

# **PHIL5340—SEMINAR IN METAPHYSICS: SUPERVENIENCE**

TR 3:30-4:50, Eng/Phil 264

## **Instructor**

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Office hours: Mondays 2:00-3:30; Tuesdays 12:00-1:30

## **Course Description**

This seminar will focus on problems with the metaphysical relationship of supervenience, something that has worked its way into just about every area of philosophy, including philosophy of mind, philosophy of science, ethics, aesthetics, and philosophy of language. Throughout this course, we will ask some central metaphysical questions about the nature of supervenience: What is its relationship with modality? What is its relationship with reduction? *Why* do some properties supervene on some other properties? Are there different *kinds* of supervenience? Finally, we will investigate how supervenience infiltrates some of philosophy's core areas.

## **Core Text**

There is no textbook for this course. All readings will be made available to students either as photocopies or electronically as PDFs.

## **Course Requirements**

Your final grade will depend on the percentage you earn of the total points possible in the class: A+: 97-100; A: 94-96; A-: 90-93; B+: 87-89; B: 84-86; B-: 80-83; C+: 77-79; C: 74-76; C-: 70-73; D+: 67-69; D: 64-66; D-: 60-63.

## ***Papers***

You will have to write two 8-to-10-page papers and one 15-to-20-page paper during the course of the term.

### *Short Papers*

Each of the short papers should focus on one or more of the papers covered during the course of the semester up to March 31. (Each of the short papers is worth 20% of your final grade.)

### *Long Paper*

The long paper may be an expanded version of one of your short papers, or may be on a different topic. Long papers are due on the final class of the semester. (The long paper is worth 50% of your final grade.)

## ***Participation***

The final 10% of your grade is your participation grade. Participation includes doing the assigned readings *before* the class in which the reading shall be discussed, taking active part in class discussion, and putting serious effort into your papers. Participation also includes attendance. For every class you miss without authorized excuse, your participation grade will be deducted 1 point (that is, 1% of your final grade, up to the 10% encompassed by the participation grade). See also "Classroom Courtesy" below.

## **Special Accommodations**

- Any student who, because of a disability, may require special arrangements in order to meet the course requirements should contact the instructor as soon as possible to make any necessary arrangements. Students should present appropriate verification from Student Disability Services during the instructor's office hours. Please note instructors are not allowed to provide classroom accommodations to a student until appropriate verification from Student Disability Services has been

provided. For additional information, you may contact the Student Disability Services office in 335 West Hall or 806-742-2405.

- You will not be penalized for any absences due to religious observances. However, it is your responsibility to inform me in advance of any intended absences for religious observance *as soon as possible* so that we can make other arrangements. As well, it remains your responsibility to have read the material assigned for that day and to obtain any notes from one of your classmates for classes missed.

### **Classroom Courtesy**

Please be courteous to your fellow students and avoid unnecessary disruptions. Arrive on time, leave on time, and *turn off your cell phone during class*. Note that if your cell phone rings during class, *I will answer it*. Laptops are permitted in class, but please do not abuse this privilege. Text-messaging is *not* permitted during my class. If I see you text-messaging during class-time, your participation grade will be deducted 1 point. This is your only warning.

### **Academic Integrity and Irresponsibility**

I take incidents of academic misconduct *very seriously*. These include but are not restricted to cheating, plagiarism, collusion, and fabrication. Penalties are dependent on the nature of the misconduct, and may involve disciplinary proceedings with the Student Judicial Programs. Knowing what constitutes academic misconduct is *your responsibility*. If you have a concern about what constitutes academic dishonesty *prior to turning in an assignment*, please see me, and I will be happy to help you. For more information, see <http://www.depts.ttu.edu/studentjudicialprograms/academicinteg.php>.

### **Course Schedule (Subject to Change)**

| <b>Date</b> | <b>Topic</b>                             | <b>Readings</b>  |
|-------------|--|--|
| Thu Jan 13  | Introduction                             | <i>No readings</i>   |
| Tue Jan 18  | Supervenience, Entailment, and Reduction | Simon Blackburn, "Moral Realism" (1973)  |
| Thu Jan 20  |  | R.M. Hare, "Supervenience" (1984)  |
| Tue Jan 25  |  | Jaegwon Kim, "Concepts of Supervenience" (1984)  |
| Thu Jan 27  |  | Simon Blackburn, "Supervenience Revisited" (1985)  |
| Tue Feb 1   |  | Bradford Petrie, "Global Supervenience and Reduction" (1987)                                       |
| Thu Feb 3   |  | Jaegwon Kim, "'Strong' and 'Global' Supervenience Revisited" (1987)                                |
| Tue Feb 8   |  | C.P. Paull and T.R. Sider, "In Defense of Global Supervenience" (1992)                             |
| Thu Feb 10  |  | Jaegwon Kim, "Postscripts on Supervenience"  |
| Tue Feb 15  |  | J. Van Cleve, "Supervenience and Closure" (1990); J. Bacon, "Van Cleve Versus Closure" (1990)      |
| Thu Feb 17  |  | B.P. McLaughlin, "Varieties of Supervenience" (1995)   |
| Tue Feb 22  |  | Robert Stalnaker, "Varieties of Supervenience" (1996)  |
| Thu Feb 24  |  | B.P. McLaughlin, "Supervenience, Vagueness, and Determination" (1997)                              |
| Tue Mar 1   |  | O. Shagrir, "Global Supervenience, Coincident Entities and Anti-individualism" (2002)              |
| Thu Mar 3   |  | D. Baxter, "Many-One Identity" (1988)  |
| Tue Mar 8   |  | Stephen Yablo, "Identity, Essence, and Indiscernibility" (1987)                                    |
| Thu Mar 10  |  | K. Bennett, "Why the Exclusion Problem Seems Intractable, and How, Just Maybe, to Tract It" (2003) |

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| Mar 12-20  | <i>Spring Break</i>                |  |
| Tue Mar 22 | Supervenience & Superdupervenience | Terry Horgan, "From Supervenience to Superdupervenience: Meeting the Demands of a Material World" (1993) |
| Thu Mar 24 |                                    | Jessica Wilson, "How Superduper Does a Physicalist Supervenience Need To Be?" (1999)                     |
| Tue Mar 29 |                                    | Michael P. Lynch and Joshua M. Glasgow, "The Impossibility of Superdupervenience" (2003)                 |
| Thu Mar 31 |                                    | Jessica Wilson, "Causal Powers, Forces, and Superdupervenience" (1999)                                   |
| Tue Apr 5  | Supervenience, Mind, and Zombies   | Chalmers, <i>The Conscious Mind</i> , Ch. 1: "Two Concepts of Mind"                                      |
| Thu Apr 7  |                                    | Chalmers, <i>The Conscious Mind</i> , Ch. 2: "Supervenience and Explanation"                             |
| Tue Apr 12 |                                    | Chalmers, <i>The Conscious Mind</i> , Ch. 3: "Can Consciousness Be Reductively Explained?"               |
| Thu Apr 14 |                                    | Stephen Yablo, "Concepts and Consciousness" (1999)   |
| Tue Apr 19 | Supervenience & Aesthetics         | Frank Sibley, "Aesthetic Concepts"(1959)   |
| Thu Apr 21 |                                    | Frank Sibley, "Particularity, Art and Evaluation" (1974)   |
| Tue Apr 26 |                                    | Kendall Walton, "Categories of Art" (1970)   |
| Thu Apr 28 |                                    | Jerrold Levinson, "Aesthetic Supervenience" (1984)   |
| Tue May 3  |                                    | Gregory Currie, "Supervenience, Essentialism and Aesthetic Properties" (1990)                            |