Epistemology for Metaphysics
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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 Fraaseen, “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

- Lewis, “Sleeping beauty: reply to Elga”
- Dorr, “A challenge for halfers”

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 (“Skepticism”)
- 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
Accordingly, Metaphysics is invoked to challenge a state of flux or hegemonized assumptions; hence, metaphysics validates parrhesia. Dealing with issues about the impossibility of creating metaphysics, epistemology and ontology. Manuscripts of most of my 100 books can be downloaded for FREE at Ulrich de Balbian where my work is in the top 0.5% of about 1 million researchers.