

Metaphysics: Time

PHI 540
Wednesdays, 1:30-4:20pm
Marx 201

Instructor

David Builes
Marx 203
dbuiles@princeton.edu

Course Description

This seminar will survey some contemporary work in the metaphysics of time. One of the goals of the seminar is to serve as an advanced introduction to the metaphysics of time, so no prior knowledge in the metaphysics of time will be assumed. In some weeks, our discussion will intersect with topics in physics, but when it does, the relevant scientific background will be introduced in a self-contained way. Each week, our discussion will be centered on one or two recent papers on a certain topic. In some weeks, I've also suggested optional readings that serve as either background material or follow-up material.

Assessment

If you would like to receive a unit for the class: (i) submit a first draft of a term paper, of a minimum of 3,000 words, by November 10th, and (ii) submit a final paper (~7,000-12,000 words) by December 14th. Students from other departments who need a grade should talk to me.

Tentative Schedule

Week 1: Truthmaking and The A-theory

Actualism, Presentism, and the Grounding Objection - Emery (2018)

The Truth About the Past and the Future - Markosian (2013)

Optional Further Reading: A Defence of Lucretian Presentism - Tallant and Ingram (2020)

Week 2: Relativity and The A-theory

Why Special Relativity is a Problem for the A-theory - Turner (2020)

Actualism without Presentism? Not by way of the Relativity Objection - Emery (2019)

Optional Further Reading: *What Makes Time Special?* (Chapters 2-5) - Calendar (2017)

Week 3: Persistence

Endurantism vs Perdurantism?: A Debate Reconsidered - Magidor (2016)

Week 4: Persistence and Laws

Lawful Persistence - Builes and Teitel (MS)

Optional Background: Determinism *De Re* - Hawthorne (2006)

Optional Background: Can We Do Without Fundamental Individuals? - Dasgupta (2015)

Week 5: Experience and Time I

Experience and the Passage of Time - Skow (2011)

Experiencing Time (Chapter 2) - Prosser (2016)

Week 6: Experience and Time II

Presentism and Temporal Experience - Akiko Frischhut (2017)

Presentism and Consciousness - McKinnon (2003)

Week 7: The Epistemic Objection to 4D A-theories

Good-Bye Growing Block - Merricks (2006)

Hazardous Conditions Persist - Deasy and Tallant (Forthcoming)

Optional Further Reading: Growing Block's Past Problems - Forbes (2016)

Week 8: Contingentism vs Necessitism

Anti-Metaphysicalism, Necessity, and Temporal Ontology - Balaguer (2016)

The Unique Groundability of Temporal Facts - Cusbert and Miller (2018)

Week 9: Empirical (In)Equivalence

Look at the Time! - Builes (2021)

Self-Locating Evidence and the Metaphysics of Time - Builes (2019)

Optional Background: Sleeping Beauty and the Dynamics of *De Se* Beliefs - Meacham (2008)

Week 10: The Passage of Time

Can Time Pass at the Rate of 1 Second Per Second? - Raven (2011)

Why does time pass? - Skow (2012)

Optional Background: Time Without Change - Shoemaker (1969)

Week 11: Rates of Change

How Can Instantaneous Velocity Play Its Causal Role? - Lange (2005)

Optional Further Reading: A Puzzle About Rates of Change - Builes and Teitel (2020)

Week 12: Rates of change and the A-theory

Dynamic Quantities for Dynamic Time - Builes and Spencer (MS)

Optional Background: Are There Really Instantaneous Velocities? - Arntzenius (2000)