

CEU Summer University – Course Syllabus

Identity: Indiscernibility, Essence, Time, and Composition

Module 1: Identity of Indiscernibles

Instructor: Prof. Gonzalo Rodriguez-Pereyra.

<p><i>Session 1:</i></p>	<p>“Historical Overview of the Principle & Objections”</p> <p>The history of the principle of Identity of Indiscernibles: the Stoics, Leibniz. Different versions of the principle: actual world, necessary, cross-world. Different versions of the principle: versions about resemblance and versions about properties. Different versions of the principle: does it refer to how an object is intrinsically, qualitatively, or both qualitatively and non-qualitatively? Max Black’s counterexample.</p> <p><i>Readings:</i></p> <ol style="list-style-type: none">1. Max Black: ‘The Identity of Indiscernibles’2. Adams: ‘Primitive Thisness and Primitive Identity’
<p><i>Session 2:</i></p>	<p>“The identity of indiscernibles and the Bundle Theory of particulars.”</p> <p>Many philosophers have argued that the Identity of Indiscernibles is false and that this shows the Bundle Theory to be false as well, since the latter entails the former. I will discuss arguments to this effect and an argument that the Bundle Theory does not entail the Identity of Indiscernibles.</p> <p><i>Reading:</i></p> <ol style="list-style-type: none">1. John O’Leary Hawthorne: ‘The Bundle Theory of Substance and the Identity of Indiscernibles’2. Gonzalo Rodriguez-Pereyra: ‘The Bundle Theory is compatible with distinct but indiscernible particulars’.
<p><i>Session 3:</i></p>	<p>“How not to trivialize the Identity of Indiscernibles.”</p> <p>Philosophers have often thought that there is a trivially true version of the Identity of Indiscernibles. I shall argue that there is no such version, and that those philosophers have confused the Identity of Indiscernibles with a different principle. But I shall also discuss how to formulate the weakest version of the Identity of Indiscernibles, a task which requires identifying the properties that trivialize the other principle with which the Identity of Indiscernibles has often been confused.</p>

	<p><i>Readings:</i></p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Bernard Katz: "The Identity of Indiscernibles Revisited" Gonzalo Rodriguez-Pereyra: 'How not to trivialize the Identity of Indiscernibles'
Session 4.	<p>"An argument for the Identity of Indiscernibles."</p> <p>I shall give an argument for the weakest version of the Identity of Indiscernibles. There is no specific reading for this class.</p>
Sessions 15 & 18	Revision class. Students will have a further opportunity to reflect on what has been discussed in the previous lectures, ask questions and develop points further.

Module 2: Composition, Time, and Identity

Instructor: Prof. Donald Baxter

Session 5:	<p>"Temporal Parts"</p> <p>Our topic is the problem of identity through time despite change of parts, as reflected in the puzzle of Heraclitus and the River wherein successive, numerically distinct "waters" appear each to be numerically identical with the same river in apparent violation of the transitivity of identity. The standard solution as presented by Quine takes the river to be a temporal whole co-existing with the succession of its temporal parts. Identity attributions help disambiguate reference to whole or parts. A feature of the standard solution is the undue multiplication of entities, which results from Quine's appeal to a Humean maxim of "the identification of indiscernibles" in a way constrained by Frege's characterization of identity. We will note that Quine's analysis of such identification gets cases of <i>misidentification</i> of indiscernibles completely wrong, which will lead us to question the Fregean characterization of identity. An alternative solution to the Heraclitus puzzle that would avoid the multiplication of entities is the multiplication of the kinds of identity that the same entities stand in.</p> <p>Readings:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Heraclitus bit in Robinson 2. Quine, "Identity, Ostension, and Hypostasis"
Session 6:	<p>"Loose Identity"</p> <p>Locke is the place to start in considering kinds of identity. He contends that identity through change of parts is to be understood as identity relative to an idea.</p>

	<p>His text seems to allow for two interpretations: a relative identity view and a loose identity view. His contention that there cannot be two distinct bodies in the same place and time suggests the latter. Appeal to a distinction between loose identity and strict identity gives a possible solution to the Heraclitus puzzle. The basic idea is that, strictly speaking, there is no identity through time in the puzzle case, just a succession of entities usefully but falsely said to be identical. We will consider the disadvantages of this solution, including a conceptual problem with the misidentification of indiscernibles that the loose identity account cannot solve. Call it the misattributed identity problem.</p> <p>Readings:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Locke, "On Identity and Diversity" 2. Butler, "Of Personal Identity" 3. Reid, "Of Identity"
<p><i>Session 7:</i></p>	<p>“Relative Identity”</p> <p>Another way to develop a Lockean account is to hold with Geach that identity is relative to sort: successive, distinct <i>waters</i> of Heraclitus's river are the same <i>river</i>. Geach's inspiration is Frege's claim that a copse is "one and the same external phenomenon" as five trees. However, assuming the Fregean characterization of identity, the view seems to collapse either into the standard view--with sortals simply serving to disambiguate reference--or else into the loose identity view. The collapse assumes also that successful reference is successful <i>singular</i> reference, as evidenced in criticisms by Wiggins and by Austin and Bennett. Accomplishing Geach's aim of giving a successful alternative to the standard view requires rejecting these assumptions.</p> <p>Readings:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Frege bit from <i>The Foundations of Arithmetic</i> 2. Geach, "Identity" 3. Wiggins bit from <i>Sameness and Substance</i> on copse and trees 4. Alston and Bennett, "Identity and Cardinality: Geach and Frege"
<p><i>Session 8.</i></p>	<p>“Many-One Identity”</p> <p>What is needed is an account of the identification of indiscernibles that, by appeal both to kinds of identity and to successful reference which is not simply singular or plural, avoids violating the transitivity of identity, avoids the multiplication of entities, and resolves the misattributed identity problem. I will propose my own view of many-one identity in which numerical identity is relative to standards for counting (or criteria of identity) and in which being the same "external phenomenon"—the same portion of reality—is an indiscernibility relation across</p>

	<p>standards for counting. The result is a view that solves the Heraclitus puzzle and acknowledges the insight of Quine’s appeal to the identification of indiscernibles while correcting its excesses.</p> <p>Readings:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Plato bit from <i>Parmenides</i> 129d, 137d 2. Baxter, “Identity in the Loose and Popular Sense” 3. Baxter, “Many-One Identity”
<i>Sessions 14 & 17</i>	Revision class. Students will have a further opportunity to reflect on what has been discussed in the previous lectures, ask questions and develop points further.

Module 3: Identity & Essence

Instructor: Dr Penelope Mackie

<i>Session 9:</i>	<p>“Identity, individual essences, and haecceitism”</p> <p>In the period of almost fifty years since the first publication of Kripke’s ‘Naming and Necessity’, a recurrent theme in discussions of essentialism in analytic philosophy has been whether the identities of ordinary individuals are constituted by individual essences that ‘make them the individuals that they are’ in some substantial metaphysical sense of that expression. Associated with this debate are a range of questions concerning the notions of <i>haecceitism</i> and <i>haecceity</i>, including whether there can be (non-qualitative) ‘haecceitistic’ differences between maximal possibilities, and whether individuals have non-qualitative ‘haecceities’. I take stock of the current state of the debate, arguing for scepticism about both substantial individual essences and haecceities, but advocating a version of the theory that there can be haecceitistic differences between maximal possibilities.</p> <p>Readings:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Mackie, P. 2006. <i>How Things Might Have Been: Individuals, Kinds, and Essential Properties</i> (Oxford: Clarendon Press), Chs 2 & 3. 2. Cowling, S. 2016. ‘Haecceitism’. <i>Stanford Encyclopedia of Philosophy</i> (Fall 2016 edition), ed. E. N. Zalta. URL= <https://plato.stanford.edu/archives/fall2016/entries/haecceitism/>.
<i>Session 10:</i>	<p>“Real definition, essence, and modality”</p> <p>In the opening paragraphs of his ground-breaking ‘Essence and Modality’ (1994), Kit Fine observed that the significance of the concept of essence in metaphysics derives partly from the fact that ‘one of the central concerns of metaphysics is with the identity of things, with what they are’, and that the notion of essence</p>

	<p>serves to isolate the metaphysically significant sense of ‘what a thing is’ (p. 1). He proceeded to argue that the relevant concept of essence cannot be captured in modal terms, but is instead better understood <i>via</i> a broadly Aristotelian notion of real definition. Importantly, though, Fine insisted that although not all of a thing’s necessary properties belong to its essence, all of a thing’s essential properties are necessary properties of that thing. Against Fine, I argue that if the notion of real definition is understood in non-modal terms, as his ‘essence-based’ approach requires, then there is no guarantee that what is true in virtue of a thing’s essence will be a necessary property of the thing. If I am right, this poses a serious challenge to the essentialist theory of modality advocated by Fine and others (including E. J. Lowe and Bob Hale), according to which all metaphysical modality has its source in the essences or natures of things.</p> <p><i>Readings:</i></p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Mackie, P. 2020. ‘Can Metaphysical Modality be Based on Essence?’ In M. Dumitru, ed., <i>Metaphysics, Meaning, and Modality: Themes from Kit Fine</i> (Oxford: Oxford University Press), 247–64. 2. Fine, K. 1994. ‘Essence and Modality’. In J. E. Tomberlin, ed., <i>Philosophical Perspectives 8: Logic and Language</i> (Atascadero, CA: Ridgview), 1–16. <p>Recommended additional reading:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 3. Cowling, S. 2013. ‘The Modal View of Essence’. <i>Canadian Journal of Philosophy</i>, 43: 248–66.
<p>Session 11:</p>	<p>“Essence and context dependence”</p> <p>In <i>On the Plurality of Worlds</i> (1986) and previous writings, David Lewis famously (or notoriously) advocated a counterpart-theoretic account of <i>de re</i> modality and essentialist attributions that makes essentialist attributions context-dependent. By contrast, self-styled advocates of ‘serious’ or ‘real’ essentialism (for example, L. A. Paul) have insisted that essentialist attributions must be regarded as ‘absolute’ rather than context-dependent. I argue, <i>contra</i> Lewis, that essentialist attributions (as opposed to <i>de re</i> modal attributions more generally) should indeed be regarded as having absolute (rather than context-relative) truth conditions, but for reasons distinct from those to which the ‘serious essentialists’ appeal.</p> <p><i>Readings:</i></p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Mackie, P. unpublished MS. ‘Essentialism and Context-dependence: a New Argument against Lewisian Counterpart Theory’. 2. Paul, L. A. 2006. ‘In Defense of Essentialism’. <i>Philosophical Perspectives</i> 20: 333–72.
<p>Session 12.</p>	<p>“Real definition, essence, and individuation”</p> <p>Those who follow Kit Fine’s broadly Aristotelian approach to the notion of essence (according to which essence is characterized in terms of real definition) confront</p>

	<p>significant questions about the relation between essence and individuation. One such issue is whether a thing's essence, so conceived, consists of properties that are unique to that thing (as advocated, for example, by E. J. Lowe and Bob Hale) or whether, as Wiggins has advocated, it consists solely of properties that are 'shared or shareable' (<i>Sameness and Substance</i> (1980), p. 120). I argue that any plausible development of the Aristotelian approach should side with Wiggins on this issue, but that this has the consequence of undermining certain arguments for the indispensability and significance of the notion of essence.</p> <p><i>Readings:</i></p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Lowe, E. J. 2008. 'Two Notions of Being: Entity and Essence'. In R. Le Poidevin, ed., <i>Being: Developments in Contemporary Metaphysics</i>, Royal Institute of Philosophy Supplement 62, 23–48. 2. Koslicki, K. 2012. 'Essence, Necessity, and Explanation'. In T. Tahko, ed., <i>Contemporary Aristotelian Metaphysics</i> (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press), 187–206.
Sessions 13 & 16.	Review Class. Students will have opportunity to ask questions related to the discussions in the previous four sessions.