

Proseminar in Metaphysics
Thursdays @ 1:15

Bryce Huebner
 lbh24@georgetown.edu
 234 New North
 Office Hours: To be determined

It should come as no surprise that this class is designed to improve your ability to think critically about issues in metaphysics (as a side-effect, it should also prepare you to write a successful comprehensive exam in metaphysics if you must do so). The course is designed to be writing intensive; and, you will be required to write something every week:

- 1) Each member of the seminar must write **one** short paper, **no longer than 3000 words** in length, addressing one argument that is articulated in a paper that we read this semester. A successful paper will be the sort of paper that one could submit for a presentation at the APA (*American Philosophical Association*), or a similar conference.
- 2) Each member of the seminar will be responsible for presenting the core arguments in *at least* one of the readings? that we will discuss this semester. On the day that you present, you must take notes on the discussion in class and post a brief synopsis of the main points of the discussion to the class blog (located at <website>). You should make this post by the Saturday evening following your presentation. This blog is intended to provide both a forum for further discussion and a record of that discussion that provides a reference for future reflections on these issues. (Depending on the numbers, people may have to post to the blog more than once during the course of the semester—but we'll work that out).
- 3) Finally, for every week that you are not presenting, each member of the seminar will write a brief response, **no longer than 600 words** in length, to one of the readings.

We will discuss some issues only briefly. So, if we find good reason to dwell, I am happy to add additional readings on some topics and delete readings from others. But, the tentative course reading schedule is as follows:

3 Sept	Cognitive calisthenics:	Lewis & Lewis, "Holes"; Dennett, <i>Content and Consciousness</i> (Chapter 1)
10 Sept	Necessity & Modality:	Kripke, "Identity and necessity"; Armstrong, "The nature of possibility"
17 Sept	Modality: (Laura)	Lewis, <i>On the plurality of worlds</i> (Focus on 1.1-1.2, 1.6-1.9)
24 Sept	Modality:	Lewis, <i>On the plurality of worlds</i> (Focus on Chapter 2)
1 Oct	Modality: (Alexander)	Sider, "Reductive theories of modality"; Rosen, "Modal fictionalism" Gibbard, "Contingent identity";
8 Oct	Identity: (Cassie, Richard)	Yablo, "Identity, Essence, and Indiscernibility"; Bennett, "Spatio-temporal coincidence and the grounding problem"
15 Oct	Identity: (Peter)	Chisholm, "Identity through possible worlds"; Lewis, "Counterparts or double lives"
22 Oct	Persistence: (Adi)	Thomson, "Parthood and identity through time"; Sider, "Temporal parts"; Hawthorne, "Three-dimensionalism vs. four-dimensionalism"
29 Oct	Personal identity: (Beau, Travis)	Williams, "The self and the future"; Parfit, "Personal identity"
5 Nov	Composite objects: (Tony, Paddy)	Van Inwagen, <i>Material beings</i> (selections); Rosen & Dorr, "Composition as fiction"
12 Nov	Composite objects: (Andy)	Sider, "Van Inwagen and the possibility of gunk"; Shaffer, "From nihilism to monism"; Markosian, "Brutal composition"
19 Nov	Reduction & Emergence: (Chong)	Kim, <i>Mind in a physical world</i>
3 Dec	Reduction & Emergence:	Chalmers, "Strong and weak emergence"; Clark, "Emergence and explanation"

I have ordered the books by Lewis and Kim. They should be available at the bookstore, but you might find them cheaper on Amazon or a used book search.