

Seminar in Philosophical Logic

Identity Confusion

Philosophy 565
Tuesdays 4:30–7pm, Fall 2016
MHP 102, University of Southern California

Instructors

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Course Description

Our starting point is a famous puzzle from Frege. Hesperus (the evening star) is the very same thing as Phosphorus (the morning star). But not everyone knows this. So (it seems) some people believe that Hesperus is Hesperus without thereby believing that Hesperus is Phosphorus. How can this be? If Hesperus and Phosphorus are the same thing, don't they have the same properties? And if Hesperus and Phosphorus have the same properties, then doesn't this include the property of being believed to be a certain way?

This puzzle about belief is one example of a pervasive phenomenon. Parallel puzzles arise throughout philosophy: for example, when it comes to knowledge, probability, vagueness, contingency, change, value, and meaning, and also when it comes to what distinct propositions and facts there are. So, while the course is officially a Seminar in Philosophical Logic—because we will give special attention to the implications of these puzzles for the *logic* of being the same thing and having the same properties—it will also in parts be a seminar in Epistemology, Metaphysics, Philosophy of Language, Ethics, and Decision Theory. Frege's puzzle is a foundational issue across philosophy.

Frege-puzzles don't just arise for individuals, such as astronomical bodies, but also for properties and propositions. So we'll also be investigating the logic of "higher-order identity."

We'll develop non-classical logics of identity that allow counterexamples to Leibniz's Law. We'll also explore connections with the logic of quantifiers. Let Julius be whoever invented the zipper. If you believe that Julius invented the zipper, then according to classical logic it follows that there is someone you believe invented the zipper. But does this really follow?

Frege held that "Hesperus" is ambiguous: on its "customary" reading it denotes a planet. On its "indirect" reading it denotes a *sense*—an abstract object that represents a planet. Other views say that "believe" is context-sensitive: one can believe a proposition as it is presented under one "guise", while disbelieving the very same thing as it is presented under another guise. Both approaches raise serious questions: what kinds of thing are senses (or guises)? What distinguishes different senses from one another? Certain natural answers to these questions turn out to be inconsistent (in a way which is closely connected to the Liar Paradox). So we need to be especially cautious.

Objectives

- To introduce you to cutting-edge work on a central, foundational philosophical topic
- To help you develop original responses to that work, producing new conference-length papers
- To practice contributing to other people's philosophical projects, both in informal collegial discussion, and by providing detailed, constructive, critical commentary

Requirements

Over the course of the semester you will be developing a research paper suitable for presentation at philosophy conferences. The requirements for this class are designed to help you through the process of coming up with an idea and developing that idea into a polished contribution to a conversation among professional philosophers.

You should start working on this the very first week of the semester. That means you'll be looking for a paper topic before we have done very much discussion at all. You should look ahead through the syllabus (right now!) for a topic you find interesting that you may want to write about, and start doing background reading. Of course you can change your mind, and of course you don't need to have an idea for the paper yet. The ideas will come as you read about the topic; your first task is just to choose a topic you think you will find interesting. You can get feedback on your ideas during the research report part of the seminar, by coming to our office hours, by making another appointment, and in discussion with other students outside of class. We encourage you to meet with us early on to hash out the very rough thoughts you have as you're looking for ideas, as well as later in the process.

Paper topics which are only loosely connected to the main seminar topics are often fine, but you should discuss them with one or both of us well in advance of any deadlines.

At the end of the semester we will all present our final work in a “mock APA meeting”, simulating the setting of a typical professional philosophy conference. In addition to presenting your own research, you will also present comments on another student’s work, and participate in Q&A for each session.

The course requirements which will be graded are as follows. There are more details about each requirement below.

<i>Requirement</i>	<i>Weight</i>	<i>Due</i>
Seminar discussion	10%	weekly
~4 research reports	15%	weekly
Proposal	5%	Tuesday, October 18, in class
Draft	5%	Friday, November 18
Comments	10%	Monday, November 28, 12pm
Conference presentation	20%	Tuesday, November 29 (TBC)
Final draft	35%	Friday, December 16

Seminar Discussion

The first part of each seminar meeting will be a working group in which some students give informal reports on their research. More details below.

In the second part of each seminar meeting, Andrew or Jeff will lead discussion by presenting some of their ideas about the week’s topic. You should be prepared for this by carefully reading and thinking about the assigned reading. You should ask questions, raise objections, and contribute your own ideas.

Research Reports

Roughly every other week (depending on the size of the class) you will give weekly a research report. Each report has two components.

- An informal **5–10 minute presentation**, followed by a short time for discussion. Usually this will consist of responding to an article or chapter that you have read in the course of looking for paper ideas, and commenting on what you think the piece is doing and how it might help your work. (This should not be one of the “boldface” required course readings.) Later in the course, you might instead present your own idea for an argument that you are thinking about making in your final paper.

- N hard copies of a **one-page handout**, where N is the number of participants in the seminar. (You can make copies in the philosophy department office.)

The main point of this is to help you prepare and focus your presentation. A handout should typically include (i) a clear statement of a central claim made in the article or chapter you are discussing, (ii) a concise synopsis of some central, interesting argument made in that piece (preferably as a premise/conclusion outline), and (iii) a (brief!) comment either evaluating the argument, or discussing how it might relate to your own project. We encourage you to write a bullet-point outline, rather than paragraphs of pretty prose.

Students auditing the course are also encouraged give research reports.

Proposal

Around the mid-point of the semester you should turn in a proposal describing in detail the final paper that you intend to write. The proposal should be about 1,000 words. Your proposal should do the following:

- State the main thesis that you intend to defend.
- Explain the background that is necessary for understanding what that thesis says, and why it is intellectually interesting. (What debates would your thesis advance, if it is true?)
- Outline the argument you intend to give for this thesis.

It is perfectly fine for your final paper to change course from what your proposal says: your proposal is not a binding commitment. But you should turn in something that is a genuinely useful step toward the final project.

Draft

Each of you will comment on someone else's work in our final conference. You will provide a draft of your own paper to your commentator about two weeks before the conference. This draft should be basically complete and clear, but it does not need to be completely polished. It should be a suitable length for a 25 minute presentation. (This is probably a bit shorter than the final draft you'll turn in. If there are parts of your draft that you won't have time to present, you should indicate this clearly to your commentator.)

Note that it is generally rude to your commentator to make major changes between the version that they see and the version that you present: they may have put substantial work into responding to the original version of your ideas, and you don't want to make that work look bad, or put them in the position of needing to substantially revise it at the last minute. That said, sometimes changes can be appropriate so long as they are sufficiently small, and you clear them in advance with your commentator. (Sometimes you just have to present

something you don't think is right anymore, and let the issues come out in comments and Q&A.)

Comments

You will write comments responding to someone else's paper draft. These should be suitable for a 10 minute presentation. As a commentator, you should provide a draft of your comments to the paper author a few days before the conference presentation. Comments should exemplify the following virtues.

- **Charity.** Try to understand and reply to the best version of the author's idea. If there are points that didn't come across clearly, or which involve slips of precision or care, your job is to help make the author's ideas clearer, more precise, and more careful, rather than trying to pin the author to the letter of what they wrote. It is also appropriate to ask clarifying questions in your commentary.
- **Helpfulness.** Try to "get inside" the author's project and think about how to advance it, rather than merely trying to undercut it.
- **Substantiveness.** You should try to help improve the paper by identifying the places where it is weak (bearing in mind the first two virtues!). Raising important objections, especially those the author may not have thought about, is part of your job. Trying to identify promising responses to those objections is also good. So is highlighting points the author made that you think are especially valuable.

It is good practice for authors and commentators to have a brief informal discussion in person at some point before your conference presentation. This gives you a chance to sort out any misunderstandings before you're on the spot.

Conference Presentation

You will have three different roles in our conference: as a presenter of your own paper, as a commentator on someone else's paper, and as a participant in each Q&A session. Provisionally, the format of each session will be a 25 minute paper presentation, a 10 minute presentation of comments, a 5 minute response, and 15 minutes for Q&A. (This format is subject to change depending on scheduling and the size of the seminar.) We will also invite other members of the philosophy department to attend these sessions and participate in Q&A.

You will receive feedback on both the content of your work and on your presentation style, time management, handout preparation, and visuals.

The norms listed here are worth contemplating: <http://consc.net/norms.html>

Final Draft

The final draft of your seminar paper will be due at the end of the semester, after you have had a chance to think about and respond to the feedback you received during the conference. The target length for your final draft is about 4,000 words, excluding footnotes and bibliography. Our hope is that this paper will be suitable for submitting to philosophy conferences, and perhaps eventually to journals.

Equality, Diversity, and Support

This classroom is a safe environment. Any discrimination on the basis of race, gender, sex, sexuality, socioeconomic status, disability, national origin, religion, or age will not be tolerated. If at any time while at USC you feel you have experienced harassment or discrimination, you can file a complaint: see <http://equity.usc.edu> for more information. You are also welcome to bring the complaint to any faculty or staff member at USC.

Academic Integrity

USC seeks to maintain an optimal learning environment. General principles of academic honesty include the concept of respect for the intellectual property of others, the expectation that individual work will be submitted unless otherwise allowed by an instructor, and the obligations both to protect one's own academic work from misuse by others as well as to avoid using another's work as one's own. All students are expected to understand and abide by these principles. SCampus, the Student Guidebook, contains the Student Conduct Code in Section 11.00. The recommended sanctions are located in Appendix A. Students will be referred to the Office of Student Judicial Affairs and Community Standards for further review, should there be any suspicion of academic dishonesty. The Review process can be found at: <http://www.usc.edu/student-affairs/SJACS/>.

Statements for Students with Disabilities

Any student requesting academic accommodations based on a disability is required to register with Disability Services and Programs (DSP) each semester. A letter of verification for approved accommodations can be obtained from DSP. Please be sure the letter is delivered to us as early in the semester as possible. DSP is located in STU 301 and is open 8:30 a.m. - 5:00 p.m., Monday through Friday. The phone number for DSP is (213) 740-0776.

Schedule

Required readings are in boldface. The other listed readings are to help you start exploring the topic further. The topics and readings might change significantly: we will update you via email of any changes.

Date	Topic	Readings
Aug 23	Introduction: Frege's Puzzle and Family	(Note that the readings for this week are optional.) Kripke, "A Puzzle About Belief" Saul, "Substitution and Simple Sentences" Perry, "The Problem of the Essential Indexical" Quine, "Quantifiers and Propositional Attitudes" Prior, "Thank Goodness That's Over" Chalmers, "Frege's Puzzle and the Objects of Credence" Gibbard, "Contingent Identity" McGee, "Kilimanjaro" Jackson, "What Mary Didn't Know"
Aug 30	Context-Sensitivity	Dorr, "Transparency and the Context-Sensitivity of Attitude Reports" Manley and Hawthorne, <i>The Reference Book</i> , ch. 3 Stanley, "Context and Logical Form"
Sep 6	Quantifying In	Kaplan, "Quantifying In" Quine, "Quantifiers and Propositional Attitudes" Yalcin, "Quantifying In From a Fregean Perspective" Jeshion, "Soames on Descriptive Reference-Fixing"
Sep 13	Fregean Senses	Chalmers, "On Sense and Intension" Schellenberg, "Sameness of Fregean Sense" Frege, "On Sense and Reference" Kaplan, "How to Russell a Frege-Church" Mount, "Church's Logic of Sense and Denotation" Zalta, "Fregean Senses, Modes of Presentation, and Concepts"
Sep 20	The De Se (I)	Magidor, "The Myth of the De Se" Lewis, "Attitudes De Dicto and De Se" Perry, "The Problem of the Essential Indexical"

Sep 27	The De Se (II)	Ninan, “Counterfactual Attitudes and Multi-Centered Worlds” Ninan, “De Se Attitudes: Ascription and Communication”
Oct 4	Temporalism	Sullivan, “Change We Can Believe In” Prior, “Thank Goodness That’s Over” Partee, “Some Structural Analogies Between Tenses and Pronouns” Moss, “Update as Communication”
Oct 11	Guises	Goodman and Lederman, “Verbalism” Crimmins and Perry, “The Prince and the Phone Booth: Reporting Puzzling Beliefs”
Oct 18	Higher-Order Logic	Carpenter, “Type Logical Semantics”, Chapters 1–2 Goodman, TBA Williamson, “Everything”
Oct 25	Russell-Myhill	Deutsch, “Resolution of Some Paradoxes of Propositions”, sec. 1–2 Goodman, “Reality is Not Structured” McGee and Rayo, “A Puzzle about <i>De Rebus</i> Beliefs”
Nov 1	Leibniz’s Law	Bacon and Russell, “The Logic of Opacity”
Nov 8	Propositional Identity	Bacon, “The Broadest Necessity” Suszko, “Abolition of the Fregean Axiom” Humberstone, “The Connectives”, section 7.32 Cresswell, “Propositional Identity” Wiredu, “On the Necessity of S4”
Nov 15	Decision Theory	Chalmers, “Frege’s Puzzle and the Objects of Credence” Elga and Rayo, “Fragmentation and Information Access” Moss, “Probabilistic Knowledge”, Chapter 7, “Intensionality”
Nov 22	Vagueness	Bacon, “Vagueness and Thought”, chapter 4 “Vagueness and Ignorance” Dorr, “Vagueness and Ignorance”
Nov 29	Conference	