

# METAONTOLOGY

Ted Sider, Spring 2006  
Davison 37, (732) 932-9861 xt. 158  
sider@philosophy.rutgers.edu  
<http://fas-philosophy.rutgers.edu/sider/>

## Description

First-order ontological debates concern whether objects of various sorts exist, for instance numbers, universals, composite material objects, etc. This seminar will examine the status of those debates. When one philosopher says that numbers exist, and another says that numbers do not exist, what exactly are they disagreeing about? About some “deep matter of fact”, or only about how to talk? Could it be indeterminate who is correct? How do we decide who is correct?

## Readings

Readings will be available for xeroxing in Susan Viola’s office, Davison 124. Some are on electronic reserve through our library:

[http://www.libraries.rutgers.edu/rul/lib\\_servs/course\\_reserves.shtml](http://www.libraries.rutgers.edu/rul/lib_servs/course_reserves.shtml)

A bibliography on metaontology is available at

[http://fas-philosophy.rutgers.edu/sider/teaching/M006/metaontology\\_bib.pdf](http://fas-philosophy.rutgers.edu/sider/teaching/M006/metaontology_bib.pdf)

Bibliographic references in the schedule (below) are to this bibliography. I have copies of many articles on the bibliography; feel free to borrow them from me to xerox.

My course notes will sometimes be available online:

[http://fas-philosophy.rutgers.edu/sider/teaching/M006/metaontology\\_notes.pdf](http://fas-philosophy.rutgers.edu/sider/teaching/M006/metaontology_notes.pdf)

## Requirements

Requirements: 5 page expository paper (due March 6); 20 page term paper. Let me know in advance what your term paper topic is.

# SCHEDULE

**Intro to first-order ontology** Van Inwagen 1990, pp. 6-12, chapters 2-3, 9-11; Lewis and Lewis 1970; Putnam 1971, chapters 7, 8

*Optional:* van Inwagen 1990, chapter 4; Burgess and Rosen 1997, introduction; Benacceraf 1973

**Carnap vs Quine** Quine 1948; Carnap 1950; van Inwagen 1998; Yablo 1998

*Optional:* Quine 1936, 1951a, 1951b, 1951c, 1953, 1969

**Challenges to Quine on ontological commitment** Szabó 2003 (good general background); Melia 1995; Prior 1971; Rayo and Yablo 2001; Hofweber 2005; van Inwagen 1981; Yablo 2000b

*Optional:* Boolos 1975, 1984, 1985; Stanley 2001; Sider 1999; Kripke 1976; Gottlieb 1980; Goodman 1978 chapters 1, 6 and 7

**Neo-Fregeanism** Background: Heck 1999. Overview: Eklund Unpublished B. We'll first work through: MacBride 2003. Then: Hale and Wright 2001, introduction; Hale and Wright 2000; Rosen 1993; Boolos 1997

[Fine 2002?]

*Optional:* Wright 1983; Field 1984; Rayo 2005

**Ontological deflationism about material objects** Putnam 1987b; Hirsch 2002a; Thomasson 2007; Eklund Forthcoming B

*Optional:* Sosa 1993; Hirsch 2002b, 2004, 2005, Forthcoming; Bennett 2007; Sidelle 2002

**Ontological realism** Quine 1960, Lewis 1983, 1984, Sider 2007

*Optional:* Prior 1960, Belnap 1961-62

[?: Brandom, Dummett, Horwich 1997, Peacocke]

**Meinongianism** Chisholm 1973; McGinn 2000, chapter 2; Lewis 1990

**Unrestricted quantification** Cartwright 1994; Rayo and Uzquiano forthcoming, introduction; Williamson 2003; Fine forthcoming

**Note:** Eklund Forthcoming C contains a nice overview of the topics of this course