

Metaphysics is the branch of philosophy devoted to exactly characterizing the nature of reality, as opposed to what we can know about it, or how we manage to represent it. In this course, we will survey some basic questions of contemporary metaphysics. Is every true proposition true in virtue of the existence of something? Are there different levels to reality? What is the nature of causation and counterfactual dependence? Do facts about how the world could have been different presuppose the existence of possible objects? What is existence, anyway? What is the nature of infinity, and infinitely divisible space and time? How do advances in physics bear on such questions? What is the place of consciousness in the resulting picture? Is there room for free action? Why is the world such that we can accurately represent it in language and thought? Are there genuine answers to such questions, or are all answers somehow relative or shallow?