

September 6, 2005

THE METAPHYSICS OF APPEARANCES

phil 245

Fall 2005

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Look at the ink blotches that make up the letters of the words in this sentence. The letters look uniformly black to the naked eye, but with a bit closer inspection -- use a strong magnifying glass or an optical microscope -- you can see that the black bits are splotchy and intermingled with the white of the paper showing through. The edges aren't nearly so smooth as they look. In fact, you can also see that the apparently smooth surface of the paper itself is rough with fibers and pocked with gaps. The ink spots and the paper's texture, we sometimes learn, are different from how they appear. Appearances, however, are central to our engagement with and understanding of the world. Very often it's the way things appear that explains how you act and what you come to believe. In this course we will investigate the status of *appearances* and the relationships that appearances bear to the ways things actually are. Where do appearances fit into the structure of reality, if anywhere? What *are* appearances, anyway?

Texts:

There is no textbook for this course. The readings will be drawn from a variety of historical and contemporary sources, and will be made available either as handouts, reserve readings, web links, or postings to WebCT. Most often I will place either the readings themselves or links to readings online at the course WebCT site. Many of the readings for the course, especially ones early in the semester, are in the public domain and are freely available. I'll include pointers to those where appropriate. You may want to buy two books. They're classics and they're cheap. The first is Bertrand Russell's *Problems of Philosophy*. The second is J.L. Austin's *Sense and Sensibilia*. We'll work with each of these quite a bit and the books are easier to acquire and carry around than the copies you'll otherwise need to download and print.

Coursework:

1. Attendance, preparation, and participation: 1/5
2. 2 papers (4 pages each), due Th 9-29, Th 11-10: 1/5 each
3. Midterm quiz (t.b.a.) and Final (M 10:30): 1/5 each

Topics and Readings:

1. Introduction (T 9-6)
2. Appearance and Reality: A Distinction (Th 9-8)
PLATO, selections from *Republic* book VII and *Theaetetus*
3. Dreams, Appearances, and the Material World (T 9-13)
DESCARTES, *Meditations* 1 and 2
4. Primary and Secondary Qualities (Th 9-15)
LOCKE, *Essay*, Book II, Chapters viii, xxiii
5. Idealisms: Berkeleyan, Transcendental, British (T 9-20, Th 9-22, T 9-27)
BERKELEY, *Principles of Human Knowledge*, Part I (sections 1-33)
KANT, *Prolegomena to Any Future Metaphysics*, Part One plus section 14 of Part Two
BRADLEY, selections from *Appearance and Reality*

6. Time and Appearance (Th 9-29)
McTAGGART, "The Unreality of Time"
7. Sense Data, Appearances, and Matter (T 10-4, Th 10-6, T 10-11)
RUSSELL, *Problems of Philosophy*, Chapters 1-5
8. The Appeal to Common Sense (Th 10-13, T 10-18)
MOORE, "A Defense of Common Sense" and "Proof of an External World"
9. On Behalf of Sense Data (T 10-25)
AYER, "Perception" from *The Problem of Knowledge*
10. Against Sense Data (Th 10-27, T 11-1, Th 11-3)
AUSTIN, selections from *Sense and Sensibilia*
11. Colors (T 11-8, Th 11-10)
HILBERT, Chapter 1 of *Color and Color Perception*
WATKINS, Chapter 1 of *Rediscovering Colors*
12. Interaction and Appearances (T 11-15, Th 11-17)
NOË, selections from *Action in Perception*, Chapters 2 and 3; "Real Presence"
NOË, "Experience of the World in Time"
13. Misleading Appearances (T 11-29, Th 12-1)
MARTIN, selections from *Uncovering Appearances* (ms)
14. Conclusion (T 12-6)