PY5325: Texts in Contemporary Metaphysics, Spring 2014

1. Practical Information for the Module

Contacts:
- Professor Katherine Hawley (kjh5, phone (46)2469, room G06 Edgecliffe). My schedule varies weekly, so I do not have regular office hours. But you are very welcome to make an appointment to see me, and you should do so as soon as possible if you are struggling with the module for any reason, or just want advice/suggestions for reading.
- Dr Aaron Cotnoir (ac117, phone (46)4438, room G07 Edgecliffe). Office hours: Mondays, 10.00–11.00 (or by appointment)

Class time: 1-3pm Thursdays, room 104 Edgecliffe.

Assessment: you are required to submit one 4000 word essay for this module, by Monday 5th May. In addition, you may submit an optional research plan of up to 1000 words, by Monday 14th April at the latest. We strongly encourage you to submit a research plan – sooner rather than later – so that we can provide feedback which will help you write your essay. You are encouraged to discuss your essay topic with Aaron or Katherine at any stage, and the sooner the better.

All coursework is to be submitted via the Module Management System. For full guidance on how to submit your work via MMS, read the Student Guide to MMS. [http://www.st-andrews.ac.uk/philosophy/docs/mms_student_guide.pdf]

Coursework should be word-processed, double-spaced with one-and-a-half inch (4cm) margins. Coursework is marked anonymously, and so submitted work should be identified only by your matriculation number. Do not put your name anywhere on your coursework. On the first page of your coursework, you should include: your matriculation number, the module name and number, your tutor's name, the word count, the title of the essay, and the following statement: 'I hereby declare that the attached piece of written work is my own work and that I have not reproduced, without acknowledgement, the work of another'.

Please note that coursework must be in pdf format. This is to ensure that diagrams and symbols come out correctly. The word count for all coursework or for the dissertation should include all footnotes, endnotes, and quotes AND the bibliography. Part of your task in writing your abstract/essay is writing to the specified word limit: this is important preparation for professional writing either in academic philosophy or in the wider world.

2. Overview and Preparation

In this module we will discuss a range of issues concerned with identity, including the closely related topics of discernibility, bundle theory, the problem of change, multiple location, composition, necessity/contingency, relative identity, vagueness, the problem of the many, and metaontology.
There are three different types of preparatory reading you may find useful. You can start by reading a sequence of survey/overview articles on these topics. Try one of the following sets of articles:

- Sider, Hawthorne and Zimmerman, eds (2008): *Contemporary Debates in Metaphysics*, Oxford: Blackwell (available in paperback). In particular, the pairs of chapters on persistence (Sider, Hawthorne), mereology (van Cleve, Markosian), or metaontology (Hirsch, Eklund).

  Philosophy Compass [http://www.blackwell-compass.com/subject/philosophy/](http://www.blackwell-compass.com/subject/philosophy/) (university network only) has helpful articles on ‘The Open Future’ (Torre), ‘Ontic Vagueness and Metaphysical Indeterminacy’ (Barnes), ‘The Problem of Change’ (Wasserman), ‘Temporal Parts’ (McGrath), ‘Parts and Wholes’ (McDaniel), ‘Simples and Gunk’ (Hudson) and ‘Metaontology’ (Eklund). If you have some knowledge of physics, then also try ‘Persistence and Location in Relativistic Spacetime’ (Gilmore).

  Stanford Encyclopedia of Philosophy [http://plato.stanford.edu/](http://plato.stanford.edu/) (open access) is less focused, but you could read ‘Temporal Parts’ (Hawley), ‘Mereology’ (Varzi) if you have technical tastes, ‘The Problem of the Many’ (Weatherson), ‘Material Constitution’ (Wasserman), ‘Ordinary Objects’ (Korman) and/or ‘Change’ (Mortensen).

Depending on your background, you may find it useful to consult a general introduction to metaphysics whilst reading some of the above. Good ones include, in order of increasing length/detail:


For follow-up reading you can begin to investigate more deeply. You can of course take up the references in the introductory reading. Or you can tackle a contemporary classic monograph in this area of metaphysics. Try:


**Other resources:**

[Google Scholar](http://scholar.google.com/) can be overwhelming, but it does link through to JSTOR etc if you’re on the university network. It is a good...
way of finding an article or author you’re already interested in. The ‘Cited by’ link helps locate published discussions of something you’re interested in.

The *Stanford Encyclopedia of Philosophy* is a huge resource, usually of very high quality: http://plato.stanford.edu/ Try looking in the alphabetical table of contents for something resembling what you’re interested in, and if that article’s not quite right, follow the links for related entries at the end of the article.

**Oxford Scholarship Online** gives access to many OUP books: http://www.oxfordscholarship.com/oso/public/philosophy/subject_home.html

PhilPapers ([www.philpapers.org](http://www.philpapers.org)) is an organised directory of philosophical papers and books. You can browse categories such as ‘identity’, or ‘material objects’, and investigate their sub-categories. A good strategy is to look up an article you already know to be relevant, check which category it falls under, then browse its neighbours.

### 3. Schedule and Key Reading

We have listed required reading for each week – everyone is expected to come to class prepared to discuss these items. Related reading will give you context or follow-ups, and will be useful for essay preparation. There is a lot of literature in this area, so we have just suggested some representative samples: if there is something particular you would like to follow up, please ask for more specific suggestions. Don’t forget the *Philosophy Compass*, Stanford Encyclopedia and other surveys mentioned above. (NB we have listed our own publications where relevant, but please do not make these the focus of your essay.)

Each week, one student will begin the class by making a short presentation on the required reading. This should be maximum 20 minutes long, so you should not expect to cover every point in the reading: focus on highlighting a few key claims or arguments, and mentioning areas you would like to discuss further, issues you didn’t understand, or questions you would like to raise.

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<th>Week 1 (30th January): Identity of Indiscernibles I</th>
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<td><strong>Required reading:</strong></td>
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**Related reading:**


**Week 2 (6th February): Identity of Indiscernibles II – Bundle Theory**

**Required reading:**


**Related reading:**

Hawthorne, John and Sider, Theodore 2002: 'Locations', *Philosophical Topics*, 30, pp. 53–76. [Also in Hawthorne's *Metaphysical Essays*.]  

**Week 3 (13th February): Identity through Change**

**Required reading**


**Related reading**


Hawley, Katherine: 'Lewis on Persistence’ forthcoming in Blackwell Companion to David Lewis, eds Loewer and Schaffer. [on my website]


**Week 4 (20th February): Identity and Multi-Location**

**Required reading:**


**Related reading**


Week 5 (6th March): Many-One Identity

**Required reading:**


**Related reading:**

Wallace, Megan (2011): ‘Composition as Identity 1’ and ‘Composition as Identity 2’, *Philosophy Compass*, 6.11, pp. 804-816 and 817-827. [Lots more references in her bibliographies.]
Cotnoir, Aaron (forthcoming): ‘Composition as Identity: Framing the Debate’, for *Composition as Identity*, co-edited with Donald Baxter, forthcoming with OUP [on Aaron’s website].

Week 6 (13th March): Absolute and Relative Identity

**Required reading**


**Related reading**


### Week 7 (27th February): Necessary and Contingent Identity

**Required reading**


**Related reading**


15th March – 30th March: Spring Break
Week 8 (3\textsuperscript{rd} April): Vague Identity

**Required reading**


**Related reading**


Week 9 (10\textsuperscript{th} April): The Problem of the Many

**Required reading**


**Related reading**
Bennett, Karen (on her website): 'Lewis on Mereology' forthcoming in the *Blackwell Companion to David Lewis*, edited by Loewer and Schaffer.

**Week 10 (17th April): Criteria of Identity**

**Required reading:**


**Related Reading:**


**Week 11 (24th April): Methodological Reflections**

**Required reading:**

- Callendar, Craig (2011)"Metaphysics and Philosophy of Science" in French and Saatsi's *Continuum Companion to Philosophy of Science*. And on his website.

**Related reading:**


• The *Metametaphysics* collection which contains the Bennett paper has lots of interesting stuff. You could start with David Manley’s ‘Introduction’, and try Amie Thomasson (her book *Ordinary Objects* is also good), John Hawthorne or Kit Fine. Also check out Elizabeth Barnes’s review in *Notre Dame Philosophical Reviews* [online].
