

Philosophy 463: Introduction to Metaphysics
Fall 2010

General information

Time: TR 2:30 PM – 4:18 PM
 Location: McPherson Lab 1021
 Webpage: <<http://people.cohums.ohio-state.edu/caplan16/463.htm>>

Instructor Ben Caplan

Office: 337F University Hall
 Office hours: TR 4:30 PM – 5:18 PM, or by appointment
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Grader Raleigh Miller

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Course description

This course is an intermediate introduction to central issues in contemporary metaphysics. We will cover three broad topics: *(i)* nihilism, monism, and pluralism; *(ii)* universals and particulars; and *(iii)* change and essence. In the first part of the course, we will ask whether there is something or nothing and, if there is something, whether there is more than one thing. In the second part of the course, we will ask whether, in addition to objects, there are properties and, if so, whether objects are built up out of them. In the third part of the course, we will ask whether objects change over time or could be different than they actually are and, if so, how. A tentative outline is provided below.

Readings

Readings will be available electronically through the course webpage (or, failing that, through Carmen). A schedule will be posted and updated on the course webpage.

Course requirements

First assignment	20%
Second assignment	40%
Third assignment	40%

Each of the assignments will be either a short paper or a problem set. (A short paper is not longer than 5 pages.) At least one of the assignments will be a short paper. If the first assignment is a short paper, it will be a very short paper. (A very short paper is not longer than 2-3 pages.)

Disabilities

Students who might need accommodations are encouraged to contact me and the Office for Disability Services (150 Pomerene Hall, 292-3307).

Academic misconduct

Academic misconduct is a serious offense. You are expected to know what counts as academic misconduct. You are also expected not to commit it. Among other things, your work must be your own, and you must cite all of your sources. If I suspect that you have committed academic misconduct, I am required to report my suspicions to the Committee on Academic Misconduct (COAM), which may impose punishments that range from failure to suspension and expulsion.

Academic misconduct is defined in Section 3335-23-04 of the *Code of Student Conduct*, which you are expected to be familiar with. Ignorance of the *Code of Student Conduct* is no excuse for academic misconduct.

The *Code of Student Conduct* is available here:

<http://studentaffairs.osu.edu/pdfs/csc_12-31-07.pdf>.

Information on the Committee on Academic Misconduct is available here:

<<http://oaa.osu.edu/coam/home.html>>.

Academic calendar

There is no class on Thursday, 11 November 2010 (Veterans' Day) or Thursday, 25 November 2010 (Thanksgiving).

Tentative outline

1. Nihilism, monism, and pluralism

Compositional nihilism

Gideon Rosen and Cian Dorr, "Composition as a Fiction," in *The Blackwell Guide to Metaphysics*, ed. Richard M. Gale, Blackwell Philosophy Guides 8 (Oxford: Blackwell, 2002), 151-174.

Theodore Sider, *Four-Dimensionalism: An Ontology of Persistence and Time* (Oxford: Clarendon, 2001), 176-180.

Theodore Sider, "Against Parthood," available at

<<http://tedsider.org/papers/nihilism.pdf>>.

Ontological nihilism

John (O'Leary-) Hawthorne and Andrew Cortens, "Towards Ontological Nihilism," *Philosophical Studies* 79.2 (Aug. 1995): 143-165.

Jason Turner, "Ontological Nihilism," *Oxford Studies in Metaphysics* (forthcoming), available at

<[http://www.personal.leeds.ac.uk/~phljtt/jason_turner/papers_files/OSM--revised\(3\).pdf](http://www.personal.leeds.ac.uk/~phljtt/jason_turner/papers_files/OSM--revised(3).pdf)>.

Existence monism

Jonathan Schaffer, "From Nihilism to Monism," *Australasian Journal of Philosophy* 85.2 (June 2007): 175-191.

Priority monism

Jonathan Schaffer, "Monism: The Priority of the Whole," *Philosophical Review* 119.1 (Jan. 2010): 31-76.

Restricted composition

Ned Markosian, "Restricted Composition," in *Contemporary Debates in Metaphysics*, ed. Theodore Sider, John Hawthorne, and Dean W. Zimmerman, *Contemporary Debates in Philosophy* 10 (Malden, MA: Blackwell, 2008), 341-363.

Unrestricted composition

Theodore Sider, *Four-Dimensionalism: An Ontology of Persistence and Time* (Oxford: Clarendon, 2001), 121-132.

2. Universals and particulars

Realism

Bertrand Russell, *The Problems of Philosophy* (London: Williams and Norgate, 1912), 91-100.

D.M. Armstrong, *Universals: An Opinionated Introduction*, Focus (Boulder, CO: Westview, 1989), 1-20, 75-112.

Nominalism

W.V.O. Quine, "On What There Is," *Review of Metaphysics* 2.5 (Sept. 1948): 21-38.

H.H. Price, *Thinking and Experience* (London: Hutchinson's University Library, 1953), 7-32.

Trope theory

Donald C. Williams, "On the Elements of Being: I," *Review of Metaphysics* 7.1 (Sept. 1953): 3-18.

Bundle theory

Max Black, "The Identity of Indiscernibles," *Mind* 61.242 (April 1952): 153-164.

Robert Merrihew Adams, "Primitive Thisness and Primitive Identity," *Journal of Philosophy* 76.1 (Jan. 1979): 5-26.

John (O'Leary-) Hawthorne, "The Bundle Theory of Substance and the Identity of Indiscernibles," *Analysis* 55.3 (July 1995): 191-196.

3. Change and essence

Perdurantism

David Lewis, Postscript B to "Survival and Identity," in *Philosophical Papers*, vol. 1 (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1983), 76-77.

David Lewis, *On the Plurality of Worlds* (Malden, MA: Blackwell, 1986), 202-204.

David Lewis, "Tensing the Copula," *Mind* 111.441 (Jan. 2002): 1-14.

Endurantism

Sally Haslanger, "Endurance and Temporary Intrinsics," *Analysis* 49.3 (June 1989): 119-125.

Mark Hinchliff, "The Puzzle of Change," *Philosophical Perspectives* 10 (1996): 119-136.

Necessity of identity and origin

Saul A. Kripke, "Identity and Necessity," in *Identity and Individuation*, ed. Milton K. Munitz (New York: New York University Press, 1971), 135-164.

Kit Fine, "Essence and Modality: The Second *Philosophical Perspectives* Lecture," *Philosophical Perspectives* 8 (1994): 1-16.

Allan Hazlett, "Brutal Individuation," in *New Waves in Metaphysics*, ed. Allan Hazlett, *New Waves in Philosophy* (Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan, 2010), 72-90.

Contingency of identity and origin

David Lewis, "Counterparts of Persons and Their Bodies," *Journal of Philosophy* 68.7 (8 April 1971): 203-211.

Allan Gibbard, "Contingent Identity," *Journal of Philosophical Logic* 4.2 (May 1975): 187-221.

David Lewis, *On the Plurality of Worlds* (Malden, MA: Blackwell, 1986), 248-263.