

PHILOSOPHY 3401

## METAPHYSICS

PROF. ANDREW ARLIG

Spring 2013  
Wednesday 6:05-9:25 pm  
4135 Boylan Hall

In this class, we will study some historical and contemporary treatments of ontology (the theory of being). Often philosophers make decisions about what there is based upon their notions of individuality, identity, change, and persistence. We will examine many of these concepts.

### OBJECTIVES:

At the end of this course you will

- have a general understanding of some of the historical developments in the discipline of metaphysics
- have a broad understanding of the discipline of metaphysics as it is practiced by professional philosophers currently working in the analytic tradition
- be familiar with the main positions and supporting arguments in many of the core sub-fields in metaphysics
- be able to express metaphysical positions and supporting arguments with precision and clarity
- develop the capacity to evaluate the validity and soundness of the arguments used in metaphysical discourse
- be able to present evaluations and criticisms of arguments in a precise and clear manner

### PROF. ARLIG'S INFORMATION:

Office Hours: Monday, 12:30-2:00 pm, Wednesday 4:30-5:30 pm, and by appointment

Office: 3300 Boylan Hall

Cell phone (emergency only, please): (646) 243-5381

Primary email: aarlig@brooklyn.cuny.edu

Secondary email: andrew.arlig@gmail.com

## ASSESSMENT:

You may choose one of two options: (1) the basic option or (2) the “graduate school prep” option. You need not be an aspiring graduate student in order to take the second option, but if you do plan to go to graduate school in philosophy or a related field you should consider choosing this option. If you wish to get a letter of recommendation from me in the future, you must take the graduate school prep option and do well on all your course work.

### (1) The basic option:

Presentation: 10% (optional, but recommended)

Short argument reconstruction papers (3 total, or 4 total if student opts out of presentation; each approximately 1-2 pages): 30%

One critical paper (approx. 5-7 pages; due no later than May 17): 30%

In-class final exam (May 22, 6:00-8:00 pm): 30%

On the presentation: You may help to lead one of the workshops (see below under CLASS FORMAT). Prior to your presentation, I recommend (but do not require) that you meet with me to go over your discussion plan. You must be prepared to present on the day that your assigned reading is being covered. Note: The presentation is optional for students who choose the basic option. However, it is strongly recommended. If you choose to not give a presentation, then you must submit a fourth argument reconstruction.

On the short argument reconstruction papers: You must submit three short papers. In these papers you will reconstruct a major argument for a position taken in one of your readings. First, you will outline the argument formally, that is, in premise-to-conclusion format (see the handout that I will circulate for an example). Then, you will write the argument in prose format. This reconstruction must be in your own words. No quotations are allowed. The reconstruction is due at the beginning of the class session after the reading was discussed. Your paper should be typewritten with standard fonts and margins. You should proofread your paper. In addition to content, I will be grading you on your writing. I grade down for grammatical mistakes, rampant misspellings, and lack of clarity. You may submit more than three (or four) papers. Your best three (or four) scores will count toward your final grade.

On the critical paper: You must write one critical paper. In this paper you will, first, need to articulate a problem or explicate an argument found in a text. Then, you must critically assess the argument or critically work out a solution to the problem. Again, please proofread your paper. In addition to content, I will be grading you on your writing. You must submit your critical paper by May 17, 11:59 pm (no exceptions). Early submissions are always welcome.

(2) The graduate school prep option:

Presentation: 10%

Paper proposal (due asap, but no later than March 8): 10%

Draft introduction and section (due asap, but no later than April 19): 20%

One substantial critical paper (approx. 15-20 pages)

Penultimate draft (due May 17): 15%

Final draft (due no later than May 25): 25%

Oral defense of the paper (must be completed by May 24): 20%

On the paper proposal: By March 8 you must submit a proposal. This proposal will consist of a topic and question. You will suggest a working hypothesis (that is, your best guess as to how you will answer your question), and you will discuss how you plan to proceed with researching and developing the thesis. This proposal must be submitted by the deadline and approved by me before you can proceed down the graduate school prep track. If either you fail to submit a proposal or I do not grant approval, then you must proceed down the basic track.

On the draft introduction and section: Due no later than April 19. The Introduction will be a natural extension of your paper proposal. In your introduction, you should include:

- Topic and question.
- Hypothesis.
- Context (e.g. a brief survey of the relevant literature on your topic and question).
- Significance of your project. (How does your project contribute to our understanding of your chosen discipline?)
- Broad outline of the paper. In very schematic terms, provide a map of the paper. What sections will your paper have? What key propositions or topics will be discussed? What order will these be presented in? Why this order and not another one?

In the draft “section” you should present one of your claims or significant sub-claims, and you should present a defense of the claims that you make. Failure to submit a draft introduction and section by the stipulated deadline will result in a severe penalty to your grade.

On the oral defense: After you have submitted a penultimate draft of your paper (due no later than May 17), you must schedule an appointment to meet with me and discuss the paper. This is an oral examination based upon what you have written. You should come to your appointment prepared to elaborate on the

issues discussed in your paper, to clarify points that you made, and to further defend your conclusions. The oral defense must take place no later than Friday, May 24. You will have an opportunity to revise your paper based on this exam, but the final draft is due no later than May 25. This deadline is not negotiable (as I must submit grades almost immediately after); hence, it is in your best interest to schedule the oral defense as early after you submit the penultimate draft as possible.

For both options:

In addition to these assignments, I will be keeping track of attendance and participation. While these are not formal components of your grade, regular attendance and participation can be a tie-breaker. For example, if you are on the cusp between a B+ and an A-, a good history of attendance and participation will bump you up to the A-, whereas a poor history will bump you down to the B+.

POLICIES:

Deadlines: All deadlines are final. There are no exceptions. Incompletes will only be given in exceptional cases and at your instructor's discretion. Note: procrastination is not an exceptional circumstance.

Email: You may email papers to me. Any attachments must be in PDF, RTF, DOC (preferred), or DOCX (acceptable) formats. My computer cannot interpret files with WPS extensions. Any papers or exams delivered in an unreadable format after the deadline will receive a failing grade. To ensure that I receive your papers, it is recommended that you email the file to both the primary and secondary address (see Instructor's Information above). I will send a confirmation when I receive your paper. If you do not receive a confirmation, it is your job to contact the instructor.

Religious observance: Please consult the policy regarding non-attendance because of religious beliefs (page 56 in the 2012-2013 Bulletin). If you cannot attend class or complete an assignment because you are observing a religious holiday, please notify Prof. Arlig and an appropriate accommodation will be made.

Accessibility: In order to receive disability-related academic accommodations you must first be registered with the Center for Student Disability Services. Students who have a documented disability or suspect they may have a disability are invited to set up an appointment with the Director of the Center for Student Disability Services.

Plagiarism and Academic Misconduct: Please note the following statement about Academic Misconduct and Plagiarism.

The faculty and administration of Brooklyn College support an environment free from cheating and plagiarism. Each student is responsible for being aware of what constitutes cheating and plagiarism and for avoiding both. The complete text of the CUNY Academic Integrity Policy and the Brooklyn College procedure for implementing that policy can be found at this site: <http://www.brooklyn.cuny.edu/bc/policies>. If a faculty member suspects a violation of academic integrity and, upon investigation, confirms that violation, or if the student admits the violation, the faculty member **MUST** report the violation.

If you are unsure whether your use of another individual's work or ideas is legal and ethical, please consult me before you hand in the version of your work that is to be graded.

#### READINGS:

Many of the readings must be obtained from the Library's electronic resources. Items that are not accessible from the Library will be made available on the Blackboard site for this class. Please locate and download your readings promptly. You must bring your workshop readings to class (see below).

#### CLASS FORMAT:

Each class will have the following format. One half of the class (usually the first) will consist of an overview of the topic, including an introduction to key concepts, problems, and positions. The Schedule will list readings that the instructor will draw upon and refer to as he presents this material. It is strongly recommended that you read these texts. The other half of the class will consist of a workshop, where the class will do a close reading of a key text. Individual students will team up with the instructor to lead the class through the article. An emphasis will be placed on reconstructing and evaluating key arguments from the text. Students must read the workshop text prior to the session.

#### SCHEDULE:

**IMPORTANT:** This schedule is subject to change. It is the student's responsibility to monitor all changes to the schedule.

#### WEEK 1 (January 30)

Introduction to course

Workshop Readings (copies will be provided to the class):

\* Parmenides, fragments 2-8, from Parmenides of Elea, *Fragments: A Text and Translation with an Introduction*. Trans. David Gallop. Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1984

\* Fridugisus of Tours, *On the Being of Nothing and Shadows* (available from Paul V. Spade's website: <http://www.pvspade.com/Logic/>)

## WEEK 2 (February 6)

Background Reading:

\* Sten Ebbesen, "The Chimera's Diary", in S. Knuuttila and J. Hintikka (eds.), *The Logic of Being*. Dordrecht: D. Reidel Publishing

\* W. V. O. Quine, "On What There Is," *The Review of Metaphysics* 2 (1948): 21-38

\* David Lewis, "Truth in Fiction," *American Philosophical Quarterly* 15 (1978): 37-46

\* Franz Brentano, "Genuine and Fictitious Objects", in Roderick M. Chisholm (ed.), *Realism and the Background of Phenomenology*. Atascadero, CA: Ridgeview Publishing, [1960] 1980

\* Alexius Meinong, "The Theory of Objects", in Roderick M. Chisholm (ed.), *Realism and the Background of Phenomenology*. Atascadero, CA: Ridgeview Publishing, [1960] 1980

\* Chris Daly, "To Be", in Robin Le Poidevin et al. (eds.), *The Routledge Companion to Metaphysics*. New York: Routledge, 2009

Workshop Readings:

\* David Lewis and Stephanie Lewis, "Holes", *Australasian Journal of Philosophy* 48 (1970): 206-212

\* Graham Priest, "Not to Be", in Robin Le Poidevin et al. (eds.), *The Routledge Companion to Metaphysics*. New York: Routledge, 2009

### WEEK 3 (February 13)

#### Background Readings:

- \* Peter Simons, *Parts: A Study in Ontology*. Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1987, Chapter 1 and Chapter 3, 3.1-3.2
- \* David Lewis, *Parts of Classes*. Oxford: Basil Blackwell, 1991, pp. 1-3, 72-87
- \* Nicholas Rescher, "Axioms for the Part Relation," *Philosophical Studies* 6 (1955): 8-11
- \* Peter Van Inwagen, *Material Beings*. Ithaca, NY / London: Cornell University Press, 1990, sections 2-3 and section 8

#### Workshop Reading:

- \* David Lewis, *Parts of Classes*, pp. 72-87

Note: Wednesday, February 20 is a CONVERSION DAY. You should attend your MONDAY classes.

### WEEK 4 (February 27)

#### Background Readings:

- \* Peter Unger, "There Are No Ordinary Things," *Synthese* 41 (1979): 117-54
- \* Peter Van Inwagen, *Material Beings*. Ithaca, NY / London: Cornell University Press, 1990, sections 2 and 8
- \* Ross P. Cameron, "Turtles All the Way Down: Regress, Priority and Fundamentality," *The Philosophical Quarterly* 58 (2008): 1-14
- \* Jonathan Schaffer, "Monism: The Priority of the Whole," *Philosophical Review* 119 (2010): 31-76

#### Workshop Readings:

- \* The "dichotomy" argument attributed to Zeno, from Jonathan Barnes (ed./trans.), *Early Greek Philosophy*. London / New York: Penguin, 1987

\* Jonathan Schaffer, "From Nihilism to Monism," *Australasian Journal of Philosophy* 85 (2007): 175-91

#### WEEK 5 (March 6)

##### Background Readings:

\* Paul Vincent Spade, "The Warp and Woof of Metaphysics" (available from his website: <http://www.pvspade.com/Logic/>)

\* Aristotle, *Categories*, chapters 2 and 5

\* Aristotle, *Physics*, book 1, chapters 5-9

\* Aristotle, *Metaphysics*, book 7, chapter 17, and book 8, chapter 6

\* Michael Loux, "Aristotle's Constituent Ontology", Dean W. Zimmerman (ed.), *Oxford Studies in Metaphysics*, vol. 2. Oxford: Clarendon Press, 2006 (available as an e-book from the BC Library)

\* Kit Fine "Things and Their Parts", *Midwest Studies in Philosophy* 23 (1999): 61-74

\* Ned Markosian, "Restricted Composition", in Hawthorne, and Dean Zimmerman (eds.), *Contemporary Debates in Metaphysics*. Oxford / Malden, MA: Blackwell Publishing, 2008 (typescript from: [http://myweb.facstaff.wwwu.edu/nmarkos/Ned\\_Markosians\\_Website/Online\\_Papers.html](http://myweb.facstaff.wwwu.edu/nmarkos/Ned_Markosians_Website/Online_Papers.html))

##### Workshop Reading:

\* Peter Van Inwagen, *Material Beings*. Ithaca, NY / London: Cornell University Press, 1990, sections 6-9

#### WEEK 6 (March 13)

##### Background Readings:

\* Peter T. Geach, *Reference and Generality*, 3<sup>rd</sup> edition. Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 1980, pp. 215-18

\* David Lewis "Many but Almost One", in John Bacon, Keith Campbell and Lloyds Reinhardt (eds.), *Ontology, Causality, and Mind: Essays in Honor of David Armstrong*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1993.



Reprinted in Elena Castellani (ed.) *Interpreting Bodies: Classical and Quantum Objects in Modern Physics*. Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1988

Workshop Reading:

\* John Buridan, *Questions on the "De Anima"* (final lecture), Book 2, question 7 ("Whether the whole soul is in each part of the ensouled body"). Translated by Andrew Arlig (unpublished translation)

### WEEK 7 (March 20)

Background Readings:

\* Peter Unger, "There Are No Ordinary Things," *Synthese* 41 (1979): 117-54

\* Peter Van Inwagen, *Material Beings*. Ithaca, NY / London: Cornell University Press, 1990, sections 17-19

\* Amie L. Thomasson, *Ordinary Objects*. Oxford / New York: Oxford University Press, 2007, chapter 5

Workshop Readings:

\* Mark Heller, "Vagueness and the Standard Ontology," *Nous* 22 (1988): 109-31

\* Amie L. Thomasson, *Ordinary Objects*. Oxford / New York: Oxford University Press, 2007, chapters 9 and 10

SPRING RECESS: March 25 to April 2

### WEEK 8 (April 3)

Background Readings:

\* Alex Oliver, "The Metaphysics of Properties," *Mind* 105 (1996): 1-80

\* Michael Devitt, "'Ostrich Nominalism' or 'Mirage Realism'?" *Pacific Philosophical Quarterly* 61 (1980): 433-9; reprinted in D. H. Mellor and Alex Oliver (eds.), *Properties*. Oxford Readings in Philosophy. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1997

\* D. M. Armstrong, "Against 'Ostrich' Nominalism: A Reply to Michael Devitt," *Pacific Philosophical Quarterly* 61 (1980): 440-9; reprinted in D. H. Mellor and Alex Oliver (eds.), *Properties*. Oxford Readings in Philosophy. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1997

\* D. M. Armstrong, *A World of States of Affairs*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1997, chapters 2 and 3

\* David Lewis, "New Work for a Theory of Universals," *Australasian Journal of Philosophy* 61 (1983): 343-77 – especially pages 343-58

Workshop Reading:

\* Boethius, selection from *Second Commentary on Porphyry's "Isagoge"*, in Paul V. Spade (trans.), *Five Texts on the Mediaeval Problem of Universals*. Indianapolis: Hackett Publishing, 1994

## WEEK 9 (April 10)

Background Readings:

\* Boethius, selections from *On the Trinity* and *Against Eutyches and Nestorius*. Translated by Andrew Arlig (unpublished)

\* Andrew Arlig, "The metaphysics of individuals in the *Opuscula Sacra*", in John Marenbon (ed.) *The Cambridge Companion to Boethius*. Cambridge / New York: Cambridge University Press, 2009

\* David S. Oderberg, "Hylomorphism and Individuation", in John Haldane (ed.), *Mind, Metaphysics, and Value in the Thomistic and Analytical Traditions*. Notre Dame: University of Notre Dame Press, 2002

Workshop Reading:

\* Peter Abelard, selection from *Logica Ingredientibus 1, glosses on Porphyry's "Isagoge"*. Translated by Andrew Arlig (unpublished)

## WEEK 10 (April 17)

Background Readings:

\* George Berkeley, *A Treatise Concerning the Principles of Human Knowledge*, 2nd edition, 1734, Part 1, §§ 1-40 (available on-line: <http://www.maths.tcd.ie/~dwilkins/Berkeley/HumanKnowledge/> )

\* Donald C. Williams, "On the Elements of Being: I," *Review of Metaphysics* 7 (1953): 3-18

\* Peter Simons, "Particulars in Particular Clothing: Three Trope Theories of Substance", *Philosophy and Phenomenological Research* 54 (1994), 553-575

Workshop Reading:

\* Peter Simons, "Farewell to Substance: A Differentiated Leave-Taking", *Ratio*, new series, 11 (1998): 235-52

#### WEEK 11 (April 24)

Background Readings:

\* Peter Simons, *Parts: A Study in Ontology*. Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1987, chapter 3, section 3.3

\* Roderick Chisholm, *Person and Object: A Metaphysical Study*. La Salle, IL: Open Court Publishing, 1976, chapter 3 and Appendix B

Workshop Readings:

\* James Van Cleve, "Mereological Essentialism, Mereological Conjunctivism, and Identity Through Time," *Midwest Studies in Philosophy* 11 (1986): 141-56

\* Peter Simons, *Parts*, chapter 5, sections 5.4 to 5.6

#### WEEK 12 (May 1)

Background Readings:

\* Roderick Chisholm, *Person and Object: A Metaphysical Study*. La Salle, IL: Open Court Publishing, 1976, chapter 3, sections 5 and 6

\* John Buridan, *Inquiries concerning Aristotle's "On Generation and Corruption"*, Book 1, Inquiry 13: "Whether that which is augmented remains unqualifiedly the same before and after", translated by Andrew Arlig (unpublished translation)

\* John Locke, *Essay Concerning Human Understanding*, Book II, chapter 27 (available on-line:

<http://etext.lib.virginia.edu/toc/modeng/public/LocHuma.html> or  
<http://oregonstate.edu/instruct/phl302/texts/locke/locke1/contents2.html> )

Workshop Reading:

\* Derek Parfit, "Personal Identity," *Philosophical Review* 80 (1971): 3-27

### WEEK 13 (May 8)

Background Readings:

\* Roderick Chisholm, *Person and Object: A Metaphysical Study*. La Salle, IL: Open Court Publishing, 1976, Appendix A

\* Peter Simons, *Parts: A Study in Ontology*. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1987, chapter 3, section 3.4

\* Ted Sider "Temporal Parts", in Ted Sider, John Hawthorne, and Dean Zimmerman (eds.), *Contemporary Debates in Metaphysics*. Oxford / Malden, MA: Blackwell Publishing, 2008 (typescript from: <http://tedsider.org/>)

\* Mark Heller, "Things Change", *Philosophy and Phenomenological Research* 52 (1992): 695-704

Workshop Reading:

\* David Lewis, "Survival and Identity," in David Lewis, *Philosophical Papers*, vol. 1, Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1983, pp. 55-77

### WEEK 14 (May 15)

Background Readings:

\* J. M. E. McTaggart, "The Unreality of Time," *Mind* 17 (1908): 457-74

\* J. J. C. Smart, *Philosophy and Scientific Realism*. International Library of Philosophy and Scientific Method. London / New York: Routledge & Kegan Paul / Humanities Press, 1963, chapter 7

\* Paul Horwich, *Asymmetries in Time: Problems in the Philosophy of Science*. Cambridge, MA: MIT Press, chapter 2

\* Robert A. Heinlein, “—All You Zombies—”, in *The Fantasies of Robert A. Heinlein*. New York: Tor, 1999

Workshop Reading:

\* David Lewis, “The Paradoxes of Time Travel,” *American Philosophical Quarterly* 13 (1976): 145-52

May 17: Reading Day

May 18 to 24: Final Examinations Period

METAPHYSICS FINAL: Wednesday, May 22, 6:00-8:00 pm (date, time and room to be confirmed later in the semester)