

Philosophy H1100: Honors Introduction to Philosophy
Spring 2017

Updated 30 January 2017

Instructor: Ben Caplan
Time: T Th 12:45 PM – 2:05 PM
Location: ~~Enarson~~ 005 Hayes (note the change of location)
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Course description

This course is on identity and identities.

The first part of the course is on *numerical identity*, a relation that everything stands in to itself. The second part of the course is on *personal identity*, a relation that you stand in to your former and future selves. The third part of the course is on identity understood as *essence*: roughly, what it is for something to be what it is. And the fourth part of the course is on *social identities*, which might include people's races, genders, disabilities, and sexual orientations.

Topics to be discussed include whether numerical identity is a relation that things stand in to the matter that they're made of, whether narrative plays a role in personal identity, whether gender is a part of a person's essence, and whether there is a difference between a person's social identities and the social positions that they occupy.

Readings

Readings are, or will be, available electronically (e.g. via Carmen (Canvas)). We will discuss some of the readings in great detail and at great length. I will sometimes presuppose that students will have the relevant texts in front of them in class.

Course requirements

Four take-home tests	40%
Levels papers	60%

There will be a (possibly very) short take-home test at the end of each section of the course. Each test is worth 10%.

The levels papers are modeled after assignments by David Sanson (at Illinois State University), who in turn modeled the assignments after assignments by Dustin Locke

(at Claremont McKenna College).¹ The description below borrows heavily from Locke via Sanson.

Apparently the levels papers are based on video game mechanics. There are three levels for you to progress through, and you are allowed to progress to the next level only after you have completed the previous level. Apparently just as with levels in video games, the idea here is to ensure that you are always working on a task that is challenging enough to be interesting but not so challenging that it is frustrating.

You have a maximum of five attempts at the levels, each due on a specific day, which will be announced at least one week in advance. After attempting a level, you will receive one of four evaluations: “not much progress,” “making progress,” “almost,” or “complete.” When you receive a “complete,” you move on to the next level. Each attempt will be on a new topic: you will not be rewriting or correcting incomplete attempts; instead, you might be attempting the same kind of task with new material. (You might also be attempting a new kind of task with new material.)

Your levels grade is determined by how far through the levels you have progressed by the end of the course.

	Not much progress	Making progress	Almost	Complete
Level 3	B	B+	A-	A
Level 2	C-	C	C+	B-
Level 1	F	D-	D	D+

We’ll discuss each level in more detail later, but the first level requires you to present an argument; the second level requires you to present an argument and an objection; and the third level requires you to present an argument, an objection, and a reply.

Academic misconduct

In accordance with Faculty Rule 3335-5-487, all suspected cases of academic misconduct will be reported to the university’s Committee on Academic Misconduct. For further details, see the Code of Student Conduct at studentaffairs.osu.edu/resource_csc.asp.

Accessibility

I’m committed to making this class as accessible as possible. If you have any particular accommodation requests, please speak to me as soon as possible.

¹ See www.davidsanson.com/201/syllabus.html and www1.cmc.edu/pages/faculty/dlocke/docs/Locke_LevelsSystem.pdf.

GE requirement

This course satisfies the Cultures and Ideas requirement. Here are the official goals and learning outcomes for courses that satisfy this requirement.

Goals: Students evaluate significant cultural phenomena and ideas in order to develop capacities for aesthetic and historical response and judgment; and interpretation and evaluation.

Expected learning outcomes: (1) Students analyze and interpret major forms of human thought, culture, and expression. (2) Students evaluate how ideas influence the character of human beliefs, the perception of reality, and the norms which guide human behavior.

In this course, you'll have an opportunity to evaluate ideas (e.g. the idea that a statue is numerically distinct from the clay that it is made of), interpret texts (e.g. the Second Meditation), and evaluate arguments (e.g. the *cogito*). You'll also have an opportunity to practice your skills in analyzing and interpreting major forms of human thought, culture, and expression: e.g. René Descartes's *Meditations on First Philosophy* (1641) and Christopher Nolan's *The Prestige* (2006).

Nondiscrimination and Title IX

Ohio State prohibits discrimination on the basis of age, ancestry, color, disability, gender identity or expression, genetic information, HIV/AIDS status, military status, national origin, race, religion, sex, sexual orientation, or veteran status in its programs, activities, employment, and admission.

Title IX—a portion of the United States Education Amendments of 1972, Public Law No. 92-318, 86 Stat. 235 (23 June 1972), codified at 20 U.S.C. Section 1681–1688—states (in part), “No person in the United States shall, on the basis of sex, be excluded from participation in, be denied the benefits of, or be subjected to discrimination under any education program or activity receiving federal financial assistance.”

Title IX makes it clear that violence and harassment based on sex and gender are Civil Rights offenses subject to the same kinds of accountability and the same kinds of support applied to offenses against other protected categories (e.g., race). If you or someone you know has been sexually harassed or assaulted, you can find resources at titleix.osu.edu or by contacting the Ohio State Title IX Coordinator, Kellie Brennan, at titleix@osu.edu.

Schedule

There is no class on 14 and 16 March 2016 (Spring Break).

A detailed and updated schedule will be posted online.

Tentative outline

1. Numerical identity

Frege's puzzle

Gottlob Frege, "Über Sinn und Bedeutung," *Zeitschrift für Philosophie und philosophische Kritik* 100 (1892): 25–50. Trans. by Max Black as "Sense and Reference," *Philosophical Review* 57.3 (May 1948): 209–230, esp. 209–210, 230 (25–26, 50).

Constitution vs. numerical identity

Judith Jarvis Thomson, "The Statue and the Clay," *Noûs* 32.2 (June 1998): 149–173, esp. 149–154.

Numerical identity over time

Sally Haslanger, "Persistence through Time," in Michael J. Loux and Dean W. Zimmerman, eds., *The Oxford Handbook of Metaphysics* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2002), 315–354.

2. Personal identity

Theodore Sider, "Personal Identity," from Earl Conee and Theodore Sider, *Riddles of Existence: A Guided Tour of Metaphysics* (Oxford: Clarendon, 2005), 7–21.

Narratives

Marya Schechtman, "The Narrative Self," in Shaun Gallagher, ed., *The Oxford Handbook of the Self* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2011), 394–415.

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René Descartes, "Second Meditation," 1641, trans. by John Cottingham in *The Philosophical Writings of Descartes*, vol. II (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1984), 16–23.

Gideon Rosen and Cian Dorr, "Composition as a Fiction," in Richard M. Gale, ed., *The Blackwell Guide to Metaphysics* (Oxford: Blackwell, 2002), 151–174, esp. 159–160.

Robert Nozick, "Reflexive Self-Reference" and "Essence as a Self," from *Philosophical Explanations* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1981), 71–79, esp. 71–73, 78–79.

3. Essence

Kit Fine, "Essence and Modality," *Philosophical Perspectives* 8 (1994): 1–16.

Charlotte Witt, "What Is Gender Essentialism?," in Charlotte Witt, ed., *Feminist Metaphysics: Explorations in the Ontology of Sex, Gender and the Self* (Dordrecht: Springer, 2011), 11–25.

4. Social identities

Gender and race as social positions

Sally Haslanger, "A Social Constructionist Analysis of Race," in Barbara A. Koenig, Sandra Soo-Jin Lee, and Sarah S. Richardson, eds., *Revisiting Race in a Genomic Age* (New Brunswick, NJ: Rutgers University Press, 2008), 56–69.

Charles W. Mills, "'But What Are You Really?': The Metaphysics of Race," in *Blackness Visible: Essays on Philosophy and Race* (Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 1998), 43–66.

Racial identity

Kwame Anthony Appiah, "Reconstructing Racial Identities," *Research in African Literatures* 27.3 (Autumn 1996): 68–72.

Sally Haslanger, "You Mixed? Racial Identity without Racial Biology," in Sally Haslanger and Charlotte Witt, eds., *Adoption Matters: Philosophical and Feminist Essays* (Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 2005), 265–289.

Gender identity

Talia Mae Bettcher, "Trans Identities and First-Person Authority," in Laurie Shrage, ed., *You've Changed: Sex Reassignment and Personal Identity* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2009), 98–120.

Katharine Jenkins, "Amelioration and Inclusion: Gender Identity and the Concept of *Woman*," *Ethics* 126.2 (Jan. 2016): 394–421.

Sexual orientation

Esa Díaz-León, “Sexual Orientations: The Desire View,” in Keya Maitra and Jennifer McWeeny, eds., *Feminist Philosophy of Mind* (forthcoming).

Disability

Elizabeth Barnes, “Preface,” “Introduction” (excerpt), and “Constructing Disability” (excerpt), in *The Minority Body: A Theory of Disability* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2016), ix-xii, 2–6, 9–13, 38–48.