

University of London MA Philosophy

Seminar Class Schedule 2001-2

Class: General Paper

Day: Mondays Time: 6.00 Place: Birkbeck
Convenor: Jonathan Wolff

Aims of Course:

The General Paper is designed for students who have not undertaken significant previous study of philosophy aims to:

- a) Introduce the student to basic philosophical methods, techniques and terminology.
- b) Provide the student with an acquaintance with some of the most important and influential writings in the subject.

Objectives

Each student will:

- a) Follow a course in elementary formal logic.
- b) Attend a weekly seminar in which a set of key readings in the subject will be introduced and discussed.
- c) Take a three hour written examination, in which there will be questions in the following areas:
 - i) Logic and Metaphysics
 - ii) Epistemology and Methodology
 - iii) Ethics
 - iv) Political Philosophy
 - v) Formal Logic

Students may not answer questions in sections which overlap with their other MA options. They must answer questions in at least two areas.

In each term the MA class will cover topics from the first four areas listed above. In total there will be 5 classes in each area. Arrangements for studying logic are made in the student's own College.

Teaching Methods

1. Students will attend a 90 minute class, each week, for two terms: a total of 20 classes.
2. For each week a particular reading is assigned. Students are expected to read that assignment with care and are encouraged to read recommended supplementary material.
3. During each class the class tutor makes a presentation based on the assigned reading, and underlying and surrounding issues. Students are encouraged to join in the discussion, raising questions and points of their own, guided by the tutor.

Term 1 Jerry Valberg

- 1 J.L. Mackie, *Ethics: Inventing Right and Wrong*, Chapter 1.
- 2 Bernard Williams, A Critique of Utilitarianism in *Utilitarianism For and Against* pp. 77-118
- 3 Judith Jarvis Thomson, ‘A Defence of Abortion’, in Peter Singer (ed.) *Applied Ethics* (Oxford 1988) pp. 37-56.
- 4 Descartes, *Meditations 1 & 2*
- 5 Gettier “Is Justified True Belief Knowledge?” and Nozick *Philosophical Explanations* (OUP 1981), Ch.3, abridged in Dancy (ed) *Perceptual Knowledge* (OUP 1988), pp. 21-42
- 6 E. Sosa “The Raft and the Pyramid” *MidWest Studies in Philosophy* 5 (1980), 3- 25, reprinted in his *Knowledge in Perspective* (CUP 1991)
- 7 Frege “On Sense and Reference” in *Meaning and Reference* (ed) Moore (OUP 1993), 23- 42
- 8 Kripke “Identity and Necessity” in Moore *op cit.* 162-191.
- 9 John Rawls, *A Theory of Justice* Chapter I and II esp sections 1-4 (5), 11, 15, 17
- 10 John Rawls: *A Theory of Justice* Chapter III sections 20-29

Term 2 TBC

- 1 Immanuel Kant *Foundations of the Metaphysics of Morals* (also known as the *Groundwork*) chs 1 & 2.
- 2 Harry Frankfurt, ‘Alternate Possibilities and Moral Responsibility’ *Journal of Philosophy* 66 (1969) 829-39. (also in his *The Importance of What We Care About*)
- 3 The Entitlement Theory of Justice Robert Nozick, *Anarchy, State, and Utopia*, Chapter 7 Section 1
- 4 Locke on Political Obligation John Locke, *Second Treatise of Government*, Chapters I, II, VIII-X
- 5 Mill on Liberty John Stuart Mill, *On Liberty*, Chapters I, III-V.
- 6 David Hume, *Treatise, Bk.1, Pt.3 & Enquiry Sec.4-5.*
- 7 N. Goodman, *Fact Fiction, Forecast, Ch.3*
- 8 W.V.O. Quine, “Two Dogmas of Empiricism”, *From a Logical Point of View*
- 9 Parfit, “Personal Identity”, *Philosophical Review* 1971
- 10 Mackie, “Causes and Conditions” in E. Sosa ed. *Causation and Conditionals*

Assessment:

Students are required to sit a degree examination in this subject at the end of their final year. Students can pre-submit three essays of up to 2,500 words each in place of the exam. (Students can pre-submit in only one of their three papers.)

Tutorial essays/arrangements are determined within the student’s own College.