

HIGHER-ORDER METAPHYSICS

Ted Sider, Spring 2020
Fridays 9:50–12:50

Description

This will be a graduate seminar on metaphysical issues connected with higher-order languages, including questions about the status of such languages, questions that can be formulated using such languages, and questions about how higher-order metaphysics connects with other metaphysical paradigms.

In a sense this will be an introductory course. Higher-order metaphysics is a rich and active area of research, but it has a high “price of entry”: many of the papers in the area are technically demanding, and presuppose familiarity with various issues in logic, philosophy of logic, and philosophy of mathematics. I will start at the very beginning, and introduce all the background necessary for understanding this literature. The background will be covered in enough detail so that students will really understand what is going on, but the course won’t get dauntingly technical—my goal is to make it accessible to any graduate student in philosophy.

Requirements

If taking for research credit: either two short (roughly 10–12 pages) papers, due 3/27 and 5/13, or one term paper (roughly 20 pages), due 5/13. If not taking for research credit: two short expository papers (roughly 6–8 pages), due 3/27 and 5/13.

Readings

Most readings will be available on the Sakai site for the course:

<https://sakai.rutgers.edu/x/i54Ks2>

(In addition to the course readings, I recommend Bennett and Gorovitz’s “Improving Academic Writing”.) In addition to the required reading, the schedule includes a lot of further reading (“background”, “further background”, “further reading”), which is all optional, to varying degrees.

Tentative schedule

This schedule will almost certainly change.

1/24–2/21 Formal preliminaries. Crash course ([website](#))

BACKGROUND: Sider (2010, Chapter 1, Chapter 2, sections 2.1–2.3); Gamut (1991, 4.1, 4.2, 4.4); Heim and Kratzer (1998, chapter 2); Fritz (2017)

FURTHER BACKGROUND: Enderton (1977, chapters 1, 2); Shapiro (1991, Part II); Stalnaker (1977)

2/28–3/13 Defenses of irreducibly higher-order quantification. Boolos (1984); Prior (1971); Rayo and Yablo (2001); Williamson (2003); Sider (2011, sections 9.12, 9.15)

BACKGROUND: Lewis (1991, section 3.2)

FURTHER BACKGROUND: Boolos (1975)

FURTHER READING: Boolos (1985); Hazen (1993); Moltmann (2016); Turner (2015)

3/27–4/3 Grain. Dorr (2016)

FURTHER READING: Wilhelm (2020a,b,c)

4/10 Ground. Fritz (2019)

FURTHER READING: Fritz (forthcoming)

4/17 Necessitism. Williamson (2013, sections 4.1, 5.1, 6.1–6.4)

BACKGROUND: Williamson (2013, Preface, chapter 1)

FURTHER BACKGROUND: Williamson (2013, chapter 5); Sider (2010, chapters 6, 9, excerpts—background on modal logic)

FURTHER READING: Goodman (2017a)

4/24 Fundamentality? Bacon (forthcoming); Goodman (2017b)

5/1 Defining necessity? Bacon (2018)

5/8 (tentative makeup) Opacity? Caie et al. (forthcoming); Bacon and Russell (forthcoming)

References

- Bacon, Andrew (2018). "The Broadest Necessity." *Journal of Philosophical Logic* 47(5): 733–783.
- (forthcoming). "Logical Combinatorialism." *Philosophical Review* .
- Bacon, Andrew and Jeffrey Sanford Russell (forthcoming). "The Logic of Opacity." *Philosophical and Phenomenological Research* .
- Bennett, Jonathan and Samuel Gorovitz (1997). "Improving Academic Writing." *Teaching Philosophy* 20: 105–20.
- Boolos, George (1975). "On Second-Order Logic." *Journal of Philosophy* 72: 509–27. Reprinted in [Boolos 1998](#): 37–53.
- (1984). "To Be Is to Be the Value of a Variable (or to Be Some Values of Some Variables)." *Journal of Philosophy* 81: 430–49. Reprinted in [Boolos 1998](#): 54–72.
- (1985). "Nominalist Platonism." *Philosophical Review* 94: 327–44. Reprinted in [Boolos 1998](#): 73–87.
- (1998). *Logic, Logic, and Logic*. Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press.
- Caie, Michael, Jeremy Goodman and Harvey Lederman (forthcoming). "Classical Opacity." *Philosophy and Phenomenological Research* .
- Dorr, Cian (2016). "To Be F is to Be G." *Philosophical Perspectives* 30(1): 39–134.
- Enderton, Herbert (1977). *Elements of Set Theory*. New York: Academic Press.
- Fritz, Peter (2017). "How Fine-Grained is Reality?" *Filosofisk Supplement* 13(2): 52–7.
- (2019). "Ground and Grain." Unpublished.
- (forthcoming). "Structure by Proxy, with an Application to Grounding." *Synthese* 1–19.
- Gamut, L. T. F. (1991). *Logic, Language, and Meaning, Volume 2: Intensional Logic and Logical Grammar*. Chicago, IL: University of Chicago Press.

- Goodman, Jeremy (2017a). “An Argument For Necessitism.” *Philosophical Perspectives* 30(1): 160–182.
- (2017b). “Reality is Not Structured.” *Analysis* 77(1): 43–53.
- Hazen, Allen (1993). “Against Pluralism.” *Australasian Journal of Philosophy* 71: 112–44.
- Heim, Irene and Angelika Kratzer (1998). *Semantics in Generative Grammar*. Malden, MA: Blackwell.
- Lewis, David (1991). *Parts of Classes*. Oxford: Blackwell.
- Moltmann, Friederike (2016). “Plural Reference and Reference to a Plurality. Linguistic Facts and Semantic Analyses.” In Massimiliano Carrara, Alexandra Arapinis and Friederike Moltmann (eds.), *Unity and Plurality. Logic, Philosophy, and Semantics*, 93–120. Oxford: Oxford University Press.
- Prior, A. N. (1971). “Platonism and Quantification.” In *Objects of Thought*, 31–47. Oxford: Oxford University Press.
- Rayo, Agustín and Stephen Yablo (2001). “Nominalism through De-Nominalization.” *Noûs* 35: 74–92.
- Shapiro, Stewart (1991). *Foundations without Foundationalism: A Case for Second-Order Logic*. Oxford: Clarendon Press.
- Sider, Theodore (2010). *Logic for Philosophy*. Oxford: Oxford University Press.
- (2011). *Writing the Book of the World*. Oxford: Clarendon Press.
- Stalnaker, Robert (1977). “Complex Predicates.” *The Monist* 60: 327–39.
- Turner, Jason (2015). “What’s So Bad About Second-Order Logic?” In *Quantifiers, Quantifiers, and Quantifiers. Themes in Logic, Metaphysics, and Language*, 463–87. Springer.
- Wilhelm, Isaac (2020a). “Fine-Grained Propositions and the Russell-Myhill Argument.” Manuscript.
- (2020b). “Grounding, Propositional Identity, and Naturalness.” Manuscript.

— (2020c). “Identity by Grounding.” Manuscript.

Williamson, Timothy (2003). “Everything.” *Philosophical Perspectives* 17: 415–65.

— (2013). *Modal Logic as Metaphysics*. Oxford: Oxford University Press.