**Metaphysics** is the branch of [philosophy](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Philosophy) that studies the first principles of being, identity and change, space and time, causality, necessity and possibility.[[1]](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Metaphysics#cite_note-1) It includes questions about the nature of [consciousness](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Consciousness) and the relationship between [mind](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Mind) and [matter](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Matter). The word "metaphysics" comes from two Greek words that, together, literally mean "after or behind or among [the study of] the natural". It has been suggested that the term might have been coined by a first century CE editor who assembled various small selections of [Aristotle](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Aristotle)’s works into the treatise we now know by the name [*Metaphysics*](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Metaphysics_(Aristotle)) (μετὰ τὰ φυσικά, *meta ta physika*, lit. 'after the [*Physics*](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Physics_(Aristotle)) ', another of Aristotle's works).[[2]](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Metaphysics#cite_note-Stanford.Enc.Philosophy-2)

Metaphysics studies questions related to what it is for something to exist and what types of existence there are. Metaphysics seeks to answer, in an abstract and fully general manner, the questions:[[3]](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Metaphysics#cite_note-3)

1. What *is there*?
2. What is it *like*?

Topics of metaphysical investigation include [existence](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Existence), [objects](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Object_(philosophy)) and their [properties](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Property_(philosophy)), [space](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Space) and [time](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Time), [cause and effect](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Causality), and [possibility](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Subjunctive_possibility). Metaphysics is considered one of the four main branches of philosophy, along with [epistemology](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Epistemology), [logic](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Logic), and [ethics](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Ethics).[[4]](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Metaphysics#cite_note-Britannica-4)

Metaphysical study is conducted using [deduction](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Deductive_reasoning)  Like [foundational mathematics](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Foundations_of_mathematics) (which is sometimes considered a special case of metaphysics applied to the existence of number), it tries to give a coherent account of the structure of the world, capable of explaining our everyday and scientific perception of the world, and being free from contradictions. In mathematics, there are many different ways to define numbers; similarly, in metaphysics, there are many different ways to define objects, properties, concepts, and other entities that are claimed to make up the world. While metaphysics may, as a special case, study the entities postulated by fundamental science such as atoms and superstrings, its core topic is the set of categories such as object, property and causality which those scientific theories assume. For example: claiming that "electrons have charge" is a scientific theory; while exploring what it means for electrons to be (or at least, to be perceived as) "objects", charge to be a "property", and for both to exist in a topological entity called "space" is the task of metaphysics.[[5]](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Metaphysics#cite_note-5)

There are two broad stances about what is "the world" studied by metaphysics. According to [metaphysical realism](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Philosophical_realism), the objects studied by metaphysics exist independently of any observer so that the subject is the most fundamental of all sciences.[[6]](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Metaphysics#cite_note-Khlentzos-6) [Metaphysical anti-realism](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Anti-realism#Metaphysical_anti-realism), on the other hand, assumes that the objects studied by metaphysics exist inside the mind of an observer, so the subject becomes a form of [introspection](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Introspection) and [conceptual analysis](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Conceptual_analysis).[[](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Metaphysics#cite_note-Khlentzos-6)

**Ontology** is the branch of [philosophy](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Philosophy) that studies concepts such as [existence](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Existence), [being](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Being), [becoming](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Becoming_(philosophy)), and [reality](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Reality). It includes the questions of how entities are grouped into [basic categories](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Category_of_being) and which of these entities exist on the most fundamental level. Ontology is sometimes referred to as the *science of being*. It has been characterized as *general metaphysics* in contrast to *special metaphysics*, which is concerned with more particular aspects of being.[[7](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Metaphysics#cite_note-7)

**Identity and change**

*See also:*[*Identity (philosophy)*](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Identity_(philosophy))

[Identity](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Identity_(philosophy)) is a fundamental metaphysical concern. Metaphysicians investigating identity are tasked with the question of what, exactly, it means for something to be identical to itself, or – more controversially – to something else. Issues of identity arise in the context of [time](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Time): what does it mean for something to be itself across two moments in time?

* **JESUS … man / deity**

THE CHURCH CAUSED THE SEPARATION OF THE PHYSICAL AND THE MIND/HEART

**Space and time**

*See also:*[*Philosophy of space and time*](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Philosophy_of_space_and_time)

Objects appear to us in space and time, while abstract entities such as classes, properties, and relations do not. How do space and time serve this function as a ground for objects? Are space and time entities themselves, of some form? Must they exist prior to objects? How exactly can they be defined? How is time related to change; must there always be something changing in order for time to exist

**Causality**

*See also:*[*Causality*](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Causality)

Classical philosophy recognized a number of causes, including [teleological](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Teleological) future causes.

[Causality](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Causality) is linked by many philosophers to the concept of [counterfactuals](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Counterfactuals). To say that A caused B means that if A had not happened then B would not have happened. This view was advanced by [David Lewis](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/David_Lewis_(philosopher)) in his 1973 paper "Causation".[[17]](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Metaphysics#cite_note-17) His subsequent papers[[18]](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Metaphysics#cite_note-18) further develop his theory of causation.

Causality is usually required as a foundation for [philosophy of science](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Philosophy_of_science) if science aims to understand causes and effects and make predictions about them.

**Necessity and possibility**

*See also:*[*Modal logic*](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Modal_logic)*and*[*Modal realism*](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Modal_realism)

Metaphysicians investigate questions about the ways the world could have been. [David Lewis](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/David_Kellogg_Lewis), in [*On the Plurality of Worlds*](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/On_the_Plurality_of_Worlds), endorsed a view called concrete [modal realism](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Modal_realism), according to which facts about how things could have been are made true by other [concrete](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Concrete_(philosophy)) worlds in which things are different.

A less controversial view is that self-identity is necessary, as it seems fundamentally incoherent to claim that any *x* is not identical to itself; this is known as the [law of identity](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Law_of_identity),

**Metaphysical cosmology and cosmogony**

*See also:*[*Cosmology (philosophy)*](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Cosmology_(philosophy))

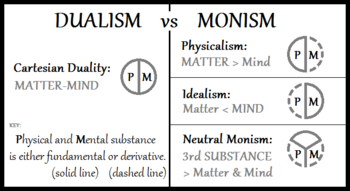
[Metaphysical cosmology](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Cosmology_(philosophy)) is the branch of metaphysics that deals with the [world](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/World) as the totality of all [phenomena](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Phenomena) in [space](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Space) and [time](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Time).

[Cosmogony](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Cosmogony) deals specifically with the origin of the universe. Modern metaphysical cosmology and cosmogony try to address questions such as:

* What is the origin of the Universe? What is its first cause? Is its existence necessary? (see [monism](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Monism), [pantheism](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Pantheism), [emanationism](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Emanationism" \o "Emanationism) and [creationism](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Creationism))
* What are the ultimate material components of the Universe? (see [mechanism](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Mechanism_(philosophy)), [dynamism](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Dynamism_(metaphysics)), [hylomorphism](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Hylomorphism), [atomism](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Atomism))

### Mind and matter

*See also:*[*Philosophy of mind*](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Philosophy_of_mind)

[](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/File:Dualism-vs-Monism.png)

Different approaches toward resolving the mind–body problem

Accounting for the existence of [mind](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Mind) in a world largely composed of [matter](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Matter) is a metaphysical problem which is so large and important as to have become a specialized subject of study in its own right, [philosophy of mind](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Philosophy_of_mind).

### Determinism and free will

*See also:*[*Determinism*](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Determinism)*and*[*Free will*](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Free_will)

[Determinism](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Determinism) is the [philosophical](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Philosophy) [proposition](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Proposition) that every event, including human cognition, decision and action, is [causally](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Causality) determined by an unbroken chain of prior occurrences. It holds that nothing happens that has not already been determined. The principal consequence of the deterministic claim is that it poses a challenge to the existence of [free will](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Free_will).

### Applied metaphysics

Although metaphysics as a philosophical enterprise is highly hypothetical,

it also has practical application in most other branches of philosophy, science, and now also information technology.

## **Rejections of metaphysics**

**Meta-metaphysics** is the branch of philosophy that is concerned with the foundations of metaphysics.[[41]](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Metaphysics#cite_note-41) A number of individuals have suggested that much or all of metaphysics should be rejected,

Some living philosophers, such as [Amie Thomasson](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Amie_Thomasson), have argued that many metaphysical questions can be dissolved just by looking at the way we use words; others, such as [Ted Sider](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Ted_Sider), have argued that metaphysical questions are substantive, and that we can make progress toward answering them by comparing theories according to a range of theoretical virtues inspired by the sciences, such as simplicity and explanatory power.[[54]](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Metaphysics#cite_note-55)

Metaphysics in [Chinese philosophy](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Chinese_philosophy) can be traced back to the earliest Chinese philosophical concepts from the [Zhou Dynasty](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Zhou_Dynasty) such as [Tian](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Tian) (Heaven) and [Yin and Yang](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Yin_and_Yang).

#### Socrates and Plato

[Socrates](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Socrates) is known for his [dialectic](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Dialectic) or questioning approach to philosophy rather than a positive metaphysical doctrine.

### Buddhist metaphysics

In [Buddhist philosophy](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Buddhist_philosophy) there are various metaphysical traditions that have proposed different questions about the nature of reality based on the teachings of the Buddha in the early [Buddhist texts](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Buddhist_texts).