

Teaching Philosophy

Jonathan Simon

At the introductory level, I believe the philosophy professor's task is to show the student how to simultaneously regard the world with more wonder and more critically than before. These two things go together, since the more critically one engages the more one sees the riddles, puzzles and open questions everywhere. I generally prefer a 'bottom-up' approach, teaching Socratically or conversationally where possible, beginning with issues more likely to independently pique interest and stimulate conversation (trolley problems, the existence of God, etc), then gradually developing rigor, connecting the more concrete to the more abstract as the course goes on. This is in part because in my experience it is what works, but in part because I hold the substantive philosophical position that the more abstract questions (of, say, meta-ethics or metaphysics) are ultimately inseparable from the more concrete questions which lead to them. I have taught absolute introductory courses like Central Problems in Philosophy (Fall 2009), and Intro to Philosophy (Summer 2010) in this manner, and also advanced introductory courses like Metaphysics (2010) and Minds and Machines (2009).

I have also taught Logic (twice so far, in Fall 2010 and Spring 2011). Logic is a special case since the fascinating questions at the core of the discipline are often passed over in favor of a more skills driven approach. I attempt to balance the desiderata that students learn all of the requisite skills, with the desiderata that they attain some perspective on why these skills matter and on the philosophical questions that drive the discipline. I generally assign large problem sets, as the skills involved, for those who do not pick them up automatically, require drilling in much the same way that language immersion courses do (the textbook I used, Barwise and Etchemendy's *Language, Proof and Logic*, allows for automated online grading of problem sets). But I also try to spend at least a few minutes of each class situating the skill at issue in a philosophical context. For example, a lecture about the truth table method might include some discussion of the question of the meaning of logical terms, and the debate over whether this meaning is better characterized in terms of inferential role, or with reference to truth. I have also given students the option of writing a short essay on one of a list of suggested topics in the philosophy of logic for extra credit.

At the advanced undergraduate / graduate level, I believe the philosophy professor's primary task is to convey that philosophy is an ongoing conversation, and to show students that they have the tools to participate. This means, on the one hand, helping students trust themselves, and see that be-

neath what they may think of as their ‘failures to understand’ lie legitimate philosophical objections. It means, on the other hand, helping students read and think charitably: to come to appreciate that for almost any viewpoint they might hold, some very bright people will hold the opposite view. To this end, I generally structure such courses so that each session involves the careful analysis of one or two arguments, but so that the overall arc of the course emphasizes the dialogue, and the open-endedness, inherent in every corner of the discipline. This has been my approach in the specialized undergraduate courses I have so far taught: Philosophy of Mind (Summer 2007, Summer 2008), Minds and Machines (Summer 2009) and Metaphysics (Spring 2010), as well as in the courses geared towards MA or PhD students, including graduate seminars in the Philosophy of Language, Introspection, Moral Psychology and the Metaphysics of Mind at Tulane and the Australian National University.

I attach syllabi from my course on Moral Psychology (2014), my course on the Limits of Introspection (2014), my Central Problems course (2009), extra credit essay questions designed for my Logic (2011) course, and available student evaluation data.

Moral Psychology: Desire, Motivation and Value

Dr. Jonathan Simon

PHIL 6931-01 R 3:30 - 6 p.m. Spring 2014

1 Introduction

The passions (moods, emotions, desires and aversions, pleasures and pains) play a pervasive role in our epistemic and rational lives. What we are feeling shapes what we believe, and what we do, in any number of ways. But are the passions an aide, or a hindrance, as we try to believe and act rightly? Some philosophers, following Kant, have held that the passions are a hindrance, at best playing a superfluous role in our rational lives. Other philosophers, including Aristotle and Hume, have held that the passions play a far more positive role: providing rational guidance, or even determining which of our actions count as right or virtuous.

This is the central question of this course: are passions an aide or a hindrance to us as we try to believe and act rightly? To answer this question, we shall consider different accounts of the passions, as well as different accounts of the right and the good. We shall see that we must settle what we think about the right and the good, as well as what we think about emotion, in order to come to a view on our central question.

We shall consider: feeling theories of emotion, the belief-desire model of emotion, the problem of moral motivation, sentimentalist and constructivist theories of value, cognitivist theories of emotion, naturalist and non-naturalist realism about value, representational and imperative theories of emotion, the idea that emotions can be appropriate or fitting, the notion of acting or desiring under the guise of the good, akrasia, self-deception, and

special topics in the nature of Pain.

2 Reading Schedule

Week One *Desire, Motivation and Value: An Introduction*

Week Two *The Pervasive Role of the Passions in Action and Judgment*

Greene, J. The Secret Joke of Kant's Soul

Haidt, J. The Emotional Dog and its Rational Tail

Blair, A Cognitive-Developmental Approach to Morality: Investigating the Psychopath

May, J. Does Disgust Influence Moral Judgment?

Week Three *Moral Motivation*

Smith and Pettit, External Reasons

Williams, Internal and External Reasons

McDowell, Might There be External Reasons

Mackie, Chapter 1, Ethics, Inventing Right and Wrong

Week Four *The Feeling Theory of Emotion*

William James, What is an Emotion?

Uriah Kriegel, Towards a New Feeling Theory of Emotion

Week Five *Sentimentalist, Constructivist and Expressivist Theories of Value*

Stevenson, The Emotive Meaning of Ethical Terms

Lewis, Dispositional Theories of Value

Daniel Stoljar, Emotivism and Truth Conditions

Mark Johnston, Dispositional Theories of Value

Week Six *Cognitivist Theories of Emotion*

Robert Solomon, Emotion and Choice

Michael Brady, 'The Irrationality of Recalcitrant Emotions'

Week Seven *Non-Naturalist Realism about Value*

David Enoch, The Epistemological Challenge Metanormative Realism:

How Best to Understand It, and How to Cope with It

Tristram MacPherson, "Moore's Open Question Argument"

Week Eight No Class

Week Nine *Naturalist Realism about Value*

Horgan and Timmons, Troubles for New Wave Moral Semantics

Helen and Richard Yetter-Chappell, The Moral Concepts Strategy.

Week Ten *Representational (Perceptual) Theories of Emotion*

Tye, An Intentionalist Theory of Emotions

Block, Pain and Representationalism.

Tye, In Defense of Representationalism: Reply to Commentators

Week Eleven *Imperativist Theories of Pain*

Colin Klein, An Imperativist Theory of Pain.

Karl Shafer, The Rational Force of Desire.

Week Twelve *Appropriateness/Fittingness and the Emotions*

D'Arms and Jacobsen, Sensibility Theory and Projectivism.

Kevin Mulligan, From Fitting Attitudes to Values.

Week Thirteen *Acting under the Guise of the Good*

Michael Stocker, Desiring the Bad.

David Velleman, The Guise of the Good.

Katherine Hawkins, Desiring the Bad under the Guise of the Good.

Week Fourteen *Moral Particularism*

Tappolet, Through Thick and Thin.

McNaughton and Rawling, Unprincipled Ethics.

Philosophy of Mind:

Introspection and its Limits

Dr. Jonathan Simon

PHIL 6190-01 M 3:30 - 6 p.m. Fall 2014

1 Introduction

Much about consciousness can be discovered by introspection and reflection. But introspection has its limits, and at these limits, research in empirical psychology and neuroscience may be able tell us things about the workings of our own minds that we cannot see unaided. In this course we will investigate cases where this may be so. Topics to be covered will include: Introspective Fallibility, Cognitive Overflow, the Structure of Attention, Limits of Cognitive Resources, Timing of Action and the Perception of Time, The Unity of Consciousness, Agnosias, Syndromes of Consciousness and general theories of Introspection.

2 Outcomes and Requirements

2.1 Program Outcomes

This course will:

- 1) Provide an overview of the literature in the philosophy of introspection, as well as an overview of how third personal methods (empirical psychology) can deliver surprising first personal results.
- 2) Survey recent empirical psychological results about consciousness.
- 3) Survey the most important views that philosophers have developed in these areas.

2.2 Learning Outcomes

After completing the course, students will be able to:

- 1) Better engage with literature in empirical psychology, and assess its philosophical relevance.
- 2) Critically analyse the most compelling arguments for and against the most important philosophical views in these areas, including two in-depth studies of particular arguments advanced by particular authors.
- 3) Cultivate their own views on these matters, and learn to trust their own voices.
- 4) Develop an understanding of the overall landscape of the debate on these issues, and how to locate their own positions within it.

2.3 Course Requirements

- 1) Each week, everyone must email me a one-page summary or critical analysis of the one paper I designate as required reading for that week. (50 points total).
- 2) Two short essays will be assigned, each of at least 5 pages. The first is due Sunday March 9, the second is due Saturday May 10. Early submissions will be offered the option of revision for an improved mark. Early submission will also entitle you to attend an individual tutorial discussion (by appointment) before re-submitting. The first essay is worth 100 points, the second is worth 200 points.
- 3) If you wish to take this course for the Writing Intensive Requirement, you must declare your intention to do that early on in the term. In this case your essays must each be substantially longer. (Consult with the Registrar's office or your academic advisor for the deadline for declarations.).
- 4) If you wish to take this course for capstone credit, you must write an additional essay, and you must meet with me to discuss the appropriate format it should take.
- 5) Participation is worth 50 points. You do not have to talk for the sake of talking, but points off for texting, checking the game on your computer, or otherwise being obviously checked out.

2.4 Policies

Policy on attendance and preparation:

You are required to come to class having done the reading assigned for that day, and to participate. I may deduct up to 10 points for an absence that you have not cleared with me beforehand.

Policy on late submissions of essays:

If you submit an essay late without clearing it with me, I may deduct points at my discretion. If you ask me in advance for an extension, I very likely will give you an extension, of at least a week.

2.5 Course Marks Scale

400-360 = A to A-

359-320 = B+ to B-

319-280 = C+ to C-

279-240 = D+ to D-

239-0 = Fail

NOTE: All written work must respect the Newcomb-Tulane Honor Code, which specifically prohibits all forms of cheating and plagiarism. Suspected failures to comply with the Code will not be tolerated in this class and will be reported to the Dean. See <http://college.tulane.edu/code.htm> for details.

3 Reading Schedule

Week One *Is Introspection as Trustworthy as it Seems?*

Schwitzgebel, Eric. "The Unreliability of Naive Introspection", Philosophical Studies, 2008

Week Two No Class (Labor Day)

Week Three *Is Introspection as Trustworthy as it Seems? - Part II*

Smithies, D. "On the Unreliability of Introspection", Phil Studies 2010
Ramm, B. "The Reliability of Phenomenal Knowledge" *ms*

Week Four No Class (I am away)

Week Five *Is Consciousness as Unified as it Seems?*

Nagel, T. "Brain Bisection and the Unity of Consciousness"

Bayne, T. "The Unity of Consciousness and the Split-Brain Syndrome",
The Journal of Philosophy, 105(6), 277-300.

Week Six *Is Consciousness as Detailed as it Seems?*

Block, N. "Consciousness and Cognitive Access", Joint Session of the
Aristotelean Society, 2008

Block, N. "On a Confusion about a Function of Consciousness", BBS,
1995.

Week Seven *Is Consciousness as Detailed as it Seems? - Part II*

Block, N. "Consciousness, Accessibility, and the mesh between Psy-
chology and Neuroscience" BBS 2007 and respondents:

Gopnik, A. "Why babies are more conscious than we are"

Izard, Quinn and Most. "Many Ways to Awareness: A developmental
Perspective on Cognitive Access"

Kouider, de Gardelle, Dupoux. "Partial Awareness and the Illusion of
Phenomenal Consciousness"

Lau, Persaud. "Broken Telephone in the Brain: the need for Metacog-
nitive Measures"

Naccache, Dehaene. "Reportability and Illusions of Phenomenality in
the Global Workspace Model"

Prinz. "Accessed, Accessible, Inaccessible: Where to draw the phe-
nomenal line"

Week Eight *Is the Will as Efficacious as it Seems?*

Mele, A. "Free Will and Luck, Chapter 2: Free Will and Neuroscience"

Haggard, P. "Conscious Intention and Motor Cognition"

Week Nine *Is the Experience of Action as Unitary as it Seems?*

Pacherie, E. "The Sense of Control and the Sense of Agency" Psyche,
2007.

Pacherie, E., Martin, J.R. "Out of Nowhere: Thought Insertion, Own-
ership and Context-Integration." Consciousness and Cognition, 2013,
22, pp.111-122.

Week Ten *Is Pain as Intrinsically Unpleasant as it Seems?"*

Klein, C. "What Pain Asymbolia Really Shows"

Week Eleven *Are the Sensory Modalities as Distinct as they Seem?*

Deroy, O. "Can Sounds be Red? A New Account of Synaesthesia as
Enriched Experience"

Deroy, O. "Synaesthesia"

Week Twelve *Is Bodily Awareness as Simple as it Seems?*

De Vignemont, F. “Habeus Corpus: The Sense of Ownership of One’s Own Body”

De Vignemont, F. “Embodiment, Ownership and Disownership”

Dennett, D. “Where Am I?”

Week Thirteen *Is the Experience of Duration as Straightforward as it Seems?*

Eagleman, D. “Brain Time“

Eagleman, D. “Prediction and Postdiction: Two Frameworks with the Goal of Delay Compensation”

Schneider, S. “Dennett on Consciousness”

Week Fourteen *Are we as Reasonable as we Seem?*

May, J. “Does Disgust Influence Rational Judgement?”

Tversky, A. and Kahneman, D. “Judgment under Uncertainty: Heuristics and Biases”

Haidt, J. “The Emotional Dog and its Rational Tail”

Week Fifteen *Is Attention as Innocuous as it Seems?*

Block, N. “Attention and Mental Paint”

CENTRAL PROBLEMS OF PHILOSOPHY

V83.0010.001

Fall 2009

MW 9:30 am – 10:45 am

48 Cooper Square Room 103

INSTRUCTOR: Jonathan Simon

EMAIL: jonathan.simon@nyu.edu

OFFICE: 5 Washington Place Room 309

OFFICE HOUR: Mondays 1-2

COURSE DESCRIPTION:

An introduction to the deepest and most fundamental problems of philosophy, and to the methods philosophers use to think about them. Is the soul the same as the body? Can computers have minds? Do we have free will? Can we know anything for certain? Do wrongdoers deserve to suffer? What makes you the same person now that you were when you were an infant? What does it mean to die, and is dying a misfortune? And why is there something rather than nothing?

COURSE REQUIREMENTS:

8 one-page Reaction papers. Two short papers (3-4 pages), and one final exam. The reaction papers will be graded +/-, and will count for a cumulative 20% of your grade. Each short paper will be 20% of your grade, the exam will be 30% of your grade. Class participation is strongly encouraged and will count for 10% of your grade.

REQUIRED TEXTS:

Tamar Gendler, Susanna Siegel, Steven Cahn, (eds) *The Elements of Philosophy: Readings From Past And Present*, Oxford 2008 [TEXTBOOK]

Julian Baggini, *The Pig That Wants To Be Eaten: 100 Experiments For Armchair Philosophers*, Plume 2005 [PIG]

REACTION PAPERS: Every class we will read one or two of the thought experiments from the Baggini book. You will pick one of them and write a few paragraphs defending an answer to it – what you would do or think the person in the experiment should do. You must focus on explaining your Reasons Why, and you must address the reasons Baggini gives for the opposing view, and tell me why you think the reasons for your view are more compelling. Your essays do not have to be polished, but they must be clear enough that I can understand what you mean: what your reasons are and why you take them to be stronger than the reasons for the opposing view.

SCHEDULE:

Wednesday, Sept. 9: Introductory Discussion.

Monday, Sept. 14: Applied Ethics: Trolleys, Killing and Letting Die

- *Kill and Let Die* [PIG 265], *Life Support* [PIG 211], *Torture Option* [PIG 49]
- Judith Jarvis Thompson, *The Trolley Problem*, [TEXTBOOK pgs 195 – 207]

Wednesday, Sept. 16: Applied Ethics: Duties to the Poor

- *Family First* [PIG 286], *The Lifeboat* [PIG 64], *The Nest Café* [PIG 298]
- Peter Singer, *Rich And Poor* [TEXTBOOK 139-152]

Monday, Sept. 21: Applied Ethics: Vegetarianism

- *The Pig That Wants to be Eaten* [PIG 13], *Pains Remains* [PIG 76], *Eating Tiddles* [PIG 169], *Free Percy* [PIG 214]
- Alistair Norcross, *Puppies, Pigs and People* [TEXTBOOK 173-185]

Wednesday, Sept. 23: Normative Ethics: Utilitarianism

- *Ordinary Heroism* [PIG 43], *More Or Less* [PIG 154]
- John Stuart Mill, *Utilitarianism* [TEXTBOOK 77-88]

Monday, Sept. 28: Normative Ethics: Deontology

- *When No One Wins* [PIG 19], *The Golden Rule* [PIG 247]
- Bernard Williams, *Utilitarianism, Integrity and Responsibility* [TEXTBOOK 96-104]
- Onora O'Neill, *A Simplified Account Of Kant's Ethics* [TEXTBOOK 112-114]
- OPTIONAL: Immanuel Kant, Excerpts from *Grounding For A Metaphysics of Morals* [TEXTBOOK 105 - 111]

Wednesday, Sept. 30: Normative Ethics: Virtue

- *Hearts and Heads* [PIG 238], *No One gets Hurt* [PIG 271], *A Byte on the Side* [PIG 10] *Ordinary Heroism* [PIG 43], *Moral Luck* [PIG 289]
- Aristotle, *Nichomachean Ethics* [TEXTBOOK 115-127]
- OPTIONAL: Rosalind Hursthouse, *Normative Virtue Ethics* [TEXTBOOK 127-136]

Monday, Oct. 5: Metaethics: Egoism

- *Good God* [PIG 22], *The Experience Machine* [PIG 292], *The Ring Of Gyges* [PIG 233]
- James Rachels, *Egoism And Moral Skepticism* [TEXTBOOK 233-239]

Wednesday, Oct. 7: Metaethics: Relativism vs Objectivism

- James Rachels, *The Challenge of Cultural Relativism* [TEXTBOOK 240-248]
- OPTIONAL: Cass Sunstein, *Morality and Heuristics* [TEXTBOOK 265-277]

Monday, Oct 12: Freedom of the Will: Incompatibilism

- *Preemptive Justice* [PIG 106], *A Clockwork Orange* [PIG 275]

- Roderick Chisolm, *Human Freedom and the Self* [TEXTBOOK 481-487]

Wednesday, Oct 14: Freedom of the Will: Compatibilism

- *Moral Luck* [PIG 289]
- Peter Strawson, *Freedom And Resentment* [TEXTBOOK 498-511]

Monday, Oct 19: Personal Identity

- John Locke, *Of Identity And Diversity* [TEXTBOOK 512-522]
- Bernard Williams *The Self And The Future* [TEXTBOOK 522-532]

Wednesday, Oct. 21: Personal Identity

- *Beam Me Up* [PIG 4], *Memories are Made of This* [PIG 88], *I am a Brain* [PIG 112], *Amoebaesque* [PIG 136], *Elusive I* [PIG 160], *Soul Power* [PIG 193], *Total Lack of Recall* [PIG 262]
- Derek Parfit, *Reasons and Persons* [TEXTBOOK 532 – 548]

Monday, Oct. 26: Time and Time Travel

- Albert Einstein, *Time and the Relativity of Simultaneity* [TEXTBOOK 455-457]
- Theodore Sider, *Time* [TEXTBOOK 457-465]

Wednesday, Oct. 28: Consciousness: Dualism

- *Zombies* [PIG 277]
- Rene Descartes, *Sixth Meditation* [TEXTBOOK 553-561]

Monday, Nov. 2: Consciousness: Physicalism

- *Land Of The Epiphens* [PIG 61], *The Hole In The Sum Of Its Parts* [PIG 145]
- Daniel Stoljar, *Physicalism* [TEXTBOOK 578-583]
- J.J.C. Smart, *Sensations And Brain Processes* [TEXTBOOK 583-593]

Wednesday, Nov 4: Consciousness: Functionalism and its Critics

- *The Chinese Room* [PIG 115], *Mad Pain* [PIG 202]
- A.M. Turing, *Computing Machinery And Intelligence* [TEXTBOOK 663-677]
- John Searle, *Can Computers Think?* [TEXTBOOK 677-684]

Monday, Nov. 9: Consciousness: Problems With Materialism

- *The Muddy Blues* [PIG 121], *Being A Bat* [PIG 217]
- Thomas Nagel, *What Is It Like To Be A Bat?* [TEXTBOOK 620]

Wednesday, Nov. 11: Consciousness: Problems With Materialism

- *Black, White and Red All Over* [PIG 37], *Water, Water Everywhere* [PIG 220]
- Saul Kripke, *The Modal Argument (From Naming and Necessity)* [TEXTBOOK

604-611]

- Frank Jackson, *The Knowledge Argument* [TEXTBOOK 611-620]

Monday, Nov. 16: Consciousness: Perception

- *The Eyes Have It* [PIG 175]
- J.J. Valberg, *Reasoning About Our Experience* [TEXTBOOK 684-693]

Wednesday, Nov. 18: Consciousness: Perception

- A.J. Ayer, *The Argument From Illusion: A Defense of Sense Data* [TEXTBOOK 693-697]
- J.L. Austin, *The Argument From Illusion: A Critique of Sense Data* [TEXTBOOK 697-706]

Monday, Nov. 23: Consciousness and Epistemology: Skepticism About The Material World

- *Something We Know Not What* [PIG 268]
- Berkeley, *Of The Principles Of Human Knowledge* [TEXTBOOK 384-392]

Wednesday, Nov. 25: Epistemology: Knowledge & Gettierology

- *No Know* [PIG 187]
- E. Gettier, *Is Justified True Belief Knowledge?* [TEXTBOOK 345]
- R. Nozick, "Knowledge" [TEXTBOOK 346-350]

Monday, Nov. 30: Epistemology: Descartes' Modern Skepticism

- Descartes, *Meditations 1 and 2* [TEXTBOOK 351-358]

Wednesday, Dec. 2: Epistemology: An Abductive Response To Skepticism?

- *Evil Demon*, [PIG 1] *The Nightmare Scenario* [PIG 28], *Mozarella Moon* [PIG 181], *I Think, Therefore?* [PIG 184]
- J. Vogel, *Cartesian Skepticism And Inference To The Best Explanation* [TEXTBOOK 373-379]

Monday, Dec. 7: Learning To Love The Vat

- *Living In A Vat* [PIG 151]
- D. Chalmers, "The Matrix As Metaphysics" [TEXTBOOK 405-419]

Wednesday, Dec. 9: Learning To Love The Vat

- *Bursting The Soap Bubble* [PIG 55], *The Rocking Horse Winner* [PIG 118]
- D. Hume, "Induction" [TEXTBOOK 422]
- OPTIONAL: W. Salmon "The Problem Of Induction" [TEXTBOOK 429 – 447]

Monday, Dec. 14:

- *Condemned To Life* [PIG 58], *The Horror* [PIG 205]
- T. Nagel, “The Absurd” [TEXTBOOK 761-768]
- T. Nagel, “Death” [TEXTBOOK 769- 774]

EXTRA [PIG] READINGS. YOU MAY WRITE NO MORE THAN ***TWO*** RESPONSE PAPERS FROM THE FOLLOWING GROUP. YOU MAY SUBMIT THESE DURING ANY REMAINING CLASS.

- *The Veil Of Ignorance* [PIG 28]
- *The Ship Theseus* [PIG 31]
- *Racing Tortoises* [PIG 46]
- *Take The Money And Run* [PIG 124]
- *Rationality Demands* [PIG 52]
- *Squaring The Circle* [PIG 70]
- *Life Dependency* [PIG 85]
- *An Inspector Calls* [PIG 208]
- *Gambling on God* [PIG 232]
- *The Sorites Tax* [PIG 280]

Introductory Logic

Essay Questions

Dr. Jonathan Simon

V83.0070 MW 9:30 - 10:45 Spring 2010

Introduction

Logic is the science of reasoning correctly. It is a set of tools that will help you clarify and disambiguate what you want to say, help you evaluate pieces of reasoning, and get you comfortable with the standard of rigor operative in mathematics, philosophy, computer science and other precise theoretical endeavors. As we learn how to use the tools in this toolkit, we will consider deeper philosophical questions raised along the way, questions like: What is it for one proposition to be a logical consequence of other propositions - for it to be impossible for the one to be false if the others are true? And what is it for some things that you have thought, written or said to be proofs of other things that you have thought, written or said? And what is it to give a formal theory of some domain, like number theory or geometry? Finally, time and interest permitting, we will use our logical tools as a standpoint from which to look into the great valley of questions about logic itself: what is the relationship between truth and proof, or between understandability, and logical definability?

Textbook/Software

Language, Proof and Logic, by Jon Barwise and John Etchemendy.

1 Ex Falso Quodlibet (a.k.a. Explosion)

It follows from the definition of the Logical Consequence relation that for any sentence Q , that sentence is the Logical Consequence of any contradiction. Some find this result implausible (see for example <http://opinionator.blogs.nytimes.com/2010/11/28/paradoxical-truth/>).

Assignment

First, give an informal proof of this principle. Then discuss what it IS to find the result implausible. Is it to object to some step in the proof you have just given? Or is it to reject the *FOL* definition of Logical Consequence, in favor of some other definition? Do you think there are any good reasons to pursue the latter project? Explain why or why not.

2 Tertium Non Datur (a.k.a. Excluded Middle)

In *FOL* we restrict our focus to sentences P such that $P \vee \neg P$ is a tautology: that is, sentences P such that either P is true or $\neg P$ is true. Some argue that this restriction is unnatural, and makes *FOL* inadequate to model most of ordinary discourse. For example, ‘Someone 5’11” is tall’ may fail to be true, while also its negation fails to be true. Likewise for ‘Twas brillig and the slithy toves did gyre and gimble in the wabe.’

Assignment

First briefly summarize the issue in your own terms. Then weigh in: Do you think that Excluded Middle imposes an unnatural restriction on *FOL*? In particular, do you think that sentences like the ones I just cited are counterexamples to the principle? Consider both sentences. Justify your answer in both cases. You may want to compare this sort of restriction, to the restriction that constant symbols must denote exactly one thing.

3 Assumptions of Existence

In *FOL* we assume that constant symbols (names) refer to actually existing things, and we assume that the domain of quantification is never empty. This means that, for example, ‘There is something that is self-identical’ is a First Order Logical Truth.

Assignment

Give me an informal version of the proof of this principle from no premises in Fitch. Now discuss the implications. Logic is supposed to be a theory-neutral discipline: it should not be making any substantial assumptions about the world. But it is a deep cosmological question why there is something rather than nothing. What is going on here? Defend one of the following three views:

(WARRANT TRANSMITS): This proof explains why something exists rather than nothing: it turns out to be a matter of deductive logic!

(WARRANT DOES NOT TRANSMIT): *FOL* makes a heavyweight assumption about the nature of reality here, and so logic is not really maintaining its theory-neutrality.

(WARRANT IS BESIDE THE POINT) This assumption is harmless: it is simply a matter of terminological convenience.

4 Presupposition and Implicature

The implicature of a sentence is what the sentence insinuates but does not logically imply. For example, in ‘Max is at home unless Claire is at the library,’ it is an implicature (but not an implication!) that if Claire *is* at the library, Max is not at home. You can test whether something is an implicature or an implication with the Cancellability test: if the conclusion is an implicature then it is coherent to affirm both the original sentence and the negation of the conclusion. A presupposition of a sentence is something that has to be true in order for the sentence to be meaningful in the first place. ‘You started late’ is true if you started late, false if you started on time or early. It presupposes that you started. Now look at section 14.3 in the book. Consider the sentence, ‘The present king of France is bald.’ Since the French monarchy has not existed since 1870, this sentence is false. In other words, it is not the case that the present king of France is bald. But this is just to say that the present king of France is not bald, isn’t it?

Assignment

Translate the sentence ‘The present king of France is not bald’ into *FOL*, using what the book in 14.3 calls ‘The Russellian Analysis’. We can now distinguish between 3 possible accounts of this sentence.

1) The existence of the Present King of France is an implicature of the sentence, but not a requirement for it to be true. 2) The existence of the Present King of France is a presupposition of the sentence, so that the sentence asserting his Majesty’s baldness is in fact strictly meaningless given that there is no present king of France. 3) The Russellian analysis. Explain the difference between these three analyses. In particular, make it clear why they are mutually exclusive. Then say which of them you think is correct, and give reasons.

5 The Meaning of ‘And’

Are the meanings of terms like ‘and’ are really given by truth tables, or by inference rules? As far as the truth functional connectives are concerned, this debate is academic: the soundness and completeness proofs for the propositional calculus (see section 8.3) show that the introduction and elimination rules for the truth functional connectives allow us to prove all and only the tautologies - exactly those sentences that the truth table method shows us must be true in virtue of the meanings of the truth functional connectives. But is our grasp of these terms fundamentally semantic, or fundamentally inferential? One way to test which theory is correct is to consider inference rules for connectives that are not truth-functional. One such case, due to the logician Arthur Prior, is called Tonk.

The introduction rule for Tonk is: $P \vdash (P \text{ TONK } Q)$

The elimination rule for Tonk is: $(P \text{ TONK } Q) \vdash Q$

Assignment

First, explain why the two-place sentential connective Because is not truth-functional. Then explain why Tonk is not truth-functional. Then say whether you think that Tonk is a meaningful connective. Does your argument imply that Because is not a meaningful connective? Do your conclusions help us decide between the Semantic and the Inferentialist conceptions of the meaning of truth-functional connectives? Explain.

6 The Logical Consequence Relation

A central theme of this class has been the interplay between different conceptions of the logical consequence relation.

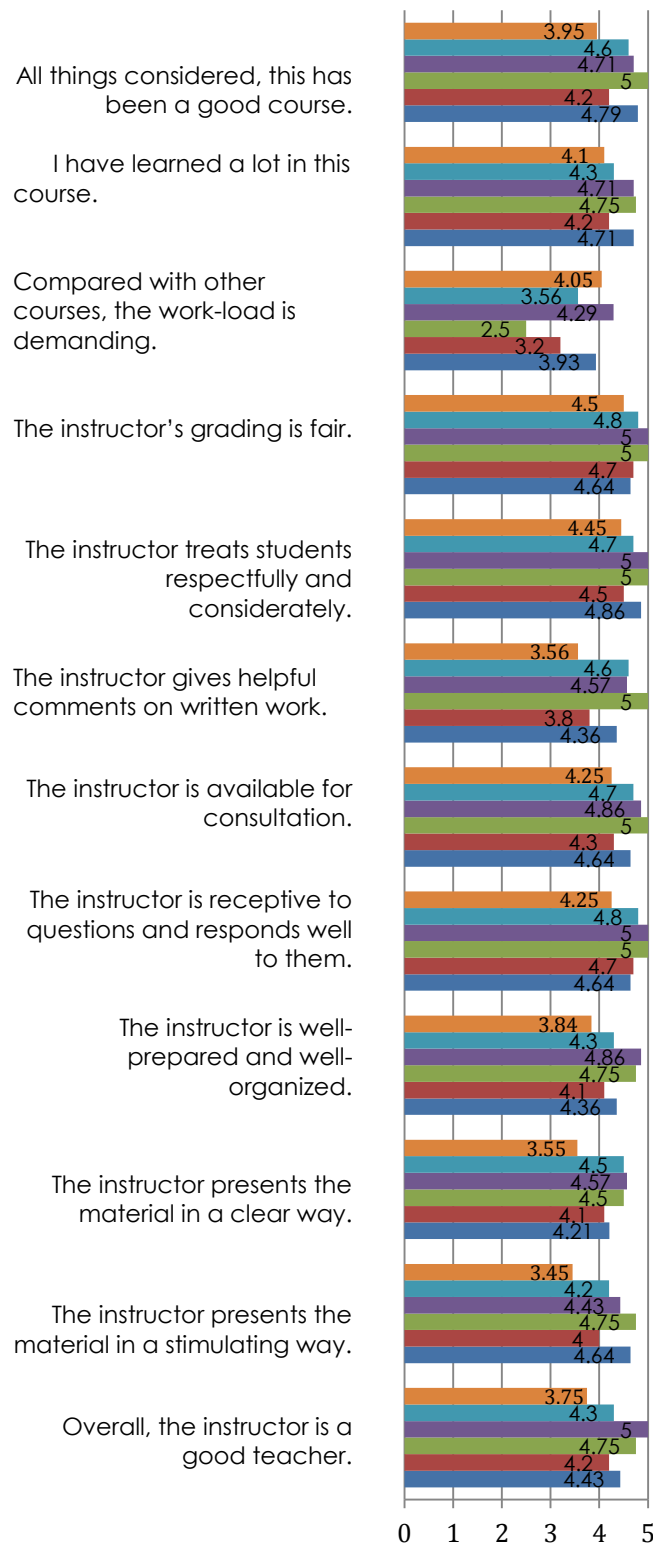
Assignment

First, define: the Tautological Consequence relation, the First Order Logical Consequence relation, and the Analytic Consequence relation. Be sure to make it clear that it can be impossible for sentence Q to be false if sentence P is true, even if Q is not an Analytic Consequence of P (think: physical laws). Explain why every Tautological Consequence relation is a First Order consequence relation, and why every First Order consequence relation is an Analytic consequence relation. Now consider the sentences ‘C is green all over’ and ‘C is not red anywhere’. Is the second sentence an analytic consequence of the first, or are the two just necessarily connected (e.g. as a matter of physical law)? Or is it a vague case, where the classification breaks down? If the latter, say why it is possible for the classification of Analytic Consequence to break down, even though the classifications of Tautological Consequence, and First Order Logic Consequence, are extremely precise.

GRAPH OF NYU STUDENT EVALUATION DATA

Below are the averages of the scores students gave me:

LIST OF COURSES AVERAGED:



0 = STRONGLY DISAGREE
5 = STRONGLY AGREE

The Course Evaluation Guide is compiled from anonymous CAS student surveys, searchable by Course ID, Instructor, or Subject.

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Instructor ▾

Simon, Jonathan A

Go

Central Problems In Philosophy

Simon, Jonathan A

Philosophy (Fall 2009)
V83.0010001

22 of 30 (73%) students responded

Course

	Average Result (5=Excellent, 1=Poor)
How would you rate this course overall?	4.36
How clear were the objectives of this course?	4.27
How well were these objectives achieved?	4.36
How interesting was the course?	4.45
To what extent were your own expectations met?	4.19
How heavy was the workload?	3.09
How much did you study for this course?	2.90
To what extent were you challenged intellectually by this course?	4.00
To what extent were you interested in the subject area before taking this course?	4.09
To what extent was your knowledge in this subject area increased?	4.22
<i>How would you rate this course overall?</i>	4.36

Instructor: Simon, Jonathan A

	Average Result (5=Excellent, 1=Poor)
How would you rate the instructor overall?	4.31
How informative were the classes?	4.31
How well organized were the classes?	3.95
How fair was the grading?	3.86
To what extent was the primary instructor effective in helping you learn in this course?	4.13

Recitation/Lab

	Average Result (5=Excellent, 1=Poor)
How useful was the discussion/recitation/lab in achieving the objective of this course?	0.00

Teaching Assistant/Lab Assistant

Average Result (5=Excellent, 1=Poor)	
How helpful was the teaching assistant?	0.00
How good was the communication between the instructor and the teaching assistant?	0.00

Recommendation

Average Result (5=Excellent, 1=Poor)	
Would you recommend this instructor to a friend?	21 Yes 1 No
Would you recommend this course to a friend?	20 Yes 1 No

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Instructor



Simon, Jonathan A

Go

Logic

Simon, Jonathan A

Philosophy (Fall 2010)
V83.0070004

38 of 39 (97%) students responded

Course

	Average Result (5=Excellent, 1=Poor)
How would you rate this course overall?	3.68
How clear were the objectives of this course?	4.07
How well were these objectives achieved?	3.89
How interesting was the course?	3.92
To what extent were your own expectations met?	3.60
How heavy was the workload?	3.73
How much did you study for this course?	3.63
To what extent were you challenged intellectually by this course?	4.23
To what extent were you interested in the subject area before taking this course?	3.57
To what extent was your knowledge in this subject area increased?	4.21
<i>How would you rate this course overall?</i>	3.68

Instructor: Simon, Jonathan A

	Average Result (5=Excellent, 1=Poor)
How would you rate the instructor overall?	3.92
How informative were the classes?	3.86
How well organized were the classes?	3.50
How fair was the grading?	4.23
To what extent was the primary instructor effective in helping you learn in this course?	3.73

Recitation/Lab

	Average Result (5=Excellent, 1=Poor)
How useful was the discussion/recitation/lab in achieving the objective of this course?	0.00

Teaching Assistant/Lab Assistant

Average Result (5=Excellent, 1=Poor)	
How helpful was the teaching assistant?	0.00
How good was the communication between the instructor and the teaching assistant?	0.00

Recommendation

Average Result (5=Excellent, 1=Poor)	
Would you recommend this instructor to a friend?	30 Yes 7 No
Would you recommend this course to a friend?	28 Yes 9 No

The Course Evaluation Guide is compiled from anonymous CAS student surveys, searchable by Course ID, Instructor, or Subject.

[Get Favorites](#)

Instructor



Simon, Jonathan A

Go

Metaphysics

Simon, Jonathan A

Philosophy (Spring 2010)
V83.0078001

26 of 31 (84%) students responded

Course

	Average Result (5=Excellent, 1=Poor)
How would you rate this course overall?	4.19
How clear were the objectives of this course?	4.23
How well were these objectives achieved?	4.00
How interesting was the course?	4.23
To what extent were your own expectations met?	3.84
How heavy was the workload?	3.11
How much did you study for this course?	3.26
To what extent were you challenged intellectually by this course?	4.07
To what extent were you interested in the subject area before taking this course?	4.15
To what extent was your knowledge in this subject area increased?	4.23
<i>How would you rate this course overall?</i>	<i>4.19</i>

Instructor: Simon, Jonathan A

	Average Result (5=Excellent, 1=Poor)
How would you rate the instructor overall?	4.23
How informative were the classes?	4.15
How well organized were the classes?	3.92
How fair was the grading?	4.30
To what extent was the primary instructor effective in helping you learn in this course?	4.03

Recitation/Lab

	Average Result (5=Excellent, 1=Poor)
How useful was the discussion/recitation/lab in achieving the objective of this course?	0.00

Teaching Assistant/Lab Assistant

Average Result (5=Excellent, 1=Poor)	
How helpful was the teaching assistant?	0.00
How good was the communication between the instructor and the teaching assistant?	0.00

Recommendation

Average Result (5=Excellent, 1=Poor)	
Would you recommend this instructor to a friend?	20 Yes 6 No
Would you recommend this course to a friend?	20 Yes 4 No

	Question Text	N	Top Two	Avg	A	B	C	D	F
1	Good understand	4	50%	4	50%	0%	50%	0%	0%
2	Fair grade	4	100%	4.8	75%	25%	0%	0%	0%
3	Organized	4	100%	4.5	50%	50%	0%	0%	0%
4	Available	4	100%	5	100%	0%	0%	0%	0%
5	Respect	4	100%	5	100%	0%	0%	0%	0%
6	Improv skills	4	75%	4.2	50%	25%	25%	0%	0%
7	Overall course	4	75%	4.2	50%	25%	25%	0%	0%
8	Overall inst	4	75%	4.5	75%	0%	25%	0%	0%
					12+	9-12	6-9	3-6	0-3
9	Lab hours	4	0%		0%	50%	0%	50%	0%

Text Responses

Question: What were the strongest aspects of this course or instructor?

Prof. Simon is an engaging lecturer who uses vivid thought experiments, research in cognitive science, and psychology to make his lectures more interesting. The mini-lectures given by the students were worthwhile.

Professor Simon is very knowledgeable about arguments surrounding the mind-body problem.

Smart guy. Really knows what he is talking about. Interested in what everyone has to say. Clearly interested in the material.

Question: What were the weakest aspects of this course or instructor?

This course would have benefitted from greater structure. Especially toward the beginning of the class, lectures seemed disorganized. However, this improved over the course of the semester and toward the end I was satisfied with the quality of lectures. I'd encourage Prof. Simon to have another graded event--maybe a short paper mid-way through the semester--so that students can get a sense of where they stand.

Sometimes students would get lost during more technical points in the lecture, especially those less familiar with the background literature on the subject matter.

Not a lot of opportunities for grades. The grade is pretty much based on one final paper which is a little bit difficult and nerve racking for an undergrad philosophy major having never taken a grad level class before.

Question: Please make any additional comments you wish, elaborating, for example, on any of the responses you made in the previous sections.

I think that as Prof. Simon gains further experience he will be a highly effective teacher. He has a lot of potential.

Great class! I would recommend it to any student interested in the mind-body problem.

There were: 11 possible respondents.

	Question Text	N	Top Two	Avg	A	B	C	D	F
1	Have you gained a good understanding of this subject matter	1	100%	4	0%	100%	0%	0%	0%
2	Is the instructor fair in grading you	1	100%	5	100%	0%	0%	0%	0%
3	Are the topics in the course organized in a coherent manner	1	100%	4	0%	100%	0%	0%	0%
4	Is the instructor available at office hours or by appointment for help or discussion	1	100%	5	100%	0%	0%	0%	0%
5	Does the instructor treat all students with respect	1	100%	5	100%	0%	0%	0%	0%
6	If applicable Has this course reinforced or assisted you in improving your writing and/or oral skills	1	100%	5	100%	0%	0%	0%	0%
7	Overall, how would you rate this course?	1	100%	4	0%	100%	0%	0%	0%
8	Overall, how would you rate this instructor	1	100%	5	100%	0%	0%	0%	0%
					12+	9-12	6-9	3-6	0-3
9	Select how many hours each week do you spend on this course, not including class time, or regularly scheduled laboratory or performance activity time	1	0%		0%	0%	100%	0%	0%

Text Responses	
Question: Strongest aspects of this course or instructor	
- approachable - took confusing concepts and made them relatable to real life - sense of humor - obvious knowledge and passion of/for the subject material	