

**Philosophy 395
Junior Research Seminar
Autumn 2009**

MEREOLGY EAST AND WEST

Morton Hall 337
TR 3:55-5:15

Professor: Nicholaos Jones
Office: 332B Morton Hall
Office Phone: 824.2338
Office Hours: TBA
Email: Nick[DOT]Jones[AT]uah[DOT]edu
Web: www.uah.edu/njones/phl395.html
Call #: 90754

Course Description

Mereology is the study of the relations between wholes and their parts. In this seminar, we'll survey the literature on two mereological issues: the Problem of the One over the Many and the Problem of Material Constitution. Along the way, we'll discuss the standard axioms of contemporary formal mereology. We'll discuss methods of research for philosophy, including tricks for constructing objections and tips for developing original ideas. We'll practice formalizing natural language arguments and "naturalizing" formal language arguments. The main product of this course will be a substantial research paper.

Helpful Background: PHL201 - Intro to Logic or PHL 320 - Symbolic Logic.

Course Aims

- to equip students with tools for effective communication (oral and written)
- to develop student ability to understand and utilize primary source material from contemporary philosophers
- to enhance student ability to formalize natural language arguments and naturalize formal language arguments
- to teach students methods of research for philosophy, including methods for constructing objections and developing original ideas
- to foster student ability to engage in independent philosophical research

Course Texts

- assorted articles, available online
- *Material Constitution: A Reader*, ed. Michael C. Rea (Rowman & Littlefield: 1997)
- Mark Siderits, *Buddhism as Philosophy: An Introduction* (Ashgate: 2007)
- Optional: *Metaphysics: Indian Philosophy*, ed. Roy W. Perrett (Taylor & Francis, 2000)

Seminar, Reading, and Assessment Schedule (*tentative*)

- 08/20 Introductory Remarks. The Problems of Material Constitution and the One Over the Many.
- 08/25 Formal Languages; Logic Review.
- 08/27 Axiomatic Mereology 1.
†Andrew Bacon, "A Primer on Formal Metaphysics"
- 09/01 Axiomatic Mereology 2.
Achille Varzi, "Mereology," *Stanford Encyclopedia of Philosophy*
- 09/03 Material Constitution.
†*Rea, "The Problem of Material Constitution," Introduction and Section 1
- 09/08 The Growing Paradox.
†*Sedley, "The Stoic Criterion of Identity," *Phronesis* 27 (1982): 255-275
Rea, "The Problem of Material Constitution," Section 2
- 09/10 Theseus' Ship Paradox.
†*Hobbes, "Of Identity and Diversity," *De Corpore*
Rea, "The Problem of Material Constitution," Section 3
- 09/15 The Body-Minus Paradox.
†*Geach, *Reference and Generality* (selection) (1980)
Rea, "The Problem of Material Constitution," Section 4
- 09/17 Lump and Goliath.
†*Gibbard, "Contingent Identity," *Journal of Philosophical Logic* 4:2 (1975): 187-221
Rea, "The Problem of Material Constitution," Section 5
- 09/22 Identity and Constitution.
†*Wiggins, "On Being in the Same Place at the Same Time," *Philosophical Review* 77: 90-95
Rea, "The Problem of Material Constitution," Section 6.1
- 09/24 Necessity of Identity.
†*Gallois, "Occasional Identity," *Philosophical Studies* 58 (1990): 203-224.
Rea, "The Problem of Material Constitution," Section 6.2
- 09/29 Existence and Composition.
†*Unger, "I Do Not Exist," in *Perception and Identity: Essays Presented to A.J. Ayer with his Replies to them* (1979)
Rea, "The Problem of Material Constitution," Section 6.3.1
- 10/01 Essence and Composition.
†*Burke, "Dion and Theon: An Essentialist Solution to an Ancient Problem," *Journal of Philosophy* 91 (1994): 129-139
Rea, "The Problem of Material Constitution," Section 6.3.2
- 10/06 Term Paper and Research Workshop 1
- 10/08 Fall Break

- 10/13 Buddhist Reductionism 1.
†* *Milindapañha*, in Siderits, *Buddhism as Philosophy* (2007): 50-56
- 10/15 Buddhist Reductionism 2.
†*Kapstein, "Mereological Considerations in Vasubandhu's 'Proof of Idealism' (*Vijñaptimātratāsiddhi*)," *Idealistic Studies* 18:1 (1988)
- 10/20 Nyaya Realism 1.
**Nyaya Sutra* (selections)
Siderits, *Buddhism as Philosophy* (2007): 97-104
- 10/22 Nyaya Realism 2.
†*Chakrabarti, "I Touch What I Saw," *Philosophy and Phenomenological Research* 52:1 (1992): 103-116
Term Paper Abstract Due
- 10/27 Buddhist Reductionism 3.
†*Bastow, "Self-Construction in Buddhism," *Ratio* 28:2 (1986)
- 10/29 Nyaya Realism 3.
†*James van Cleve, "Mereological Essentialism, Mereological Conjunctivism, and Identity through Time," in *Midwest Studies in Philosophy Volume 11* (1986): 141-156.
- 11/03 Term Paper and Research Workshop 2
- 11/05 Senses of Identity.
†*Baxter, "Identity in the Loose and Popular Sense," *Mind* 97:388 (1988): 575-582.
- 11/10 Mereological Essentialism.
†*Chisholm, "Parts as Essential to Their Wholes," *Review of Metaphysics* 26:4 (1973)
- 11/12 One Over the Many.
*Jones, "Solving the Problem of the One over the Many: Nyāya-Vaiśeṣika Inherence, Indian Buddhist Reduction, and Huayan Total Power," Sections I and II
Term Paper Draft Due
- 11/17 Huayan Mereology 1.
*Fazang, *Treatise on the Five Teachings of Huayan* (excerpts)
- 11/19 Huayan Mereology 2.
†*Jones, "Solving the Problem of the One over the Many: Nyāya-Vaiśeṣika Inherence, Indian Buddhist Reduction, and Huayan Total Power," Sections III, IV, V
- 11/24 TBA. **Course Evaluations**
- 11/26 No Class: Thanksgiving Break
- 11/30 TBA
- 12/07 Term Paper Due by 4:00pm**

Student Expectations

Abide by the UAH Code of Student Conduct.

In Class

Attend class regularly. It is unlikely that one can succeed in this course without doing this.

Arrive at class in a timely fashion: lateness is disruptive.

Ask questions and share thoughts, especially if something is not understood.

Participate courteously in class discussions.

Treat other people's questions as opportunities for learning rather than distractions from lecture.

Outside of Class

Keep up with the material to a reasonable extent.

Carefully read at least one of the crossed † readings per week.

Carefully read all assigned readings not marked with either a cross † or an asterisk *.

Seek help from the instructor (or other students) as often as needed.

Consult additional readings on an as-needed basis.

Assessment

There are ten **critical reviews**, each worth 2% of the final grade.

There is one **class presentation**, worth 10% of the final grade.

There is one **term paper abstract**, worth 10% of the final grade.

There is one **mandatory term paper draft**, worth 20% of the final grade.

There is one **seminar-length term paper**, worth 30% of the final grade.

Attendance and **thoughtful participation** is worth 10% of the final grade.

Assessments and final grades are assigned according to the following measure:

> 93% = A	80-82% = B-	67-69% = D+
90-92% = A-	77-79% = C+	60-66% = D
87-89% = B+	73-76% = C	< 60% = F
83-86% = B	70-72% = C-	

Only dire circumstances merit an incomplete.

Cheating is unacceptable. You shouldn't cheat. Don't cheat. Seriously.

Late submission of assessments, and submission of assessments by email, is permissible if and only if the student obtains prior consent from the instructor.

Retain a copy of all graded work, in order to resolve grade disputes.

- The instructor is not responsible for "lost" material.

The instructor reserves the right to augment the final grades of students who demonstrate superior class performance, and to lower the grades of students who demonstrate a dereliction of their work or contribute to a classroom environment that is not conducive to learning.

Academic Honesty

At the instructor's discretion, academic misconduct will be reported promptly to the Vice President for Student Affairs as being in violation of the UAH Code of Student Conduct 7.III.C.1.

Plagiarism is defined as "the act of appropriating the literary composition of another, or parts or passages of his writings, or the ideas or language of the same, and passing them off as the product's of one's own mind" --Black's Law Dictionary, 5th edition.

Students should refer to page 93 of the *Student Handbook* to review the definition and examples of academic misconduct. Students should contact the instructor without delay to discuss questions regarding academic misconduct.

UAH is committed to the fundamental values of preserving academic honesty as defined in the *Student Handbook*. The instructor reserves the right to utilize electronic means to help prevent and identify plagiarism, including the use of Turnitin.com. Students agree that by taking this course, all assignments are subject to submission for textual similarity review to Turnitin.com. Assignments submitted to Turnitin.com will be included as source documents in Turnitin.com's restricted access database solely for the purpose of detecting plagiarism in such documents. The terms that apply to the University's use of the Turnitin.com service, as well as additional information about the company, are described at www.uah.edu/library/turnitin

No student may submit, in fulfillment of requirements for this course, any work submitted, presented, or used by the student in any other course, without the prior consent of the instructor.

The instructor reserves the right to impose academic sanctions, in lieu of or in addition to those imposed by the Vice President for Student Affairs, upon any student who commits any form of academic misconduct during the course. Students have the right to discuss such sanctions with the instructor before they are imposed, and to protest sanctions to the Vice President for Student Affairs.

Critical Reviews

Each student shall write a one- to two-page critical review for each of ten crossed readings. (These are readings on the syllabus that have a cross † next to them.) Submit the review via email attachment by 8:00pm the day before we are scheduled to discuss the corresponding reading.

Each critical review should contain four elements:

- 1 - A clear, one-sentence statement of the author's *thesis*: what is the author's overall conclusion?
- 2 - A statement of the *thesis context*: what is the broader issue on which the thesis bears?
- 3 - A summary of at least one *principle argument* the author gives to support the thesis: what is at least one set of reasons the author gives in support of the thesis?
- 4 - *Either* (a) a *critique* of the author's thesis--what is at least one consideration that casts doubt upon the truth of the thesis?--*or else* (b) a *question* about the reading accompanied by an *explanation* of the question's origin or importance.

Grading for each critical review is based upon a 10-point scale: 0 (not submitted); 1-5 (clear statement of thesis and rhetorical purpose); 6-7 (clear statement of thesis, rhetorical purpose, at least one principle argument); 8-10 (clear statement of thesis, rhetorical purpose, principle argument, plus a thought-provoking critique or question).

Class Presentation

Each student, alone or in cooperation with one other student, shall lead the initial portion of one class meeting's discussion of a starred reading. (These are readings on the syllabus that have an asterisk * next to them.) The student(s) shall explain the thesis, rhetorical purpose, and principle arguments of the assigned reading for the day in a way that stimulates subsequent class discussion.

Each student (or student pair) must prepare an outline for the presentation and discuss it with the instructor prior to giving the presentation to the class.

Grading for the class presentation is based upon a 10-point scale: 0 (not performed); 1-5 (organized presentation of thesis, rhetorical purpose, and principle arguments); 6-8 (use of illustrative examples that do not occur in the reading); 9-10 (quality of subsequent class discussion).

Term Paper, inc. Abstract and Draft

Paper: Each student shall submit a cover-sheet-free hardcopy of their term paper by 4:00pm on 12/07.

The term paper should include:

- 1 - An original thesis and defense. (Your paper should not be a mere literature review.)
- 2 - A clear thesis statement: what is the overall conclusion of your paper?
- 3 - An explanation of the broader context on which your thesis bears: what is the thesis context of your paper?
- 4 - Signs of engagement with relevant literature, including appropriate quotations, summaries and explanations of competing positions, and so on.
- 5 - Appropriate citations in the body of the paper.
- 6 - Appropriate argumentation for your thesis, including clear signals to the reader for when you are stating reasons in support of your thesis and how those reasons hang together for a coherent overall argument.
- 7 - A bibliography for all of the literature on which the content of your paper relies. This should be formatted in such a way as to allow a reasonably intelligent person to find the materials you cite.

Grading for the term paper is a function of: relevance of topic to the course; clarity of expression; depth of understanding; quality of interpretation, explanation, and argumentation; and degree of engagement with other thinkers, including sagacious use of quotations and illustrative examples.

Abstract: Each student shall submit via email attachment a one-paragraph provisional abstract for their term paper by the end of the 10th week of class (10/23). The abstract should contain a concise summary of the issue to be addressed in the term paper and a clear statement of the intended thesis for the paper. *This abstract is not a contract*: changing topic or thesis is permissible.

Draft: Each student shall submit via email attachment a substantially complete term paper draft by the end of the 13th week of class (11/13).

The term paper draft should include elements 2, 3, 4, 5, and 7 from the above list of requirements, and it should show evidence of non-negligible progress toward completion of element 6.

Miscellany

Philosophy is not easy. You must make a serious effort to understand and articulate the material. It helps to take detailed notes, and let your mind wander over what you find interesting outside of the classroom. It also helps to discuss ideas with others, especially people not in the class.

This course presents a special challenge, in virtue of being a research seminar. We shall cover material at a level of rigor and speed that probably exceeds the level typical for other 300-level philosophy courses. You should expect to devote, on average, ten hours of work per week for this course. You also should expect to spend an extended period of time working on your term paper. A satisfactory paper probably requires an early research effort (beginning by, say, the 8th or 9th week); a period of time to absorb and reflect upon research materials; a separate, longer period of time to develop ideas, pursue false starts, and formulate ideas in words; and yet another period of time to organize ideas into a coherent whole.

Tip: Beginning work on your paper does not require waiting until you have a well-worked-out thesis. Composing a preliminary draft of a general thesis context and extant positions on some topic within that context can help to stimulate insights and arguments that are not apparent before beginning the writing process. Use the skills you develop in writing critical reviews to help with writing parts of your term paper.

If at any time you would like to discuss the issues covered in this course or philosophy in general, feel free to visit during office hours or to arrange a meeting.

If at any time you are having problems with the subject matter or the manner of its presentation, do not hesitate to bring this to my attention (in person, via email or anonymous note, etc). It is your responsibility to bring any course-related concerns to my attention.

Any student who feels that accommodations based on the impact of a disability are required should contact the instructor privately to discuss specific needs. Please also contact the Disability Support Services at 113 University Center (256-824-6203); they coordinate reasonable accommodations for students with documented disabilities.

Any student who feels that their life is overwhelming or unmanageable is encouraged to contact the Counseling Center at 113 University Center (256-824-6203) for free and confidential appointments. It is normal to use counseling services: no problems are too big or too small.

I encourage a free and tolerant atmosphere in class. I encourage and expect questions and challenges at appropriate times during class. I welcome visits to my office. *I am here to help you learn.*

I reserve all federal and state copyrights over my lectures and course materials.

I reserve the right to alter any or all portions of this syllabus, at my sole discretion, at any time.