

# SEMINAR: MODALITY

Karen Bennett, Ted Sider, Spring 2014  
Goldwin Smith 158, Tuesdays 2:40–4:35

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## Description

We will discuss several recent articles and books on modality.

## Requirements

Either i) two short (10–15 page) papers, due 3/25 and 5/16, or ii) one term paper (20–30 pages), draft due 4/15, final version due 5/16. Please clear paper topics with us. We'll suggest some topics in class.

## Bibliography

Some readings on modality are listed here: [http://tedsider.org/teaching/modality\\_14/modality\\_bibliography.pdf](http://tedsider.org/teaching/modality_14/modality_bibliography.pdf).

## Tentative schedule and readings

1/28 Intro to necessity, possible worlds, modal logic. Ayer (1936, chapter 4); Kripke (1972, Lectures 1 and 2); Plantinga (1974, chapter 1); Sider (2010, 133–43). Optional background reading: Melia (2003, chapters 1, 2); Quine (1953*a,b*)

*Could there have been something that doesn't actually exist?*

2/4 Contingent existence and variable domains. Some subset of: McMichael (1983); Bennett (2005, 2006); Hayaki (2003). Optional further reading: Adams (1981); Fitch (1996); Speaks (2012)

2/11 Contingentism 1. Stalnaker (2012, chapters 1 and 2)

2/25 Contingentism 2. Stalnaker (2012, chapters 3 and 4)

3/4 Necessitism 1. Williamson (2013, xxx). Optional further reading: Linsky and Zalta (1994, 1996); Hayaki (2006); Einheuser (2012); Sullivan (2014)

3/11 Necessitism 2. Williamson (2013, xxx).

3/18 catch-up

3/25 catch-up

### *Miscellaneous*

4/8 Counterfactual approaches. Kment (2006); Williamson (2007, chapter 5)

4/15 Fine. Fine (2005)

4/22 Lightweight reductions. Sider (2011, chapter 12); Thomasson (2007, 2014, intro and chapter 2). Optional further reading: Brandom (2008, chapter 4); Sider (2003); Thomasson (2014, chapter 1) (historical); Thomasson (2013)

4/29 Dorr on counterparts. Dorr (2014)

5/6 Modality and time. Dorr and Goodman (2014)

## References

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