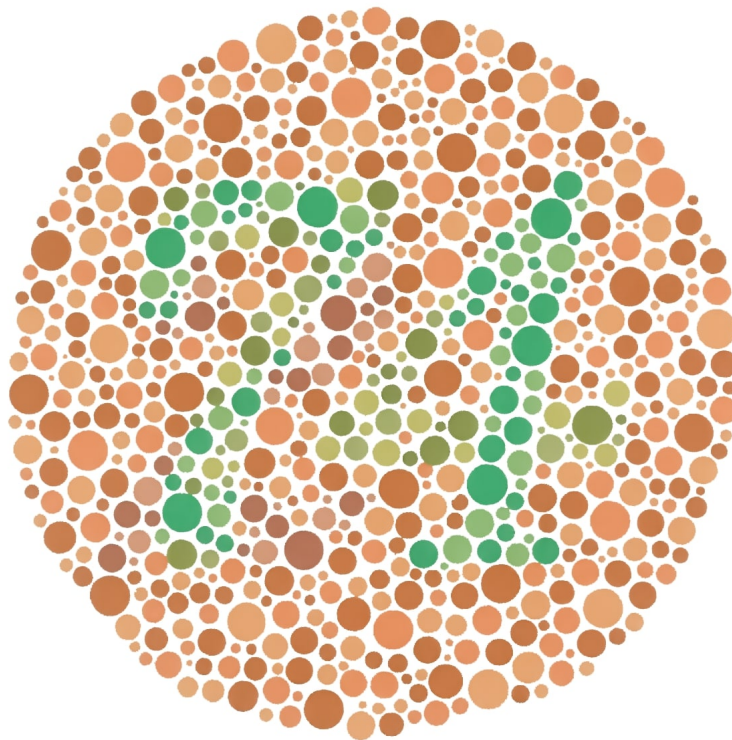


Philosophy of Colour

DRAFT Syllabus: Subject to Change

Spring 2020

Gabe Dupre



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Office: Edith-Morley G70

Office Hour: 1-2pm Wednesday

Lecture: 11-1pm, Friday Edith-Morley 280

Seminar: 12-1pm Wednesday, Edith-Morley 287

Course Overview

Colour is one of the most familiar aspects of everyday life and experience. However, reflection on colour very quickly raises very deep philosophical concerns. What is colour? Is it a property of external objects and surfaces, as it immediately appears to us? Unlike other paradigmatic properties of these external objects, such as size and shape, physical descriptions of such objects make no reference to colour. For this reason, some have argued that colours should be viewed instead as features of *our psychologies*, rather than of the objects we perceive. But this proposal forces us to reject much of our commonsense understanding of the world and our relations to it. This instability of colours, between the world and our perception of it, resists any simple and satisfactory description. Resolution of these worries requires inter-disciplinary work, drawing on psychology, physics, linguistics, and more.

In the first part of this course, we will examine the various philosophical options for a theory of color, mapping out the logical space. In the latter half of the course, we will draw connections between these ‘metaphysical’ accounts of colour and other areas of inquiry, such as cognitive science, linguistics, and epistemology. This course will provide an opportunity not just to engage with some of the oldest and deepest puzzles in philosophy, but to approach these puzzles in a thoroughly inter-disciplinary way.

Course Difficulty

While there are no prerequisites for this course, it will be intellectually demanding—requiring you to master novel theoretical concepts and critically engage with complex arguments in your own writing. As with many other courses, to do well in PP3CO you will need to:

- Attend all lectures and seminars and take (mental or physical) notes;
- Complete all the course readings, slowly and carefully, typically multiple times;
- Prepare your presentation in advance, reflecting carefully on reading and lectures;
- Work hard on your papers, including proof-reading and re-drafting multiple times, and submit them on time.
- **Optional, but highly recommended:** Meet with me to discuss questions regarding the course material or your paper topics.

This class is not about memorizing facts or correctly reproducing slogans; this class is about developing your own opinions and critical perspective on the topics discussed and enriching your ability to articulate and defend those opinions in a written form. Students who are prepared to work hard, challenge themselves, and attend lecture and section regularly will do well.

For pro-tips on reading and writing philosophy:

<https://sites.google.com/a/wellesley.edu/pinkguidetophilosophy/>

Course Materials

There will be no official textbook for the course. All of the required readings will be available digitally through the course webpage. Please check the course website regularly for updates.

If you are interested in reading further into a topic than the assigned readings, please let me know and I can suggest some material. Another good place to look is the Stanford Encyclopedia of Philosophy.

Course Requirements

1. **Paper 1:** 30% of final grade.
2. **Paper 2:** 60% of final grade.
3. **In-Class Presentation** 10% of final grade.
4. **Be familiar with and abide by the University of Reading's policy on Academic Integrity:** This policy can be found at:
<https://libguides.reading.ac.uk/academicintegrity/about>
 - Students needing an academic accommodation based on a disability should notify the Disability Advisory Service (disability@reading.ac.uk, 0118 378 4202). When possible, students should contact the DAS within the first two weeks of the quarter, as reasonable notice is needed to coordinate accommodations.
 - Unless requested by the DAS, ***The use of computers, phones, and tablets is not allowed in lecture.*** This component of the course's requirements is not intended to be mean or punitive, but rather to aid your understanding — and the understanding of those around you — of the contents of the lectures.
5. **Late assignments:** Late papers will be docked by 10% for every 24 hour period after the due date up to 5 days. After this, the paper will receive no credit. Extensions may be granted if you have a valid reason, For an extension, you must contact the School of Humanities. For details see the course website.

Lectures and Seminars

Friday's class will be dedicated to lecture, in which I will present an overview of that week's material. Wednesday's classes will be dedicated to discussing the previous week's material. These will begin with either one or two student presentations and student-led discussion. The boundary between lecture and seminar will, however, be a fluid one. Student participation (questions, objections, etc.) during lecture is highly encouraged. For seminars, I would like students who are not presenting to come to class armed with several questions to ask about the material. I may cold-call students for these questions.

Note: Week 1 will be slightly differently organized, as there is no previous week's material to present on. In week 1, Wednesday's class will be a general introduction to/overview of the course, and a lecture on the first readings. Friday's class will be a discussion of this material. So please read the readings associated with week 1 (Chirumuuta and Russell) in advance.

Classroom Etiquette

Classroom participation is strongly encouraged. The best way to learn philosophy is to *do* philosophy, and this involves discussion and argumentation, in the flesh as well as in written work. Such discussion may get heated and this is OK. However, what is not OK is behavior that discourages other students from engaging. Finding the line between passionate debate and personal attack is a vital skill for anyone in or outside of academia.

All other students in the classroom must be treated respectfully, as peers engaged in a collective activity. Behavior that will not be tolerated includes, but is not limited to: dismissing another student's opinion, talking over another student, personal attacks etc. In short: Don't be a jerk. Class discussion is every student's opportunity to engage with the material, and behavior which impedes this will not be tolerated.

Course Papers

You will be assigned two papers, of equal length, but in increasing order of difficulty. The idea is that you will build up your philosophical skills of exegesis, argumentation, and novel contribution to philosophical inquiry. I will provide detailed feedback. In order to do well in this course, you will need to incorporate this feedback into later work.

All papers will be submitted online, via the course website. Please include a cover page including: your name, your student ID number, my name, the course name, and a title.

Paper 1

A prompt for paper 1, with options, will be assigned in the Friday lecture of week 3, to be submitted on the Friday of Week 5. This paper will be between 2000 and 2500 words long.

Paper 2

A prompt for paper 2, with options, will be assigned in the lecture of Week 9, to be submitted on the Friday of Week 11. This paper will be between 2000 and 2500 words long.

Presentation

Each student will be responsible for a brief in-class presentation. These will take place in the seminar session on Wednesday morning. Each student will be given 20 minutes, in which they will present some aspect of the material from the previous week's reading and will lead class discussion on this topic. This can include exposition, but should also go beyond the course reading, evaluating the argument/theory, applying it to novel cases, etc. Students may divide this 20 minutes up between presentation and discussion as they please, but should note that the assessment will be based on their contribution. As there are 12 students enrolled, and 9 weeks of class (not including day one), there will be usually just one student presentation per week. I plan to set aside time after lecture on Friday to discuss the material with students presenting the following week. I will pin a spreadsheet to my office door on which students can select a week in which to present. You may also e-mail me specifying your preference, and I will update the sheet accordingly. If the necessary slots are not filled one week before the presentations are to be given, I will try and find some students in seminar to agree to present the following week. If I can't find enough volunteers, I will randomly select students who are not yet assigned to a week.

Reading Schedule

Readings marked with an '*' are recommended, but not required. Readings are to be read before lecture.

Week 1: The Colour Problem

- Chirimuuta, M. *Outside Color* (Chapter 1)
- * Russell, B. *Problems of Philosophy* (Chapter 1)

Week 2: Eliminativism and Subjectivism

- * Hardin, C.L. *A Spectral Reflectance Doth Not a Color Make*
- Chirimuuta, M. *Outside Color* (Chapter 3)
- Palmer, S. *Vision Science: Photons to Phenomenology* (Section 3.1)

Week 3: Reductive Realism

- Byrne, A. and Hilbert, D. *Color Realism and Color Science*
- Jackson, F. and Pargetter, R. *An Objectivists Guide to Subjectivism About Color*

Week 4: Non-Reductive Realism and Dispositionalism

- Johnston, M. *How to Speak of the Colors*

* Stroud, B. *Dispositional Theories of the Colours of Things*

Week 5: Colour Perception

- Land E. and McCann, J. *Lightness and Retinex Theory*
- Palmer, S. *Vision Science: Photons to Phenomenology* (Sections 3.2-3.3)
- Burge, T. *Perception: Where Mind Begins*
- * Chirimuuta, M. *Reflectance Realism and Colour Constancy*

NO CLASS WEEK 6

Week 7: Colour and Other Visual Properties

- Chirimuuta, M. *Outside Color* (Chapter 4)
- Akins, K. and Hahn, M. *More Than Mere Coloring*
- * Matthen, M. *How Things Look (and What Things Look That Way)*

Week 8: Colour and Other Perceptual Illusions

- Rey, G. *In Defense of Folieism*
- Collins, J. *Representations Without Representata*

Week 9: Inter-Linguistic Variation and Colour

- Berlin, B. and Kay, P. *Basic Color Terms: Their Universality and Evolution* (Chapters 1 and 2)
- * Lucy, J. *The Linguistics of 'Color'*
- Gibson, E. *et al. Color Naming Across Languages Reflects Color Use*
- Palmer, S. *Vision Science: Photons to Phenomenology* (Section 3.4)

Week 10: Intra-Linguistic Variation and Colour

- Cappelen, H. and Lepore, E. *Insensitive Semantics* (Chapter 2 and Chapter 10-13)
- Hansen, N. *Colour Adjectives and Radical Contextualism*

Week 11: Colour and Knowledge

- Jackson, F. *Epiphenomenal Qualia*
- Lewis, D. *What Experience Teaches*
- * Byrne, A. *Color and the Mind-Body Problem*