

Fall 2006 • T 11:00am–12:50pm • 716 Philosophy Hall
 Office Hours W 11:00am–12:50pm • 702 Philosophy Hall • tel. 4-3531 • email: av72 • url: ~av72
 Course website: <http://www.columbia.edu/~av72/Vagueness>

General Outline. This seminar aims to give a comprehensive examination of the main issues raised by the phenomenon of vagueness in the philosophy of language, logic, and metaphysics. Topics include: semantic vagueness; vagueness in the world; vagueness and perception; the logic of vagueness; higher-order vagueness. These topics will be addressed *via* a critical discussion of the main accounts put forward in the literature, including: epistemicism; supervaluationism; degree theories and fuzzy logic; context-based theories.

Organization and Requirements. A solid background in logic and philosophy of language will be presupposed. The course will be run as a seminar and students are expected to participate actively. Requirements for E-credit: short class presentation (15 min) and final paper (approximately 5,000 words). The final paper will account for 70% of the grade. Requirements for R-credit: regular (active) attendance and short class presentation (15 min).

Readings. Most of the required readings are collected in *Vagueness: A Reader*, edited by Rosanna Keefe and Peter Smith (MIT Press, 1997). Timothy Williamson's *Vagueness* (Routledge, 1994) is also strongly recommended. Copies of these books have been ordered at Labyrinth Books (536 West 112th Street, phone 212-865-1588). Both are also available in electronic form on CLIO. Other readings will be posted as .pdf files on the course website.

Tentative Schedule and Readings (K&S = Keefe and Smith; W = Williamson; P = pdf)

1. Jan 16 INTRODUCTION AND OVERVIEW
 - Diogenes Laertius, Galen, and Cicero: on sorites paradoxes K&S
 - Williamson: Chapter 1, 'The Early History of Sorites Paradoxes' (1994) W
2. Jan 23 THE PHILOSOPHICAL SIGNIFICANCE OF VAGUENESS
 - Russell: 'Vagueness' (1923) K&S
 - Black: 'Vagueness: An Exercise in Logical Analysis' (1937) K&S
 - Wright: 'On the Coherence of Vague Predicates' (1975) P
 - Unger: 'There Are No Ordinary Things' (1979) P
3. Jan 30 FUZZY LOGIC AND DEGREE THEORIES
 - Machina: 'Truth, Belief, and Vagueness' (1976) K&S
 - Williamson: Chapter 4, 'Many-Valued Logic and Degrees of Truth' (1994) W
 - Edgington: 'Vagueness by Degrees' (1996) K&S
 - Gaifman: 'Contextual Logic' (1997) P
4. Feb 6 THE EPISTEMIC VIEW
 - Cargile: 'The Sorites Paradox' (1969) K&S
 - Sorensen: 'Vagueness, Blurriness, and Measurement' (1988) P
 - Williamson: Chapter 7, 'Vagueness and Ignorance', and Chapter 8, 'Inexact Knowledge' W

5. Feb 13 CONTEXT-BASED THEORIES
- Burns: ‘Vagueness and Coherence’ (1986) P
 - Raffman: ‘Vagueness without Paradox’ (1994) P
 - Varzi: ‘Vagueness, Indiscernibility, and Pragmatics’ (1995) P
 - Shapiro: ‘Vagueness and Conversation’ (2003) P
6. Feb 20 SUPERVALUATIONISM (I)
- Mehlberg: ‘Truth and Vagueness’ (1958) K&S
 - Fine: ‘Vagueness, Truth and Logic’ (1975) K&S
 - Kamp: ‘The Paradox of the Heap’ (1981) P
7. Feb 27 SUPERVALUATIONISM (II)
- Sanford: ‘Competing Semantics of Vagueness: Many Values Versus Super-Truth’ (1976) P
 - Tye: ‘Supervaluationism and the Law of Excluded Middle’ (1989) P
 - Williamson: Chapter 5, ‘Supervaluations’ (1994) W
8. Mar 6 SUPERVALUATIONISM (III)
- Keefe: ‘Supervaluationism’ and ‘Truth Is Super-Truth’ (2000) P
 - Graff: ‘Gap Principles, Penumbral Consequence, and Higher-Order Vagueness’ (2003) K&S
 - Varzi: ‘Supervaluationism and Its Logics’ (2007) K&S
9. Mar 13 *Spring Break*
10. Mar 20 HIGHER-ORDER VAGUENESS
- Sorensen: ‘An Argument for the Vagueness of “Vague”’ (1985) P
 - Sainsbury: ‘Is There Higher-Order Vagueness?’ (1991) P
 - Hyde: ‘Why Higher-Order Vagueness is a Pseudo-Problem’ (1994) P
 - Tye: ‘Why the Vague Need *Not* be Higher-Order Vague’ (1994) P
 - Varzi: ‘Higher-Order Vagueness and the Vagueness of “Vague”’ (2003) P
11. Mar 27 ONTIC VAGUENESS (I)
- Evans: ‘Can There Be Vague Objects?’ (1978) K&S
 - Thomason, ‘Identity and Vagueness’ (1982) P
 - Lewis: ‘Vague Identity: Evans Misunderstood’ (1988) K&S
 - Tye: ‘Vague Objects’ (1990) P
 - Parsons and Woodruff: ‘Wordly Interminacy of Identity’ (1995) K&S
12. Apr 3 ONTIC VAGUENESS (II)
- Morreau, ‘What Vague Objects Are Like’ (2002)
 - Priest: ‘A Site for Sorites’ (2003) P
 - Varzi: ‘Cut-Offs and Their Neighbors’ (2003) P
13. Apr 10 VAGUENESS AND METAPHYSICS (I)
- Van Inwagen: ‘The Vagueness of Identity’ and ‘The Vagueness of Existence’ (1990) P
 - Hawley: ‘Vagueness’ (2001) P
 - Sider: ‘The Argument from Vagueness’ (2001) P
14. Apr 17 VAGUENESS AND METAPHYSICS (II)
- Lowe: ‘Vagueness and Endurance’ (2005) P
 - Varzi: ‘Promiscuous Endurantism and Diachronic Vagueness’ (2007) P
15. Apr 24 OPEN ISSUES AND CONCLUDING REMARKS