

PHIL 595F | TOPICS IN FORMAL PHILOSOPHY

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Bartlett 363

This course is an overview of recent (and not so recent) work on conditionals. Topics include: the canonical semantics for conditionals and some of the alternatives (e.g. expressivist, relativist, NTV, and dynamic theories); the logic of indicative and counterfactual conditionals; the formal criteria that any theory of conditionals should meet; the relationship between conditionals and conditional probability; the analysis of conditional obligations; the relationship between chance and counterfactual conditionals.

PRACTICAL INFORMATION

Meetings: W 16.00-18.30, Bartlett 374

Course website: <http://perezcarballo.org/phil595F>

Office hours: TH 2:30-4.30, and by appointment

Feel free to stop by my office if you want to talk about the readings for the class, or if you have an idea (or a proto-idea, for that matter) you would like to bounce off me. If you can't make it to my office hours, email me so we can arrange to meet at some other time.

PREREQUISITES

This class is only open to graduate students in philosophy or to undergraduates who have taken *three* prior courses in philosophy, including one of Phil 110 (Intro to Logic) or Phil 310 (Intermediate Logic), or a similar class.

If you have any questions about whether you satisfy the course prerequisites, please let me know.

READINGS

You should ensure you have access to the following book:

- J. Bennett. *A Philosophical Guide to Conditionals*. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2003

All other readings will be made available electronically. That said, you may find it useful to also have access to the following books:

- W. L. Harper, R. C. Stalnaker, and G. Pearce, eds. *Ifs: Conditionals, Belief, Decision, Chance and Time*. Dordrecht: Reidel, 1981
- A. Kratzer. *Modals and Conditionals: New and Revised Perspectives*. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2012
- D. Lewis. *Counterfactuals*. Oxford: Basil Blackwell, 1973

COURSE REQUIREMENTS & EXPECTATIONS

It is a good idea to think of the class—whether or not you are enrolled for credit—as a reading group of which you are an *active* participant. This means I will expect all of you to have carefully read the material before our meeting and to have carefully thought about it.

Problem sets

If you are enrolled in this course for credit you will have to complete a series of problem sets. These will be due roughly every two weeks during the semester. In addition, you will write a short term paper (≤ 3000 words). A list of topics will be posted on the course website in due course.

Term paper

Seminar credit

If you wish to obtain seminar credit, you will have to write a more substantial term paper (5000-7500 words). You will also give a 30 minute seminar presentation during the course of the semester. We will discuss relevant details in due course.

ACADEMIC INTEGRITY

It goes without saying that EVERYTHING YOU SUBMIT MUST BE YOUR OWN WORK. I take academic honesty very seriously.

General principles of academic honesty include the concept of respect for the intellectual property of others, the expectation that individual work will be submitted unless otherwise allowed by an instructor, and the obligations both to protect one's own academic work from misuse by others as well as to avoid using another's work as one's own. All students are expected to understand and abide by these principles. Each student must be familiar with the University's [Academic Honesty Policy](#). If you have any questions about academic dishonesty, please come talk to me as soon as possible.

STUDENTS WITH DISABILITIES

In order to help us make reasonable, effective, and appropriate accommodations to meet your needs, you should first register with **Disability Services**. Once you do that, please come talk to me. It would be most helpful to receive the proper paperwork as soon as possible so we can make the appropriate accommodations in a timely manner.

TENTATIVE SCHEDULE

This is mostly a list of some possible readings. The reading schedule may end up looking nothing like this.

09.03 Introduction: background and overview

Bennett, *A Philosophical Guide to Conditionals*, ch. 1-3.

Indicative conditionals

09.10 Probabilities of conditionals and conditional probabilities

Bennett, *A Philosophical Guide to Conditionals*, ch. 4-5. // Lewis, 'Probabilities of conditionals and conditional probabilities'.

09.17 Subjectivity

Bennett, *A Philosophical Guide to Conditionals*, ch. 6. // Stalnaker, 'Probability and Conditionals'.

09.24 Do indicative conditionals express propositions?

Bennett, *A Philosophical Guide to Conditionals*, ch. 7. // Edgington, 'On Conditionals', §§7-9

10.01 Modal analyses

Kratzer, 'Modality' // Kratzer, *Modals and Conditionals*, ch. 4. // Rothschild, 'A note on conditionals and restrictors'.

10.08 Conditional obligations: some puzzles

Chisholm, 'Contrary-to-Duty Imperatives and Deontic Logic' // Zvolenszky, 'Is a Possible-Worlds Semantics of Modality Possible? A Problem for Kratzer's Semantics'

10.15 The Miner's Puzzle

Kolodny and MacFarlane, 'Ifs and oughts' // Willer, 'A Remark on Iffy Oughts'.

Subjunctive conditionals

10.22 Support theories

Goodman, *Fact, Fiction, and Forecast*, ch. 1 // Bennett, *A Philosophical Guide to Conditionals*, ch. 20

10.29 The Lewis/Stalnaker theory

Stalnaker, 'A theory of conditionals' // Lewis, *Counterfactuals*, ch. 1 // Bennett, *A Philosophical Guide to Conditionals*, ch. 10-11.

11.05 No class: Tuesday schedule

11.12 Chance and counterfactuals

Hawthorne, 'Chance and Counterfactuals' // Williams, 'Chances, Counterfactuals, and Similarity' // Bennett, *A Philosophical Guide to Conditionals*, ch. 16

11.19 Counterfactual triviality?

Williams, 'Counterfactual triviality: A Lewis-impossibility proof for counterfactuals' // Skyrms, 'Adams Conditionals' // Edgington, 'Counterfactuals' // Bennett, *A Philosophical Guide to Conditionals*, ch. 16

11.26 Overspill

BIBLIOGRAPHY

Bennett, J. *A Philosophical Guide to Conditionals*. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2003.

Chisholm, R. M. 'Contrary-to-Duty Imperatives and Deontic Logic'. *Analysis* 24.2 (1963), pages.

Edgington, D. 'On Conditionals'. *Mind* 104.414 (1995), pp. 235-329.

——— 'Counterfactuals'. *Proceedings of the Aristotelian Society* 108.1 (2008), pp. 1-21.

Goodman, N. *Fact, Fiction, and Forecast*. 4th ed. Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 1983.

Harper, W. L., R. C. Stalnaker, and G. Pearce, eds. *Ifs: Conditionals, Belief, Decision, Chance and Time*. Dordrecht: Reidel, 1981.

Hawthorne, J. 'Chance and Counterfactuals'. *Philosophy and Phenomenological Research* 70.2 (2005), pp. 396-405.

Kolodny, N. and J. MacFarlane. 'Ifs and oughts'. *The Journal of Philosophy* 107.3 (2010), pp. 115-143.

Kratzer, A. 'Modality'. In: *Semantics: An International Handbook of Contemporary Research*. Ed. by A. von Stechow and D. Wunderlich. Berlin: de Gruyter, 1991.

——— *Modals and Conditionals: New and Revised Perspectives*. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2012.

Lewis, D. *Counterfactuals*. Oxford: Basil Blackwell, 1973.

——— 'Probabilities of conditionals and conditional probabilities'. *Philosophical Review* 85.3 (1976), pp. 297-315.

Rothschild, D. 'A note on conditionals and restrictors'. Unpublished ms., UCL. 2012.

- Skyrms, B. 'Adams Conditionals'. In: *Probability and Conditionals: Belief Revision and Rational Decision*. Ed. by E. Eells and B. Skyrms. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1994, pp. 13–26.
- Stalnaker, R. C. 'A theory of conditionals'. *Studies in Logical Theory* 2 (1968), pp. 98–112.
- 'Probability and Conditionals'. *Philosophy of Science* 37.1 (1970), pp. 64–80.
- Willer, M. 'A Remark on Iffy Oughts'. *Journal of Philosophy* 109.7 (2012), pp. 449–461.
- Williams, J. R. G. 'Chances, Counterfactuals, and Similarity'. *Philosophy and Phenomenological Research* 2 (), pp. 385–420.
- 'Counterfactual triviality: A Lewis-impossibility proof for counterfactuals'. *Philosophy and Phenomenological Research* 85.3 (2012), pp. 648–670.
- Zvolenszky, Z. 'Is a Possible-Worlds Semantics of Modality Possible? A Problem for Kratzer's Semantics'. *Proceedings of Semantics and Linguistic Theory* 12 (2002).