

Properties Seminar
Fall 2025
Wednesdays, 3:45-6:30

Heller



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Expectations:

We will carefully read each assignment before class.

Each student should try to write down what the author's main argument is.

Each student will come prepared with three or more "pointed questions" – questions or comments that will get us thinking more deeply about the material.

- Challenges
- Proposed helpful recommendations
- Proposed applications
- Emphasizing the significance of a point the author makes
- Explaining how some point fits in (or doesn't) with other things we've read
- Just plain "I'm confused about this"
- etc

There will be a term paper.

Due date: last day of finals: December 16th.

(I am flexible on due dates if you need a little more time, but you must discuss it with me in advance.)

Reading schedule: See reverse side

Reading schedule:

You must acquire the Armstrong book on your own.
All other readings will be distributed as PDFs.

Day	Date	Reading
1	Aug 27	-- Quine, 1948, "On What There Is." -- Lewis & Lewis, 1970, "Holes."
2	Sep 3	Armstrong, 1978, <i>Nominalism and Realism, Volume 1</i> , Intro and chapters 1, 2, 3, 4
3	Sep 10	Armstrong, 1978, <i>Nominalism and Realism, Volume 1</i> , Chapters 6, 7, 10, 11
4	Sep 17	-- Devitt, 1980, " 'Ostrich Nominalism' or 'Mirage Realism'?" -- Armstrong, 1980, "Against Ostrich Nominalism: A Reply to Michael Devitt." -- Devitt, 1999, Postscript to " 'Ostrich Nominalism' or 'Mirage Realism'?"
5	Sep 24	Lewis, 1983, "New Work for a Theory of Universals." Skip the last section on linguistic and mental content.
6	Oct 1	-- Armstrong, 1978, Chapter 5, "Resemblance Nominalism." -- Rodriguez-Pereyra, 2024, "Class Nominalism and Resemblance Nominalism.
7	Oct 8	-- Armstrong, 1978, Chapter 8, "Properties and Relations as Particulars." -- Maurin, 2016, "Tropes: For and Against."
8	Oct 15	-- Lewis, 1986, "Against Structural Universals." -- Schaffer, 2004, "Two Conceptions of Sparse Properties."
9	Oct 22	-- Parsons, 1999, "There is No 'Truthmaker' Argument against Nominalism." -- Melia, 2005, "Truthmaking without Truthmakers."
10	Oct 29	-- Schulte, 2018, "Grounding Nominalism."
11	Nov 5	-- Imaguire, 2024, "Priority and Grounding Nominalism." -- Devitt, 2024, "Ostrich Nominalism."
12	Nov 12	-- van Cleve, 1994, "Predication Without Universals? A Fling with Ostrich Nominalism." -- Jones, 2018, "Nominalist Realism."
13	Nov 19	-- Frugé, 2025, "Against Instantiation."
		Nov 26: Thanksgiving: no class
14	Dec 3	-- Liggins, David, 2021, "Should a Higher-Order Metaphysician Believe in Properties?"

