

# PROPERTIES AND PREDICATIONS

## FALL 2016

INSTRUCTORS:	Paul Audi	Alison Peterman
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OFFICE HOURS:	M&W, 12-1, and by appointment Lattimore 522	Mondays, 10:30-12:30 Lattimore 520

TIME AND LOCATION: Tuesday 2:00 pm - 4:40 pm, Lattimore 531

### COURSE DESCRIPTION

What are properties, and when do - and don't - we need them to account for the truth of predications? This course takes on this question from both a historical and contemporary perspective. We will start by reading important and influential accounts in medieval and early modern philosophy of the nature of properties and of what makes predicative claims true, starting with debates over nominalism and continuing through reductionist mechanistic accounts of material qualities, empiricist anti-abstractionism and some weirder treatments of predications in Spinoza and Leibniz. We will then turn to the core problems of properties and predication as they are conceived in contemporary metaphysics. In particular, we will look at David Lewis's influential understanding of the problems to be addressed, and the very different approaches of David Armstrong, John Heil, and Peter van Inwagen. Finally, we will look in some detail at trope theory and its prospects.

### POLICIES

This seminar falls under the heading of PHL 542: Special Topics in Metaphysics and its History (and whether such labeling has a more robust ontological underpinning is something yet to be seen). It may be taken for credit either as a seminar in metaphysics or as a seminar in modern philosophy. If you would like credit for a metaphysics seminar, your final paper should be more closely focused on a topic in contemporary metaphysics. If you would like credit for a modern seminar, your paper should be recognizable as a paper in the history of philosophy. Of course, the goal is to benefit from doing these together, so talk to us about satisfying this requirement in creative ways. Also, you are more strongly recommended to read the recommended readings in metaphysics if you are taking the course for metaphysics credit and in history if you are taking it for history credit. In the case of history, this is especially important when primary texts are relegated to recommended readings for the sake of time.

Please let us know right away if you need special accommodations because of a documented condition that interferes with your learning.

Please review the class schedule sometime in the next week and let us know if there are any issues.

Please turn off your cell phones when you arrive.

The syllabus is subject to change as the semester progresses.

Student success at the University of Rochester includes more than just academic performance. Please feel comfortable speaking with us about challenges you are experiencing within and outside of the classroom so that we may submit a CARE report on your behalf. A CARE report is submitted when the level of concern for a student necessitates inclusive, multi-layered support from the campus community. The CARE network administrator shares information only with staff who need to know it in order to help you.

## ASSESSMENT

### PRESENTATIONS (10%):

Students taking the course for a grade will be asked to give a 5-10 minute presentation to kick things off.

### RESPONSE PAPERS (20%):

1-2 page critical summaries of one of the required readings for the week.

### PARTICIPATION (0%):

Is expected.

### FINAL PAPER (70%):

With drafts.

## COURSE SCHEDULE

The readings listed for each day are to be read *before* the lecture on that day. All of the required and many of the recommended readings will be on Blackboard.

September 6: Medieval Nominalism and Universals

Required:

\* Panaccio: "Universals"

Recommended:

- \* Aristotle: *Topics*, Book I, Parts 4, 5 and 8
- \* Porphyry: *Isagoge*
- \* Ockham: selections on universals
- \* Spade, ed.: *Five Texts on the Mediaeval Theory of Universals*
- \* Klima: “The Medieval Problem of Universals”, *Stanford Encyclopedia of Philosophy*
- \* Armstrong: *Universals and Scientific Realism V.1: Nominalism and Realism*

September 13: Real accidents and real qualities

Required:

- \* Pasnau: selections from *Metaphysical Themes* (Real Accidents and Real Qualities)

September 20: Modes and the modal distinction

Required:

- \* Menn: “Suárez, Nominalism and Modes”
- \* Menn: “The greatest stumbling block: Descartes’s denial of real qualities”

Recommended:

- \* Pasnau: selections from *Metaphysical Themes* (Modes)

September 27: Mechanism and reduction (John Komdat)

Required:

- \* Hobbes: selections from *De Corpore*
- \* Peterman: “Cavendish on compositional motion and corporeal qualities”

Recommended (required for historians):

- \* Cavendish: selections from *Observations on Experimental Philosophy* and *Grounds of Natural Philosophy*

October 4: Mechanism and reduction

Required:

- \* Boyle: *The Origin of Forms and Qualities*
- \* Kaufman: “Locks, Schlocks, and Poisoned Peas: Boyle on Actual and Dispositive Qualities”

Recommended:

- \* Galileo: from *Assayer*

October 11: Anti-abstractionism (Matt Lamb)

Required:

- \* Berkeley: selections
- \* Hume: selections
- \* Baxter: “Hume on Abstraction and Identity”

October 18: Fall Break: NO CLASS

October 25: Spinoza and Baxter on aspects

Required:

- \* Douglas: “ ‘*Quatenus*’, Spinoza’s Monism and the Logic of *Participia*”
- \* Baxter: “Instantiation as Partial Identity”

Recommended:

- \* Spinoza: *Ethics* Parts 1 and 2

November 1: Leibniz on true predication and intension and extension (Kelley Annesley)

Required:

- \* Leibniz: *Primary Truths*
- \* Swoyer: “Leibniz on Intension and Extension”

November 8 (Don Vispi)

Required:

- \* Lewis: “New Work for a Theory of Universals”

Recommended:

- \* Oliver: “The Metaphysics of Properties”
- \* Armstrong: *Universals and Scientific Realism V.1: Nominalism and Realism*, Part II.
- \* Rodriguez-Pereyra: “What is the Problem of Universals?”

November 15 (Kyle Blanchette)

Required:

- \* Armstrong: *Universals: An Opinionated Introduction*, Ch. 3 and 6

Recommended:

- \* Rodriguez-Pereyra: “Resemblance Nominalism and the Imperfect Community.”
- \* D.C. Williams: “The Elements of Being, I”

November 22 (Yanssel Garcia)

Required:

- \* Heil: *The Universe as We Find It*, 2.1-2.5 and 5.5-5.8

Recommended:

- \* Heil: “Dispostions”
- \* Heil: “Properties and Powers”
- \* Campbell: *Abstract Particulars*, Ch. 2
- \* D.C. Williams: “Universals and Existents”

November 29

Required:

- \* Anna-Sofia Maurin: “An Argument for the Existence of Tropes”
- \* Anna-Sofia Maurin: “Same but Different”

Recommended:

- \* Ehring: *Tropes: Properties, Objects and Mental Causation*

December 6

Required:

- \* Garcia: “Tropes as Character Grounders”

Recommended:

- \* Garcia: “Tropes and Dependency Profiles”
- \* Garcia: “Two Ways to Particularize a Property”

December 13: Paul day!

Required:

- \* Paul paper 1

Recommended (but the author is going to be RIGHT THERE)

- \* Paul paper 2