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Modal Objectivity

PHIL G9515
Spring 2015
Tuesday 12:10-2

Description: This is a course on meta-modality – the epistemology, metaphysics, and semantics of modal discourse. We will cover some familiar topics, including the relationship between conceivability and possibility, the prospects for reduction, and possible worlds semantics. However, we will also spend time in less charted waters – on the absoluteness, determinacy, and “metaphysical distinction” of metaphysical necessity and related notions. Attention will be paid to interactions between problems in meta-modality, and problems in the philosophies of logic and mathematics.

Requirements: Regular attendance, class participation, and a term paper (\approx 20 pages), due **May 4**.

Week

Topic

Literature

Introduction to Modal Metaphysics

1/20	Background and Overview	R: Kripke [1980] Lecture III, Melia [2003] Ch. I, Quine [1952], Soames [2005], Sec. VII O: Ballarín [2010], Carnap [1947], Garson [2014], Lewis [1914], Knuuttila [2013], Kment [2012]
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Realism

1/27	Cognitivism	R: Blackburn [1986] O: Brandom [2008], Ch. IV, Craig [1985], Hale and Wright [1989], Price [2008], Sellars [1958], Ryle [1950/1971], Shalkowski [2008], Thomasson [2007], Wittgenstein [1998], Wright [1986].
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2/3	Independence	R: Sidelle [1989] selections. O: Hale [2004], Sidelle [2009], Yablo [1992], Putnam [1986] & [1990]
2/10	Ideology	R: Field [1989] selections. O: Fine [2003b], Forbes [1989], Melia [2003], Nolan [2011b], Rosen [1990] & [1993]
2/17	Ontology I: Reduction	R: Lewis [1986], Ch. I O: Benacerraf [1965], Field [1989] selections, Melia, Ch. V, Menzel [2014], Sec. 2.1
2/24	Ontology II: Primitivism	R: Melia [2003] VI & VII, Plantinga [1976] selections. O: Loux [2010] Ch. 5, Menzel [2014], Sec. 2.2-2.3, Lewis [1986], Ch. III, Menzel [2008]

Epistemology

3/3	Conceivability	R: Yablo [1992], Chalmers [2002] O: Descartes [1984], Edgington [2004], Nozick Ch. III, Quine [1951], Sec. VI., Vaidya [2007], Yablo [2002]
3/10 [No Class Next Week]	Understanding	R: Bealer [2002], Peacocke [1997] O: Bealer [1987] & [1999], Peacocke [1998], [2002a] & [2002b]
3/24	Counterfactuals	R: Williamson [2007a] O: Casullo [2012], Hill [2006], Kment [2014].
3/31	Abduction	R: Williamson [2013], Methodological Afterward, Sturgeon [2010], selections O: Godel [1947], Russell [1907]
4/7	Error	R: Field [1989], selections, Kripke [1980] Lecture III O: Bealer [2004], Benacerraf [1973], Clarke-Doane

		[Forthcoming], Duffy [2014], Wright [1994], Yablo [1992]
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Objectivity

4/14	Determinacy	R: Rosen [2002] O: Clarke-Doane [2013], Field [1998a], Hintikka [1970], Rosen [2006], Sauchelli [2008]
4/21	Absoluteness	R: Clarke-Doane [2015], Hale [1996], Nolan [2011a], Rumfitt [2015], Ch. III & IV O: Beall and Restall [2005], Sec. III, Brogaard and Salerno [2013], Field [1989] selections, & [1993], Hale [2002], McFedridge [1990], Mortensen [1989], Nolan [1997], Rescher and Brandom [1980], Williamson [2007b], Ch. V.
4/28	Metaphysical Distinction	R: Clarke-Doane [2015], Nolan [2011a], Sider [2011], Ch. 12 O: Balaguer [2001], Cameron [2009], Field [1998a] & [1998b], Unger [2014], Ch. I.

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