

PHILOSOPHY 730

W. Lycan

Fall, 2007

METAPHYSICS OF MODALITY

Readings

...will be online or distributed.

Written work

There will be one short paper (1000-1250 words), due on September 19, and a term paper due December 5. Topics will be of your own choosing.

Syllabus

August 22: Mere possibilia. Modal logic and possible worlds. *Reading:* A. Meinong, excerpt from “The Theory of Objects”; S. Kripke, “Semantical Considerations on Modal Logic”; W.V. Quine, “On What There Is.”

August 29: The usual suspects. *Reading:* Excerpt from S. Kripke, “Naming and Necessity”; excerpt from Kripke, “Identity and Necessity”; excerpt from K.J.J. Hintikka, “Semantics for Propositional Attitudes”; [R.M. Adams, “Theories of Actuality”](#); W. Lycan, *Modality and Meaning*, Chs. 1, 2.

September 5: Lewis’ Concretism. *Reading:* D.K. Lewis, *On the Plurality of Worlds*, Chs. 1, 3; [R. Stalnaker, “Possible Worlds”](#); W. Lycan, *Modality and Meaning*, Chs. 3, 4.

September 12: Fictionalism. *Reading:* [G. Rosen, “Modal Fictionalism”](#); [D. Nolan, “Modal Fictionalism.”](#)

September 19: Essentialism. *Reading:* W.V. Quine, “Reference and Modality”; [L. Linsky, “Reference, Essentialism, and Modality”](#); excerpt from S. Kripke, “Naming and Necessity”; N. Salmon, *Reference and Essence*, Ch. 5; W. Lycan, *Modality and Meaning*, Ch. 5. **Short paper due.**

September 26: Relative modalities (and free will secured!). *Reading:* W. Lycan, *Modality and Meaning*, Ch. 8; [M. Slote, “Selective Necessity and the Free-Will Problem.”](#)

October 3: Impossibilia. *Reading*: R. Stalnaker, “Impossibilities.”

October 10: Ontological commitment: Quine vs. Carnap and others. *Reading*: [R. Carnap, “Empiricism, Semantics, and Ontology”](#); W.V. Quine, *Word and Object*, §§ 33, 34, 49, 50; [T. Hofweber, “A Puzzle about Ontology.”](#)

October 17 (notice that Fall Break *does not* now include the Wednesday afternoon): Ontological commitment: Azzouni. *Reading*: J. Azzouni, *Deflating Existential Consequence*, Chs. 3, 4; [“Ontological Commitment in the Vernacular.”](#)

October 24: Counterfactuals: the Similarity theory. *Reading*: D.K. Lewis, *Counterfactuals*, Ch. 1; J. Bennett, *A Philosophical Guide to Conditionals*, Chs. 10-13.

October 31: Counterfactuals: two shocking views. *Reading*: [A. Hájek, “Most Counterfactuals are False”](#); D. Edgington, “Do Counterfactuals Have Truth Conditions?”

November 7: Two classics on fictional truth and fictional entities. *Reading*: S. Kripke, “Reference and Existence” (1973 John Locke Lectures); D.K. Lewis, “Truth in Fiction.”

November 14: Fiction and essence. *Reading*: P. van Inwagen, “Creatures of Fiction”; W. Lycan, *Modality and Meaning*, Ch. 6; A. Thomasson, *Fiction and Metaphysics*, Chs. 1, 3-5.

November 28: More recent work on fiction. *Reading*: [S. Brock, “Fictionalism about Fictional Characters”](#); D. Proudfoot, “Possible Worlds Semantics and Fiction.”

December 5: Zany contextualism about fiction vs. reality. *Reading*: P. Ludlow, “From Sherlock and Buffy to Klingon and Norrathian Platinum Pieces: Pretense, Contextualism, and the Myth of Fiction.” **Term paper due.**