Philosophy 351: Metaphysics and Epistemology
Fall 2007 Syllabus
Prof. Clare Batty

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Office Hours: M 11:30-1:00, Th. 1:00-2:30, or by appt.

Prerequisites
None. But you must be prepared to engage with some difficult contemporary material.

Course Description
This is an upper-level undergraduate course in contemporary metaphysics and epistemology.

Metaphysics is the area of philosophy that deals with the question: what is there and what is it like? Our focus will be on the topics of universals and particulars, persistence through time and personal identity. The questions we will be looking at include:

- Does reality contain universal features (e.g. redness) as well as particular entities (e.g. roses)?
- What is the relation between a thing and its qualities? Are objects simply bundles of qualities or is there something more that grounds these qualities?
- What is required for the survival of a thing over time? For example, what makes you the same person today as the person who first enrolled at the University of Kentucky?

Epistemology is the area of philosophy that deals with the question: what is the nature of knowledge and reasonable belief? We will concentrate on the topics of skepticism, the definition of knowledge and the nature of justification. The questions we will be looking at include:

- Do we know anything about the external world?
- What conditions must be met in order to possess knowledge?
- What makes it the case that we are justified in having certain beliefs?

Course Objectives
Upon completion of this course, a student should be able to do the following:

- explain different contemporary issues and views in metaphysics and epistemology;
- analyze and critically evaluate the arguments for these positions; and
- construct clear philosophical prose that addresses these issues.

Required Readings


Both are available in the bookstore.

Recommended secondary reading:

**Reading Assignments**

There is a reading assignment for each week, typically a paper or two from the two required anthologies. The readings in both anthologies are often very difficult: expect to read everything at least twice. They require close study, and you should not put them off until the last minute. This course will involve a considerable amount of discussion, and if that is to be of value to us, *your careful preparation of the readings is crucial*. If you have trouble understanding what an author says, or any other question concerning the course, please do not hesitate to ask.

**Requirements**

3 papers (5-6 pages): 20% each (60%)
Final exam: 20%
Class participation: 20% (This will include your performance on a selection of short ‘pop quizzes’ or minor in-class assignments.)

**Plagiarism**

Plagiarism means taking the words and thoughts of others (their ideas, concepts, images, sentences, and so forth) and using them as if they were your own, without crediting the author or citing the source. At this and most other universities, plagiarism is taken very seriously and will be punished in accordance with the UK Policy on Disposition of Academic Offenses. For more information on plagiarism, and how to avoid it, see:

http://www.uky.edu/Ombud/Plagiarism.pdf
http://wps.prenhall.com/hss_understand_plagiarism_1/0,6622,427064,-00.html

For a statement on UK's Policy on Disposition of Academic Offenses, see:
http://www.chem.uky.edu/research/grossman/acadoffenses/new_policy.pdf

**Getting Help**

I am here to help you. Feel free to email me with any questions about the material or the assignments, or come and visit me during office hours. You may also make an appointment with me outside of office hours.

**Web Resources**

See Jim Pryor’s Guidelines on reading and writing philosophy papers:
http://www.jimpryor.net/teaching/guidelines/reading.html
http://www.jimpryor.net/teaching/guidelines/writing.html.

Useful glossaries are Jim Pryor’s Philosophical Terms and Methods:

**Classroom and Learning Accommodations**

Any student with a disability who is taking this course and needs classroom or exam accommodations should contact the Disability Resource Center, 257-2754, room 2 Alumni Gym, jkarnes@uky.edu.
**Tentative Schedule**

Handouts will be distributed or posted online. This schedule is tentative. We will alter it if need be.

**WEEK 1** (Aug. 22, 24)
**Introduction and Preliminaries**
Readings: Loux, Introduction to Part I, Universals (AL)

**WEEK 2** (Aug. 27, 29, 31)
**Universals: Metaphysical Realism**
Readings: Russell, “The World of Universals” (AL)
   *recommended: Chapter 1 (OL)*

*FIRST PAPER TOPICS HANDED OUT FRIDAY, AUG. 31*

**WEEK 3** (Sept. 5, 7)
**Universals: Nominalism**
Readings: Price, “Universals and Resemblances” (AL)
   *recommended: Chapter 2 (OL)*

**WEEK 4** (Sept. 10, 12, 14)
**Particulars**
Readings: Loux, Introduction to Part II, Particulars (AL)
   Black, “The Identity of Indiscernibles” (AL)
   *recommended: Chapter 3 (OL)*

*FIRST PAPERS DUE FRIDAY SEPT. 14*

**WEEK 5** (Sept. 17, 19, 21)
**Persistence**
Readings: Loux, Introduction to Part V, Endurantism and Perdurantism (AL)
   Heller, “Temporal Parts of Four-Dimensional Objects” (AL)
   *recommended: Chapter 8 (OL)*

**WEEK 6** (Sept. 24, 26, 28)
**Persistence (cont’d)**
Readings: Heller (cont’d)
   Merricks, “Endurance and Indiscernibility” (AL)

**WEEK 7** (Oct. 1, 3, 5)
**Personal Identity**
Readings: Parfit, “Personal Identity” (AL)
   Lewis, “Survival and Identity” (AL)

*SECOND PAPER TOPICS HANDED OUT FRIDAY OCT. 5*

**WEEK 8** (Oct. 8, 10, 12)
**Personal Identity (cont’d)**
Readings: Lewis (cont’d)
   Swinburne, “Personal Identity: The Dualist Theory” (AL)
WEEK 9 (Oct. 15, 17, 19)
Introduction to Epistemology: Skepticism
Readings: Ayer, selections from Language, Truth and Knowledge (handout)
Descartes, selections from the Meditations (handout)
Unger, “A Defense of Skepticism” (BD)
*SECOND PAPER DUE FRIDAY OCT. 19*

WEEK 10 (Oct. 22, 24, 26)
Skepticism
Readings: Nozick, “Knowledge and Scepticism” (BD)
Lewis, “Elusive Knowledge” (BD)
recommended: Chapter 6 (F)

WEEK 11 (Oct. 29, 31, Nov. 2)
The Definition of Knowledge
Readings: Plato, selections from the Theatetus (handout)
Gettier, “Is Justified True Belief Knowledge?” (BD)
Goldman, “A Causal Theory of Knowing” (BD)
recommended: Chapter 2 (F)
*THIRD PAPER TOPICS HANDED OUT FRIDAY NOV. 2*

WEEK 12 (Nov. 5, 7, 9)
The Definition of Knowledge (cont’d)
Readings: Goldman (cont’d)
Lehrer & Paxson, “Knowledge: Undefeated Justified True Belief” (BD)
recommended: Chapter 3 (F)

WEEK 13 (Nov. 12, 14, 16)
Justification: Externalism
Readings: Armstrong, “The Thermometer-Model of Knowledge” (BD)
Goldman, “Discrimination and Perceptual Knowledge” (BD)
recommended: Chapter 5 (F)

WEEK 14 (Nov. 19)
Catch up
*THIRD PAPER DUE MONDAY NOV. 19*

WEEK 15 (Nov. 26, 28, 30)
Justification: Internalism
Readings: Chisolm, “The Indispensability of Internal Justification” (BD)
Bonjour, “The Elements of Coherentism” (BD)
recommended: Chapter 4 (F)

WEEK 16 (Dec. 3, 5, 7)
Justification: Compromises
Readings: Alston, “An Internalist Externalism” (BD)