

## **Epistemology for Metaphysics**

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Stonier 227

Office hours: Wed 10–11am or by appointment

We'll look at the implications of recent work in epistemology for debates in metaphysics (and in some cases, vice versa). Mainly time and space.

### **Requirements**

1. Oct 15: < 3000 word paper
2. Dec 17: Two options.
  - Option A. < 3000 word paper on a new topic
  - Option B. < 5000 word revised and extended version of the first paper
3. Chair discussion of a couple of the readings
4. Attendance and participation

### **Notes**

- Please let me know if you are going to have any difficulty meeting the final deadline: I may be able to grant you an extension.
- I prefer that you send me your papers by email rather than hardcopy. (In PDF format, please! I hate Word.)
- Let me know if you have something that you'd like to present at some point during the seminar.
- I will probably make some changes to the topics and readings as we go.

# 1 Thinking about Time

## 1.1 “When the facts change, I change my mind.”

## 1.2 *De se* attitudes and their objects

- Frege, “The thought”
- Perry, “The problem of the essential indexical”
- Lewis, “Attitudes *de dicto* and *de se*”
- Magidor, “The myth of the *de se*”

## 1.3 Temporary facts I (attitude problems for B-theorists?)

- Zimmerman, “The A-theory of time, the B-theory of time, and ‘taking tense seriously’ ”
- Sider, *Four-Dimensionalism*, ch. 2 (“Against Presentism”), esp. sec. 1
- Sider, *Writing the Book of the World*, ch. 11 (“Time”)
- Dorr, *Counterparts*, selections (“A-Theories and B-Theories”)

## 1.4 Conditionalization

- Van Fraassen, “A new argument for conditionalization”
- Greaves and Wallace, “Justifying conditionalization: conditionalization maximizes expected epistemic utility”
- Arntzenius, “Some problems for conditionalization and reflection”
- Hedden, “Time-slice rationality”
- Williamson, *Knowledge and its Limits*, ch. 10 (“Evidential Probability”)

## 1.5 Reflection

- Van Fraassen, “Belief and the will”
- Egan and Elga, “I can’t believe I’m stupid”
- Briggs, “Distorted reflection”
- Williamson, *Knowledge and its Limits* (henceforth *KL*), sec. 10.6 (“A puzzling phenomenon”)

## 1.6 Sleeping Beauty

- Elga, “Self-locating belief and the Sleeping Beauty problem”
- Lewis, “Sleeping beauty: reply to Elga”
- Dorr, “A challenge for halfers”
- White, “The generalized Sleeping Beauty problem: a challenge for thirderers”

## 1.7 Temporary facts II (attitude problems for A-theorists?)

- Sullivan, “Change we can believe in (and assert)”
- Moss, “Updating as communication”

## 1.8 Time bias

- Parfit, *Reasons and Persons*, ch. 8 (“Different attitudes to time”)
- Dougherty, “On whether to prefer pain to pass”
- Greene and Sullivan, “Against time bias”

## 1.9 Experiencing change

- Paul, “Temporal experience”
- Other stuff...

## 2 Skepticism and Symmetry

### 2.1 Skepticism and safety

- Williamson, *KL*, ch. 5 (“Margins and Iterations”), esp. sec 3; ch. 8 (“Scepticism”)
- Pritchard, “Sensitivity, safety, and anti-luck epistemology”
- Gendler and Hawthorne, “The real guide to fake barns: a catalogue of gifts for your epistemic enemies”

### 2.2 Evidence

- Conee and Feldman, *Evidentialism*, ch. 9 (“Having evidence”)
- Williamson, *KL*, ch. 9 (“Evidence”)

### 2.3 Defeat

- Williamson, “Very improbable knowing”
- Lasonen-Aario, “Unreasonable knowledge”
- Horowitz, “Epistemic akrasia”

### 2.4 Disagreement

- Elga, “Reflection and disagreement”
- Christensen, “Epistemology of disagreement: the good news”
- Lackey, “What should we do when we disagree?”
- Hawthorne and Srinivasan, “Disagreement without transparency: some bleak thoughts”

## 2.5 **Knowing where you are and which way you're going**

- Maudlin, "Buckets of water and waves of space: why spacetime is probably a substance"
- Roberts, "A puzzle about laws, symmetry, and measurability"
- Dasgupta, "The bare necessities"
- Russell, "On where things could be"

## 2.6 **Knowing what time it is**

- Braddon-Mitchell, "How do we know it is now now?"
- Forrest, "The real but dead past: a reply to Braddon-Mitchell"
- Merricks, "Good-bye growing block"
- Cameron, manuscript
- Russell, manuscript

## 2.7 **Knowing what's what**

- Adams, "Primitive thisness and primitive identity"
- Lewis, *On the Plurality of Worlds*, sec. 4.4 ("Against haecceitism")
- Dasgupta, "Individuals: an essay in revisionary metaphysics"
- Dasgupta, "Inexpressible ignorance"
- Manley and Hawthorne, *The Reference Book*, ch. 3 ("Epistemic acquaintance")

## 2.8 **Relativity and knowing how things are shaped**

- Zimmerman, "Presentism and relativity"
- Russell, manuscript