Intermediate Metaphysics  
Philosophy 3640  
Fall 2015

Professor Karen Bennett  
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322 Goldwin Smith Hall  
Office Hours: Wednesday 11:30-12:15 and by appointment  
Note: My office is not wheelchair accessible. Please e-mail me if you need to set up a meeting in an alternate location.

Required Texts  
*What is a Law of Nature?, David Armstrong*  
*Universals: an Opinionated Introduction*, David Armstrong

All other readings will be made available via Blackboard.

Optional extras:  
*Properties*, eds. D. H. Mellor and Alex Oliver (Oxford Readings in Philosophy)  
*Causation*, eds. Ernest Sosa and Michael Tooley (Oxford Readings in Philosophy)  
*Causation and Counterfactuals*, eds. Laurie Paul, Ned Hall, and John Collins

Online Resources  
The Cornell Library maintains a list of online philosophy resources here:  
http://guides.library.cornell.edu/philosophyresearch  
I particularly 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 roughly 10 pages long; for grad students, they should be 12-15 pages long. (Normal font size and margins.)

- Homework and Participation: 30%  
  A brief homework assignment will be due every Monday at noon.  
  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 ‘−’.

Policy Notes  
1. Extensions can be granted on papers, but you have to talk to me in advance. If you do not make arrangements beforehand, late papers will be downgraded by 1/3 letter grade per day.
2. Every student in this course is expected to abide by Cornell’s policies regarding academic integrity, available at http://cuinfo.cornell.edu/Academic/AIC.html.
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.)

• To access and answer homework questions
  Log on to Blackboard and access the Phil 3640 site.
  Click on “Homework Assignments” on the left hand side of the page
  Click on that week’s homework question.
  Click “text submission” and answer the question in the box that opens. Undergrads: your answers should range from a couple of sentences to a paragraph or so. Grad students: your answers should the equivalent of 1-2 pages.

• Questions about Blackboard? Go here first!
  http://bbhelp.cit.cornell.edu/blackboard-faq/#students

Tentative Schedule of Readings

Introduction

8/26 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

8/31 Armstrong, *What is a Law of Nature?*, chapters 1 and 2

9/2 Armstrong, *What is a Law of Nature?*, chapter 3

9/7 no class (Labor Day)

9/9 Armstrong, *What is a Law of Nature?*, chapter 4

9/14 Armstrong, *What is a Law of Nature?*, chapter 5, §4
     Lewis, *Counterfactuals*, pp. 73-74
     Lewis, excerpt from “Postscript C” to “Subjectivist’s Guide to Objective Chance”, 122-124
     Lewis, p. 215-216 only of “New Work for a Theory of Universals” (i.e., the beginning of the section titled “Laws and Causation”)
     Lewis, p. 478-480 only of “Humean Supervenience Debugged”

9/16 Loewer, pp. 187-194 of “Humean Supervenience” (the section called, “Are the L-Laws the Laws?”—rest is optional)
     Lange, sections 2.3 and 2.4 from *Laws and Lawmakers*

     Lewis, p. 213-214 of “New Work for a Theory of Universals”
     Lewis, p. xii of introduction to *Philosophical Papers Volume II*
9/23 continued and catch-up


Further reading on laws: Lange, Laws and Lawmakers; Maudlin, The Metaphysics within Physics; van Fraassen, Laws and Symmetry; Ellis, Causal Essentialism; John Carroll, Laws of Nature; John Carroll, ed., Readings on Laws of Nature

2. Properties

10/5 Plato, excerpt from The Republic book X
Armstrong, Universals: An Opinionated Introduction, pp. 1-11
reread Armstrong, What is a Law of Nature?, chapter 6, §2

10/7 Quine, “On What There Is”

10/12 no class (fall break)

10/14 Armstrong, Universals: An Opinionated Introduction, chapters 1 and 2

10/19 Paper #1 due
Armstrong, Universals: An Opinionated Introduction, chapter 3

10/21 Lewis, “Modal Realism at Work: Properties”
Lewis, “New Work for a Theory of Universals” sections 1-3

10/26 Shoemaker, “Causality and Properties”
Armstrong, What is a Law of Nature?, chapter 11 §1

10/28 continued

3. Causation

11/2 Lewis, “Causation”
Collins, Hall, and Paul, sections 0 and 1 of the Introduction to Causation and Counterfactuals

11/4 Lewis, “Counterfactual Dependence and Time’s Arrow”

11/9 Lewis, “Postscripts”, section E

11/11 continued

11/16 Lewis, “Postscripts”, section D
Lewis, “Void and Object” sections 1, 2, and 5 (rest optional), Beebee, “Causing and Nothingness”

11/18 McGrath, “Causation by Omission: a Dilemma”
Optional: Thomson, “Causation: Omissions”

11/23 Mackie, “Causing, Delaying, and Hastening: Do Rains Cause Fires?”

11/25 no class (Thanksgiving break)

11/30 Strawson, “Realism and Causation”
Beebee, “Does Anything Hold the Universe Together?”
Armstrong, “Going Through the Open Door Again”
Tooley, “Causation: Reductionism vs. Realism” particularly §3-6 (section 2 rehearse arguments against Humeanism about laws of nature)
Optional: Schaffer, “Causation and Laws of Nature: Reductionism”

12/2 continued and wrap-up

Paper #2 due by 12/10 at 4:30 PM (this deadline is set by the registrar)