

Metaphysics of Modality (PHIL 176)
Spring 2006

Time: MW 1:00 PM – 2:50 PM
Location: Bunche 3178
Instructor: Ben Caplan
Office: Dodd 382
Office Hour: T 1:30 PM – 2:30 PM, or by appointment
Phone: 310.206.3475
Email: ben_caplan@umanitoba.ca
Webpage: http://home.cc.umanitoba.ca/~caplanbd/phil_176.htm

Description

This is a course in the metaphysics of modality: i.e. of necessity and possibility. We will address questions about the existence of mere *possibilia* (are there any?), the nature of possible worlds (are they abstract or concrete? what are they like?), and the mechanics of *de re* modality (is there transworld identity, or should we be counterpart theorists?). We might also address additional questions: e.g. about the connection between existence and instantiation (can objects have properties at worlds at which they don't exist?) and about the necessity of origin.

Readings

Copies of David Lewis's *On the Plurality of Worlds* (Malden, MA: Blackwell, 1986) should be available in the bookstore. Additional readings will be assigned during the quarter. Many (if not all) of these will be available electronically through the course webpage.

Requirements

Your grade will be based on two or three assignments. Due dates will be announced in class as we proceed. You will have at least one week to complete each assignment. I won't accept assignments more than one class late, since I might be posting answers on the course webpage.