



UNIVERSITY OF
CALGARY

FACULTY OF ARTS
DEPARTMENT OF PHILOSOPHY

PHIL 667.9 Lec 01
Topics in Philosophy of Science: Historical Narratives & Historicity
Winter Term 2016

Tuesday and Thursday 2:00-3:15 pm in SS 1253

Course Outline

Instructor: Marc Ereshefsky

Phone: 403-220-3162

Office Hours: Tuesdays 3:30-4:30

(but not Jan 12, Feb 9, and March 8), and my appointment

Office: SS1204

Email: ereshefs@ucalgary.ca

Course Description

Philosophical theories of natural kinds tend to assume that ultimately there will be one correct theory of natural kinds reflecting the way the world is fundamentally divided. The phrase one often hears in philosophy is that natural kinds 'carve nature at its joints.' This seminar will explore how philosophers can offer a more scientifically informed and more pragmatic approach to natural kinds. We will start the seminar by reading and discussing foundational articles on natural kinds to get us up to speed on the topic. We will then turn to articles selected by students related to their research as well as several articles selected by visitors to the Philosophy Department. Students taking the course will undertake a semester long research project with the aim of producing a research paper that can be submitted for presentation at a conference.

Course Work

Topic Identification

A two-page description of the topic you plan to research and write a paper on in this seminar. You should both describe the topic and explain why it would be a promising topic to work on. On a third page, provide a bibliography of at least three sources. For each source, add a sentence or two explaining why it is a good source for the topic.

Research Proposal

A four or five page presentation of your research plan (not counting references). Your plan should identify your research question or problem, explain why it is important, and explain how you intend to address it. You should organize your proposal in two parts. The first part should explain and motivate the focus of your research by answering these questions: (i) What is the general topic area? (ii) What are the main views on the topic? (iii) What question or problem in this topic area will be the focus of your attention? The second part of the proposal should contain a section-by-section outline of how you plan to construct your research paper. Dedicate a paragraph describing each section of the proposed paper. This outline will serve as your research plan. It is just a tentative plan. The proposal should be no more than 5 pages long. At least 3 pages should be devoted to the first part of the proposal. The proposal must include references.

Research Paper

The word maximum is 5,000 words (including footnotes, excluding references and any diagram notation). You are required to submit a rough draft as well as a final draft.

Daily Question Assignment

- For each class meeting please bring a one-sentence question from the reading we are discussing in class that day. The assignment should also contain a three to six sentence paragraph briefly explaining why you are raising that question.
- The question may be remedial, seeking an account of an important claim or argument in the reading that you could not follow. Or the question could be more critical in nature, alluding to a weakness in the paper. Or the question could be probing, identifying an issue that is raised by the reading or a possible implication of the reading.
- Please hand in a hard copy of the assignment at the beginning of class.

Introduction to a Foundational Reading

The aim of these presentations is to stimulate subsequent discussion, not to provide a summary of the contents of the reading. You should draw attention to what you think are the most provocative ideas, lines of reasoning, and arguments in the selection. Your presentation should motivate questions that we can discuss. You should conclude your presentation with those questions.

Introduction to a Student-selected Reading

The aim of these presentations is to explain the significance of the reading for your project and stimulate subsequent discussion, not to provide a summary of the contents of the reading. You should draw attention to what you think are the most provocative ideas, lines of reasoning, and arguments in the selection relevant to your research problem.

Due Dates, Assignment Values, and Grade Scale

No late assignments will be accepted without an appropriate excuse.

No registrar scheduled final will be given.

| Assignment | Due date | Points |
|-----------------------------------|-------------------------|--------------------------|
| 24 Daily Questions | Beginning of each class | 24 points (1 apiece) |
| Topic Identification | February 11 | 10 points |
| Research Proposal | March 8 | 22 points |
| Rough Draft Research Paper | March 31 | Required; no point value |
| Final Research Paper | December 14 | 44 points |
| Intro to Foundational Reading | To be assigned | Required; no point value |
| Intro to Student-selected Reading | To be assigned | Required; no point value |

Final grades will be awarded as follows

| | | |
|-------------|------------|--------------|
| 96-100 = A+ | 75-79 = B | 55-59 = C- |
| 90-95 = A | 70-74 = B- | 50-54 = D+ |
| 85-89 = A- | 65-69 = C+ | 45-49 = D |
| 80-84 = B+ | 60-64 = C | below 45 = F |

Readings

Our first reading will be from the *Stanford Encyclopedia of Philosophy* (on-line and open access) entry on 'Natural Kinds.' (We will read from the revised version of Jan 27, 2015). We will not read the entire entry, just selections. A reading from that entry will be assigned for our first class.

Subsequent readings will be announced throughout the semester. Readings will be available through the e-journal collection of the University Library.

Course Schedule

Weeks 1 – 7 of class will be devoted to reading and discussing foundational readings on natural kinds, classification, and scientific practice. Weeks 8 - 11 of class will be devoted to reading and discussing student research topic areas and readings related to those areas. The final two weeks of class will be devoted to discussing drafts of student research papers.

Style and Citation Requirements

- All written work for this course should be submitted as hard copies. Your submissions should be double-spaced, with 12 point font and 1 inch margins. Please number your pages.
- Whenever you quote someone, provide the source and page numbers from that source. Here's an example: Dr. Black writes that "all kittens are incredibly cute" (1993, p. 46). '(1993, p. 46)' refers to the article or book and page number where Dr. Black says that. Place detailed information about the article or book in your bibliography.
- Whenever you attribute a view or idea to a person, provide the source and page number where that claim is made. Here's an example: Dr. White likes kittens, but argues that puppies are far cuter (1994, p. 333).
- Use the following method for listing articles and books in your bibliography.
Smith, D. (1997) "A Theory of Cats," *Philosophy of Science* 44: 60-88.
Smith, D. (1998) *A New Theory of Cats*, Blackwell Publishers.
Smith, D. (1992) "A Theory of Great Cats," in J. Armstrong (ed.), *An Anthology on Theories of Great Cats*, Oxford University Press, 60-88.
Canto, P. (2006). "A Theoretical Discussion of Cats." <http://ohiou.edu/CatTheory>.
The first entry is for an article, the second for a book, the third for a chapter in an edited book, and the fourth for a web site.

Academic Honesty

Cheating or plagiarism on any assignment or examination is regarded as an extremely serious academic offense, the penalty for which may be an F on the assignment, an F in the course, academic probation, or requirement to withdraw from the University. See the relevant sections on 'Academic Misconduct' in the current University Calendar. Intellectual honesty requires that your work include adequate referencing to sources. Plagiarism occurs when you do not acknowledge or correctly reference your sources. If you have questions about correct referencing, consult your instructor.

Academic Accommodation

Student's seeking an accommodation based on disability or medical concerns should contact Student Accessibility Services. SAS will process the request and issue letters of accommodation to instructors. For more information on support services

and accommodations for students with disabilities, visit <http://www.ucalgary.ca/access/> . Students who require accommodation in relation to their coursework based on a protected ground other than disability should communicate this need in writing to their instructor. The full policy on student accommodations is available at http://www.ucalgary.ca/policies/files/policies/student-accommodation-policy_0.pdf

D2L Help

Desire2Learn is the University of Calgary's online learning management system. Go to <http://www.ucalgary.ca/it/services/d2l> for help.

Protection of Privacy

The University of Calgary is under the jurisdiction of the provincial Freedom of Information and Protection of Privacy (FOIP) Act. The Department of Philosophy ensures the student's right to privacy by requiring all graded assignments be returned to the student directly from the instructor or teaching assistant.

Safewalk

Call 403-220-5333 (24/7/365) for a Safewalk volunteer to accompany you safely to your destination on campus including parking lots, housing, and the LRT station or use a Campus Help Phone.