PHIL 4010: Senior Seminar

Naming & Taxonomic Necessity

Course #7276  Instructor: Matt Haber
Fall 2011  email: mhaber[at]philosophy.utah.edu
2:00-5:00 Tuesday  Office: CTIHB 455
CTIHB 459  Office Hours: 9:00-11:00 Monday (or by appointment)
http://www.hum.utah.edu/~mhaber/PHIL4010.html

Course Description

The course is designed as a capstone to the philosophy training you’ve received in our program, and will (1) examine a deeply influential 20th century philosophical work and reaction to it; and (2) apply that to particular cases in the biological sciences. The goal is to provide students with focused exposure to a modern classic, and provide a glimpse of the kind of research being done in this department.

Course Layout

We will start the semester off by reading Saul Kripke’s Naming & Necessity. This is arguably the most influential and important philosophical text written in the 20th century. There are certainly competitors, but Naming & Necessity has, for better or worse, had a huge impact both on how philosophy is done and what problems are front and center in contemporary philosophy.

One of Kripke’s students, Michael Jubien, is both a critic and proponent of Kripke’s views. We will read parts of his Possibility with an eye on how the metaphysics of objects and modality inform us of how proper names refer. Jubien is an exceptionally clear thinker and writer, and will help clarify and challenge Kripke’s views. It will be good for us to consider competing positions.

The second half of the course will focus more closely on the ontology of biological species, and how proper names are assigned to species. That is, we will take the positions laid out in the first half of the class, and test them against biological practice. As you’ll see, the questions being addressed by Jubien and Kripke are very much the same concerns raised by taxonomists (at least I hope you’ll see this!). We will consider these questions as a way of testing the various views against each other, and demonstrating philosophy of biology.

Finally, we will work on professionalization. All students will give a professional-style presentation, followed by a question & answer period. The topic of presentation will be your term paper.
Texts

There are two textbooks for this course, along with several posted readings.

• Saul Kripke (1980)[1972] Naming & Necessity
• Michael Jubien (2009) Possibility

Other readings include:
• David Hull’s (1978) “A Matter of Individuality.”
• Michael Ghiselin’s (1974) “A Radical Solution to the Species Problem.”

Course Requirements and Grading

Your grade will be determined by a combination of participation, class presentation and term paper. All written work must be submitted electronically through turnitin.com (see below).

Class Participation 10%

This class is going to be run similar to a graduate level seminar. Expectations are that all students will have completed the assigned reading, will be prepared for class discussion, and arrive promptly. There will typically not be lectures in this class; we are going to figure things out by discussing the material. Come to class with questions and comments ready to go. I may single you out to hear what you have to say! If I detect that students are coming to class unprepared, I reserve the right to assign additional assignments.

Class Presentation 25%

Part of being a philosopher is presenting your work to others. More and more, this includes giving an electronic slideshow using PowerPoint, Keynote, LaTeX (Beamer) or some other presentation software. We will end the semester with student presentations. These will be on your term paper, and are an excellent opportunity to receive feedback on the argument you are constructing. As will be described in class, I have provided lots of resources to help you. These include templates for creating your presentation, and a means of receiving feedback on drafts of your paper.

Term Paper 65%

A term paper is due for this class during finals week. I will detail the assignment in class.
Online Components

PHIL 4010 Course Website (http://www.hum.utah.edu/~mhaber/PHIL4010.html)
(Please note: the url is case-sensitive)
This site contains the weekly topic & reading list. Course readings may be downloaded when applicable. I will also use this site to update reading lists as we approach the student presentations.

turnitin.com (https://turnitin.com/static/index.php)
All papers must be turned in electronically through turnitin.com. Except by prior arrangement, I will not accept hard copies of any papers, nor will I accept any papers emailed directly to me! You will need to register with the course turnitin.com page with the following information:
Class id: 4217682
Class password: Utes2011

Course Etiquette

E-mail correspondence – I am very happy to correspond with you via e-mail, and this is the best way to contact me. I hardly ever check my voicemail, and rarely return student phone calls. Emails, on the other hand, will typically get a response within 24 hours (and often much quicker), and I check it often during the semester. However, I do ask that you follow some minimal guidelines:

1. Please indicate which class you are writing to me about. I teach more than one course and it does neither of us any good if my reply is simply, “Which class are you writing me about?”

2. Please use a proper greeting. This may be formal (e.g., “Dear Prof. Haber”) or informal (“Hi Matt”). You may address me in whatever way you feel comfortable (so long as it is respectful!). If you are unsure how to address me, you may simply use, “Dear Prof. Haber”.

3. Please sign your e-mail. All too often I get unsigned e-mails from students with inscrutable e-mail addresses. Please identify yourself to me.

4. Please send emails to and from an official University of Utah address. You may use my department address: mhaber[at]philosophy.utah.edu. If you send emails from a non-University email system, I cannot guarantee that I will receive it or respond to it, e.g., I have had problems with student email addresses getting caught in my spam filter. Ultimately, it is your responsibility to provide me with an email address that we can use for correspondence.

These guidelines may be relaxed in obvious cases (e.g., in a string of e-mail replies, if you have confirmed your non-University email works). I will use similar guidelines in writing you. As stated above, I am happy to answer student e-mails, and tend to respond promptly
(within a day). If I receive e-mails that fail meet the guidelines above, I reserve the right to not respond.

**In-Class Expectations:**
1. Show up on time; do not leave until class is over. Arriving to class late or leaving early is very distracting and disruptive, both to me and to other students. If you must leave class early, please select a seat such that you can leave in an unobtrusive manner;
2. Turn off your cell phone ringers. If a cell phone rings during class, I reserve the right to answer your phone for you;
3. No text-messaging, IMing, web-surfing, newspaper reading or other related activities during class. If you feel these kinds of activities are more meaningful than paying attention in class, then by all means do it – just not in the classroom. My feelings won’t be hurt if you choose not to attend class;
4. Be respectful of others. We are going to have in-class discussions over controversial foundational philosophical issues. You may feel strongly about this, and disagree with your fellow students (or me!). Disagreement is fine, *ad hominem* attacks are not.

**Administrative and Campus Policies**

The University of Utah seeks to provide equal access to its programs, services and activities for people with disabilities. If you will need accommodations in the class, reasonable prior notice needs to be given to the Center for Disability Services, 162 Union Building, 581-5020 (V/TDD). CDS will work with you and the instructor to make arrangements for accommodations.

I have zero tolerance for plagiarism and cheating. Students are responsible for knowing and understanding the University’s policy on academic misconduct. More information may be found in the Student Code, available at [http://www.admin.utah.edu/ppmanual/8/8-10.html#SECTION%20V](http://www.admin.utah.edu/ppmanual/8/8-10.html#SECTION%20V). According to the Code of Student Rights and Responsibilities, "Plagiarism includes, but is not limited to, representing as one's own, without attribution, any other person's words, phrasing, ideas, sequence of ideas, information or any other mode or content of expression. It does not include honest error." You are welcome to cite sources in your work, but you must do so explicitly and clearly. Please contact me if you have any questions on how to appropriately credit and mark the work of others.