

Philosophical Issues in Quantified Modal Logic

J. Stanley

Fall 2007

The topic of the seminar is philosophical issues in quantified modal logic. We will begin with a very brief introduction to modal logic. We will not have time to do many details, so we will focus on getting clear about the basic semantic interpretation of quantified modal logic, rather than proving theorems. We will then turn to some metaphysical issues at the intersection of the semantics, metaphysics, and logic of modal discourse. Our central metaphysical focus will be on various versions of the view that the actual world with its objects and properties is all there is. Our focus will be on whether we can reconcile an adequate semantics for quantified modal logic with this view. Finally, we will look at some issues concerning the Barcan Formula and its converse.

For the first month, there will be additional meetings on Mondays at 4:30 in the graduate lounge to cover topics in logic.

Tentative Syllabus (subject to revision)

September 6. Review of propositional modal logic.

Chapters 1, 2, and 3 of Hughes and Cresswell, A New Introduction to Modal Logic

Recommended: Chapter 6, Hughes and Cresswell (for advanced students)

September 13: Review of Quantified Modal Logic

Chapters 13 of Hughes and Cresswell

Recommended: Chapter 14 of Hughes and Cresswell (for advanced students)

September 20. Variable Domains

Readings: Saul Kripke, "Semantical Considerations on Modal Logic"

Selections from Chapter 15 and 16 of Hughes and Cresswell

September 27. Plantinga on Actualism

"Actualism and Possible Worlds"

Recommended: Chapters 3, 4, 5, and 7 of The Nature of Necessity

October 4. Adams on Actualism

"Actualism and Thisness"

Recommended: "Theories of Actuality"

October 11: Plantinga on Existentialism

“On Existentialism”

Kit Fine, “Plantinga on Possibilist Discourse”

October 18 NO CLASS

October 25. Truth-in-a-world vs. Truth-at-a-world: Guest lecturer, Jeffrey King

Jeffrey King, The Nature and Structure of Content, Chapter 3

November 1 Worries with Actualism

Alan McMichael “A Problem for Actualism about Possible Worlds”

David Lewis, selections from Chapter 3 of On the Plurality of Worlds

November 8

NO CLASS

November 15 Actualist semantic theories for QML

Thomas Jager, “An Actualist Semantics for Quantified Modal Logic”

Alan McMichael, “A New Actualist Modal Semantics”

November 20: The Simplest Quantified Modal Logic

Bernard Linsky and Edward Zalta, “In Defense of the Simplest Quantified Modal Logic”

Some Williamson papers

At least two Timothy Williamson papers:

“Truthmakers and the Converse Barcan Formula”

“Bare possibilia”

“Existence and Contingency”

“Bare possibilia”

December 6: Guest Lecturer: Karen Bennett

“Two Axes of Actualism”

“Proxy Actualism”