Metaphysics
Philosophy 3640
Fall 2008

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Office Hours: TBA
Note: My office is not wheelchair accessible. Please call or e-mail me if you need to set up a meeting in an alternate location.

Texts
What is a Law of Nature?, David Armstrong
Properties, eds. D. H. Mellor and Alex Oliver (Oxford Readings in Philosophy)
Universals: an Opinionated Introduction, David Armstrong
Causation, eds. Ernest Sosa and Michael Tooley (Oxford Readings in Philosophy)
Additional readings will be made available via Blackboard.

Further Resources
• On reserve at Uris:
  A Companion to Metaphysics, eds. Jaegwon Kim and Ernest Sosa
  Metaphysics: A Contemporary Introduction, Michael Loux
  Causation and Counterfactuals, eds. L.A. Paul, Ned Hall, and John Collins
• On the web:
The Cornell Library maintains a list of online philosophy resources here:
  http://www.library.cornell.edu/olinuris/ref/phil.html
In particular, I recommend the following:
  The Oxford Dictionary of Philosophy:   http://www.oxfordreference.com

Assessment
• Papers: 70%
  Two papers, worth 35% each. For undergrads, these should be 8-10 pages long; for grad students, they should be 10-12 pages long. (Normal font size and margins all ’round, please.)
• Homework and Participation: 30%
  A brief homework assignment will be due every Monday at 11 AM.
  Undergrad version: These should be roughly a paragraph, and won’t be graded. Your homework grade will be based on the percentage of assignments you have completed.
  Grad student version: These should be roughly a page, and won’t be carefully graded, but I reserve the right to give the occasional ‘+’ or ‘–’.

Use of Blackboard Software
I will use Blackboard to send occasional e-mails, and to post paper topics and homework questions. You will submit your answers to homework questions via Blackboard (though you will turn papers in the old-fashioned way, on paper.) You must self-enroll to access the Blackboard site.
• To self-enroll:
  Go to http://blackboard.cornell.edu and log in. (Or, if you do not yet have a Blackboard account, click “New User: Get an Account”.)
Click “All Blackboard Sites” tab near the upper left
Search for Phil 1100
Click button marked “Enroll”

- To access and answer homework questions
  - Log on to Blackboard and access the Phil 3640 site.
  - Click on “Assignments” on the left hand side of the page
  - Read that week’s homework question.
  - Click on the “View/Complete Assignment” link.
  - Undergrads should try to answer the question in the “Comments” box rather than uploading a file. You may upload a file if the comment box isn’t big enough, but bear in mind that your homework responses should not exceed a page. Grad students should upload a file.

- Questions about Blackboard? Go here first!
  - http://atc.cit.cornell.edu/blackboard/students/index.cfm

**Tentative Schedule of Readings**

*Most readings are in the salient book for that section of the course. Those marked with an asterisk will be made available on Blackboard.*

0. **Introduction**
   9/1  *Hume, excerpt from Enquiry Concerning Human Understanding, Book VII, 2;*  
   *Hume, excerpt from An Abstract of a Treatise of Human Nature;*  
   *Lewis, excerpt from introduction to Philosophical Papers Volume II*

1. **Laws of Nature**
   9/3  Armstrong, *What is a Law of Nature?*, chapters 1 and 2  
   9/8  **no class**  
   9/10 Armstrong, *What is a Law of Nature?*, chapter 3 (chapter 4 is optional)  
      *Tooley, “The Nature of Laws”*  
   9/15 Armstrong, *What is a Law of Nature?*, chapter 5; Lewis, *Counterfactuals*, pp. 73-74  
   9/17 Armstrong, *What is a Law of Nature?*, chapter 6 (skip §5 & 8)  
      reread Lewis, p. xii of introduction to *Philosophical Papers Volume II*  
      Lewis, p. 213-216 only of “New Work for a Theory of Universals” (i.e., the beginning of the section titled “Laws and Causation”)  
   9/24 **catch-up**

2. **Properties**
   9/29 *Plato, excerpt from The Republic book X*  
      reread Armstrong, *What is a Law of Nature?*, chapter 6, §2

   10/1  continued  
   10/6  Quine, “On What There Is”  
   **10/8  no class**

**Fall break**

10/15 Lewis, “Modal Realism at Work: Properties”  
      Lewis, “New Work for a Theory of Universals” sections 1-3  
      Armstrong, *Universals: An Opinionated Introduction*, chapters 1-3
10/20  **Paper #1 due**  
continued
10/22  Shoemaker, “Causality and Properties”
Armstrong, *What is a Law of Nature?*, chapter 11 §1  
10/27  continued

3.  **Causation**  
10/29  Mackie, “Causes and Conditions”
11/3  Lewis, “Causation”  
*Collins, Hall, and Paul, sections 0 and 1 of the Introduction to *Causation and Counterfactuals*  
*Lewis, “Counterfactual Dependence and Time’s Arrow”*
11/5  continued
11/10  Horwich, “Lewis’ Programme”
*Lewis, “Postscripts”, section E  
*Schaffer, “Trumping preemption”  
*Optional: *Collins, Hall, and Paul, section 4 of the Introduction to *Causation and Counterfactuals*
11/12  continued
11.17  Tooley, “Causation: Reductionism vs. Realism”  
*Armstrong, “Going Through the Open Door Again”  
11/19  * Schaffer, “Causation and Laws of Nature: Reductionism”
11/24  Lewis, “Postscripts”, section D  
Lewis, “Void and Object” sections 1, 2, and 5 (rest optional), Dowe, “A Counterfactual Theory of Prevention and ‘Causation’ by Omission”  
*Optional: Beebee, “Causing and Nothingness”*
11/26  McGrath, “Causation by Omission: a Dilemma”  
*Optional: Thomson, “Causation: Omissions”  

**Thanksgiving**

12/1  *Mackie, “Causing, Delaying, and Hastening: Do Rains Cause Fires?”  
12/3  Anscombe, “Causality and Determination,” section 1  
* Siegel, “The Visual Experience of Causation”  

12/5  **Paper #2 due**