

PERSONAL IDENTITY AND THE SELF

PHIL 2540 – Fall 2015

Lectures: Mondays and Wednesdays; 11:35-12:55
Venue: Mackenzie Building 3275

Instructor: Dr. Nils-Frederic Wagner
Office: 329B Paterson Hall (Department of Philosophy)
Email: nilsfrederic.wagner@carleton.ca
Office Hours: Mondays 2:30-3:30 or by appointment
Course Website: Through registration, you will get access to the cuLearn pages for this course. This system will be used for access to announcements and grades, as well as for essay submissions.

Course Description

This course is meant to introduce you to some of the most fundamental questions of personal identity and selfhood, as they are debated in empirically informed Philosophy of Mind and Action. This will be done through studying the work of major (mostly contemporary) philosophers. We will be reading about and discussing questions such as: Do we persist as one and the same person over time? If so, what makes for our identity through time—is it our minds, our brains, our bodies, or our life stories? Can one person become another person during their lifetime? Is there a self; and if there is, what kind of thing is it?

Course Materials

All the readings will be freely available on Ares, the digital reserve system. You can access it through this link: <https://libares01.carleton.ca> (there will be a link on cuLearn that directs you to Ares as well). Also, most of the readings are freely available on the internet.

Course Requirements

You are required to attend class. Discussion is an important part of the coursework and you will need to be there to participate. You are also expected to do all of the assigned readings. Written requirements will involve two in-class midterm exams (the first will be worth 25%; the second will be worth 35%), consisting mainly of short identification questions and short essay questions; and one 4-5 page (1100-1500 words) final take-home essay (40%). The essay must be formatted with a commonly used 12pt serif font (such as Times New Roman), double-spaced with 1 inch margins on all sides and submitted as a word file. Unless otherwise informed, you should submit your essay through the cuLearn course website. Late essay submissions will be penalized one letter step per day. So, for example, if an A paper is handed in a day late, it will receive an A-; if it is handed in two days late, it will receive a B+ and so forth. Late essays will be accepted without penalty only if there is legitimate reason. You must do all of the written assignments and attend class regularly to get a passing grade. The grade percentages listed above apply only to those who do all of the work. Announcements will be made, assignments given, and materials presented in class. You are responsible to keep track of any material missed due to absence.

Class Schedule, Topics and Readings

The class is divided, roughly, into three thematic priorities; however, all parts are somewhat related and thus overlap to a certain degree. You will get the most out of the lectures if you have the assigned readings done before the corresponding class takes place. Moreover, by building on familiarity with the readings, some of the material presented in class will go beyond what is covered in the readings.

Sep 2, Wed Organizational Matters and Introduction: Personal Identity and Selfhood.

I. Historical Background, and Bodily/Biological Criterion

Sep 4, Fri John Locke (1694): An Essay Concerning Human Understanding (excerpt): Book II, Chapter XXVII: Of Identity and Diversity.

Sep 7, Mon Statutory holiday, University closed.

Sep 9, Wed David Hume (1739): A Treatise of Human Nature (excerpt): Book I, Part IV, Section VI: Of Personal Identity.

Sep 14, Mon Bernard Williams (1970): The Self and the Future.

Sep 16, Wed Eric Olson (1997): Was I Ever a Fetus?

Sep 21, Mon Eric Olson (1999): The Human Animal (excerpt): Chapter 6: The Biological Approach.

Sep 23, Wed Derek Parfit (2012): We Are Not Human Beings.

Sep 28, Mon Midterm Exam (worth 25%).

II. Psychological Criterion, Brain Criterion, and Constitutionalism

Sep 30, Wed Derek Parfit (1984): Reasons and Persons (excerpt): Chapter 10: What We Believe Ourselves to Be.

Oct 05, Mon Derek Parfit (1984): Reasons and Persons (excerpt): Chapter 11: How We Are not What We Believe.

Oct 07, Wed Derek Parfit (1984): Reasons and Persons (excerpt): Chapter 12: Why Our Identity is not What Matters.

Oct 12, Mon Statutory holiday, University closed.

Oct 14, Wed Anthony Brueckner (1993): Parfit on What Matters in Survival.

Oct 19, Mon Thomas Nagel (1986): The View from Nowhere (excerpt): Chapter III: Mind and Body.

Oct 21, Wed Thomas Nagel (1986): The View from Nowhere (excerpt): Chapter IV: The Objective Self.

Oct 26-30 Fall break, No classes.

Nov 02, Mon Midterm Exam (worth 35%).

- Nov 04, Wed Jeff McMahan (2002): *The Ethics of Killing* (excerpt): Chapter 5: The Embodied Mind Account.
- Nov 09, Mon Lynne Baker (2000): *Persons and Bodies* (excerpt): Chapter 5: Personal Identity Over Time.
- Nov 11, Wed John Perry (1978): *A Dialogue on Personal Identity and Immortality*.

III. Narrative Criterion, Empirical Considerations, and Existentialism

- Nov 16, Mon Michael Bratman (2000): *Reflection, Planning, and Temporally Extended Agency*.
- Nov 18, Wed Marya Schechtman (2014): *Staying Alive* (excerpt): Chapter 6: Personal Identity.
- Nov 23, Mon John Searle (2005): *The Self as a Problem in Philosophy and Neurobiology*.
- Nov 25, Wed Marya Schechtman (2010): *Personhood and the Practical*.
- Nov 30, Mon Nir Lipsman & Walter Glannon (2013): *Brain, Mind and Machine: What Are the Implications of Deep Brain Stimulation for Perceptions of Personal Identity, Agency and Free Will?*
- Dec 02, Wed J. David Velleman (2006): *So It Goes*.
- Dec 7, Mon Final Discussion; Final Take-Home Essay assigned, requirements discussed.
- Dec 21, Mon Final Take-Home Essay (worth 40%) due.

Bibliography

- Baker, L. (2000). *Persons and Bodies—A Constitution View* (pp. 118-146). Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
- Bratman, M. (2000). Reflection, Planning, and Temporally Extended Agency. *Philosophical Review*, 109(1): 35-61.
- Brueckner, A. (1993). Parfit on What Matters in Survival. *Philosophical Studies*, 70(1): 1-22.
- Hume, D. (1739/2001). *A Treatise of Human Nature* (pp.164-174). Eds. D. Norton and M. Norton. Oxford: Oxford University Press.
- Lipsman, N. & Glannon, W. (2013). Brain, Mind and Machine: What Are the Implications of Deep Brain Stimulation for Perceptions of Personal Identity, Agency and Free Will? *Bioethics*, 27(9): 465-470.
- Locke, J. (1694/1975). *An Essay Concerning Human Understanding* (pp. 311-333). Ed. P. Nidditch. Oxford: Clarendon Press.
- McMahan, J. (2002). *The Ethics of Killing—Problems at the Margins of Life* (pp. 66-88). Oxford: Oxford University Press.
- Nagel, T. (1986). *The View From Nowhere* (pp. 28-66). Oxford: Oxford University Press.
- Olson, E. (1997). Was I Ever a Fetus? *Philosophy and Phenomenological Research*, 57(1): 95-110.
- Olson, E. (1999). *The Human Animal—Personal Identity Without Psychology* (pp. 124-142). Oxford: Oxford University Press.
- Parfit, D. (1984). *Reasons and Persons* (pp. 199-280). Oxford: Oxford University Press.

- Parfit, D. (2012). We Are Not Human Beings. *Philosophy*, 87(1): 5-28.
- Perry, J. (1978). *A Dialogue on Personal Identity and Immortality*. Indianapolis, IN: Hackett Publishing Company.
- Schechtman, M. (2010). Personhood and the Practical. *Theoretical Medicine and Bioethics*, 31(4): 271-283.
- Schechtman, M. (2014). *Staying Alive—Personal Identity, Practical Concerns, and the Unity of a Life* (pp. 139-168). Oxford: Oxford University Press.
- Searle, J. (2005). The Self as a Problem in Philosophy and Neurobiology. In T. Feinberg and J. Keenan Eds. *The Lost Self—Pathologies of the Brain and Identity* (pp. 7-20). Oxford: Oxford University Press.
- Velleman, J. D. (2006). So It Goes. *The Amherst Lecture in Philosophy*, 1 (2006): 1-23.
<<http://www.amherstlecture.org/velleman2006/>>.
- Williams, B. (1970). The Self and the Future. *Philosophical Review*, 79(2): 161-180.

Department of Philosophy and Carleton University Policies (2015-16)

Assignments:

Unless specifically told otherwise by their instructors, students:

- must not use a plastic or cardboard cover or paper clips
- must staple the paper (there is a stapler on the essay box)
- must include the following:
 - student name
 - student number
 - course number and section
 - instructor's name
- No assignments will be accepted after the last day for handing in term work – see dates in next column.
- Assignments handed in through the essay box (just inside the glass doors, Paterson Hall, Floor 3A) must be dropped into the box by **4:15** on a regular business day in order to be date-stamped with that day's date. Assignments handed in after 4:15 or on a non-business day will be stamped as having been handed in on the next business day.
- Students are required to keep copies of their assignments. If your paper is lost at any point, you will be considered not to have submitted it if you cannot produce a copy immediately on request.

Deferrals for Term Work:

If you miss a final examination and/or fail to submit a final assignment by the due date because of circumstances beyond your control, you may apply for a deferral of examination/assignment. For deferred examinations, you must apply within 5 working days after the scheduled date of your exam. To apply for deferral of a final assignment, you must apply within 5 working days of the last scheduled day of classes. Visit the Registrar's Office for more information.

Plagiarism:

It is the responsibility of each student to understand the meaning of 'plagiarism' as defined in the Undergraduate or Graduate Calendars, and to avoid both committing plagiarism and aiding or abetting plagiarism by other students. (Undergraduate Calendar Academic Regulations, section 14.3, or <http://calendar.carleton.ca/undergrad/regulations/academicregulationsoftheuniversity/acadregsuniv14/>)

Academic Accommodation:

You may need special arrangements to meet your academic obligations during the term. For an accommodation request the processes are as follows:

Pregnancy obligation: write to your professor with any requests for academic accommodation during the first two weeks of class, or as soon as possible after the need for accommodation is known to exist. For more details visit the Equity Services website: <http://www2.carleton.ca/equity/>

Religious obligation: write to your professor with any requests for academic accommodation during the first two weeks of class, or as soon as possible after the need for accommodation is known to exist. For more details visit the Equity Services website: <http://www2.carleton.ca/equity/>

Academic Accommodations for Students with Disabilities: The **Paul Menton Centre** for Students with Disabilities (PMC) provides services to students with Learning Disabilities (LD), psychiatric/mental health disabilities, Attention Deficit Hyperactivity Disorder (ADHD), Autism Spectrum Disorders (ASD), chronic medical conditions, and impairments in mobility, hearing, and vision. If you have a disability requiring academic accommodations in this course, please contact PMC at 613-520-6608 or pmc@carleton.ca for a formal evaluation. If you are already registered with the PMC, contact your PMC coordinator to send your **Letter of Accommodation** at the beginning of the term, and no later than two weeks before the first in-class scheduled test or exam requiring accommodation (*if applicable*). After requesting

accommodation from PMC, meet with your professor to ensure accommodation arrangements are made. Please consult the PMC website for the deadline to request accommodations for the formally-scheduled exam (*if applicable*) at <http://www2.carleton.ca/pmc/new-and-current-students/dates-and-deadlines/>

You can visit the Equity Services website to view the policies and to obtain more detailed information on academic accommodation at <http://www2.carleton.ca/equity/>

Important Dates:

Sept. 2	Classes start.
Sept. 4	Classes follow a Monday schedule.
Sept. 7	Labour Day - University closed.
Sept. 18	Last day for registration and course changes in Fall and Fall/Winter courses.
Sept. 30	Last day for entire fee adjustment when withdrawing from Fall term or two-term courses.
Oct. 12	Thanksgiving Day – University closed.
Oct. 26-30	Fall Break – no classes.
Nov. 24	Last day for tests or examinations in courses below 4000-level before the Final Examination period.
Dec. 7	Last day of classes, Fall term. Last day for handing in term work and the last day that can be specified by a course instructor as a due date for Fall term courses.
Dec. 7	Last day to withdraw from Fall term courses (academic purposes only).
Dec. 8	No classes or examinations take place. Review classes may be held, but no new material may be introduced.
Dec. 9-21	Final examinations for Fall courses, mid-terms for Fall/Winter courses. Exams are normally held all seven days of the week.
Dec. 21	Take-home exams are due.
Jan. 6	Winter term classes begin.
Jan. 19	Last day for registration and course changes in Winter term classes.
Jan. 31	Last day for entire fee adjustment when withdrawing from winter courses or winter portion of two-term courses.
Feb. 15-19	Winter Break, no classes.
Mar. 24	Last day for tests or examinations in courses below 4000-level before the Final Examination period.
Mar. 25	Good Friday – University closed.
Apr. 8	Last day of Fall/Winter and Winter term classes. Last day for handing in term work and the last day that can be specified by a course instructor as a due date for term work for Fall/Winter and Winter term courses.
Apr. 8	Last day to withdraw from Fall/Winter and Winter term courses (academic purposes only).
Apr. 9-10	No classes or examinations take place. Review classes may be held, but no new material may be introduced.
Apr. 11-23	Final Examinations. Exams are normally held all seven days of the week.
Apr. 23	Take-home exams are due.

Addresses:

Department of Philosophy:	3A35 Paterson Hall www.carleton.ca/philosophy 520-2110
Registrar's Office:	300 Tory www.carleton.ca/registrar 520-3500
Student Academic Success Centre:	302 Tory www.carleton.ca/sasc 520-7850
Writing Tutorial Service:	4 th Floor, Library http://www1.carleton.ca/sasc/writing-tutorial-service/ 520-6632
MacOdrum Library	http://www.library.carleton.ca/ 520-2735