an approach to the philosophy of matter, and how it failed given the advent of quantum theory, general relativity, and other developments in modern physics. With all this as background, we will read some recent papers on various aspects of reality by "ontologically serious" contemporary metaphysicians.

Students will be graded on a single written assignment due at the end of the semester (on the last day the class meets). This will be a paper (either a research paper or a personal investigation of a metaphysical issue) about 8 to 12 pages in length. Various topics will be suggested (in class and on Web-CT) as we progress through the term. On Friday March 9 (the last day of class before Spring Break) everyone should turn in an outline of the proposed paper.