

Philosophy 350: Metaphysics and Epistemology
Fall 2010 Syllabus
Prof. Clare Batty

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Office Hours: Tues. 9:00-10:30; Thurs. 10:00-11:30; or by appointment

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)?

If everything in the world is determined by previous events, can we say that we ever act freely? If we can't, should this worry us?

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

Reading Metaphysics, Helen Beebe & Julian Dodd (eds.), Malden, MA: Blackwell (2006). **(RM)**

Reading Epistemology, Sven Bernecker (ed.), Malden, MA: Blackwell (2006). **(RE)**

I have ordered both for the bookstores.

Recommended secondary reading:

What Is This Thing Called Metaphysics?, Brian Garrett, New York: Routledge (2006). **(G)**

Epistemology, Richard Feldman, New Jersey: Prentice Hall (2003). **(F)**

You may access selections of **(G)** and **(F)** from the course website as they become available before the beginning of each week. Note: site is password protected.

Reading Assignments

Reading, discussing and writing about the assigned readings are the central activities of this class. There is a reading assignment for each week, typically a paper or two from the two required anthologies. *Your careful preparation of the readings is crucial.* The readings in both anthologies are often short but always

quite difficult: expect to read everything at least twice. They require close study, and you should not put them off until the last minute. If you have trouble understanding what an author says, or any other question concerning the course, please do not hesitate to ask.

Requirements

IMPORTANT: Failure to meet ANY of the requirements of the course will result in **FAILURE OF THE COURSE**.

(Please see course reading list for all due dates.)

Paper 1	15%	5-6 pages. Topics will be handed out 2 weeks before papers are due
Paper 2	20%	5-6 pages. Topics will be handed out 2 weeks before papers are due
Paper 3	25%	5-6 pages. Topics will be handed out 2 weeks before papers are due
Final Exam	25%	Final Exam Schedule: 12/16/10 @ 1:00 p.m.; same classroom
Participation	15%	Will be based on attendance, preparation, contribution to class discussion and scores on the occasional 'pop quiz'
TOTAL	100%	

IMPORTANT: MORE THAN 4 UNDOCUMENTED ABSENCES WILL RESULT IN NO CREDIT FOR PARTICIPATION.

Now let's do some simple logic by considering the following argument:

1. Participation is a requirement of the course.
2. If you have more than 4 undocumented absences, then you will fail to meet a requirement of the course.
3. If you fail to meet any of the requirements of the course, then you will fail the course.
- C. So, if you have more than 4 undocumented absences, then you will fail the course. (from 2, 3 by the Transitivity of Implication—a logical law)
- C* Best to come to class, then. (just common sense, really)

Policy on Late Assignments

Papers handed in late will be penalized by the equivalent of one grade point per calendar day, unless you can document a medical or other valid reason for why your assignment is late.

Plagiarism

Plagiarism and other forms of academic dishonesty will not be tolerated in this course. 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. Other forms of academic dishonesty include: cheating on exams, double submission of papers, aiding dishonesty, and falsification of records. If in doubt about what counts as plagiarism, or about how to properly reference a source, consult me. 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. If you are tempted to plagiarize because you are in crisis, it is always better to speak to your professor, your advisor, the counseling center, or another trusted authority on campus who can help you handle the crisis. 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

Please note that any assignment you turn in may be submitted to Turnitin for plagiarism comparison.

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:

<http://www.jimpryor.net/teaching/vocab/index.html>.

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.

Reading Schedule v1.0
 Phil 350: Metaphysics and Epistemology
 Fall 2010
 Professor Clare Batty

Professor reserves the right to change the schedule--in good time and within reason.

Week 1	Topic	Reading	Assignments
08/26/10	Introduction		
Week 2			
08/31/10	Personal Identity	Introduction; Parfit, "Personal Identity"; Commentary [RM, 1-36] <i>Recommended:</i> "Personal Identity" [G, 119-136]	
09/02/10	Personal Identity	Parfit (cont'd); Schechtman, "Personhood and Personal Identity"; Commentary [RM, 36-59]	
Week 3			
09/07/10	Personal Identity	Schechtman (cont'd)	
09/09/10	Free Will	Introduction; van Inwagen, "The Incompatibility of Free Will and Determinism"; Commentary [RM, 60-82] <i>Recommended:</i> "Free Will" [G, 101-118]	
Week 4			
09/14/10	Free Will	van Ingwagen (cont'd); Dennett, "Could Have Done Otherwise"; Commentary [RM, 82-99]	Paper 1 handed out
09/16/10	Free Will	Dennett (cont'd)	
Week 5			
09/21/10	Realism and Nominalism	Introduction; Devitt, "'Ostrich Nominalism' or 'Mirage Nominalism?"; Commentary [RM, 146-160] <i>Recommended:</i> "Universals and Particulars" [G, 35-50]	
09/23/10	Realism and Nominalism	Devitt (cont'd); Armstrong, "Against 'Ostrich' Nominalism: A Reply to Michael Devitt"; Commentary [RM 160-174]	
Week 6			
09/28/10	Realism and Nominalism	Armstrong (cont'd)	Paper 1 due
09/30/10	Possible Worlds	Introduction; Lewis, extract from Counterfactuals; Commentary [RM 175-191] <i>Recommended:</i> "Existence" [G, 19-34]	
Week 7			
10/05/10	Possible Worlds	Lewis (cont'd); Kripke, extract from Naming and Necessity; Commentary [RM 192-203]	
10/07/10	Possible Worlds	Kripke (cont'd)	
Week 8			
10/12/10	Persistence Over Time	Introduction; Lewis, extract from <i>On the Plurality of Worlds</i> ; Commentary [RM 204-213]	
10/14/10	Persistence Over Time	Lewis (cont'd); Haslanger, "Endurance and Temporary Intrinsic"; Commentary [RM 214-222]	Paper 2 handed out
Week 9			
10/19/10	Persistence Over Time	Haslanger (cont'd) Lewis, "Tensing the Copula"; Commentary [RM 223-233]	
10/21/10	Defining Knowledge	Gettier, "Is Justified True Belief Knowledge?" [handout] Introduction; Pollack, "The Gettier Problem"; Commentary [RE 4-13] <i>Recommended:</i> Chapter 2 (F); Chapter 3 (F)	
Week 10			
10/26/10	Defining Knowledge	Pollack (cont'd) Nozick, "Conditions for Knowledge"; Commentary [RE 14-26]	
10/28/10	Defining Knowledge	Nozick (cont'd)	Paper 2 due
Week 11			
11/02/10	Justification and Truth	Introduction; Goldman, "What is Justified Belief?"; Commentary [RE 27-43] <i>Recommended:</i> Chapter 5 (F)	
11/04/10	Justification and Truth	Goldman (cont'd) Foley, "What's Wrong with Reliabilism?"; Commentary [RE 44-56]	
Week 12			
11/09/10	Justification and Truth	Foley (cont'd)	Paper 3 handed out
11/11/10	Duties and Virtues	Introduction; Steup, "A Defense of Internalism"; Commentary [RE 57-79] <i>Recommended:</i> Chapter 4 (F)	

Week 13

11/16/10	Duties and Virtues	Steup (cont'd) Sosa, "Reliabilism and Intellectual Virtue"; Commentary [RE 80-92]	
11/18/10	Duties and Virtues	Sosa (cont'd)	

Week 14

11/23/10	Foundations or Coherence?	Introduction; Alston, "Two Types of Foundationalism"; Commentary [RE 122-138]	Paper 3 due
11/25/10		THANKSGIVING	

Week 15

11/30/10	Foundations or Coherence?	Alston (cont'd) Bonjour, "The Coherence Theory of Empirical Knowledge"; Commentary [RE 139-155]	
12/02/10	Scepticism in Context	Introduction; Dretske, "The Pragmatic Dimension of Knowledge" Commentary [RE 156-172] <i>Recommended: Chapter # (F)</i>	

Week 16

12/07/10	Scepticism in Context	Dretske (cont'd) Williams, "Realism and Scepticism"; Commentary [RM 173-185]	
12/09/10	Scepticism in Context	Williams (cont'd)	