

PHIL 291 / Spring 2026

Advanced Seminar in Metaphysics: THE ISSUE OF EXISTENCE *A Cross-Tradition Engaging Approach*

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Class format: fully online

This seminar course as given in Spring 2026 is to examine one most fundamental and perennial metaphysical issue in philosophy, *the issue of existence*, in a holistic cross-tradition engaging way, through the joint lens of metaphysics, philosophy of language, philosophy of logic, etc., and in view of updated scholarship on the issue. The issue of existence will be examined through its two closely related sub-issues: (1) Are there distinct kinds of being or existence? Do some objects exist in different ways? Do some objects enjoy more existence than other objects? (2) How to understand the identity (as sameness) of existing things? What is the relation between the two fundamental metaphysical forces, “being” (sameness/unchanging) and “becoming” (difference/changing)? (1) and (2) combined: How to understand and characterize the existential sameness identities of distinct types of existence?

Basic texts:

<1> Kris McDaniel: *The Fragmentation of Being* (Oxford University Press / paperback 2019 / ISBN 9780198848080).

<2> Bo Mou: *Cross-Tradition Engagement on the Law of Logic: Approaching Identity and Reference from Classical Chinese Philosophy to Modern Logic* (Routledge / paperback 2025 / ISBN 978103259052).

<3> *Course Reader* (its included files to be posted as the course proceeds).

Note: the text <1> is primarily for the above sub-issue (1); the text <2> is primarily for the above sub-issue (2). They are selected primarily in view of their relevant and updated scholarship, also with consideration of reducing the students' cost (their paperbacks available).

Prerequisite:

At least one upper division course in metaphysics (or epistemology, philosophy of language, logic), or instructor consent.