Metaphysics
Philosophy 4400
Fall 2017

Instructor: Gordon Steinhoff
Room: Geology 30B
Time: 3:00 - 4:15 Tues, Thurs.

Objectives: In this course we will study the following topics in metaphysics: mind and body, determinism and freedom, fatalism, realism and antirealism, universals, truth, and our knowledge of the external world. We will study the writings of some well-known philosophers, including Richard Taylor, Bertrand Russell, Hilary Putnam, Nelson Goodman, and Paul Feyerabend. We will practice writing medium-length philosophical essays.

Course Requirements: I will ask each of you to write four essays of 5 to 6 pages each. The essay assignments will cover topics from our readings and from class discussion. These essays will be graded strictly. Plan on putting a fair amount of effort into writing each one. Good class notes and reading notes will be essential. In addition, there will be a one-page "reaction paper" assigned once or twice each week on the readings. These reaction papers will be graded on a 10-point scale and will count for one-fifth of your final grade. There will be no in-class exams. All essays and reaction papers are due on the dates assigned. The final essay will be due Dec. 14.

Assigned readings will include the books listed below and will also include photocopied articles which are available on electronic reserve for this course (our canvas site).

Books: Richard Taylor, Metaphysics, fourth edition
Keith Campbell, Body and Mind
Bertrand Russell, The Problems of Philosophy

Tentative Schedule:

Weeks 1 through 4 Mind and Body (Campbell's and Taylor's books, and an article by Churchland)
Weeks 5 through 8 Determinism and Freedom (Taylor's book and articles by Schlick, Stace, and C.A. Campbell)
Weeks 9 through 12 Realism and Truth (Russell's book and an article by Devitt)
Weeks 13 through 15 Responses to Realism (articles by Luce, Putnam, Goodman, and Feyerabend)

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