

PHI 540: Metaphysics and Logic

Instructor: Boris Kment

We will be talking about issues at the intersection of metaphysics with logic (very broadly conceived), paying special attention to the ways in which ideas and results in one of these disciplines can motivate views, and help us resolve problems, in the others. Topics might be selected from the following list.

- (i) *Ground and Paradox I*. Some theories of metaphysical explanation endorse what might be called an “iterative conception” of reality, according to which the realm of facts is divided up into a hierarchy of different levels of fundamentality. Does this conception shed new light on the paradoxes of truth, heterologicality, and set theory? Can it be used to provide the metaphysical foundations of a new and promising approach to these paradoxes?
- (ii) *Ground and Paradox II*. Does the theory of ground face its own set of paradoxes, as Kit Fine has argued? If so, does their resolution require revisions in our logic?
- (iii) *Paradox, Vagueness, and Metaphysical Indeterminacy*. Does a workable solution to problems of vagueness or to the paradoxes require us to say that reality is somehow incomplete or indeterminate? How would such indeterminacy be reflected in the correct system of propositional logic?
- (iv) *True Contradictions*. Do the most attractive solutions to some problems in metaphysics or logic require us to accept that there are true contradictions?
- (v) *Symmetry, substitution, and second-order logic*. Is a non-symmetrical relation (such as loving) identical with its converse (being-loved-by)? If the answer is ‘yes’, then predicates expressing the same non-symmetrical relation cannot generally be substituted for each other *salva veritate* (‘A loves B’ need not have the same truth-value as ‘A is loved by B’). Does that create problems for quantification into predicate position?
- (vi) *Semantics, Logic, and Necessary Existence*. Does model-theoretic semantics in logic, or possible-worlds semantics for natural languages, commit us to the necessary existence of everything? Does the system of modal logic that is most attractive by scientific standards entail that you exist necessarily, and that you could have been a non-concrete object?
- (vii) *Intrinsic Representation*. Some philosophers have argued that propositions are ‘intrinsically representational,’ in the sense that they do not owe their representational features to the way they are interpreted. Is there a credible metaphysical account of such ‘intrinsic representation’?

The seminar will feature a number of guest speakers. Confirmed so far: Kit Fine, Daniel Nolan, and Graham Priest.