

Syllabus
PHIL 3400 (3 Cr.)
Mind, Language, & Reality
Spring 2017

Instructor: Dr. Kristopher G. Phillips
Office: 108F General Classrooms
Office Hours: TR 9:30-11:00a, W 2:00-4:00p & also by appointment
Email: kristopherphillips@suu.edu

Office Phone: 435.586.7912
Cell: 616.364.8045

Classes Meet:
TR 1:00p-2:20p in GC 106

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*.

Knowledge, Possibility and Consciousness (ISBN: 978-0-26-266135-5) by John Perry, MIT Press (2001) is currently out of print. We will, however, still read this book. You can find copies at various online distributors, or the full-text is available here:

<http://www.al-edu.com/wp-content/uploads/2014/05/Perry-J.-Knowledge-Possibility-and-Consciousness-2001.pdf>

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 1-2 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)

Syllabus
PHIL 3400 (3 Cr.)
Mind, Language, & Reality
Spring 2017

Weeks 3-8 **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)

Amie Thomasson: *The Nature and Varieties of Existential Dependence* (Ch. 2 – p. 24-34)

Amie Thomasson: *Fictional Characters as Abstract Artifacts* (Ch. 3 – p. 35-42)

Amie Thomasson: *Reference to Fictional Characters* (Ch. 4 – p. 43-54)

Amie Thomasson: *Identity Conditions for Fictional Characters* (Ch. 5 – 55-70)

Amie Thomasson: *Fiction and Experience* (Ch. 6 – p. 76-92)

Amie Thomasson: *Fiction and Language* (Ch. 7 – p. 93-114)

Amie Thomasson: *Ontology and Categorization* (Ch. 8 – 115-136)

Amie Thomasson: *Perils of False Parsimony* (Ch. 9 – 137-146)

Amie Thomasson: *Ontology for a Varied World* (Ch. 10 – 147-153)

[Mid-Term Exam]

Weeks 8-11 **Dualist Challenges to Physicalism**

Brie Gertler: *In Defense of Mind-Body Dualism* (A&H: 34-46)

Thomas Nagel: *What is it Like to be a Bat?* (A&H: 15-22)

David Chalmers: *Phenomenal Concepts and the Explanatory Gap* (A&H: 148-167)

Frank Jackson: *Epiphenomenal Qualia* (A&H: 23-29)

Frank Jackson: *Postscript* (A&H: 30-33)

Saul Kripke: from *Naming and Necessity* (A&H: 9-14)

Weeks 11-15 **Antecedent Physicalism**

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.

John Perry: *Experience and Neo-Dualism* (Ch. 1 – p. 1-24)

John Perry: *Sentience and Thought* (Ch. 2 – p. 25-44)

John Perry: *Thoughts about Sensations* (Ch. 3 – p. 45-70)

John Perry: *The Zombie Argument* (Ch. 4 – p. 71-92)

John Perry: *The Knowledge Argument* (Ch. 5 – p. 93-116)

John Perry: *Recognition and Identification* (Ch. 6 – p. 117-144)

John Perry: *What Mary Learned* (Ch. 7 – p. 145-168)

John Perry: *The Modal Argument* (Ch. 8 – p. 169-208)

Barbara Montero: *Post Physicalism* (A&H: 322-336)

[Final Exam]

ASSIGNMENTS, EVALUATION, POLICY:

Two Exams (60%; 30% for each exam) The exams will be take-home. You will be expected to complete four short-answer questions, and one essay. I expect your short answer questions to be about 2-3 pages in total and your essay should be 3-4 pages typed. You are to work alone; standard exam rules apply. More on this in class.

Ten Weekly Discussion Board Posts (20%; 2% for each) I expect you to keep up on the reading. To facilitate discussion and keep you on track, you should complete 10 weekly discussion board posts (i.e. across 10 different weeks). You may respond to a thread already going, or you may begin a discussion of your own. I expect these to be thoughtful, reflective, substantive posts. A question with no follow-up is not sufficient for your contribution. I would like to see careful engagement with the course material, but I'd also like to see you go *beyond* the class discussion. These may be critical or clarificatory, but must not be a mere summary of what you've read. Please be sure to post by **7:00p on Sunday**. Any posts made after 7:00p on Sunday will be counted for the following week's commentary grade.

Syllabus
PHIL 3400 (3 Cr.)
Mind, Language, & Reality
Spring 2017

Research Paper (20%; 5% for Proposal, 15% for the final product) You will be expected to complete a term paper on any topic relevant to metaphysics or philosophy of mind. You are not limited to topics that we discuss explicitly in class, and you are expected to do research beyond the material we cover in class. Your paper should be between 2000-3000 words. I expect you to submit a 1-page proposal to me by the **10th week of the semester**. This will include an explicit statement of your (tentative) thesis, and some of the sources you intend to utilize in your research. **Your final paper will be due at the close of week 14.**

The proposal is non-binding, that is, you have some flexibility in terms of changing your thesis or trying out a different argument. I do ask that you not diverge too radically without first talking to me about your paper topic.

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 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.

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.

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>.

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/>

Syllabus
PHIL 3400 (3 Cr.)
Mind, Language, & Reality
Spring 2017

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/>

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](#)

Quine: *Natural Kinds*

Putnam: *On Properties*

Butchvarov: [Resemblance and Identity](#)

Causation:

Hume: [Enquiry Concerning Human Understanding](#) (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*

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*

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?*

Syllabus
PHIL 3400 (3 Cr.)
Mind, Language, & Reality
Spring 2017

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*
(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*