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:

- **Weekly Comments and Class Participation**
  - 25%

- **Three Essays (due: Feb 9, March 9, April 13)**
  - 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:** 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. All essays are required and should be 2500-3000 words in length (3000 words is a strict upper limit).

**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 and the departmental Philosophy Colloquium (a schedule is available). Evaluation will be based on a written comprehensive final exam in theoretical philosophy, which will range over the
eleven topics covered in this course. The exam will take place at least two weeks after our last class meeting. At the discretion of the course directors, students may also be asked to defend the written examination orally. A list of questions will be distributed in advance, from which the exam questions will be drawn.

**Reading Schedule**

Readings with one asterisk (*) are required for PHIL 5800, readings with two asterisks (**) are required for PHIL 5801, and readings with no asterisk are recommended for PHIL 5801. All required readings are available on Moodle; all recommended readings are available either by accessing the relevant journal or have been put on reserve at Scott Library (please consult with us if there are any readings that you are unable to locate).

Jan 9: **Introduction (MAK & JB)**

Jan 16: **Analyticity (JB)**

* W.V. Quine, “Two Dogmas of Empiricism,” *From a Logical Point of View* (Harvard University Press, 1953)

I. Kant, Introduction to the B-edition of *The Critique of Pure Reason*, §§I-V

Jan 23: **Modality and Essentialism (MAK)**


Jan 30: **Sense and Reference (JB)**

* G. Evans, *The Varieties of Reference* (Oxford University Press, 1982), Chapter 1


S. Kripke, *Naming and Necessity* (Harvard, 1980), Lectures I-II

M. Dummett, *Frege: Philosophy of Language* (Duckworth, 1973), Chapters 5–6


Feb 6: **Natural Kinds (MAK)**


First Essay Due February 9 on Moodle

Feb 13: **Objectivity & Representation (JB)**

* W. V. Quine, *Word and Object* (MIT Press, 1960), Chapter 2

W. V. Quine, *Word and Object* (MIT Press, 1960), Chapter 3


Feb 20: **Reading Week (No Class)**

Feb 27: **Concepts (MAK & JB)**


G. Evans, *The Varieties of Reference* (Oxford University Press, 1982), Chapter 4

J. Fodor, *The Language of Thought* (Harvard University Press, 1975), Chapter 1


Mar 6: **Innateness (MAK)**


**Second Essay Due March 9 on Moodle**
March 13: **Nonconceptual Content (JB)**

* J. McDowell, *Mind and World*, Lecture III (pp. 46-65)
** C. Peacocke, *A Study of Concepts* (MIT Press, 1992), Ch. 3 (pp. 61–98)

G. Evans, *The Varieties of Reference* (Oxford University Press, 1982), §§4.3, 5.2, 6.3, 7.4
M. Matthen, *Seeing, Doing and Knowing* (Oxford University Press, 2007), Ch. 3

March 20: **Wittgenstein & Davidson (CV)**

Readings TBA

March 27: **Wittgenstein & Davidson Workshop**

Readings TBA

Monday, April 6: **Causation (MAK)**


**Third Essay Due April 13 on Moodle**