

Philosophical Problems of Knowledge and Reality

Philosophy 550

Fall 2006

Dr. Brandon C. Look

Class Meeting Place: CB 346

Class Meeting Time: TR 2:00-3:15pm

Instructor's e-mail: look@uky.edu

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Office Phone: 257-3071

Office Hours: TR 9:30-10:30

Course Description:

This course will concern itself with contemporary analytic metaphysics. Issues to be explored include the following: existence (both the existence of universals and the existence and nature of concrete particulars), identity, modality and possible worlds, things and their persistence, causation, and the analysis of events.

Course Format:

Classes will be a combination of lecture and focused discussion of the texts. Students are expected to have read (and carefully reflected upon!) the material **prior** to class.

Course Requirements:

Students will be expected to write three short essays (6-8 pp.) on topics provided by the instructor. These will be handed out during the course of the semester and will be due on the dates shown in the schedule below. Graduate students in philosophy will have the option of writing a longer term paper instead.

Grading:

Grades will be based upon the instructor's judgment of the quality of the three individual essays or of the one term-paper. Graduate students in philosophy will be held up to a slightly higher standard than undergraduates or non-philosophy graduate students. *Active* participation in class will also improve the student's final grade.

There is no +/- grading; hence possible final grades are A, B, C, D, F, or W.

Miscellaneous Policies:

- Students are expected to attend all classes; unexcused absences will be considered in determining the final grade.
- Incompletes will only be given in extraordinary circumstances.
- Plagiarism is defined in the Student Handbook. Read the definition. Don't plagiarize. Those caught will fail the course and may be expelled from the university or terminated from the graduate program.

Required Book:

Metaphysics: An Anthology. Eds. Jaegwon Kim and Ernest Sosa. Oxford: Blackwell, 1999. ("MA" below.)

Schedule

Topic (Reading)

- 8/24 Class Mechanics, **An Introduction to Metaphysics.**
- 8/29 **Existence** (Quine, "On What There Is," MA pp. 3-12.)
- 8/31 **Existence** (Carnap, "Empiricism, Semantics and Ontology," MA pp. 13-22)
- 9/5 **Existence** (Russell, "Existence and Description," and Parsons, "Referring to Non-existent Objects," MA pp. 23-44)
- 9/7 **Existence** (Quine, "Ontological Relativity," MA pp. 45-61)
- 9/12 **Identity** (Black, "The Identity of Indiscernibles," MA pp. 66-71)
- 9/14 **Identity** (Kripke, "Identity and Necessity," MA pp. 72-89)
- 9/19 **Identity** (Perry, "The Same *F*," MA pp. 90-99; Gibbard, "Contingent Identity," MA pp. 100-15)
- 9/21 **Identity** (Yablo, "Identity, Essence, and Indiscernibility," MA pp. 116-29)
- 9/26 **Modality** (Plantinga, "Modalities...", and Chisholm "Identity through Possible Worlds," MA pp. 135-53)
- 9/28 **Modality** (Lewis, "Counterparts or Double Lives?" MA pp.154-71)
- Paper 1 Due**
- 10/3 **Modality** (Adams, "Primitive Thisness," MA pp. 172-83)
- 10/5 **Modality** (Armstrong, "The Nature of Possibility," MA pp. 184-93)
- 10/10 **Universals and Particulars** (Armstrong, "Universals as Attributes," MA pp. 198-208)
- 10/12 **Universals and Particulars** (Lewis, "New Work for a Theory of Universals," MA pp. 209-32)
- 10/17 **Universals and Particulars** (Quine, "Natural Kinds," and Putnam, "On Properties," MA pp. 233-52)
- 10/19 **Universals and Particulars** (Shoemaker, "Causality and Properties," MA pp. 253-68)
- 10/24 **Time and Change** (Chisholm, "Identity through Time," MA pp. 273-83)
- 10/26 **Time and Change** (Quine, "Identity, Ostension, and Hypostasis," and Cartwright, "Scattered Objects," MA pp. 284-300)
- 10/31 **Time and Change** (Thomson, "Parthood and Identity Across Time," MA pp. 301-11)
- 11/2 **Time and Change** (Heller, "Temporal Parts," MA pp. 312-26)
- Paper 2 due**

- 11/7 **Causation** (Mackie, "Causes and Conditions," MA pp. 413-27)
- 11/9 **Causation** (Davidson, "Causal Relations," and Lewis, "Causation" MA pp. 428-43)
- 11/14 **Causation** (Salmon "Causal Connections," MA pp. 444-57)
- 11/16 **Causation** (Tooley, "The Nature of Causation," MA pp. 458-82)
- 11/21 **Personal Identity** (Chisholm, "The Persistence of Persons" and Shoemaker, "Persons and their Pasts," MA pp. 331-54)
- 11/23 Thanksgiving
- 11/28 **Personal Identity** (Williams, "The Self and the Future" and Parfit "Personal Identity," MA pp. 355-76)
- 11/30 **Personal Identity** (Swinburne, "Personal Identity: The Dualist Theory," MA pp. 377-92)
- 12/5 **Personal Identity** (Johnston, "Human Beings," MA pp. 393-407)
- 12/7 Spill-over, Conclusion
Paper 3 due
- (12/11 Term-paper Due)