# Metaphysics : Western

## SEMESTER I
## (AS PER CBCS AND NEP 2020)

# PHILOSOPHY

SURYA KUMAR BHUYAN SCHOOL OF SOCIAL SCIENCES

KRISHNA KANTA HANDIQUI STATE OPEN UNIVERSITY

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## CONTENTS


| | | Page No: |
|---|---|---|
| **UNIT 1:** | **The Nature of metaphysical enquiry: Metaphysical Arguments**<br>The Subdivisions of Metaphysics, Nature of Metaphysics, Is Metaphysics Possible? | **1-15** |
| **UNIT 2:** | **Universals: Conceptualism**<br>Universals, The nature of universal and its relation to particulars, Conceptualism: | **16-23** |
| **UNIT 3:** | **Universals: Realism (Plato and Aristotle)**<br>Universal: Its nature and theories, Realism, Plato's realism, Aristotle's realism | **24-38** |
| **UNIT 4:** | **Nominalism**<br>Problem of Universals, Abstract Objects and Universals: Arguments Against them, Different forms of Nominalism | **39-53** |
| **UNIT 5:** | **Personal Identity**<br>Bodily criterion, Memory criterion, Jean Paul Sartre's Viewpoint on Self-Identity, Critical Appreciation | **54-75** |
| **UNIT 6:** | **Cause: Necessary Connection and Constant Conjunction**<br>Definition and meaning of cause, Aristotle view about cause, David Hume's view about cause, John Stuart's Mill's analysis of cause, Francis Bacon's views on causal relation, Cause and necessary connection, Constant conjunction | **76-99** |
| **UNIT 7:** | **Contemporary Analysis of Causal Language**<br>Concept of causality, Analysis of causal language, Causality in Indian philosophy, | **100-116** |
| **UNIT 8:** | **Space and Time**<br>Concept of Space, Perceptual and Conceptual Space, Origin of idea of Space, Concept of Time, Perceptual and Conceptual Time, Origin of idea of Time, Subjectivity and Objectivity of Space and Time | **117-136** |
| **UNIT 9:** | **Mind- Body Relation**<br>Descartes view on Mind- Body relation, Spinoza's View on Mind-Body relation, Leibnitz's view on Mind-Body relation, Strawson's view on Mind and Body Relation | **137-163** |
| **UNIT 10:** | **Substance**<br>What is Substance? Aristotle's view, Rationalists' View, Empiricists' View, Contemporary View | **164-178** |

**UNIT 11: Appearance and Reality** **179-193**

Bradley on the Distinction between Appearance and Reality, Russell on the Distinction between Appearance and Reality, Plato on the Distinction between Appearance and Reality, Bradley on the Distinction between Appearance and Reality, Berkeley's Response on the Distinction between Appearance and Reality, Thomas Reid's Response on the Distinction between Appearance and Reality:

**UNIT 12: The Problem of Categories of Kant and Ryle** **194-219**

Problem of category in Kant's Philosophy, Synthetic unity of Apperception and the categories, Schematism, Problem of category in Ryle's Philosophy, Concept of category mistake, Ryle's approach to Category

**UNIT 13: Aristotle's Concept of Causation** **220-235**

The four Types of Causes, Form and Matter, Potentiality and Actuality, Comparison between Aristotle's conception of causation and modern analysis of causation

**UNIT 14: Concept of Person** **236-253**

The Concept of Person (Locke), Hume's View, Persons and their experiences, Rene Descartes and the "no ownership doctrine", The Concept of person as primitive, Appreciation and criticism of Strawson's theory

**UNIT 15: Language and Reality** **254-272**

Language and the Nature of Language, Reality and the nature of reality, The Relationship between Language and Reality

## COURSE INTRODUCTION

The first course of First Semester of M A in Philosophy of KKHSOU is "Metaphysics: Western". It is designed to help the learners to have a deep understanding of the theoretical knowledge of metaphysics. As a learner of Master Degree in Philosophy one must have proper and thorough understanding about different theories and thoughts of metaphysics. Metaphysics is an important branch of philosophy. As a philosophy or theory of the 'real' or 'being' it concerns itself with basic question whether the reality or being, wholly or partially, reveals itself in the process of knowing. This question also leads to another important question, that is, is there any scope of distinction between the known world and the real world? The Answer to this question involves a vital issue which is technically known as 'Appearance and reality'. It is considered the core of any metaphysical enquiry, because it involves the important issues like idealism, realism, agnosticism and the skepticism. That is why, metaphysics as one of the important branches of philosophy forms the core of any philosophical enquiry. Again it is found that 'epistemology' or the theory of knowing is essentially connected with metaphysics because we cannot start the enquiry of the theory of 'real' or 'being' unless and until we already justify our claim and prove by the process of knowing that knowledge of the enquiry is possible. If it is supposed that we cannot know the 'real' or 'being', it is meaningless to investigate the nature of reality. So, the issue of the nature and validity of our knowledge and the enquiry of the nature of reality or being are the two aspects of the same enquiry.

This course consists of fifteen units in total.
First unit of this course is 'The Nature of metaphysical enquiry: Metaphysical Arguments'. After going through this unit one will be able to know what metaphysics is and to find out what metaphysical enquiry is. Differentiate between a metaphysical enquiry and a non-metaphysical enquiry. This unit will also try to answer if Metaphysics is possible and will try to acquaint with some metaphysical problems.

The name of the second unit of this course is 'Universals: Conceptualism'. This unit is going to study the basic outlines of universals. After going through this unit one will be able to know the nature of universal and its relation to particulars. Conceptualism is one of the important branches of universal. By reading this unit, you will be able to know about conceptualism.

'Universals: Realism (Plato and Aristotle)' is the third unit of this course. This unit introduces to you the problem of universals sprang from our experience, thought and language. It is a matter of common experience that particular things exist in space and time. Particular things like a chair, a table, a red colour, a cow, a tree etc exist in a particular space and in a particular time. They are different from and exclusive of one another. This unit will specially emphasis on realism and views of Plato and Aristotle.

The fourth unit of the course one is 'Nominalism'. After going through this unit, one will able to know that nnominalism is a theory according to which reality is only made up of particular items. It denies the real existence of any general entities such as properties, species, or other categories. The term "nominalism" stems from the Latin "nomen", "name." According to nominalism there is nothing general except names.

The fifth unit of this course is 'Personal Identity'. This unit introduces to you about the problem of personal identity is a philosophical enquiry of re-identifications of persons. Some philosophers have said that we are never concerned with this problem because sameness and changes are themselves incompatible, while some others opine that sameness and changes are compatible. In this regard philosophers accept two criteria of personal identity in order to explore the mystery of personal identity. They are: i) Bodily identity and ii) Memory identity. Now, we will discuss the above two criteria one by one in order to discuss the problem.

The sixth unit of this course is 'Cause: Necessary Connection and Constant Conjunction'. This unit consists of cause and causal connection. Common people believe that a cause is a power or force which produces the effect. Physical science improves upon this popular view and interprets causality in the light of the doctrine of conservation of energy. By conservation of energy we mean that the total amount of energy in the universe is constant, that it is neither increased nor decreased but that it undergoes modification in different forms.

The seventh unit is 'Contemporary Analysis of Causal Language.' This unit deals with the notion of causality. Generally, the relation between cause and effect is known as causality. A very definition of causality can be expressed as if 'C' then 'E'. It is a formula of 'constant conjunction' that advocated by David Hume. According to the formula, 'C' causes 'E' means the same as 'C' is constantly conjoined with 'E' or 'C' is regularly followed by 'E'. Hume appears to be describing causal relationship, and in this description, psychology and philosophical analysis are interwoven.

'Space and Time' is the eighth unit of course one. This unit introduces to you the concept of Space and time which are categories of knowledge. The simplest form of knowledge is judgment. A judgment consists of subject and predicate. Different judgments have different predicates .There are certain predicates which are universally present in all judgments. These universal notions involved in all judgments are called categories of knowledge. The word "category" means what predicated or affirmed of something in thinking of it.

The ninth unit is Mind-Body Relation'. This unit introduces to you different theories forwarded by different philosophers regarding the problem of Mind- Body relation. We will discuss here the theories like Interactionism given by Descartes, Parallelism by Spinoza, Pre-established harmony by Leibnitz, Russell's view on Leibnitz's concept of Mind- Body relation, and Strawson's view on Mind-Body relation etc.
The tenth unit of the course four is, 'Substance'. This unit introduces to you that substance is one of the central metaphysical concepts attracting the interest of philosophers over time. The problem is as old as philosophy itself. It is discussed with equal significance both in Indian and Western philosophy. A number of philosophical problems have centered round the concept of substance.

The eleventh unit is, 'Appearance and Reality'. This unit introduces to you the concepts of appearance and reality and will try to find out whether they are different from each other or not. Daniel Webster once stated, "The world is governed more by appearances than realities, so that it is fully as necessary to seem to know something as to know it." In other words, much of what goes on in the world is due to what people think rather than what actually is; therefore, the only thing one must do is present himself in the way he wants others to believe he truly is.

The twelfth unit of this course is 'The Problem of Categories of Kant and Ryle'. After reading this unit one will be able to explain categories in Kant's philosophy and will be able to discuss the relation between synthetic unity of Apperception and the categories. This unit will also try to elaborate schematism. After going through this unit one will not only be able to describe critically Kant's problem of categories but will be able to explain category mistake.

The thirteenth unit of the course one is, 'Aristotle's Concept of Causation'. After going through this unit one will be able to know that Aristotle was not the first person to engage in a causal investigation of the world around us. From the very beginning, and independently of Aristotle, the investigation of the natural world consisted in the search for the relevant causes of a variety of natural phenomena. The so-called "inquiry into nature" consisted in a search for "the causes of each thing; why each thing comes into existence, why it goes out of existence, why it exists".

The fourteenth unit is 'The Concept of Person'. This unit will consist of the concept of person from the different perspective. According to the concept of person, a person is an individual capable of moral agency. Although the details of their theories of human nature differ widely, Descartes, Locke, Kant and Strawson, all accepted a functional description of the person that includes both mental and physical features: the attribution of responsibilities to a moral agent requires both the ability to choose and an ability to act on that choice.

The fifteenth unit of this course is 'Language and Reality'. The main contention of this unit is to show the relationship between language and reality. This unit may be segmented into three different sub-sections. Section one deals with the very nature of language; section two deals with the very nature of reality or ontology and section three deals with the relationship between language and reality.

While going through this course you will come across some boxes which are put on the left side or right side of the text. These boxes will give us the meanings of some words and concepts within the text. Apart from this, there will be some broad and short questions included under Activity and Check Your Progress in every unit. Activities will increase our thinking capacity because questions put in Activity are not directly derived from the text. But answers to the short questions are put in the section Answers to Check Your Progress. Besides, there are some text-related questions which are put in Model Questions. These questions will help you in selecting and mastering probable topics for the examination so that you can prepare for the examination with confidence.