

Instructor: James Shaw
E-mail: James.A.R.Shaw@gmail.com
Office Hours: Monday 10am-12:30pm
Cathedral of Learning 1008B

METAPHYSICS & EPISTEMOLOGY CORE

COURSE DESCRIPTION

We're going to try to gain a basic understanding of some important positions in contemporary philosophy of language, philosophy of mind, and epistemology while developing a toolkit of useful concepts and some basic philosophical skills. We begin with a unit on reference using *Naming and Necessity* as a focal point. In the remainder of the course we cover a relatively scattered set of topics in philosophy of mind and epistemology.

COURSE REQUIREMENTS AND GRADING

- Responses
- 60% Papers (20% each)
- 20% Presentation
- 20% Participation

Responses: Every week, starting with our second meeting, e-mail me a *short* paragraph response or question by Sunday evening (7pm) about *one* of the readings for the subsequent class. These are informal and meant to give me a sense for what is troubling people in the readings. They won't be graded but *must be completed for course credit*.

Papers: There will be three papers of between 5 and 7 full pages (double spaced, 12pt.). *Respect these length limits.* Assignment distribution dates are below. You should have a little less than two weeks to complete each paper (or a little less than three if you have a presentation the week the paper would otherwise be due). Late assignments are docked a half-letter grade per day, barring special excuses.

Presentation: You'll sign up to present and critique some argument found in one of the later readings and help lead a subsequent discussion on the topic. More instructions are on the "presentations" handout.

Participation: You must participate during every other student's presentation, either by asking questions, providing constructive suggestions, or giving friendly, searching criticism. Combateness is frowned upon as is monopolizing discussion.

TEXTS

There is only one text to purchase for the course: Kripke's *Naming and Necessity*. You can find other readings here:

www.jshaw.net/courses/core.html

You will need a password to access the documents, which you can find on the syllabus handed out on the first day of class.

SCHEDULE OF TOPICS AND READINGS

(Subject to change)

LANGUAGE

- Aug. 29 Introduction, Frege on Sense and Reference
Frege, "Sense and Reference"
- Sep. 12 Russell on Denoting
Russell, "On Denoting"
- Sep.19 & 26 Naming and Necessity
Garson, "Modal Logic" (SEP) §§1, 2, 6
Kripke, *Naming & Necessity*
- Oct. 3 De Se Content
Lewis, "Attitudes *De Dicto* and *De Se*"
Perry, "The Problem of the Essential Indexical"
First Paper Assigned

MIND

- Oct. 10 Functionalism
Kim, *Philosophy of Mind*, pp. 129-57, 169-79, 186-9
- Oct. 17 Worries for Functionalists
Block, "Troubles with Functionalism" pp.277-300
Block, "Inverted Earth" pp.53-72 (skip the last section)
- Oct. 24 Arguments for Dualism
Jackson, "Epiphenomenal Qualia"
Chalmers, "The Two-Dimensional Argument against Materialism"
- Oct. 31 The Contents of Perception
Siegel, "Do Experiences Have Contents?"
Brewer, "Perception and its Objects"
Second Paper Assigned

EPISTEMOLOGY

- Nov. 7 Epistemic Contextualism and Skepticism
Lewis, "Elusive Knowledge"
Schiffer, "Contextualist Solutions to Skepticism"
- Nov. 14 "Knowledge First" Epistemology: Mentality, Primeness, Luminosity
Williamson, *Knowledge and its Limits*
§§1.1-1.4, pp.49, 52, §§3.1-3.2, §§4.1-4.4
- Nov. 21 ***No Class***
- Nov. 28 A Primer on Partial Belief, Bayesianism
Strevens, *Lectures on Bayesian Confirmation Theory* Chs.1-4
- Dec. 5 Peer Disagreement
Elga, "Reflection and Disagreement"
McGrath "Moral Disagreement and Moral Expertise"
Third Paper Assigned