This course offers an advanced survey of some central themes in contemporary theoretical philosophy, drawn from recent work in metaphysics, epistemology, and the philosophies of mind, language, and science. While it is designed to provide background for those who pursue graduate-level research in these areas, it is not an introductory course. (Those who do not have some undergraduate preparation in these areas are advised to discuss remedial work with the course directors as soon as possible.)

Requirements and Evaluation

All students are required to complete the required readings, submit the essays and/or paper, and participate in seminar discussions. Evaluation is on the following basis:

PHIL 4800
Weekly Comments and Class Participation 20%
First essay (due: Oct 17) 20%
Term paper (due: Dec 5) 60%

PHIL 5800
Weekly Comments and Class Participation 25%
Three essays (due: Oct 17, Nov 14, Dec 5) 75%

Comments and Participation: Before noon of the Thursday preceding each class meeting, you must post a comment to the class Moodle page on any one claim or argument drawn from that week’s required readings. Your comment should consist of a brief observation or criticism, something that interests you, puzzles you, or seems incorrect to you (no longer than 300 words). Your comments will form the basis of our weekly discussions and will be assessed for your class participation grade, provided that you are present in the seminar on the relevant day. You may without penalty take two ‘passes’ and post no comment for that week.

Essays (4800 and 5800): The essays for the course are due on the dates indicated above. Essay topics will be distributed roughly two weeks in advance of the due date. Both graduates and undergraduates must submit the first essay; only graduate students must submit the following two essays. Essays should be 2500-3000 words in length (3000 words is a strict upper limit).

Term Paper (4800): This paper may be on any topic within the purview of the course, subject to the approval of the course directors, not to exceed 5000 words. We will also offer some suggestions for possible topics. It will include as a graded component of 10% a bibliographic note to be submitted by November 7.

Late Penalties: Weekly comments are not accepted late; other work may be accepted late at the discretion of the course directors, subject to a penalty of 2.5% per calendar day or fraction thereof.
PHIL 5801

PHIL 5801, taken in conjunction with 5800, provides a forum for further discussion of central themes in contemporary theoretical philosophy. It is designed to prepare students to write the comprehensive exam in theoretical philosophy. It covers the same topics as PHIL 5800, with additional readings, discussions, and colloquia to broaden one's grasp of the field.

In addition to the required readings for PHIL 5800, students in 5801 are required to complete the required readings for PHIL 5801, as well as some or all of the recommended readings, to attend the discussion seminars, give a presentation on one of the readings for the afternoon session, and attend the departmental Philosophy Colloquium (a schedule will be made available in due course). Evaluation will be based on a written comprehensive final exam in theoretical philosophy, which will range over the twelve topics covered in this course. At the discretion of the course directors, students may also be asked to defend the written examination orally. Sample questions will be distributed in advance.

Reading Schedule

Readings with one asterisk (*) are required for PHIL 4800/5800, readings with two asterisks (**) are required for PHIL 5801, and readings with no asterisk are recommended for PHIL 5801.

Sept 5: Introduction (CV & MAK)

Sept 12: Realism and Anti-Realism (CV & MAK)

*Quine, W.V., “Ontological relativity”, in his Ontological relativity and Other Essays. (1969)


Quine, W.V., “Two Dogmas of Empiricism”, in his From a Logical Point of View. (1953)
Davidson, D., “The Method of Truth in Metaphysics”, in his Inquiries.

Sept 19: Natural Kinds (MAK)


Dupre, “Natural Kinds and Biological Taxa,” *Philosophical Review* 90 (1981), 66-91

**Sept 26: Semantic Externalism: Perceptual and Social (CV)**


**Davidson, D., “Knowing One’s Own Mind”, in his *Subjective, Intersubjective, Objective*. (2001)

Kripke, K., *Naming and Necessity.* (1972)
Davidson, D., “Truth and Meaning”, in his *Inquiries.*
Davidson, D., “Radical Interpretation”, in his *Inquiries.*

**October 3: Concepts (MAK)**


**Woodfield, "Do Your Concepts Develop?" *Philosophy* (Supplement) (1993)


**October 10: No Class**

**October 17: Language and Thought (CV) (FIRST ESSAY DUE)**

*Davidson, D., “Rational Animals”, in his *Subjective, Intersubjective, Objective.*
*Davidson, D., “The Second Person”, in his *Subjective, Intersubjective, Objective.*

Davidson, D., “Talk and Thought”, in his *Inquiries.*


October 24: **Innateness (MAK)**


*Jackendoff, “What is a Concept, That a Person May Grasp It?” *Mind & Language* (1989)*


Sober, “Innate Knowledge,” *Routledge Encyclopedia of Philosophy*


October 31: **Reductionism and Functionalism (MAK)**


November 7: **Rule-Following and Meaning (CV)**


McDowell, J., “Wittgenstein on Following a Rule”, *Synthese* 58, 1984

November 14: **Normativity of Meaning and Content (CV)** (SECOND ESSAY DUE)


Davidson, “A Nice Derangement of Epitaphs”, in his *Truth, Language and History.*

November 21: **Epistemic Internalism, Externalism and Contextualism (CV)**

*Goldman, A., ”What is Justified Belief?”, in Sosa and Kim.

**Lewis, D., ”Elusive Knowledge”, in Sosa and Kim.

Descartes, R., *Meditation I.*
McDowell, J., ”Knowledge and the Internal”, in Sosa and Kim.
Sosa, E., ”Reflective Knowledge in the Best Circles”, in Sosa and Kim.
November 28: **Epistemology Naturalized (MAK)**


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December 5  THIRD ESSAY DUE/TERM PAPER DUE