

# **Philosophy 741: Seminar in Metaphysics**

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This class will be conducted online and synchronously. The class meetings will be on Zoom, at the regularly scheduled time for the class. (The Zoom meetings will also be recorded and made available upon request to students in the class. The recordings will come with transcripts produced by Zoom's software. These are imperfect, but still useful for some purposes.) My office hours will also take place on Zoom.

**Class Meetings:** Wednesday 12:20pm-2:50pm.

**My Office Hours:** Tuesday 2:00pm-3:00pm, Thursday 1:00pm-2:00pm.

## **Course Overview**

This course will focus on two recent books that are already having an outsized influence in the metaphysics literature: Lynne Rudder Baker's *The Metaphysics of Everyday Life*, and Karen Bennett's *Making Things Up*. Baker's book offers an alternative to the anti-commonsense views (fundamental reality consists of nothing more than collections of particles, for example) that dominate the mainstream metaphysics literature; and Bennett's book provides a novel, satisfying, and unified account of a number of different phenomena (including composition, causation, grounding, and property realization) that feature prominently in recent metaphysics but have never before been thought of as closely related.

## **Course Requirements**

- ❖ **Two presentations** (collectively worth 20% of final grade)
- ❖ **Eight weekly papers** (collectively worth 30% of final grade)
- ❖ **One term paper** (worth 50% of final grade)

## Required Readings

- Lynne Rudder Baker, *The Metaphysics of Everyday Life* (Cambridge University Press, 2009).
- Karen Bennett, *Making Things Up* (Oxford University Press, 2019).

## About Presentations

Each of your presentations should be about 15 minutes long, and should feature a 1- or 2-page handout. You are not expected to summarize the reading. Instead, you should select one main point or argument from the reading (ideally this will be one of the two or three most important things in the reading), and present your own response to that point or argument. After your presentation you will conduct a 10-minute Q&A session.

Our schedule for presentations will be worked out on the first day of class.

## About Weekly Papers

For each day when there is a reading assignment and you are not giving a presentation, you will be required to turn in a weekly paper on that day's reading assignment. A weekly paper is a 3-page paper in which you (i) summarize the main content of the reading assignment, and (ii) raise some substantive questions or objections about that content.

Your lowest weekly paper grade will be automatically dropped, and the remaining seven grades will be averaged to determine your overall weekly paper grade.

Weekly papers are due at 10am on the day of a given reading assignment, and must be submitted using Turnitin on Moodle. Late papers will be penalized 10 points (out of 100) per day. Extensions are possible for students who email me ahead of time.

## About Term Papers

Your term paper must be on an approved topic, and should be approximately 4000-7000 words (about 12-20 pages) long. It must be submitted using Turnitin on Moodle. Late papers will be penalized at the rate of one letter grade per day, but extensions are available to those who email me ahead of time.

## Schedule

Date	Reading Assignment/Topic	Presenter(s)
Feb	3 Course intro	
	10 Baker, Ch. 1-3	KT, GP
	17 Baker, Ch. 4-5	
	24 <i>No class (Wellbeing Wednesday)</i>	
Mar	1 Baker, Ch. 6-7	JP
Mar	3 Baker, Ch. 8-9	MD, CD
	10 Baker, Ch. 10-11	MS
	17 Bennett, Ch. 1-2	GP, KT
	24 Bennett, Ch. 3-4	CD
	31 Bennett, Ch. 5	MD, MS
Apr	7 Bennett, Ch. 6	JP
	14 <i>No class (Wellbeing Wednesday)</i>	
	20 <i>No class (Wellbeing Tuesday)</i>	
	21 Bennett, Ch. 7-8, Appendix	
	28 <i>Karen Bennett guest appearance</i>	
May	10 <b>Term papers due at 5PM</b>	