

PHI 3500 Fall 2023

J. Biro (Griffin-Floyd 115D) (jbiro@ufl.edu) (273-1804)

We will be exploring some long-debated questions about the individuation and identity conditions of ordinary material objects: what makes one the object it is, distinct from others, and what makes it the same object over time. Our discussions will be based on recent papers on these topics which will be made available in a course-pack (available from Target Copy).

There will be two examinations that you *must* take: a mid-term and the (non-comprehensive) final. (More on the nature of the exams and how to prepare for them closer to the time.) You *may* also write a paper, but if you plan to do so you must discuss your proposed topic with me by mid-November. Your grade in the course will be based on the best two you earn. Class participation may improve your grade; lack thereof will not hurt it.

I do not check attendance but highly recommend it. It is essential that you read the text to be discussed before class and re-read it as soon after class as possible. When you read it before class, it is a good idea to try to write down briefly what you take the author's main claim and his argument for it to be. Then check as soon after class as possible to see if your understanding has changed or you if you had missed something important. If so, write down a new summary to which you can refer when preparing for the exams.

Office hours: Thursday 2:15 - 3:30 and by appointment.

The readings are:

1. Michael C. Rea, ed. (1997) "Introduction" *Material Constitution*, Rowman and Littlefield, pp. xv-xix (ISBN 0-8476-8383-4) (excerpt)
2. Michael B. Burke (1980) "Cohabitation, Stuff, and Intermittent Existence" *Mind* 89, pp. 391-405 (ISSN 00264423)
3. Richard Cartwright (1975) "Scattered Objects" in *Analysis and Metaphysics*, K. Lehrer, ed., Reidel: Dordrecht, pp.157-8 (ISBN 9027705712) (excerpt)
4. John Biro (2017) "Are there scattered objects?" *Metaphysica* 8/2, pp. 155-65
5. David Wiggins (1968) "On Being in the Same Place at the Same Time" *The Philosophical Review* 77/1, pp. 90-2 (ISSN 0031-8108) (excerpt)
6. Christopher Hughes (1997) "Same-kind Coincidence and the Ship of Theseus" *Mind* 106, pp. 53-67 (ISSN 0026423)
7. Alan Gibbard (1975) "Contingent Identity" *Journal of Philosophical Logic* 4, pp.188-92 (ISSN 00223611) (excerpt)
8. Crawford Elder (1998) "Essential Properties and Coinciding Objects" *Philosophy and Phenomenological Research* 58, pp. 317-31
9. Michael Jubien (2009) *Possibility*, Oxford University Press, pp. 15-22 (ISBN13: 9780199232789) (excerpt)

10. John Biro *b* (2018) "Constitution and identity" *Erkenntnis* 83/6, pp. 1127-38
11. John Biro *c* (2016) "Co-location and separability" *Philosophical Inquiries* IV, pp. 29-36
12. John Biro *d* (2020) "Leading a double life: statues and pieces of clay" *Metaphysica* 21/2, pp. 273-77
13. John Biro *e* (2019) "Persistence conditions and identity" *Metaphysica* 20/1, pp. 73-82
14. Peter van Inwagen (1990) *Material Beings*, Cornell University Press, pp. 124-31 (excerpt)
15. John Biro *f* (2018) "Saving the ship" *European Journal of Analytic Philosophy* 13/2, pp. 43-54
16. John Biro *g* (2020) "Rearranging the furniture" *Philosophia* 48/1, pp. 77-81
17. Trenton Merricks (2017) "Do ordinary objects exist? No." in *Current Controversies in Metaphysics* (E. Barnes, ed.)
18. John Biro *h* (2022) "Two notes on composition" *Metaphysica* 23/2, pp. 445-54

*Tentative schedule:*

Week 1    Introduction; Rea

Week 2    Burke

Week 3    Cartwright; Biro *a*

Week 4    Wiggins; Hughes

Week 5    Gibbard

Week 6    Elder  
*First examination questions distributed*

Week 7    Jubien  
*First examination due*

Week 8    Biro *b*; Biro *c*

Week 10   Biro *d*; Biro *e*

Week 11   van Inwagen

Week 12   Biro *f*; Biro *g*

Week 13   Merricks

Week 14   Biro *h*

Week 15   Review

*Final examination:* Dec 12

*Optional paper due:* Dec 8

From CANVAS:

To login to the e-Learning site for this course, go to <https://lss.at.ufl.edu/>, click the **e-Learning in Canvas** button, and on the next page enter your Gatorlink username and password. You can then access the course e-Learning environment by selecting PHI 3861 from the **Courses** pull-down menu at the top of the page. If you encounter any difficulties logging in or accessing any of the course content, contact the UF Computing Help Desk at (352) 392-4537 or <http://helpdesk.ufl.edu>. Do not contact the course instructor regarding computer issues.

Please note the following university policies:

**ACADEMIC HONESTY.** UF students are bound by The Honor Pledge, which states, "We, the members of the University of Florida community, pledge to hold ourselves and our peers to the highest standards of honor and integrity by abiding by the Honor Code. On all work submitted for credit by students at the University of Florida, the following pledge is either required or implied: "On my honor, I have neither given nor received unauthorized aid in doing this assignment." The Honor Code (<http://www.dso.ufl.edu/sccr/process/student-conduct-honor-code/>) specifies a number of behaviors that are in violation of this code and the possible sanctions. Furthermore, you are obligated to report any condition that facilitates academic misconduct to appropriate personnel. If you have any questions or concerns, please consult with the instructor or TAs in this class. Plagiarism on any assignment will automatically result in a grade of "E" for the course. Plagiarism is defined in the University of Florida's Student Honor Code as follows: "A student shall not represent as the student's own work all or any portion of the work of another. Plagiarism includes (but is not limited to): a. Quoting oral or written materials, whether published or unpublished, without proper attribution. b. Submitting a document or assignment which in whole or in part is identical or substantially identical to a document or assignment not authored by the student." Students found guilty of academic misconduct will be prosecuted in accordance with the procedures specified in the UF honesty policy.

**ATTENDANCE AND CLASSROOM POLICIES.** Students are expected to attend class and to have done all assigned reading in advance. Failure to do so will adversely affect students' ability to perform well in this course. The use of laptop computers, smart phones, or other electronic devices during class is not permitted. Requirements for make-up exams are consistent with university policies specified at: <https://catalog.ufl.edu/ugrad/current/regulations/info/attendance.aspx>.

**STUDENTS WITH DISABILITIES.** Students requesting classroom accommodation must first register with the Dean of Students Office (<http://www.dso.ufl.edu/drp/>). The Dean of Students Office will provide documentation to the student who must then provide this documentation to the instructor when requesting accommodation.

**ONLINE COURSE EVALUATION.** Students are expected to provide feedback on the quality of instruction in this course based on 10 criteria. These evaluations are conducted online at <https://evaluations.ufl.edu>. Evaluations are typically open during the last two or three weeks of the semester. Students will be given specific times when they are open. Summary results of these assessments are available to students at <https://evaluations.ufl.edu/results>.

**GENERAL EDUCATION.** PHH 3500 counts towards the Humanities (H) and International (N) General Education requirements. General Education Humanities courses provide instruction in the key themes, principles and terminology of a humanities discipline. PHH 3500 accomplishes this by familiarizing students with some debates in contemporary analytic metaphysics. The General Education Student Learning Outcomes (SLO's) divide into three areas: CONTENT – students demonstrate competence in the terminology, concepts, theories and methodologies used within the discipline; COMMUNICATION – students communicate knowledge, ideas and reasoning clearly and effectively in written and oral forms appropriate to the discipline; and CRITICAL THINKING – students analyze information carefully and logically from different perspectives. Students will satisfy these SLO by participating in class discussion and taking two in-class exams designed to test their command of the course content. They will also have the option to submit a paper; if they do, their grade in the course will be based on the best two earned.