Aim and scope

No notion seems simpler and easier to understand than identity, the relation which everything bears to itself and nothing else. Despite its apparent simplicity, however, it is far from clear what the properties of identity are, as the following questions suggest:

- Is it the case that identical things have the same properties?
- Is identity a necessary relation?
- Is it the case, as Leibniz suggested, that things having the same properties are identical?
- When we talk about 'properties' in the above conditions, what kinds of properties are we referring to?
- Anti-haecceitism is the view that the qualitative facts about the world fix the identity facts. Is this view tenable?
- Can the identity relation be vague?
- Is identity a fundamental relation?
- Does identity apply to the objects of quantum physics? If not, should we revise set theory accordingly?
- Do mathematical objects acquire their identity simply in virtue of the relations they bear to each other?
- Can identity be a one-many relation?
The goal of this course is to understand and attempt to answer the above questions in the light of the most recent philosophical literature.

The class will be taught in English.

**Bibliography**


Kripke, Saul (1980). Naming and Necessity, Wiley


Schwarz, Wolfgang (2013). “Contingent identity”, Philosophy Compass, 8(5): 486-95


Assignments and policies

Short essays. Each student enrolled in this class is required to submit 9 short assignments.

Each essay must be structured as follows. (1) Formulate a question or a problem that you find interesting or hard to solve based on the reading for the week. (2) Provide a solution or a strategy for a possible solution, or discuss the problem if you think you cannot find a solution. The whole assignment should be 1 page in length.

Everybody is expected to discuss their own questions during lecture. Short assignments must be submitted at the beginning of class, or otherwise emailed, on the day they are due. Late assignments will not be accepted.

Final essay. One paper of approximately 20 pages (not including bibliography) must be submitted at the end of the course on a topic agreed upon with the instructor.

The final grade is weighed as follows. Short essays: 63% (7%x9). Final essay: 37%. Attendance will count towards the grade as follows: two absences are allowed; for each additional absence, subtract 5% from the final grade.

Although cooperation among students is encouraged, assignments are meant to be individual tasks. Overwhelmingly similar assignments will not count for credit. Remember that plagiarism (including use of unreferenced web sources) will not be tolerated.

Schedule and readings

April 17 Course presentation
April 24 Identity of indiscernibles I
  Reading: Black (1952)
  Optional readings: Hacking (1975), Rodríguez-Pereyra (2006)
May 1 ***NO CLASS***
May 8 ***NO CLASS***
May 15 Identity of indiscernibles II
  Reading: Shapiro (2008)
  Optional readings: Quine (1976), Ketland (2006), Ladyman et al. (2011)
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<thead>
<tr>
<th>Date</th>
<th>Topic</th>
<th>Reading 1</th>
<th>Optional Reading 1</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>June 5</td>
<td>Indiscernibility of identicals and contingent identity II</td>
<td>Gibbard (1975)</td>
<td>Schwarz (2013)</td>
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<td>June 19</td>
<td>Vague identity II</td>
<td>Williams (2008)</td>
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<td>July 17</td>
<td>Composition as identity I</td>
<td>Turner (forthcoming)</td>
<td>Cotnoir (forthcoming)</td>
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<td>July 24</td>
<td>Composition as identity II</td>
<td>Kleinschmidt (forthcoming)</td>
<td>Hawley (2006)</td>
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