61500 PHIL-122-01 CONTEMPORARY ANALYTIC METAPHYSICS
SPRING 2013
MWF 3:30PM-4:40PM COWELL ACAD 134

SYLLABUS

COURSE WEB PAGE: http://people.ucsc.edu/~jbowin/Ancient/phil122.html

PROFESSOR:
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OFFICE HOURS: Monday 11:00 a.m. – 12:00 p.m. or by appointment

TEXTS:
(Both of the above texts are available at The Literary Guillotine, 204 Locust Street, Santa Cruz)
3.) Course Reader available at the Bay Tree Bookstore.
(A pdf version of the reader is available on eCommons.)

COURSE DESCRIPTION:
This course will be a survey of contemporary analytic metaphysics. Topics will include nominalism and metaphysical realism and the ontological analysis of concrete particulars, including problems of modality and persistence through time.

REQUIREMENTS:

1.) Reader Response Papers: You will be required to write four 500 word reader-response papers. The class will be divided into two groups. On all but the 1st and 10th weeks, one of the groups will be required to prepare a 500 word reader response paper responding to one of the questions included in the syllabus for that week. No credit will be given if you write on a topic from a different week. Due Dates: Group A: 4/8, 4/22, 5/6, 5/20; Group B: 4/15, 4/29, 5/13, 5/29.

2.) Term Paper: You will be required to write one term paper of 2,000-3,000 words, due on 6/7/13. You may choose to expand on one of your reader response papers or, subject to approval by the instructor, devise a topic of your own.

3.) Attendance: Students are eligible to receive a grade of A- or higher in this course only if they

1 For announcements like changed or additional readings and handouts, etc.
are absent from no more than 3 lectures. Students are eligible to receive a grade of B- or higher in this course only if they are absent from no more than 6 lectures. Students are eligible to receive a grade of C or higher in this course only if they are absent from no more than 9 lectures. Tardy students will be penalized at the rate of one absence for every two times they are tardy. Students who attend class but fail to prepare for it by completing the assigned reading shall also be deemed absent for the purpose of this requirement. Short, unscheduled open book quizzes will be given in lecture from time to time to test whether assigned materials have been read. These quizzes will test basic familiarity with the assigned readings.

4.) Since attendance will be taken using the barcode on the back of your UCSC student ID card, you will be required to have a student I.D. card and bring it to each class.

5.) In addition, students will be eligible to receive a participation bonus of up to 3 grade notches added to their final grade (e.g., from B to A), based on their participation (i.e., talking, not mere attendance) in discussions in lecture.

**Evaluation:** Reader Response Papers: 50%; Term Paper: 50%.

**Schedule of Readings and Reader Response Questions:**

**Week 1 (4/1, 4/3, 4/5): Course Introduction/The Problem of Universals I: Metaphysical Realism. Readings: MCI Introduction, Ch. 1.**

**Week 2 (4/8, 4/10, 4/12): Metaphysical Realism Cont'd. Readings: Russell, “The World of Universals” (MCR), Armstrong, “Universals as Attributes” (MCR). Reader Response Questions: 1.) Carefully explain how the paradox about the property “non-selfexemplification” is supposed to arise for the realist about universals (see MCI, pp. 30-1). How should the realist about universals respond to this paradox? 2.) Carefully explain how the Parmenidean and Bradlean regresses are supposed to work and how they differ from each other (see MCI, pp. 31-36), and evaluate Loux’s responses to these regresses as objections to realism about universals.

**Week 3 (4/15, 4/17, 4/19): The Problem of Universals II: Nominalism. Readings: MCI Ch. 2, Price, “Universals and Resemblances” (MCR), Quine, “On What There Is” (MCR), Williams “The Elements of Being” (MCR). Reader Response Questions: 1.) Loux claims a “ceteris paribus” clause is required to translate the sentence “Courage is a moral virtue” into a semantically equivalent sentence making reference to only concrete particulars. Why does he claim this and what problems arise because of this requirement? Do you agree with Loux that the austere nominalist has no choice but to deny that ceteris paribus clauses are fully analyzable? 2.) Explain why Quine recommends that the debate between realism and nominalism be held at a metalinguistic level. Should a realist about universals accept this recommendation? 3.) Evaluate Loux’s claim on p. 79 of MCI that since trope theory takes abstract terms such as “courage” to refer to sets of resembling tropes, and since sets have their members necessarily, then it is impossible that there be, for instance, “just one fewer courageous individual than there is.”
WEEK 4 (4/22, 4/24, 4/26): CONCRETE PARTICULARS I: SUBSTRATA, BUNDLES AND SUBSTANCES. Readings: MCI Ch. 3, Max Black, “The Identity of Indiscernibles” (MCR), Edwin B. Allaire, “Bare Particles” (MCR), James Van Cleve, “Three Versions of the Bundle Theory” (MCR). Reader Response Questions: 1.) Evaluate Loux’s claim on pp. 95-6 of MCI that since bare substrata cannot be picked out or identified independently of the attributes that we ascribe to them, ascriptions of attributes to bare substrata turn out to be just as tautologous for the bare substratum theorist as for the bundle theorist. 2.) According to Loux, the bundle theorist who is a realist about universals is committed by implication to some form of the identity of indiscernibles, and since there are counter-examples to this principle (e.g., Black’s two-sphere universe or Loux’s red balls Sam and Peter) any theory that implies it must be false. But are these genuine counter-examples to the identity of indiscernibles? Explain.

WEEK 5 (5/6, 5/8, 5/10): SUBSTRATA, BUNDLES AND SUBSTANCES CONT’D./PROPOSITIONS AND THEIR NEIGHBORS. Readings: Albert Casullo, “A Fourth Version of the Bundle Theory” (MCR), MCI Ch. 4, Frege, “On Sinn and Bedeutung” (Reader). Reader Response Questions: 1.) On p. 112 of MCI, Loux claims Aristotelians think the multiple instantiation of a kind is “sufficient to secure the existence of numerically different particulars.” Suppose Loux’s red balls Sam and Peter are instantiations of a single kind. Would this fact alone ensure that Sam ≠ Peter, or are additional assumptions required? Explain. 2.) According to Loux, both Sellars’ and Prior’s nominalist accounts of propositions fail to deal with sentences like “There are truths for which there is no linguistic expression” (see MCI pp. 137-8). Is this a serious problem? Why or why not?

WEEK 6 (4/29, 5/1, 5/3): PROPOSITIONS AND THEIR NEIGHBORS CONT’D./THE NECESSARY & THE POSSIBLE. Readings: Davidson, “The Individuation of Events” (Reader), Kim, “Events as Property Exemplifications” (Reader), MCI Ch. 5, Lewis, “Possible Worlds” (MCR). Reader Response Questions: 1.) Compare the relative advantages and disadvantages of Kim’s and Davidson’s theories of events for the purpose of logically analyzing event statements like “Sebastian strolled through the streets of Bologna at 2 a.m.” and accounting for the role that events play in causal claims like “The collapse was caused, not by the bolt’s giving way, but the bolt’s giving way so suddenly.” 2.) What, according to Lewis, are properties and propositions? (MCI, pp. 162-6) What problems does this nominalist account of properties and propositions face? Are these problems insuperable? Why or why not?

WEEK 7 (5/13, 5/15, 5/17): THE NECESSARY & THE POSSIBLE CONT’D. Readings: Plantinga, “Actualism and Possible Worlds” (MCR), Lewis, “Counterparts or Double Lives?” (MCR), Kripke, “Identity and Necessity” (MCR). Reader Response Questions: 1.) In “Actualism and Possible Worlds,” Plantinga claims that the actual world is an abstract object (MCR p. 172). Why does he do this? What are the philosophical consequences of this position? 2.) State Lewis’ objections to transworld individuals and the concerns that motivate it, as well as the replies of Plantinga and Kripke. Do you think these replies are adequate? Why or why not? Can you think of other more attractive ways to deal with these problems?
WEEK 8 (5/20, 5/22, 5/24): CAUSATION/THE NATURE OF TIME. Readings: MCI Ch. 6, Mackie, “Causes and Conditions” (MCR), Lewis, “Causation” (MCR), MCI Ch. 7, McTaggart, “Time” (MCR), McTaggart, “The Unreality of Time” (excerpt) (Reader), Dummett, ‘A Defense of McTaggart’s Proof of the Unreality of Time’ (Reader). Reader Response Questions: 1.) Do either Hume, Mackie, or Lewis succeed in giving a non-modal account of causation? Pick what you take to be the most successful account and explain why you think it succeeds or fails. 2.) Do you think McTaggart’s argument proved time to be unreal? Why or why not?

WEEK 9 (5/29, 5/31): THE NATURE OF TIME CONT’D. Readings: Smart, “The River of Time” (Reader), Williams, ‘The Myth of Passage’ (Reader), Markosian, “How Fast Does Time Pass?” (Reader), Prior, “Changes in Events and Changes in Things” (Reader). Reader Response Questions: 1.) Does time flow or not? Do you think the A theorists are correct or the B theorists? Why or why not? 2.) Do you think it is plausible, as Prior claims, that changes in events are really changes in things? What about the case of Queen Anne’s death becoming ever more past? Does Prior account for this plausibly?

WEEK 10 (6/3, 6/5, 6/7): CONCRETE PARTICULARS II: PERSISTENCE THROUGH TIME. Readings: Haslanger, “Persistence Through Time” (Reader), Quine, “Identity, Ostension, and Hypostasis” (Reader), Merricks, “Endurance and Indiscernibility” (MCR). Discussion Questions: 1.) Haslanger claims that endurantism could be compatible with eternalism and that perdurantism and exdurantism could be compatible with presentism, but how plausible or coherent is eternalist endurantism, presentist perdurantism or presentist exdurantism? 2.) In “Counterparts or Double Lives?” (MCR p. 199) Lewis claims that the problem of trans-world identity is analogous to the problem of the diachronic identity. Assuming this is true, which combinations of theories of time and persistence (e.g., eternalist endurantism, presentist perdurantism, etc.) most closely correspond to Plantinga’s, Kripke’s and Lewis’ treatments of trans-world identity? Do any of the objections against these treatments of trans-world identity have analogues in these theories of time and persistence? If so, what are they, and do they have analogous solutions?