

**Syllabus**  
**PHIL 3400 (3 Cr.)**  
**Mind, Language, & Reality**  
**Fall 2014**

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Class Meets:  
MWF 2:00p-2:50p in GC 311

**COURSE DESCRIPTION:** Over the course of this semester we will devote our efforts to understanding the fundamental nature of the kinds of things that exist in the world, the minds that think about those things, and the relation between mind and world. We will investigate and *try* to answer some of the following questions:

- What kinds of things actually exist? What does it mean for something to exist?
- How can one object be similar to another? In virtue of what do things differ?
- What exactly *is* causation? What does it mean for some thing/event to *cause* some other thing/event?
- What is a mind?
- What is the mind's relation to the body?
- What is consciousness?

These questions number among the most difficult questions to answer in the history of philosophy, but be neither fooled nor discouraged by those who claim that philosophy has made no progress! While we will be reading some very old texts, including work from Plato, Descartes and Hume, we will also be reading cutting-edge research from today's top scholars in metaphysics and the philosophy of mind. Much of this material will be very challenging, but careful study will almost certainly result in both a deeper understanding of the nature of the universe, and your mind being totally blown, at least on occasion.

**Course Learning Outcomes:**

- **Critical Thinking:** The successful student will be able to differentiate between good and bad reasons for holding philosophical beliefs and will be able to seek out and identify the assumptions that lie at the basis of philosophical positions.
- **Inquiry and Analysis:** The successful student will be able to break complex philosophical problems into their components, and will be able to identify the consequences and implications of philosophical positions.
- **Reading Comprehension:** The successful student will be able to analyze and interpret abstract and difficult philosophical writing.
- **Writing:** The successful student will be able to express abstract and complex philosophical ideas in clear, precise, and logical prose.

Evaluation of these learning outcomes will be done through exams, papers, and in-class presentations.

**TEXTS:** *Metaphysics: A Guide and Anthology*, edited by Crane and Farkas (Oxford 2004) ISBN: 9780199261970.

*Physicalism, or Something Near Enough*, by Jaegwon Kim (Princeton 2005) ISBN: 9780691133850.

These can be found at the College Bookstore, and are *required*.

Materials not available in the required texts will be provided on Canvas.

**SOME GENERAL ADVICE:** This course presupposes a willingness to work hard and think critically about some very difficult problems. Philosophy is hard, you'll see. Students who read reflectively and attend class regularly are more likely to remain interested in (and even enjoy) the material, benefit from the class discussions, and develop the philosophical skills and level of comprehension required to do well on the exams and papers. Some notes will be provided every week, but these, the lectures, and class discussion will very likely be hard to follow if you don't do the readings or if you miss previous classes.

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Everyone will get the grade they earn. If you're worried about getting an A, work hard and come to office hours if you are having problems understanding the material. You might still get a B or C because not everybody is excellent at philosophy, but your future does not depend on you getting straight A's nearly as much as you think it does.

**SCHEDULE OF READINGS:**

This list of readings is tentative, and the pace is brisk. Specific reading assignments will be given on a day-to-day basis, and the schedule is subject to revision.

**Week 1** **Introduction**

Fumerton & Jeske: *Philosophical Analysis, Argument, & the Relevance of Thought Experiments* (Canvas)  
Crane & Farkas: *Introduction to Being* (C&F p. 137-148)

**Weeks 2-5** **Being and Existence**

Aristotle: Selections from *Categories* (C&F p. 149-154)  
Locke: Selection from *Essay Concerning Human Understanding* (C&F p. 155-160)  
Adams: *Primitive Thisness and Primitive Identity* (C&F p. 161-178)  
Quine: *On What There Is* (C&F p. 179-192)  
David & Stephanie Lewis: *Holes* (Canvas)  
Thomasson: *Fictional Objects* (Canvas)

**Weeks 6-7** **Universals**

Armstrong: Selection from *Universals: an Opinionated Introduction* (C&F p. 235-248)  
Lewis: Selection from *New Work for a Theory of Universals* (C&F p. 249-261)  
Shoemaker: *Causality and Properties* (C&F p. 273-295)  
**Recommended:** Crane and Farkas: *Introduction to Universals and Particulars* (C&F p. 217-226)

**Week 8** **Causation**

Hume: Selection from *Enquiry Concerning Human Understanding* (C&F p. 382-389)  
Anscombe: *Causality and Determination* (Canvas)  
**Recommended:** Crane and Farkas: *Introduction to Causation* (C&F p. 369-379)  
**[Mid-Term Exam Distributed; Term Paper Proposals Due]**

**Weeks 9-11** **Substance and Property Dualism**

Descartes: Selections from *Meditations on First Philosophy* (C&F p. 611-618)  
Elisabeth of Bohemia: *Correspondence with Descartes* (Canvas)  
Nagel: *What Is It Like to Be a Bat?* (C&F p. 648-658)  
Akins: *What Is It Like to be Boring and Myopic?* (Canvas)  
Jackson: *What Mary Didn't Know* (Canvas)  
Nida-Rümelin: *What Mary Couldn't Know: Belief About Phenomenal States* (Canvas)  
**Recommended:** Phillips, Beretta, Whitaker: *Mind and Brain: Toward an Understanding of Dualism* (Canvas)

**Weeks 11-12** **Physicalism...**

Smart: *Sensations and Brain Processes* (Canvas)  
Lewis: *Psychophysical and Theoretical Identifications* (C&F p. 629-638)  
Montero: *The Body Problem* (Canvas)

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**Weeks 13-15**

... or Something Near Enough

**[Term Paper Due]**

Kim: *Physicalism or Something Near Enough* (Individual Chapters TBD).

**Recommended (with chapter 1):** Thomasson: *A Non-Reductivist Solution to Mental Causation* (Canvas)

**[Final Exam]**

**ASSIGNMENTS and EVALUATION:**

*Two Take-Home Exams:* You will have two take-home exams over the course of the semester, one at mid-term, and one as a final exam. I will assign the exam on a Wednesday and it will be due on the following Monday. The exams will consist of five (or so) essay questions. You will have to select three of the five (or so) questions, and type complete answers to those questions. Each answer will likely be 3-5 pages. This is a substantial test. They will be open book and open note, but you are expected to complete the exam on your own.

*One Term Paper:* In addition to the exams, you are expected to write a term paper on any subject you like within metaphysics or the philosophy of mind. Your paper should be 2000-3000 words. Since there are a number of cool issues here that we will not have time to cover (including God's existence and nature, personal identity, free-will, space and time, and the nature of necessity) you are not limited to the topics or papers that we have covered. You will be required to provide me with a 1-page *term paper proposal* by the time I distribute the mid-term exam, so start thinking about which issues are most interesting to you EARLY. Please note that the term paper is due at the start of WEEK 13. I encourage you to meet with me often regarding the paper.

*Two Presentations/Short Papers:* During the first week I will ask you to sign up to present on, and subsequently write a short paper (roughly 700-1000 words) critically examining one of the texts you have been assigned. You can, of course, do further research on these topics, and build upon the insights of your classmates, but further research is not a requirement of this assignment. I want to encourage you to meet with me a few days (or even better, a week) prior to each presentation.

Note: You may use these short papers as a basis for your term paper if you so desire.

*Grading Breakdown by Percentage:*

Mid-Term Exam: 25%

Final Exam: 25%

Term Paper Proposal: 5%

Term Paper: 20%

Presentation/Short Paper 1: 10%

Presentation/Short Paper 2: 15%

**POLICY:**

**Late Work:** I will accept late exams, but for each 24-hour period that the paper is late, the grade will be reduced by 1/3 of a grade.

**Grade Disputes:** If you feel that your work has been unfairly assessed, you may ask that I reconsider. I am, after all, a human who makes mistakes on occasion. I will do so **only if** you submit to me, on paper, a one-paragraph typewritten explanation of why you believe that your work has been unfairly evaluated. You must indicate the grade you believe yourself to deserve and explain clearly why it is that you deserve that grade. Your dispute must be submitted within **one week** of receiving your grade.

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**Attendance:** Excessive absences (6 or more) will hurt you 1 letter grade (as in A- to B-). Philosophy is hard even if you come to class. Skip at your own risk. You are responsible for information that I offer in lecture that is not in the readings. I will not give you notes for unexcused absences because I am a recalcitrant bastard. Participation in class discussion can raise your grade up to 1/3 of a letter grade.

**Plagiarism or academic fraud of any sort will result in an F for the course.** Academic dishonesty is a serious matter. Please familiarize yourself with Southern Utah University's *Student Handbook*, which you can find online at <https://www.suu.edu/pub/policies/pdf/PP633Academic.pdf>. I will follow the regulations described in this document for dealing with cheating, plagiarism, etc. If you have any questions regarding what constitutes plagiarism or academic fraud after reading through the student handbook, please do not hesitate to ask me for further clarification.

**Disabilities:** I warmly welcome any of you who have disabilities. Students with medical, psychological, learning or other disabilities desiring academic adjustments, accommodations, or auxiliary aids must contact the Office for Students with Disabilities. The Office for Students with Disabilities determines eligibility for and authorizes the provision of these services and aids. Reasonable and effective accommodations and services will be provided to students if requests are made in a timely manner, with appropriate documentation, in accordance with federal, state, and University guidelines. For Southern Utah University's full policy, see: <http://suu.edu/pub/policies/pdf/PP119Disability.pdf>.

**Emergency Management:** In case of emergency, the University's Emergency Notification System (ENS) will be activated. Students are encouraged to maintain updated contact information using the link on the homepage of the mySUU portal. In addition, students are encouraged to familiarize themselves with the Emergency Response Protocols posted in each classroom. Detailed information about the University's emergency management plan can be found at <http://suu.edu/emergency>.

**HEOA Compliance:** The sharing of copyrighted material through peer-to-peer (P2P) file sharing, except as provided under U.S. copyright law, is prohibited by law.

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**Suggestions for Further Research by Topic:**

*For all topics, the Stanford Encyclopedia of Philosophy is an outstanding resource: <http://plato.stanford.edu>*

**Being and Existence:**

Maxwell: *The Ontological Status of Theoretical Entities*  
Alston: *Ontological Commitments*  
Varzi: *Doughnuts*  
Carnap: *Empiricism, Semantics and Ontology*  
Russell: *Existence and Description*  
Searle: [The Construction of Social Reality](#)  
Hacking: [The Social Construction of What?](#)

**Universals and Particulars:**

Russell: *The World of Universals*  
Price: *Universals and Resemblances*  
Allaire: *Bare Particulars*  
Van Cleve: *Three Versions of Bundle Theory*  
Casullo: *A Fourth Version of Bundle Theory*  
Quine: *Natural Kinds*  
Putnam: *On Properties*

**Causation:**

Ewing: *Cause*  
Mackie: *Causes and Conditions*  
Lewis: *Causation*  
Davidson: *Causal Relations*  
W. Salmon: *Causal Connections*  
Tooley: *The Nature of Causation: A Singularist Account*  
Paul: *Counterfactual Theories*  
Beebe: *Causation and Observation*

**Dualism and its Critics:**

Levine: *Materialism and Qualia: The Explanatory Gap*  
Jackson: *Epiphenomenal Qualia*  
Ryle: *Descartes's Myth*  
Patricia Churchland: *Can Neurobiology Teach Us Anything About Consciousness?*  
Locke: *Essay Concerning Human Understanding* (specifically, Book II)  
Spinoza: *Ethics* (specifically, Book I)  
Chalmers: *Phenomenal Concepts and the Knowledge Argument*  
(See all of Chalmers' papers here: <http://consc.net/papers.html>)  
Fumerton: [Knowledge, Thought and the Case for Dualism](#)

**Behaviorism, Functionalism, Physicalism, and Eliminativism:**

Putnam: *Brains and Behavior*  
Carnap: *Psychology in Physical Language*  
Hardcastle: *The Why of Consciousness: A Non-Issue for Materialists*  
Lewis: *Mad Pain, Martian Pain*  
Patricia Churchland: *Consciousness: The Transmutation of a Concept*  
Paul Churchland: *Eliminative Materialism and the Propositional Attitudes*  
Kim: *Multiple Realization and the Metaphysics of Reduction*  
Polger: *Are Sensations Still Brain Processes?*  
Theurer & Bickle: *What's Old is New Again: Kenny-Oppenheim Reduction in Current Molecular Neuroscience*

**Personal Identity:**

Locke: *Of Identity and Diversity*  
Reid: *Of Identity*  
Reid: *Of Mr. Locke's Account of Our Personal Identity*  
Butler: *Of Personal Identity*  
Hume: *On the Immortality of the Soul*  
Hume: *Treatise I.IV.IV: Of Personal Identity*  
Williams: *The Self and the Future*  
Parfit: *Personal Identity*  
Perry: *A Dialogue on Personal Identity*  
Brison: *Outliving Oneself*  
Swinburn: *Personal Identity: The Dualist Theory*  
Shoemaker: *Persons and their Pasts*  
Chisholm: *The Persistence of Persons*  
Unger: *I do not Exist*  
Wolf: *Self Interest and Interest in Selves*

**Free Will:**

Van Inwagen: [An Essay on Free Will](#)  
Fischer, Kane, Pereboom, & Vargas: [Four Views on Free Will](#)  
O'Connor: *Agent Causal Power*  
Galen Strawson: *The Impossibility of Ultimate Moral Responsibility*  
Ayer: *Freedom and Necessity*  
P.F. Strawson: *Freedom and Resentment*  
Frankfurt: *Alternate Possibilities and Moral Responsibility*  
Wolf: *Asymmetrical Freedom*  
Augustine: *On Free Choice of the Will*