

PHIL 1920: Contemporary Metaphysics
MW 1:30-2:45
Riverside 1012

Instructor: Prof. Thomas F. Pyne

Office Hours: MW 10:30-11:30 (and by appointment)

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Required Text: No required text. Readings can be found in SacCT site.

SacCT: <http://www.csus.edu/sacct/>

Course Description

Advanced topics in metaphysics. Topics may include: Ontology; realism and anti-realism; universals; individuals; substance; identity through time and change; kinds and degrees of necessity; physicalism; moral realism; realism regarding social entities. Emphasis is on contemporary formulations. **Prerequisite:** 6 units in Philosophy or instructor permission. **Graded:** Graded Student. **Units:** 3.

This seminar will be a detailed (though still introductory) examination of strategies for adopting an 'anti-realist' stance in ontology, and corresponding strategies for defending a realist approach. In particular we will examine the 'Realism/Anti-Realism' debate as it is currently conducted in different domains.

The domains include: social entities, non-fundamental physical objects (including organisms), mental states, and moral properties. Issues include: the requirements for a realism regarding each of these; the varieties of anti-realism; reasons for adopting realist or anti-realist positions.

Course Objectives

- Develop an in-depth grasp of the state of the realist/anti-realist debate within these particular areas;
- Investigate the proposals and solutions of contemporary philosophers.
- Develop a reasoned, well-supported position on the ontological issues.

Students will be expected to:

- Demonstrate a developed ability to read and understand contemporary philosophical texts.
- Evaluate critically the concepts and arguments contained in the texts;
- Formulate criticisms of complex philosophical arguments;
- Produce arguments advancing their own view of the issue and defending those arguments against criticism;

Students will demonstrate their achievement of the course objectives and expectations through:

- Exams which test for a deeper understanding of issues, as well as of the arguments for or against the different sides; students will show their understanding via essay answers;
- Participation in in-class and online discussion;
- Write, present, and defend short (2-3 page) essays on specific readings and topics.
- Write, present, and defend a draft of a substantial final analytic essay.
- Submit a revised version of the final analytic essay.

Course Delivery

While PHIL 192O is a seminar, it will be ‘web-assisted.’ That is, we will be using some features of the SacCT course management system.

SacCT is a program designed for online college courses. Among other things, it serves as a location for course material, lecture notes, tests, papers, and discussions.

I will make important course content available, including lecture notes and other supplementary material.

You will be taking quizzes and exams, participating in discussions, and submitting papers through SacCT. In addition, you may communicate with me, as well as with other students in the class, through the SacCT Mail facility.

Access the Course

You will use your Saclink account to log into the course from the [SacCT Login page](http://www.csus.edu/sacct/) (www.csus.edu/sacct/).

If you do not have a Saclink account yet, please refer to [Get a Saclink Account](#).

To get started using SacCT, visit the [Student Resources](http://www.csus.edu/sacct/student/index.stm) webpage (www.csus.edu/sacct/student/index.stm) where you can access Online Tutorials, Frequently Asked Questions, and other help resources.

Communications

The course will use the communication tools built into SacCT:

- Announcements: It’s a good idea to check for announcements from time to time during the semester
- Mail: You may send me (or a classmate) a message via the ‘Mail’ function.
- Discussions: You will be expected to participate in discussions, whether in class or through the ‘Discussions’ function in SacCT.

- Calendar: Exams and due dates for papers will all appear in the Calendar.

Technical Requirements

To access a course in SacCT you will need access to the Internet and an internet browser (Internet Explorer, Firefox, Safari). To ensure that you are using a supported browser and have required plug-ins please run the Check Browser from your SacCT course. Refer to the [SacCT Browser Settings Guide](#).

For help or to report a problem with SacCT you can:

- Visit the [Student 'Frequently Asked Questions' webpage](#)
- Submit a [SacCT Problem Form](#)
- Contact the University Help Desk at (916) 278-7337

Work for the Course

1. Three essay exams (10 points each).
2. Seminar Analytic Essay (20 points) A substantial argumentative research paper on a topic relevant to the seminar.
3. In-class Presentation (5 points) A presentation of a draft of your seminar paper. Draft should be uploaded into SacCT five days before the presentation date. Seminar members will come to class prepared to discuss the draft.
4. Periodic short (1-2 page) analytic essay responses to particular issues. (5 points each)
5. Discussion Participation (15 points total) Discussion includes in-class contributions as well as those made in 'Discussion' function in SacCT. I will give you periodic updates on your progress.

Assignment Submission Instructions

Response Essays and Seminar Analytic Essay

Response essays and the seminar essay (draft and final version) will be submitted in SacCT. In writing these, follow the instructions for argumentative papers found in the “Guidelines for Writing Philosophy Papers” at the Philosophy Department website:
<http://www.csus.edu/phil/WritingGuidelines&GradingStandardsforPapers.htm>

To submit a paper in SacCT:

- Enter SacCT at <https://online.csus.edu>.
- Open the main page for PHIL 192M..
- Open ‘Assignments’ (under ‘Course Tools’ on the left margin).
- Open the correct assignment; you will see the text of the assignment itself as well as the due date and time.
- You will see a space for the paper – don’t use that. (Some students, operating on the Belt And Suspenders Principle, paste their paper into that space just in case. That’s fine. But you don’t have to.)
- Click on the ‘Attachment’ button.

- Attach your paper as an *editable* file that will open in Microsoft Word (*not* a .pdf or .htm file); if you're unsure, attach it as a 'text' (.txt) or 'rich text' (.rtf); those options are available in all word-processing programs.
- Late assignments will be lowered a grade increment for every day past the due date. I leave the window open for submitting a paper for five days after its due date. After that the paper will not be accepted.

Discussions

- Philosophy involves discussion and argument. It's the best way to explore philosophical questions, the best way to learn how to philosophize. So I will expect you to participate in the discussions. If I notice that you are not participating, I will let you know that I expect more. Ultimately I will force the issue.
- To participate in an online discussion:
 - Enter SacCT;
 - Open 'Discussions' (under 'Course Tools' on the left margin);
 - Click on one of the topics; you will be able to read the other contributions;
 - You can contribute to the discussion by clicking 'Create Message'.

Grading

Exams: Each exam will have a maximum of 10 points.

Response Essays: Response essays will worth a maximum of 5 points. Review the rubric for them to see what I'm expecting.

Seminar Analytic Essay: The seminar paper will have a maximum of 20 points. Review the rubric before submitting.

Seminar Presentation: Seminar presentation will be worth 5 points.

Discussion: Discussion participation will evaluated on your continuing commitment to the seminar, that is, having read the assigned readings, being willing to discuss them in class, and on the evidence of effort toward mastery of the problems. Periodically, I will post progress reports on participation in the Gradebook. These progress reports indicate of what you would get at the end of the semester if you continue on the current course. So the grade you see in that column is just information – until it's final.

Final Grade: The final grade for the course will be produced by quaddition of all the points attained.

Viewing Grades in SacCT

For exams, and papers I will post the grades as soon as I have finished grading them.

You can see your grades during the semester by going to 'MyGrades' in SacCT.

Course Policies

Attendance

I expect attendance at every seminar meeting. If for some excellent reason you cannot make class, let me know – preferably in advance. If this is impossible, let me know by 5:00 on the day you miss, preferably by an e-mail message within SacCT. I will lower you a grade increment for every absence in which you fail to contact me the same day.

Seminar meetings will begin with a roll. Be on time. Anticipate. Excuses don't cut it: I will treat a pattern of late arrival as an unexcused absence.

I expect attention to the material during class periods. If there is a class discussion, I will serve as moderator; please wait to be recognized before making a contribution.

If you wish to ask a question, answer a question, or make a contribution to the class, please ask to be recognized. There is no excuse for conducting a private discussion during class time. I will treat a pattern of talking in class as an unexcused absence.

Make-Up Exams and Quizzes

A makeup exam will be penalized .5 point for every day it's late.

Late Work

For response essays, I will leave the assignment window open for five days after the due date. The grade will be lowered .5 point for every day it's late. Since the seminar paper draft for class presentation should be available to the other participants it cannot – *cannot* – be late. It would be a discourtesy to the rest of us.

Since the final grades are due so soon after exam week, late submission of the final version of the seminar paper will result in a Biblical penalty. (We're talking Fire and Brimstone, Rivers of Blood, Horsemen of the Apocalypse – you get the idea.)

University Policies

Academic Honesty

Students are expected to be familiar with the University's Academic Honesty, Policy & Procedures. The policy on Academic Honesty and other information regarding student conduct can be accessed from the [University Policy Manual](http://www.csus.edu/umannual/index.htm) (<http://www.csus.edu/umannual/index.htm>).

The University Library has a helpful treatment of plagiarism at <http://library.csus.edu/content2.asp?pageID=353>.

The University has very helpful information on plagiarism at the [Library's Plagiarism Website](#).

Reasonable Accommodation Policy

If you have a disability and require accommodations, you need to provide disability documentation to Services for Students with Disabilities (SSWD). For more information please visit the [SSWD website](http://www.csus.edu/sswd/) (<http://www.csus.edu/sswd/>). They are located in Lassen Hall 1008 and can be contacted by phone at (916) 278-6955 (Voice) (916) 278-7239 (TDD only) or via email at sswd@csus.edu.

Please discuss your accommodation needs with me after early in the semester. Don't wait until the first exam or paper.

University Resources

The CSUS Writing Center

The Writing Center provides encouraging, focused, and non-judgmental one-to-one tutorials in writing. Their tutors can help with writing at all points in the process, from initial planning and organizing through developing and revising a paper. You can bring the assignment to them for help.

Sac State Library

The Sac State Library's webpage is <http://library.csus.edu>.

To find a book or periodical, click on "Eureka: Library Catalogue" under "Resources and Collections" or go directly to <http://eureka.lib.csus.edu/>

For a largely undergraduate institution, the Sac State library's holdings and resources in philosophy are pretty good. I particularly recommend Sac State librarian Lisa Roberts' website "Philosophy: Resources." Two ways to find it: through "Research Guides" under "Resources and Collections", or go directly to <http://library.csus.edu/guides/roberts/philoguide.htm>

Student Computing Labs

To access SacCT from campus, or use any of the other campus online resources, you can use the IRT managed student computer labs on campus. See [University Labs website](http://www.csus.edu/uccs/labs/generalinfo/about.stm), that is, <http://www.csus.edu/uccs/labs/generalinfo/about.stm> for information about locations, hours, and resources available.

SacCT

SacCT is the course management system used on the Sac State campus for web-assisted courses. To access a course on SacCT, you must login from the [SacCT Login Page](https://online.csus.edu) (<https://online.csus.edu>).

To learn more about SacCT visit the [Student Resources](http://www.csus.edu/WebCT/student/) webpage (<http://www.csus.edu/WebCT/student/>) where you can view online Tutorials, FAQ's and other help resources.

Course Schedule

(Readings are in SacCT site unless I indicate that it's somewhere else.)

Introduction: Realism and Anti-Realism			
Week	Topic	Readings	Due Dates
Week 1 M 1/23	M: What Is It To Be a 'Realist'? Ways To Be an <i>Anti</i> -Realist: Error Theory, Prefix Fictionalism, Instrumentalism, Non-Cognitivism, Social Construction	M: [Lecture]	M:
W 1/25	W: Anti-Realist Strategies: Reduction, Elimination	W: [Lecture]	W:
Week 2 M 1/30	M: Realist Strategies: Supervenience, Emergence	M: [Lecture]	M:
Part I: Realism About Social Entities			
W 2/1	W: An Ontology of Social Reality	W: Searle, <i>The Construction of Social Reality</i> , Ch 1. "The Building Blocks of Social Reality"; Ch. 2 "Creating Institutional Facts"	W:
Week 3 M 2/6	M: A Case Study: The Reality of Race	M: Ronald R. Sundstrom, "Race as a Human Kind"	M:
W 2/8	W: Race (cont.)	W: Ronald R. Sundstrom, "Race as a Human Kind"	W: First Response Essay due 11:30 pm, Wednesday, February 8, 11:30 PM.
Part II: Realism About Objects			
Week 4 M 2/13	M: Exam 1	M:	M: In-class exam
W 2/15	W: The Ship of Theseus and the Paradox of Increase	W: Olson, "The Paradox of Increase"	W:

Week 5 M 2/20	M: The Problem of Identity Across Change	M Olson, "The Paradox of Increase":	M:
W 2/22	W: Material Constitution	W: Rea, "Sameness Without Identity"	W:
Week 6 M 2/27	M: Material Constitution	M: Rea, "Sameness Without Identity"	M:
W 3/1	W: Versions of Hylomorphism	W: Koons, "Stalwart vs. Faint-Hearted Hylomorphism"	W:
Week 7 M 3/6	M: Versions of Hylomorphism (cont.)	M: Koons, "Stalwart vs. Faint-Hearted Hylomorphism"	M:
W 3/8	W: A Worked-out Hylomorphist Realism About Objects	W: Koons, "The Ontological and Epistemological Superiority of Hylomorphism"	W:
Week 8 M 3/13	M: Is Hylomorphist Object-Realism Consistent With Science?	M: Koons, "The Ontological and Epistemological Superiority of Hylomorphism"	M: Second Response Essay due 11:30 pm, Monday, March 13, 11:30 PM.
W 3/15	W: In-Class Exam 2	W:	W: Exam 2
Week 9 3/20	M: <i>Spring Recess</i>	M:	M:
3/22	W: <i>Spring Recess</i>	W:	W:
Part III: Realism About Mental States			
Week 10 M 3/27	M: Identity Theory and Its Problems	M: Hirsch, "Kripke's Arguments Against Materialism"	M: <u>Student Presentation</u>
W 3/29	W: Functionalism and Its Problems	W: Koons & Bealer, "Introduction," <i>The Waning of Materialism</i>	W: <u>Student Presentation</u>
Week 11 M 4/3	M: Functionalism and Its Problems (cont.)	M: Bealer, "The Self-Consciousness Argument: Functionalism and the Corruption of Content"	M: <u>Student Presentation</u>

W 4/5	W: 2017 Nammour Symposium	W:	W:
Week 12 M 4/10	M: Supervenience and Its Problems	M: O'Connor and Churchill, "Non-Reductive Physicalism or Emergent Dualism? The Argument from Mental Causation"	M: <u>Student Presentation</u>
W 4/12	W: Mental States as Emergent Entities	W: Horgan, "Materialism, Minimal Emergentism, and the Hard Problem of Consciousness"	W: <u>Student Presentation</u> Third Response Essay due 11:30 pm, Wednesday, April 12, 11:30 PM.
Week 13 M 4/17	M: Hylomorphism Regarding the Mental	M: Haldane, "A Return to Form in the Philosophy of Mind"	M: <u>Student Presentation</u>
Part IV: Realism About Moral Properties and Values			
W 4/19	W: Moral Anti-Realism: Non-Cognitivism	W: Hume, "Enquiry Concerning the Principles of Morals";	W: <u>Student Presentation</u>
Week 14 M 4/24	M: A Taxonomy of Moral Realism	M: Sayre-McCord, "The Many Moral Realisms"	M: <u>Student Presentation</u>
W 4/26	W: The Moral Realist Project	W: Sayre-McCord, "Moral Realism"	W: <u>Student Presentation</u>
Week 15 M 5/1	M: Analogies Between Moral and Other Properties	M: McDowell, "Values and Secondary Qualities"	M:
W 5/3	W: Naturalist Realism	W: Boyd, "How to Be a Moral Realist"	W: Fourth Response Essay due 11:30 pm, Wednesday, May 3, 11:30 PM.
Week 16 M 5/8	M: Non-Naturalist Realism	M: Shafer-Landau, "Ethical Non-	M:

W 5/10	W: The 'Open Question' Argument and Moral Kinds	Naturalism" W: Sayre-McCord, "Good on Twin Earth"	W:
Week 17	Finals Week		
M 5/15	M:	M:	M: Exam 3, Monday, May 15, 12:45-2:45
W 5/17	W:	W:	W: Seminar Analytic Essay due Wednesday, May 17, 11:30 PM.

The descriptions and due dates are subject to change for pedagogical reasons.