

**Syllabus**  
**PHIL 3400 (3 Cr.)**  
**Mind, Language, & Reality**  
**Spring 2019**

Instructor: Dr. Kristopher G. Phillips  
Office: 108F General Classrooms  
Office Hours: MWF 2:00-3:00p, T 3:00-5:00p & also by appointment

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Class Meets:  
MWF 1:00p-2:00p in SC 127

**COURSE DESCRIPTION:** What exists? At first glance this seems to be a silly question that admits of obvious answers. We know about all kinds of things – books, people, tables, chairs... the list goes on. But the seeming simplicity of this question is misleading. What about abstract objects? Does virtue exist? What about countries, or money, or fictional characters? Does Sherlock Holmes *exist*? He is fictional, no doubt, but he seems to exist across texts, in films, and on television. How do we make sense of such cases? In this class we will use fiction as a foil to ask questions about existence and language. Since fictional characters seem to depend, at least in some sense on the intentional acts of a thinker, we will segue into a discussion of what the mind is. Is the mind purely physical, or is it something that cannot be reduced to the material world?

We will consider fundamental problems in metaphysics and the philosophy of mind over the course of the semester through the study of contemporary works in both fields. By the end you should have a basic understanding of some of the core issues in philosophy including: ontology, causation, social construction, meaning and reference, modal metaphysics, identity, consciousness, physicalism, and dualism.

**Course Learning Outcomes:**

- **Critical Thinking:** The successful student will begin to 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 begin to be able to break complex philosophical problems into their components, and will be able to identify the consequences and implications of philosophical positions.
- **Writing:** The successful student will be able to express some abstract and complex philosophical ideas in clear, precise, and logical prose.

Evaluation of these learning outcomes will be done through exams, a paper, and in-class discussions.

**TEXTS:** *Fiction and Metaphysics* (ISBN: 978-0-52-106521-4) by Amie Thomasson, Cambridge University Press (1999)  
*Consciousness and the Mind-Body Problem* (ISBN: 978-0-19-973924-0) ed. Torin Alter & Robert Howell, Oxford University Press (2012)

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

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

**SCHEDULE OF READINGS:**

This list of readings is tentative. Specific reading assignments will be given on a day-to-day basis.

**Weeks 1-3          Introduction to Ontology and the Problem of Negative Existentials**

Aristotle: from *The Categories* (Canvas)

Bertrand Russell: *On Denoting* (Canvas)

W.V.O. Quine: *On What There Is* (Canvas)

Alexius Meinong: *The Theory of Objects* (Canvas)

**Weeks 3-9                                                  Fiction and Metaphysics**

**Note:** This comes out to about 1 chapter/class. Some will not be as difficult as others, so we'll just adjust the schedule as necessary. We are reading the whole book, so do try your best to stay on top of it.

Amie Thomasson: *If We Postulated Fictional Objects, What Would They Be?* (Ch. 1 – p. 5-23)



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We will have a member of the library staff join us one day to explain how to do philosophical research (including what resources are available to you, and how to find relevant articles). More details in class.

**Late Work:** I will accept late exams and papers, but for each 24-hour period that the assignment is late, the grade will be reduced by 4%.

**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.

**Extra Credit and Final Grades:** I will *not*, under any circumstances, offer extra credit. If you are concerned about your grade, consider taking advantage of the help available (e.g. come to my office hours). Please do so before the end of the semester. With regard to final grades, as I stated above, you will get the grade you have earned. Asking me to bump, round up, or otherwise adjust your final grade will guarantee that I will NOT adjust your final grade. Please do not ask.

**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.

**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>.

**SUU Care and Support Team:** The SUU Care and Support Team (CAST) is comprised of trained faculty and staff who are committed to creating an environment at SUU that supports students who may be struggling with emotional distress and mental health issues. As a member of CAST, please know that I am here to help. I am not a professional counselor, but I do care, know how and where to find help if you need it, and want to see you succeed. Please do not be afraid to visit me if you're struggling.  
<http://www.suu.edu/cast/>

**SUU Allies on Campus:** Allies On Campus is a network comprised of students, staff, and faculty dedicated to creating safe spaces for Lesbian, Gay, Bi-sexual, Transgender, Queer individuals and Allies (LGBTQA) on the campus of Southern Utah University (SUU). As an ally, please know that I am committed to seeing that everyone is afforded the dignity and respect they deserve regardless of their identity.  
<http://www.suu.edu/allies/>

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**Link:** SUU faculty and staff care about the success of our students. In addition to your professor, numerous services are available to assist you with the achievement of your educational goals. I may use SUU's Link system to notify you and/or your advisors of my concern for your progress and provide references to campus services as appropriate.

**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.

**Disclaimer:** Information contained in this syllabus, other than the grading, late assignments, makeup work, and attendance policies are subject to change with advance notice, as I deem appropriate.

**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:**

Adams: *Primitive Thisness and Primitive Identity*

Maxwell: *The Ontological Status of Theoretical Entities*

Alston: *Ontological Commitments*

Lewis & Lewis: *Holes*

Varzi: *Doughnuts*

Carnap: *Empiricism, Semantics and Ontology*

Russell: *Existence and Description*

Searle: The Construction of Social Reality

Hacking: The Social Construction of What?

Butchvarov: Being Qua Being

(section VII)

Anscombe: *Causality and Determination*

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:**

Descartes: Meditations (esp. 2 and 6).

Elisabeth of Bohemia: *Correspondence with Descartes*

Akins: *What is it Like to be Boring and Myopic?*

Jackson: *What Mary Didn't Know*

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*

**Universals and Particulars:**

Russell: *The World of Universals*

Armstrong: Universals: an Opinionated

Introduction

Lewis: New Work for a Theory of Universals

Shoemaker: *Causality and Properties*

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*

Butchvarov: Resemblance and Identity

**Causation:**

Hume: Enquiry Concerning Human Understanding

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(See all of Chalmers' papers here:

<http://consc.net/papers.html>)

Fumerton: Knowledge, Thought and the Case for Dualism

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

Smart: *Sensations and Brain Processes*

Lewis: *Psychophysical and Theoretical Identifications*

Putnam: *Brains and Behavior*

Carnap: *Psychology in Physical Language*

Hardcastle: *The Why of Consciousness: A Non-Issue for Materialists*

Lewis: *Mad Pain, Martian Pain*

Montero: *The Body Problem*

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*

Berger: *A Dilemma for the Soul Theory of Personal Identity*

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: *Freedom of the Will and the Concept of a Person*

Frankfurt: *Alternate Possibilities and Moral Responsibility*

Wolf: *Asymmetrical Freedom*

Augustine: *On Free Choice of the Will*