

Philosophy 415
Professor King
Fall 2007

Metaphysics

Contemporary analytical metaphysics is a sub-discipline of philosophy comprising substantial literatures on a wide variety of topics and issues that are generally very abstract and fundamental to philosophy as a whole. Because of the sheer number of issues addressed, the complexity of the issues and the many views on any given issue, there can be no question of even a remotely exhaustive survey of this sub-discipline in a single course. Instead, we will discuss a range of issues that I believe to be among the most central in contemporary analytical metaphysics. Because it will be hard to even state the issues to be discussed at the outset with any rigor, suffice it to say that the following will be among the topics covered: the nature of time; what objects are; what it is for something to change; the relation between a material object and the matter that makes it up.

Textbook: Material Constitution, Michael Rea (ed.) Readings not in this book are asterisked and on the library reserve online.

Week 1: 'On Being in the Same Place at the Same Time', David Wiggins

Week 2: 'Spatially Coinciding Objects', Frederick C. Doepke

Week 3: 'The Doctrine of Arbitrary Undetached Parts', Peter van Inwagen

Week 4: weeks 1-3 continued

Week 5: 'Temporal Parts of Four Dimensional Objects', Mark Heller

Week 6: 'Counterparts or Double Lives' (& perhaps other excerpts from On the Plurality of Worlds*), David Lewis

Week 7: same

Weeks 8-10: 'A Defense of Presentism*', Ned Markosian; 'Presentism and Ontological Commitment*', Theodore Sider

Week 11: 'Constitution is not Identity', Mark Johnston

Week 12: 'Preserving the Principle of One Object to One Place', Michael Burke

Weeks 13 -14: Excerpts from Four Dimensionalism*, Ted Sider

Because the material we will be discussing is very difficult, we will go through it in great detail. You will certainly need to read every reading many times to fully understand it. For this reason I have kept the number of pages read per week fairly low. **Do not be deceived by this!** You should read every reading before we discuss it and read it again afterwards. As a result, lots of reading is in fact required.

Because we will be going over the readings in great detail (see above), you should bring any readings that may be under discussion on a given day to class. We will often look over passages together in class and you will want to have the relevant passages in front of you.

Grading: There will be two (5-7 page) papers and a take home final examination. Each of these assignments is worth a third of your grade.

Policies: 1) PAPERS ARE DUE IN CLASS ON THE DAY SPECIFIED. PAPERS TURNED IN LATE WITHOUT PRIOR APPROVAL WILL BE GRADED DOWN 1/2 GRADE FOR EACH DAY THEY ARE LATE (PAPERS TURNED IN THE DAY DUE BUT AFTER CLASS ARE ONE DAY LATE); FINAL EXAMS TURNED IN AFTER THE DAY AND TIME THEY ARE DUE WITHOUT PRIOR APPROVAL WILL NOT BE ACCEPTED AND YOU WILL BE GIVEN A GRADE OF 'F' FOR YOUR EXAM.

2) BECAUSE OF THE DRAMATIC INCREASE IN CASES OF PLAGIARISM OVER THE LAST SEVERAL YEARS, MY CURRENT POLICY IS TO REFER, IMMEDIATELY AND WITHOUT QUESTION OR COMMENT, ALL CASES OF SUSPECTED PLAGIARISM TO STUDENT JUDICIAL AFFAIRS!

(A statement of Rutgers policy on plagiarism can be found on-line at:
<http://academicintegrity.rutgers.edu/integrity.shtml#plagiarism>)