**Modal Objectivity**
PHIL G9515  
Spring 2015  
Tuesday 12:10-2

*Description:* This is a course on meta-modality – the epistemology, metaphysics, and semantics of modal discourse. We will cover some familiar topics, including the relationship between conceivability and possibility, the prospects for reduction, and possible worlds semantics. However, we will also spend time in less charted waters – on the absoluteness, determinacy, and “metaphysical distinction” of metaphysical necessity and related notions. Attention will be paid to interactions between problems in meta-modality, and problems in the philosophies of logic and mathematics.

*Requirements:* Regular attendance, class participation, and a term paper (∼ 20 pages), due **May 4**.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Week</th>
<th>Topic</th>
<th>Literature</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>
| 1/20 | Background and Overview | **R:** Kripke [1980] Lecture III, Melia [2003] Ch. I, Quine [1952], Soames [2005], Sec. VII  
**O:** Ballarin [2010], Carnap [1947], Garson [2014], Lewis [1914], Knuuttila [2013], Kment [2012] |

Introduction to Modal Metaphysics

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Week</th>
<th>Topic</th>
<th>Literature</th>
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</table>
| 1/27 | Cognitivism | **R:** Blackburn [1986]  
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Date</th>
<th>Topic</th>
<th>Reading</th>
<th>Other</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>2/17</td>
<td>Ontology I: Reduction</td>
<td>Lewis [1986], Ch. I</td>
<td>Benacerraf [1965], Field [1989] selections, Melia, Ch. V, Menzel [2014], Sec. 2.1</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Epistemology**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Date</th>
<th>Topic</th>
<th>Reading</th>
<th>Other</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>3/31</td>
<td>Abduction</td>
<td>Williamson [2013], Methodological Afterward, Sturgeon [2010], selections</td>
<td>Godel [1947], Russell [1907]</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
### Objectivity

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Date</th>
<th>Topic</th>
<th>References</th>
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</table>
| 4/14 | Determinacy | R: Rosen [2002]  
O: Clarke-Doane [2013], Field [1998a], Hintikka [1970], Rosen [2006], Sauchelli [2008] |
| 4/21 | Absoluteness| R: Clarke-Doane [2015], Hale [1996], Nolan [2011a], Rumfitt [2015], Ch. III & IV  
| 4/28 | Metaphysical Distinction | R: Clarke-Doane [2015], Nolan [2011a], Sider [2011], Ch. 12  


Price, Huw. [2008] “Brandom and Hume on the genealogy of modals,” Philosophical Topics. Vol. 36. 87—97