

5AANA010 METAPHYSICS II

Syllabus – Academic year 2016/17

Basic information

Credits: 15

Module Tutor: Bill Brewer

Office: 802

Consultation time: TBC

Semester: Second

Lecture time and venue*: Monday, 3.00, K-1. 56

**Please note that tutorial times and venues will be organised independently with your teaching tutor*

Module description (plus aims and objectives)

This module will focus in a sustained and detailed way on the metaphysics of ordinary material objects. Topics to be discussed will include some of the following. Idealism and Phenomenalism, Quinean ontology, four-dimensionalism, compositional universalism, and arguments from vagueness, Kantian and Ramseyan Humility, Fine on hylomorphism, rigid embodiment and variable embodiment, sortalism, and grounding, Natural Continuants and Exclusivity.

Aims

The Metaphysics II module aims to instruct students in a central and fundamental area of contemporary metaphysics: the nature of ordinary material objects. It will discuss some topics also covered in Metaphysics I, but in greater depth, as well as introducing other important metaphysical topics in the area.

Objectives

By the end of the module, the students will be able to demonstrate intellectual, transferable, and practicable skills appropriate to a Level 5 module and in particular will be able to demonstrate a broad understanding of the main problems concerning the metaphysics of ordinary material objects in the analytic tradition.

Assessment methods and deadlines

- **Formative assessment:** one 2000 word essays due: 1600 Monday 27 Feb 2017
- **Summative assessment:** two 2000 word essays (100%) due 1600 Wednesday 26 April 2017

Outline of lecture topics (plus suggested readings)

Week One<TBC>: <<Idealism and Phenomenalism>>

Suggested reading:

- Foster, 'Berkeley on the Physical World', in Foster and Robinson (eds.), Essays on Berkeley.
- Stoneham, Berkeley's World, , chs. 2 & 8.
- Wilson, 'The "Phenomenalisms" of Leibniz and Berkeley', 'The "Phenomenalisms" of Berkeley and Kant', in her Ideas and Mechanism.

Week Two<TBC>: <<Universalism>>

Suggested reading:

- Sider, Four-Dimensionalism, ch. 4.9.1.
- Van Inwagen, 'When are Objects Parts?', pt. III, in Kim et al (eds.), Metaphysics.
- Thomson, 'Parthood and Identity Across Time', in Kim et al (eds.), Metaphysics.

Week Three<TBC>: <<4D Stage View v Worm View>>

Suggested reading:

- Sider, Four-Dimensionalism, ch. 5.8.
- Hawley, How Things Persist, ch. 2.

Week Four<TBC>: <<Vagueness and Nihilism>>

Suggested reading:

- Sider, Four-Dimensionalism, ch. 4.9.2-3.
- Varzi, 'Change, Temporal Parts, and the Argument from Vagueness', http://www.columbia.edu/~av72/papers/Dialectica_2005.pdf
- Sider, 'Against Parthood', <http://tedsider.org/papers/nihilism.pdf>

Week Five <TBC>: <<Humility>>

Suggested reading:

- Lewis, 'Ramseyian Humility', http://www.andrewmbailey.com/dkl/Ramseyan_Humility.pdf
- Langton, Kantian Humility, ch. 6.
- Brewer, Perception and Its Objects, ch. 2.

READING WEEK – FORMATIVE ESSAY DUE – 1600h 27.ii.17

Week Six<TBC>: <<Berkeley's Puzzle>>

Suggested reading:

- Campbell, Berkeley's Puzzle, <http://socrates.berkeley.edu/~jcampbel/documents/Berkeley.pdf>
- Brewer, 'Visual Experience, Revelation, and the Three R's'.

Week Seven<TBC>: <<Hylomorphism>>

Suggested reading:

- Fine, 'Coincidence and Form'.
- Fine, 'Things and their Parts'.
- Koslicki, The Structure of Objects, ch. 4.

Week Eight<TBC>: <<Sortalism and Grounding>>

Suggested reading:

- Wiggins, 'Identity, Individuation, and Substance'. European Journal of Philosophy, 2012.
- Bennett, 'Spatiotemporal Coincidence and the Grounding Problem'.
- Jones, 'Multiple Constitution', http://www.nkjones.com/uploads/2/2/0/7/22071324/multiple_constitution_web_-_12-10-05.pdf

Week Nine<TBC>: <<Natural Continuants and Exclusivity>>

Suggested reading:

- Ayers, 'Ordinary Objects, Ordinary Language, and Identity', The Monist, 2005.
- Brewer, 'Exclusive Individuals'.
- Brewer, 'Material Objects and Their Parts'.
- Brewer, 'Basic Objects as Grounds'.

Week Ten <TBC>: <<Review>>

SUMMATIVE ESSAYS DUE – 1600h 26.iv.17

Suggested essay questions

A Formative

1. Compare and contrast two interpretations of Berkeley's anti-realism about physical objects.
2. Does every plurality of material objects compose a further material object?
3. Should the Four-Dimensionalist be a Worm Theorist or a Stage Theorist; why?
4. State and evaluate Sider's Argument from Vagueness for Four-Dimensionalism.
5. What, if any, are the implications of Lewis' argument for Ramseyian Humility for our conception of ordinary material objects?
6. Is there a satisfactory Realist solution to Berkeley's Puzzle?

B Summative

1. Can Berkeley reconcile idealism (or phenomenalism) with the common sense world view?
2. Are there pluralities of material objects that fail to compose a material object?
3. Does stage theory offer a more natural account of the way in which we count material objects than worm theory; does it matter if so?
4. In what respect, if any, is Sider's later nihilism an improvement on his earlier universalist four-dimensionalism?
5. State and evaluate Lewis' argument for Ramseyian Humility.
6. To what extent, if at all, are Berkeley and Campbell right that perceptual experience is revelatory of the nature of ordinary objects?
7. Explain and evaluate Fine's theory of Rigid and Variable Embodiments.
8. Can the Sortalist give a satisfactory solution to the Grounding Problem?
9. Is there a unified class of Exclusive ordinary material objects?