

PHI687 LEMM Proseminar

Instructor: Kevan Edwards (kedwar02@syr.edu)

Class meetings: Tuesday/Thursday 12:30PM - 1:50PM, HL 011

Office hours: I am planning to be in my office Wednesday from 11am to noon, but I can be available other times and it is a good idea to contact me in advance anyway.

Shared folder (including a rolling schedule):

<https://drive.google.com/drive/folders/1F1wjTuulvzLpjntPefeMJ-LvF2YcMve?usp=sharing>

Basic course description

The plan is to work through various papers and two books in the broad area of LEMM (Language, Epistemology, Metaphysics and Mind). Kripke's *Naming and Necessity* is widely considered to be among the most important and influential texts published in the past century in this area. Millikan's *Beyond Concepts* doesn't have the same historical weight or stand-alone status, but it is a recent contribution to a unified, ambitious, and very influential body of work that Millikan has been producing since the

mid-1980's. There will be some clear recurring themes and points of contact between the two books, but also enough differences—and novelty in Millikan's approach—to make things interesting. There will be a focus on class presentations, writing, peer review, and the process of revising written work.

Required texts

Naming and Necessity, by Saul Kripke

Beyond Concepts, by Ruth Garrett Millikan

Other readings will be made available as PDF files (likely in a shared google drive folder)

Course goals

- Cover some seminal work in the broad subject area, as well as some related, more recent work.
- Practice writing and revising written work.
- Practice presenting material.
- Practice effective peer review (similar to refereeing).
- Learn about some seminal work in the broad subject area, and some related more recent work.

Course requirements

Participation. Much of this class will be run a bit like a structured reading group. You should be prepared to offer a brief summary of anything that we have read as a class and often you will be asked to come with some response to the reading (questions, comments, objections, etc.)

Class presentations. You will be encouraged—and likely required—to lead class discussions and/or present ideas in class. There are various forms this could take; the following possibilities are not intended to be exhaustive:

- You may be asked to spend some time researching and presenting basic information about a topic or issue that will be helpful for the class to know something about.

- If you find yourself really puzzling over a passage and coming up with a tentative interpretation or counter-argument (or something along these lines), you might use a class presentation as an excuse to spend some time sorting things out. This could involve presenting an argument or issue from the text and offering some commentary/evaluation, followed by fielding questions.
- Doing a class presentation is a good way to get a potential paper project underway. One warning: don't treat this as an excuse to get preliminary feedback on inchoate ideas. You should be able to both motivate and explain the project with some care, and you should have a thesis worked out that you can take a stab at defending. This will help to focus the discussion and to give members of the class a target—either something to help you shore up or something that ends up getting picked apart.

Papers. You need to write at least 2 papers (this is subject to change). The length of papers should be modeled after APA colloquium papers. Papers should be tightly focussed. If you end up with a view about some of the material we cover, you might find yourself in a position to write a typical, thesis-driven paper. If you feel like you lack sufficient background or breadth of knowledge to do this, there are other options. One possibility is to explore issues in the secondary literature until you find something interesting that you have something to say about. Another possibility is to target a specific interpretative question or argument in an assigned reading. If you end up with a project that is largely exegetical, you should set the bar quite high as far as how much work you put into interpreting and laying bear the relevant issues—and hopefully you end up having something interesting and insightful to say about them. If your first paper ends up being exegetical, try to find a more argumentative topic for your second. Feel free to run ideas past me. It is a good idea to start keeping your eyes out for potential paper topics right from the start of the semester.

Peer review / referee reports. At least one of your two short papers (maybe both) will undergo peer review. You will need to submit two copies of the paper to the instructor, one of which needs to be stripped of any identifying information. You will write a brief “referee report” on one of your peers’ papers. The process will be double-blind. The report should include a short summary of the paper, followed by constructive comments. The report should be accurate, clearly written, and it should have an appropriate tone. The instructor will act as an editor and (quickly!) glance over the report before passing it on to the author.

Final paper. One of your papers should be revised and resubmitted at the end of the semester. The final version can be longer than the earlier version, since you will have feedback to take into consideration.

The revised paper should be a substantial improvement over the original (unless the original was already very good). You can also choose to write a new paper.

Calculating grades. I do not follow an algorithm when I assign final grades in graduate classes. I do take time to write explanations of the grades that I assign and I take steps to justify any grade that I think a student may not be satisfied with. My goal is that no one is surprised by their final grade. If you have concerns about this, please feel free to speak to me.

Academic integrity

I take the university's academic honesty policy very seriously. It is your responsibility to read and understand the University's policies governing academic integrity. Clear violations of the university's academic integrity policy will result in a failing grade in the course and the Philosophy Department is likely to pursue a stronger sanction, namely expulsion from the program.

Syracuse University's Academic Integrity Policy reflects the high value that we, as a university community, place on honesty in academic work. The policy holds students accountable for the integrity of all work they submit and for upholding course-specific, as well as university-wide, academic integrity expectations. The policy governs citation and use of sources, the integrity of work submitted in exams and assignments, and truthfulness in all academic matters, including course attendance and participation. The policy also prohibits students from: 1) submitting the same work in more than one class without receiving advance written authorization from both instructors and, 2) using websites that charge fees or require uploading of course materials to obtain exam solutions or assignments completed by others and present the work as their own. Under the policy, instructors who seek to penalize a student for a suspected violation must first report the violation to the Center for Learning and Student Success (CLASS). Students may not drop or withdraw from courses in which they face a suspected violation. Instructors must wait to assign a final course grade until a suspected violation is reviewed and upheld or overturned. Upholding Academic Integrity includes abiding by instructors' individual course expectations, which may include the protection of their intellectual property. Students should not upload, distribute, or otherwise share instructors' course materials without permission. Students found in violation of the policy are subject to grade sanctions determined by the course instructor and non-grade sanctions determined by the School or College where the course is offered, as described in the Violation and Sanction Classification Rubric. Students are required to read an online summary of the University's academic integrity expectations and provide an electronic signature agreeing to abide by them twice a year during pre-term check-in on MySlice.

The University's academic integrity policy can be found here:
<http://class.syr.edu/academic-integrity/policy/>.

Special needs

If you have any medical or disability-related information to share, please speak to me as soon as possible.

If you believe that you need academic adjustments (accommodations) for a disability, please contact the Office of Disability Services (ODS), visit the ODS website– <http://disabilityservices.syr.edu>, located in Room 309 of 804 University Avenue, or call (315) 443-4498 or TDD: (315) 443-1371 for an appointment to discuss your needs and the process for requesting academic adjustments. ODS is responsible for coordinating disability-related academic adjustments and will issue students with documented Disabilities Accommodation Authorization Letters, as appropriate. Since academic adjustments may require early planning and generally are not provided retroactively, please contact ODS as soon as possible.