Teaching Statement

I have enjoyed teaching a wide variety of students during my appointment at UCLA. Because I teach a large introductory course on the philosophy of science (with enrollment between 150 and 300 students), the majority of my students are new to philosophy. Unfortunately, the philosophy of science can seem obscure and impractical to new students, especially when compared to science itself. So, I am constantly experimenting with strategies for bringing abstract questions about the nature of science to bear on timely concrete debates. For example, my unit on scientific demarcation is framed as an argument that there is no important sense in which evolutionary theory is a science but creationism is not. And, this year I will experiment with teaching students about the political forces that go into determining which scientific theories are accepted and which are rejected by framing a unit around the growing skepticism that dinosaur extinction was primarily caused by a meteorite rather than by volcanic activity. Students are sometimes shocked and annoyed to have their preconceptions of science challenged, but once they have a horse in the race they typically find it easier to engage and to learn. I have been consistently gratified by the level of sophistication my introductory students achieve in both class discussion and in their writing.

I also regularly teach a more advanced course on contemporary philosophy of science and an advanced topics course in metaphysics (which I rotate between philosophical questions about causation and philosophical questions about object identity). Here the challenge is to take students past the introductory level of engaging with general philosophical theorizing to the more advanced level of engaging with specialized scholarly writing. To meet this challenge, I assign readings that introduce big ideas in one fell swoop (rather than readings that make small interventions to entrenched debates.) Further, I assign a series of short-answer weekly quizzes to encourage students to keep up with the reading. For writing topics, I require my students to synthesize multiple readings in some way not previously discussed in class. I occasionally use handouts to supplement more difficult readings, but my general strategy is to encourage students to take their own notes during our discussions while I make notes on the board to highly important points. A sign that class has gone well is that I’ve worked up a sweat documenting some debate my students are having about the day’s assigned reading.

I teach a graduate seminar on some topic in the philosophy of science once a year. To maximize my value as a graduate teacher, I have tried to balance offering seminars on specialized areas within my research area with offering seminars on topics that are likely to be of use across a wide range of specializations. For example, I have offered specialized courses on chance, time travel, and indeterministic explanation, but have also offered more general courses on scientific explanation, natural kinds, and inference to the best explanation. My aim is to make sure that graduate students have the opportunity to dig into a particular topic on which I am an expert but also to bring quite general insights from the philosophy of science and metaphysics to bear on their own research areas.

I have also experimented with new modes of graduate teaching. For example, I joined David Kaplan in co-teaching one quarter of our department’s seminar for first-year graduate students. The topic of the course was the philosophy of language and many of the readings were new to me. It was enormously fun and fruitful to model the role of question asker (rather than question answerer), and I learned a great deal. The strategy of modeling philosophy by discussing papers with which I am otherwise unfamiliar seemed risky at first, but it went so well that I have incorporated it (in small doses!) at all levels of my teaching.

Because few of our graduate students specialize in the philosophy of science or in metaphysics, I have served on only one completed dissertation committee—though I am pleased to report that the student, David Friedell, is presently a Postdoctoral Fellow at the University of British Columbia. I presently serve on the dissertation committee of a second student working in action theory. I would welcome the opportunity to engage in more direct advising at both the graduate and undergraduate level.
### UCLA Undergraduate Teaching Tabulation Summary

Overall rating of instructor/overall rating of course are reported on a 9 point scale, where 9 indicates “very high”.

#### Introduction to the Philosophy of Science (Philosophy 8)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
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#### Topics in Metaphysics: Laws and Causation (Philosophy 184)

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#### Topics in Metaphysics: Object Identity (Philosophy 184)

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#### Philosophy of Science: Contemporary (Philosophy 125)

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Selection of Students’ Written Evaluations

The following selected student evaluations regard courses taught during the 2018-2019 school year. A complete collection of students’ written evaluations during my appointment at UCLA is available on request.

Introduction to the Philosophy of Science (Phil 8)
Katie has been one of the best professors I’ve had. Her lectures are very structured and easy to follow. I definitely appreciate the outlines being available before the class and to refer back to in testing. I would take brief notes and fill the rest in during/after lecture, but having them available beforehand meant I always knew which direction the lecture was going to go. Philosophy is definitely conception and can be mind boggling, but she always explained things in great detail, using layman terms and examples that illustrate her point. She was always clear and the analytical aspect—telling us what we should focus on or get out of a certain concept. This class is a pre-req for my Cog Sci major, so it’ll probably be one of the only philosophy classes I’ll take… but I think one of those things that’s impacted how I think/view things, and I’m more open to taking further classes in it if possible. I also had trouble enrolling the class, but she was very accommodating to the late enrollment process and not many professors I’ve dealt with are really approachable and cooperative like that. Its been a great quarter!

Professor Elliott excels at making her lectures understandable and crystal-clear while at the same time making them engaging and fun. She has a very relatable personality, which makes going to lectures a joy. The readings are very interesting, and the material in class was always a slightly different take—which was good, because looking at the topic from multiple angles makes you understand it better. The papers were very simple and clear in their instructions, with the challenge being fitting everything you wanted to say into two pages (although this teaches you to be concise, an important skill in philosophy writing!). Overall, this was a phenomenal class and I would recommend anyone remotely interested in science and/or philosophy to take it. Thanks, Prof. Elliott!

Professor Elliott was extremely helpful, a clear lecturer, and engaging speaker. She was always extremely prepared and organized and easy to approach and ask questions. I would definitely want to take another philosophy class that she teaches in the future. I have taken many other philosophy classes in the department, but with all male professors… It was quite refreshing to finally have a female professor, and I found her to be the most engaging and approachable prof I have had in the Phil department thus far. She was funny, clear, and highly prepared. And I really appreciated the content of the course and how applicable she made it. Great intro class for any new students to philosophy as well.

I had no prior experience with philosophy, but this class exceeded my expectations, made it accessible for us to understand and learn, and also was very interesting. The professor always kept us engaged and we loved coming to class, as examples were applicable to us and she broke down the material so it was easier to understand. She was funny and always catered to our needs and was very timely about assignments. The papers were very applicable to what we were learning, and I am walking away from this class with new knowledge that I enjoyed learning.

Topics in Metaphysics: Laws and Causation (Phil 184)
Dr. Elliott is undoubtedly my favorite professor at UCLA. The way she teaches is truly an art. How someone can make such difficult material so incredibly clear is astounding. She is such a wonderful professor and makes the material accessible to anyone and everyone. The examples she provides are relatable, and it makes the concepts so much easier to follow. UCLA is so lucky to have her. She needs to be tenured NOW!!! Seriously, she teaches such interesting, engaging material in a way that one would be able to follow without ever having had taken a philosophy class before. Thank you, Dr. Elliott, for reminding me why I became a philosophy major in the first place.
Katie Elliott is a gem of the philosophy department. She is highly knowledgeable, exceptionally funny and kind. Katie has a unique ability to present abstract material very clearly (a difficult thing to do in Philosophy, especially in metaphysics). Philos 184 is the second course I have taken with Katie. I had an interest in both philosophy of science and philosophy of causation. However, if Katie offered another course I would most likely take it regardless of previous interest in the subject matter; she is that good.

I wish I could give Katie higher ratings. She is a wonderful teacher, and an excellent philosopher. She hands down has the best communication skills out of any professor I have ever had. I would take any class of hers in a heartbeat.

**Philosophy of Science: Contemporary (Phil 125)**

This class and professor does a great job of keeping the love and beauty of philosophy alive. I walked out of every class feeling excited, curious, and stimulated to learn, discuss, and apply philosophy to my life.

I had little to no interest in this class when I first signed up. However, Professor Elliot has made this class one of the best I have had at UCLA. No question is beyond her knowledge and she can give any answer as if she was reading it from a book, verbatim. One of the most impressive professor I have had the pleasure of watching teach. Professor Elliot is able to take a very difficult subject and make it easy to understand, and fun!

Katie is AMAZING. Absolutely incredible. This class was so much fun. It is my last class at UCLA and will definitely be one of my most memorable, the perfect way to end my undergraduate. Katie's ability to distill the information is great. She makes all the readings incredibly accessible. But she doesn’t water them down. If I struggled with material Katie brought it into focus. If I did understand, she invariably expanded, challenged, and improved my understanding. Her design of the class is perfect for two reasons. First, the material is challenging without being overwhelming. Rather than walk away with a loose grasp on opaque difficult material, I really feel changed and improved by her lessons I've internalized. Second, the flow of the class is great, and the material builds in a way unusually good for a philosophy class. Too top it all off Katie is hilarious, and lecture is so fun to attend. I can’t thank her enough!

Katrina Elliott is a hilarious, engaging, and relatable professor with excellent communication skills and a talent for making difficult concepts accessible to undergraduate students. Elliott welcomes questions and encourages student participation during lecture and office hours. This course is stimulating and rewarding, and I hope to learn from Professor Elliott in the future.

**Graduate Seminar: Inference to the Best Explanation (Phil 232)**

Such a nice instructor! She always listens to what students say in earnest and draws productive points that even students themselves often do not recognize. The conversation about papers during the office hour was extremely helpful as well. Also, she has a special talent in delivering the gist of difficult material in a way that even those who do not have much background can easily follow. Last but not least, she is very good at making the climate of the seminar warm and friendly.

This review will be a RAVE. I loved this course! Katie is a phenomenal teacher, certainly the best I have had in graduate school. She is funny, encouraging, approachable – in short, a masterful pedagogue. First, it seems that she is able to present any material in simple and clear terms, without losing the complexity of the material itself. Given that philosophical content is often both technical and obscure, this is an incredible skill. Second, each week, she was able to foster a rich and engaging class discussion in which everyone felt comfortable speaking. This is often a problem in other classes, in which only a few students with prior exposure to the material are eager to engage with the professor. Lastly, Katie gave super detailed feedback on our papers. Her comments not only gave me instruction as to where the gaps in my argument were, but also gave me directly as to how to fix these areas. Thanks, Katie! I wish I could take all of my seminars with you.
Sample Syllabi:

**Introduction to the Philosophy of Science (pp. 5-9)**
Topics in Metaphysics: Identity (pp. 10-13)
Philosophy of Science: Contemporary (pp. 14-16)
Time Travel: What’s Possible and What’s Probable (pp. 17-18)

**Phil 8: Introduction to the Philosophy of Science**
UCLA, Spring 2019
TR 12:30AM-1:45PM
MS 4000A

**Required Text**

(i) *An Introduction to the Philosophy of Science: Theory and Reality*, by Peter Godfrey-Smith

(ii) All additional assigned readings are available on our course website:
https://ccle.ucla.edu/course/view/17F-PHILOS8-1

**Lecture Outlines**

Lecture outlines are available on our course website, and will be posted in advance of each lecture. You may use them as a study tool in whatever way you see fit, though you are responsible for accessing them. I recommend using them after class to check against your own notes. **No copies of outlines will be provided in lecture.**

Lecture outlines are not meant to be comprehensive summaries of class content, and you are responsible for everything in lecture regardless of whether it has appeared on an outline.

**Evaluation**

**Papers:** You will be assigned four two-page papers over the course of the quarter. **Each paper is worth 15% of your final grade.** Paper topics will be provided for you. Refer to the schedule below for paper assignment and due dates.

PLEASE NOTE: Late papers will be accepted, but you will lose 10% of your final grade for every 72-hour period that the paper is late. (For example, if the paper is due Thursday at 11:30AM and you fail to hand it in, you have until 11:30AM on Sunday to turn it in for a loss of only 10% of your paper grade.) In very special circumstances, unpenalized paper extensions will be granted, but you must notify your TA about your situation before the paper is due, as soon as it is practical to do so.

**Midterm:** You will take an in-class midterm on Thursday, May 7th. The midterm format will be multiple choice. More information about the content of the midterm will be provided as the midterm approaches. **Your midterm is worth 10% of your final grade.**

**Final:** You will take a final exam on June 13th. The final will be the same format as the midterm. More information about the content of the final will be provided as the final exam approaches. **Your final is worth 20% of your final grade.**
**Attendance:** Your attendance in lecture is *not mandatory*, though you are responsible for all information covered in lecture. Most students will find it *very* difficult to do well in this course without regularly attending lecture. If you need to miss a lecture, it is a good idea to arrange to borrow a fellow classmate’s notes. Neither your TA nor I will provide you with notes for lectures that you have missed (other than the posted course outlines).

Attendance in recitation is *mandatory*. Your TA will take attendance. Furthermore, class discussion is an *essential* feature of any good philosophy class. Recitation is your opportunity to ask questions, make points, clarify issues, and complain about me. Recitation discussion will make your time in class much more fruitful and enjoyable, but it will also make your classmates experience more valuable and educational. Accordingly, **10% of your final grade** will be a function of your attendance in recitation.

If there is anything that your TA or I can do to make you personally feel more comfortable interacting during class, please do not hesitate to let us know.

**Completion:** Turning in each 2-page paper and taking both the midterm and the final are *required* for receiving a passing grade in this class. If you do not complete each of these requirements, you will fail this course *even if* your numerical grade is above failing. Remember that it is your responsibility to contact your TA or me about any missing work.

**Conduct Code:** In accord with the UCLA Student Conduct Code (available in full at [http://www.deanofstudents.ucla.edu/Code_choice.php](http://www.deanofstudents.ucla.edu/Code_choice.php)), take care to submit only work that is your own.

**Reading Schedule**

Many days have been divided into two halves (“A” and “B”): each associated with a different topic and assigned reading. **Be advised:** you are responsible for both the A and B reading for each day. Also, while I will do my best to keep us on the following reading schedule, it is *subject to change* (with the following exceptions: paper assignment due dates will never be earlier than the schedule indicates, paper assignments will always be given on the day that the schedule indicates, and the midterm and final dates will not change.) At the end of each lecture, I’ll announce any changes in the topic/outline/reading for next lecture.

All readings are either from your book, or are available on our class website.

**Unit 1: The Problem of Induction**

**Tuesday, April 2nd**

A. Course Introduction
   - Syllabus
   - Reading Schedule
   - (no assigned reading)

B. Introduction to Justification
   - Outline 1
   - (no assigned reading)
Thursday, April 4th
A. Problem of Induction
   - Outline 2
   - Reading: “An Encounter with David Hume” (Available Electronically) (Wesley Salmon, from Joel Feinberg, Reason and Responsibility, pp. 190-208)

Tuesday, April 9th
A. The Pragmatic Vindication of Induction
   - Outline 3
   - Reading: “Pragmatic Vindication” (Available Electronically) (John Earman and Wesley Salmon, from Introduction to Philosophy of Science, by the HPS Department of the University of Pittsburgh, 1992)

Thursday, April 11th
A. The New Riddle of Induction
   - Outline 4
   - Reading: Theory and Reality: Chapter 3.4
   - PAPER ASSIGNMENT #1

UNIT 2: “THE” SCIENTIFIC METHOD, PART 1: WHO NEEDS TO THINK THAT MUCH ABOUT ACTUAL HUMAN SCIENTISTS?

Tuesday, April 16th
A. Background
   - Outline 5
   - Reading: Theory and Reality: Chapter 1
B. Logical Positivism
   - Outline 6
   - Reading: Theory and Reality: Chapter 2

Thursday, April 18th
No Class

Tuesday, April 23rd
A. The Hypothetical-Deductive Method
   - Outline 7
   - Reading: “The Hypothetico-Deductive Method” (Available Electronically) (John Earman and Wesley Salmon, from Introduction to Philosophy of Science, by the HPS Department of the University of Pittsburgh, 1992)
B. Qualitative Confirmation
   - Outline 8
   - (no assigned reading)
   - Paper Assignment #1 DUE

Thursday, April 25th
A. Falsificationism
   - Outline 9
   - Reading: Theory and Reality: Chapter 4.1-4.4
B. Creationism and Demarcation
UNIT 3: “THE” SCIENTIFIC METHOD, PART 2: MAYBE WE NEED TO THINK ABOUT ACTUAL HUMAN SCIENTISTS?

Tuesday, April 30th
A. The Ravens Problem
   - Outline 11
   - Reading: Theory and Reality: Chapter 3.1-3.3
   - Paper Assignment #2
B. Objections to the H-D Method
   - Outline 12

Thursday, May 2nd
A. Case studies in complexity
   - Outline 13
B. Creationism revisited
   - Outline 14
   - Reading: “Science at the Bar” (Available Electronically) (Larry Laudan.)

Tuesday, May 7th
Midterm

Thursday, May 9th
A. Kuhn and Normal Science
   - Outline 15
   - Reading: Theory and Reality: Chapter 5

Tuesday, May 14th
A. Kuhn and Revolutions
   - Outline 16
   - Reading: Theory and Reality: Chapter 6
B. Paper Assignment #2 DUE

Thursday, May 16th:
No class

Tuesday, May 21st
A. Kuhn’s brand of relativism, clarified
   - Outline 17

Thursday, May 23rd
A. Feminist approaches to philosophy of science
   - Outline 18
   - Reading: “Gender, politics, and theoretical virtue” (Available electronically)
   - Paper Assignment #3

Tuesday, May 28th
A. Feminist standpoint epistemology
   - Outline 19

UNIT 4: ANTI-REALISM AND EXPLANATION

Thursday, May 30th
A. Realism
   - Outline 20
   - Reading: *Theory and Reality*: Chapter 12.1-12.4
B. Anti-Realism
   - Outline 21
   - Reading: *Theory and Reality*: Chapter 12.4-12.6
   - Reading: Forward (to *On the Revolutions of Heavenly Bodies*) by Andreas Osiander (Available Online)
   - Paper Assignment #3 Due

Tuesday, June 4th
A. Deductive-Nomological Model
   - Outline 22
B. Inductive-Statistical Model
   - Outline 23

Thursday, June 6th
A. More on Explanation
   - Outline 24
   - Reading: *Theory and Reality*:13.3,13.4
B. Pragmatics of Explanation
   - Outline 25
   - “The Pragmatics of Explanation” (Available Electronically) (John Earman and Wesley Salmon, from *Introduction to Philosophy of Science*, by the HPS Department of the University of Pittsburgh, 1992)
   - Paper Assignment #4

FINAL EXAM: Thursday, June 13th 11:30AM-2:30PM    FINAL PAPER #4 DUE
**Phil 184: Topics in Metaphysics**

**Identity: Through Time and Across Worlds**

UCLA, Fall 2018
MW 12-1:50
Dodd 167

**Course Summary**

There are a lot of controversial claims I could make about my iPhone 5S (e.g. that it is better than the iPhone 6), but I doubt that the following platitude will cause any controversy at all:

1. Whatever is true of my iPhone 5S is true of anything that is identical to my iPhone 5S.

Despite being (seemingly) beyond reproach, (1) has puzzling consequences. Start by imagining that I drop my iPhone and crack the screen. Assuming no funny business (e.g. imperceptibly fast sleight of hand), the iPhone that is now broken is the very same iPhone that I held a moment ago. But, given (1), I have two *different* iPhones! After all, there is something true of the phone now on the ground (i.e. that its screen is cracked) that is not true of the phone I held a moment ago. How can we accept claims like (1) given that objects change their properties?

Now suppose that, over the years, I replace every part of my broken iPhone (e.g. the screen, the battery, the camera, etc.) until I end up with a working iPhone. You collect these broken pieces and use them to construct a broken iPhone. Which iPhone- the working one or the broken one- is identical to the iPhone with which I started (i.e. to *my* iPhone)? I hope it’s the working iPhone! However, the iPhone I started with was broken and so, by (1), the presently broken iPhone is mine. How can we accept claims like (1) given that objects change their parts?

Next, when I hold my iPhone, how many objects are in my hand? According to (1), there are two: my iPhone and the hunk of materials that compose my iPhone. After all, it’s true that my iPhone can be destroyed with a hammer, but not true that the hunk of materials composing my iPhone can be destroyed with a hammer. By (1), then, my iPhone is not identical to the hunk of materials that compose it and so I am holding two objects. But it’s not possible for there to be two objects that are in the exact same place at the exact same time, so how can (1) be true?

Finally, my iPhone is white but there is a possible scenario in which it is painted black. So, my iPhone *could* have been black. But, by (1), any phone that is painted black (e.g. the phone in the possible scenario) is *not* my (white) iPhone. Therefore, there are *no* possible scenarios in which my phone is black and so it *had* to be white. How can (1) be true given that my phone could have been black?

In this course, we will discuss and evaluate the most prominent answers to these four questions that contemporary metaphysics has to offer. Of course, the above examples needn’t have involved my iPhone in particular, but rather could have involved *any* material (composite) object. So in discussing these questions, we will address two aspects of the metaphysics of material objects in general: identity across time and identity across worlds.

**Readings**

Assigned readings are available on our course website.

**Evaluation**
Breakdown:
Exams (3): 15%, 35%, 35%
Quizzes: 15%

Exams: You will be assigned 3 take-home essay exams throughout the course of the quarter. The first exam will be worth 15%, the second 35%, and the third 35%. You will have one week to complete each exam. Unexcused late exams will be docked 10% for each class period that they are late. Exam extensions will be given in unusual circumstances, but only if they are requested as soon as is practically possible. Do NOT wait until after the exam is due to request an extension in light of some extenuating circumstances that occurred before the exam was due.

Quizzes: In order to encourage attendance and reading, I’ll give a very short quiz at the start of class once every week. The quiz will be designed so as to check for basic comprehension of the day’s assigned reading. Your grades on those quizzes will determine 15% of your final grade.

Quiz Makeup: Quizzes missed for any reason are unexcused. However, you have the opportunity to make-up 3 quiz scores over the course of the quarter by writing a 2-page (double spaced, times new roman) reaction paper to the reading assigned for the quiz day missed. You are under no obligation to makeup missed quizzes. All makeup quizzes are due on the last day of class.

Completion: To pass this class, you must have completed all three exams. Your grade is a function of your scores on assignments only if you have completed all the exams.

Conduct Code: In accord with the UCLA Student Conduct Code (available in full at http://www.deanofstudents.ucla.edu/Code_choice.php), take care to submit only work that is your own.

Reading Schedule
While I will do my best to keep us on the following reading schedule, it is subject to change (with the following exceptions: exam dates will never be earlier than the schedule indicates).

April 2nd
Introduction

Unit 1.1 Identity Through Time: Qualitative Change

April 4th
Reading 1: Qualitative Chance and the Doctrine of Temporal Parts

April 9th
Reading 2: Persistence, change, and explanation
Teaching Portfolio
Katrina Elliott


April 11th
Reading 3: Endurance and Indiscernibility

April 16th
No new reading. Catchup and Review. Take home exam assigned.

UNIT 1.2: IDENTITY THROUGH TIME: CHANGE OF COMPOSITION

April 18th
Reading 4: Identity Through Time

April 23rd
Exam Due
Reading 5: On the Identity of Artifacts

UNIT 1.3 IDENTITY THROUGH TIME: COEXISTENCE

April 25th
Reading 6: Substantial Change and Spatiotemporal Coincidence (pp. 59-74)

April 30th
Reading 7: Artifacts

May 2nd
Reading 8: Temporal Parts

May 7th
No new reading. Catch up and review. Take home exam assigned.

UNIT 2: IDENTITY ACROSS WORLDS

May 9th
Reading 9: Reductive Theories of Modality, Sections 1, 3, 3.1, 3.2, 3.5, 3.6, 4,
4.1  
Dean W. Zimmerman (eds.), The Oxford Handbook of Metaphysics. Oxford University 
Press. 180-208.

May 14th  
**EXAM DUE** 
Reading 10: Identity Through Possible Worlds  

May 16th 
Reading 11: Counterparts or Double Lives?  
David Lewis (1997). Counterparts or Double Lives? (Selections). In Michael C.  

May 21st  
Reading 12: Essentialism  

May 23rd: Memorial Day

May 30th  
Reading 13: Personal identity.  

June 6th  
Reading 14: Paradoxes of Time Travel  

June 8th: No new reading. Wrap up and review. **Final exam assigned.**
Phil 125: Philosophy of Science (Contemporary)
UCLA, Fall 2018
WF 10-11:50
Royce Hall 160

Readings

Required Text: Philosophy of Science: Contemporary Readings (Balashov and Rosenberg)

Please bring your text with you to class. If there is some reason why it is difficult for you to acquire a copy of the text, let me know—I might be able to help.

Any additional readings will be located on our course website.

Evaluation

Breakdown:
Exams (3): 15%, 35%, 35%
Quizzes: 15%

Exams: You will be assigned 3 take-home essay exams throughout the course of the quarter. The first exam will be worth 15%, the second 35%, and the third 35%. You will have one week to complete each exam. Unexcused late exams will be docked 10% for each week that they are late. Exam extensions will be given in unusual circumstances, but only if they are requested as soon as is practically possible. Do NOT wait until after the exam is due to request an extension in light of some extenuating circumstances that occurred before the exam was due.

Quizzes: In order to encourage attendance and reading, I’ll give a short quiz at the start of class once every week. The quiz will be designed so as to check for basic comprehension of the day’s assigned reading. Your grades on those quizzes will determine 15% of your final grade.

Quiz Makeup: Quizzes missed for any reason are unexcused. However, you have the opportunity to make-up 3 quiz scores over the course of the quarter by writing a 2-page (double spaced, times new roman) reaction paper to the reading assigned for the quiz day missed. You are under no obligation to make up missed quizzes. All make up quizzes are due on the last day of class.

Completion: To pass this class, you must have completed all three exams. Your grade is a function of your scores on assignments only if you have completed all the exams.

Conduct Code: In accord with the UCLA Student Conduct Code (available in full at http://www.deanofstudents.ucla.edu/Code_choice.php), take care to submit only work that is your own.
Redistributing essay weights: In an effort to provide extra incentive to improve your essay performance, I will allow you to redistribute 10% of the weighting in your three essay exams however you see fit. For example, instead of having exam 1 be worth 15%, exam 2 be worth 35%, and exam 3 be worth 35%, you might elect to have exam 1 be worth 5%, exam 2 be worth 40%, and exam 3 be worth 40%. PLEASE NOTE THE FOLLOWING TO CAVEATS:

1. Redistributing the weights is completely optional. If I do not hear from you, I will not redistribute the weights for your grade.
2. If you would like to redistribute the essay weights, you must let me know via email by 10 am on December 14TH. That means you will need to commit to any redistributions prior to knowing the grade of your final essay (which is also due by 10 am on December 14th).

Reading Schedule

While I will do my best to keep us on the following reading schedule, it is subject to change (with the following exceptions: exam dates will never be earlier than the schedule indicates). Every reading listed is from our book, unless otherwise noted.

Confirmation and Theory Choice

September 28th:
Course Introduction

October 3rd:
“On Induction” by Bertrand Russell

October 5th:
“The Grue Paradox” by Peter Achinstein

October 10th:
“Seeing and Seeing As” by N. Russell Hanson

October 12th:
“Two Dogmas of Empiricism” by W.V. Quine

October 17th:
“Let’s Razor Ockham’s Razor’ by Elliott Sober

October 19th:
“Objectivity, Value Judgment, and Theory Choice” by Thomas Kuhn

Realism and Anti-Realism

October 24th: Essay 1 Assigned (Due November 2nd) [Kuhn Discussion]
October 26th:
   Catch up and Review

October 31st:
   “The Theoretician’s Dilemma” by Carl Hempel

November 2nd: Essay 1 Due
   “A Confutation of Convergent Realism” by Larry Laudan

November 7th:
   “Scientific Realism versus Constructive Empiricism: A Dialogue”

November 9th:
   “A Case for Scientific Realism” by Ernan McMullin

**SCIENTIFIC EXPLANATION AND THE LAWS OF NATURE**

Monday, November 14th:
   Exam II assigned—DUE NOVEMBER 28TH

   Catch up and review.

Wednesday, November 16th:
   “Two Models of Scientific Explanation” by Carl Hempel

November 21st:
   Cancelled Class

November 23rd:
   THANKSGIVING BREAK

November 28th:
   “Explanatory Unification and the Causal Structure of the World” by Philip Kitcher

November 30th:
   “A Neo-Humean Perspective: Laws as Regularities” by Norman Swartz

December 5th:
   “The Laws of Nature” and “Humean Supervenience Debugged” by David Lewis

December 7th:

   Exam III Assigned—DUE DECEMBER 14TH (AT 10 AM)
   Wrap up and Review.
Time Travel: What’s Possible and What’s Probable
Phil 232 Philosophy of Science

Description:

Our primary goal will be to assess answers to the following two questions, which have been discussed in contemporary philosophical discussions of time travel:

What’s possible? I wish I hadn’t lost my paycheck in last night’s roulette game, but there’s no fix for it now. What if I had a time machine? On the one hand, it seems that I can travel back in time and prevent my younger self from placing the bet. After all, it’s not hard to prevent even committed gamblers from placing bets (especially if you have the element of surprise on your side). On the other hand, it seems that I can’t travel back in time and prevent my younger self from placing the bet. After all, there’s nothing I can do to make a contradiction true. If it’s true that I lost my paycheck in last night’s roulette game, it’s not true that I didn’t. So, scenarios involving time travel to the local past bring out a puzzle about what’s possible; can I, or can’t I, change the past?

What’s probable? What happens if I try to prevent my younger self from placing the bet? Since I don’t make a contradiction true, I fail. What stops me? No matter how carefully I plan, no matter how many times I try, no matter what extremes I go to, something always goes wrong. On the one hand, it seems improbable that there would be such long strings of repeated failures, and so improbable that there will be time travelers who repeatedly attempt to change the past. On the other hand, long strings of failures are as probable as can be since it’s a necessary truth that all attempts to change the past end in failure. So, scenarios involving time travel to the local past bring out a puzzle about what’s probable; do the strange coincidences required by time travel show that we shouldn’t expect there to be time travel into the past?

Our secondary goal will be to assess whether the answers to these questions have philosophical implications that stretch beyond the recherché topic of time travel. For example, answers to the first question arguably undercut arguments for fatalism. And, I’ll argue that answers to the second question tell us something interesting about the relationship between prediction and explanation.

Grading

Students enrolled for regular credit will write a 5-7 page exegetical paper, a 3-page paper proposal, and a final paper (approximately 15 pages). Students enrolled S/U will write a 5-7 page exegetical paper. See schedule for due dates.

Schedule

All readings are posted on our website.

Week 1: March 30th

Week 2: April 6th

Week 3: April 13th

Week 4: April 20th
Vranas, Peter B. M. (2010). What time travelers may be able to do. Philosophical Studies 150 (1):115 - 121

First Paper Due

Week 5: April 27th


Week 6: May 4th

Week 7: May 11th

Week 8: May 18th
Elliott, K. “How to Know that Time Travel is Unlikely without Knowing Why”

Week 9: June 1st
Meeting with John Roberts

Paper Proposals Due

Week 10: Thursday, June 11th, 12-3
Class Presentations

Final Paper Due July 1st