



FACULTY OF HUMANITIES  
DEPARTMENT OF PHILOSOPHY

**PHIL 467 Lec 01 – “Problems in the Philosophy of Science”  
Winter Term 2010**

**Course Outline**

**Instructor:** Marc Ereshefsky

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**Office Hours:** Thursdays, 9:15-10:00; 3:30-4:15

**Lectures:** TR 11:00-12:15 in EDC 284

**COURSE DESCRIPTION**

The world is divided into kinds of things. Some kinds seem obviously natural, such as the chemical element gold. Other kinds seem more artificial. They are a result of how we make and divide the world rather than how the world is. For instance, it is not clear whether the kind Afro-Canadian is a natural or artificial kind. In this course we study various philosophical theories of what constitutes a natural kind. A central question explored is distinguishing kinds that exist in nature from kinds that are constructed by society.

**TEXT**

Course Packet available at Bound & Copied, the Students' Union Copy Centre.

**COURSE REQUIREMENTS**

Two tests and one paper are required. No Registrar-scheduled final exam will be given.

- For the tests, questions will be distributed in advance. Questions will be drawn from class readings and discussion.
- For the paper, topics will be assigned. Topics will be drawn from class readings and class discussion. Maximum length for papers is 6 pages, not including endnotes and bibliography. Papers need to be typed, double-spaced and have one inch margins.
- The tests will be on February 9 and March 16. The paper is due on April 15. No make-up tests will be given or late papers accepted without an appropriate excuse.
- Each test is worth 30% of your course grade. The paper is worth 40%. Letter grades will be given for tests and the paper, and the course grade will be calculated using the percentage weights given above.

**READINGS** (Dates will be announced in class.)

Ayers, Michael R. 1981. "Locke Versus Aristotle on Natural Kinds," *The Journal of Philosophy*, volume LXXVIII, no. 5 pp. 247-272.

Putnam, Hilary. 1975. "Is Semantics Possible," in *Mind Language and Reality; Philosophical Papers*, volume 2, Cambridge University Press, pp. 102-118.

Dupré, John. 1981. "Natural Kinds and Biological Taxa," *The Philosophical Review*, 90, pp. 66-90.

Hacking, Ian. 1991. "A Tradition of Natural Kinds," *Philosophical Studies*, 61, pp. 109-126.

Boyd, Richard. 1999. "Homeostasis, Species, and Higher Taxa" in R. Wilson (ed.), *Species: New Interdisciplinary Essays*. Cambridge, Massachusetts: MIT Press, pp. 141-186.

- Elder, Crawford. 2008. "Biological Species are Natural Kinds," *Southern Journal of Philosophy*, 46, pp. 339-362.
- Okasha, S. 2002. "Darwinian Metaphysics: Species and the Question of Essentialism," *Synthese*, 131, pp. 191-213.
- Devitt, Michael. 2008. "Resurrecting Biological Essentialism", *Philosophy of Science* 75, pp.344-382.
- Ereshefsky, Marc. 2010. "What's Wrong with the New Biological Essentialism," *Philosophy of Science*, in press.
- Quine, W. V. 1969. "Natural Kinds" in *Ontological Relativity*, pp. 114-138.
- Byrd, Alexander and Tobin, Emma. 2008. "Natural Kinds," *Stanford Encyclopedia of Philosophy*, online access: <http://plato.stanford.edu/entries/natural-kinds/>
- Hacking, Ian. 2007. "Natural Kinds: Rosy Dawn, Scholastic Twilight," *Royal Institute of Philosophy Supplement*, 82, pp. 203-239.
- Griffiths, Paul. 1994. "Cladistic Classification and Functional Explanation," *Philosophy of Science*, 61, pp. 206-227.

### **BLACKBOARD**

The class has a site on BlackBoard. Class information and handouts will be posted there. Please log on to the class's BlackBoard site during the first two weeks of class, otherwise you will not be able to access the site later.

### **INTELLECTUAL HONESTY**

Intellectual honesty is the cornerstone of the development and acquisition of knowledge and requires that the contribution of others be acknowledged. As a result, cheating or plagiarism on any assignment or examination is regarded as an extremely serious academic offence, the penalty for which may be an F on the assignment and possibly also an F in the course, academic probation, or requirement to withdraw. The University Calendar states that plagiarism exists when:

- *the work submitted or presented was done, in whole or in part, by an individual other than the one submitting or presenting the work (this includes having another impersonate the student or otherwise substituting the work of another for one's own in an examination or test;*
- *parts of the work are taken from another source without reference to the original author;*
- *the whole work (e.g., an essay) is copied from another source; and/or*
- *a student submits or presents work in one course which has also been submitted in another course (although it may be completely original with that student) without the knowledge of or prior agreement of the instructor involved.*

While it is recognized that scholarly work often involves reference to the ideas, data and conclusions of other scholars, intellectual honesty requires that such references be explicitly and clearly noted. Plagiarism is an extremely serious offence. Plagiarism occurs not only when direct quotations are taken from a source without specific acknowledgement, but also when original ideas or data from the source are not acknowledged. A bibliography is insufficient to establish which portions of the student's work are taken from external sources; footnotes or other recognized forms of citation must be used for this purpose.

### **ACADEMIC ACCOMMODATION**

It is the student's responsibility to request academic accommodation. If you are a student with a documented disability who may require academic accommodation and have not registered with the Disability Resource Centre, please contact their office at 220-8237. Students who have not registered with the Disability Resource Centre are not eligible for formal academic accommodation. You are also required to discuss your needs with your instructor no later than fourteen (14) days after the start of this course.

### **STUDENTS' UNION REPRESENTATIVE**

The Humanities Representative is Britney Luimes, MSC 251, [humanitiesrep@su.ucalgary.ca](mailto:humanitiesrep@su.ucalgary.ca) or 220-3913.