PHILOSOPHY 611: CONDITIONALIZATION AND ITS DISCONTENTS

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FOCUS | This course will explore a central question from several angles: how should your beliefs change when you learn something? If you have no background in formal epistemology, this course will serve as a hands-on introduction to helpful formal tools, as well as a survey of some of the most intriguing open questions in the field.

First we will talk about conditionalization and Jeffrey conditionalization. Then we will talk about five problems that have been raised for these classic procedures: how they could be generalized to updating on non-propositional information, how they fail for credence distributions over *de se* propositions, whether they can apply to imprecise credences, whether they adequately represent identical learning, and whether they conflict with a holistic understanding of confirmation.

MATERIALS | Scheduled readings are listed in normal font in the syllabus. Italics indicate supplementary readings you may also want to explore. Readings and problem sets will be posted on our course webpage at http://ctools.umich.edu.

GRADING | Problem sets: 50%
Term paper: 50%

I will assign five problem sets to give you some hands-on practice with the more formal concepts we will talk about. Problem sets will be due on Tuesdays by midnight so that I have time to look at your work and you have time to look at the readings before seminar on Thursday. It is okay to work together, but please always try to teach each other rather than share answers. If you are stuck on a problem, please feel free to email me, call me, or drop by my office with questions.

The term paper can be anything from an 8-page *Analysis*-style piece to a 25-page paper including some literature review. I am simply looking for something that is clear and precise and moves the current dialectic on a topic forward in some way. Each person taking the seminar for credit should meet with me by December 4 to discuss their plan for a term paper.

SCHEDULE | 9/10   introduction to conditionalization
        Skyrms 1999: Choice and Chance: An Introduction to Inductive Logic
        Hacking 2001: An Introduction to Probability and Inductive Logic
        Joyce 2003: "Bayes' Theorem"
        Strevens 2006: "Notes on Bayesian Confirmation Theory"
        Weisberg 2009: Varieties of Bayesianism, Chapters 1–2

9/17   Jeffrey 1965: *The Logic of Decision*, Chapter 11
        Levi 1967: "Probability Kinematics"
        Jeffrey 1968: "Probable Knowledge"
        Weisberg 2009: Varieties of Bayesianism, Chapter 3

9/22   problem set 1 due

9/24   van Fraassen 1989: *Laws and Symmetry*, Chapter 13
        Howson and Franklin 1994: "Bayesian Conditionalization and Probability Kinematics"
        Diaconis and Zabell 1982: "Updating Subjective Probability"
        Skyrms 1987: "Updating, Supposing, and MAXENT"

10/1   Elga 2000: "Self-Locating Belief and the Sleeping Beauty Problem"
        Arntzenius 2003: "Some Problems for Conditionalization and Reflection"
        Perry 1977: "Frege on Demonstratives"
        Lewis 1979: "Attitudes De Dicto and De Se"
        Lewis 2001: "Sleeping Beauty: Reply to Elga"

10/6   problem set 2 due

10/8   Hitchcock 2004: "Beauty and the Bets"
        Bovens 2010: "Judy Benjamin is a Sleeping Beauty"
        Meacham 2003: "Sleeping Beauty and the Dynamics of De Se Beliefs"
        Halpern 2004: "Sleeping Beauty Reconsidered: Conditioning and Reflection..."

10/15   van Fraassen 1990: "Figures in a Probability Landscape"
        Weatherson: "Decision Making with Imprecise Probabilities"
        Levi 1980: The Enterprise of Knowledge
        Jeffrey 1983: "Bayesianism with a Human Face"
        Walley 1991: Statistical Reasoning with Imprecise Probabilities
        Kaplan 1996: Decision Theory as Philosophy

10/20   problem set 3 due

10/22   White 2006: "Problems for Dogmatism"
        Weatherson 2007: "The Bayesian and the Dogmatist"
        Moore 1939: "Proof of an External World"
        Pryor 2000: "The Skeptic and the Dogmatist"

10/29   Joyce 2005: "How Probabilities Reflect Evidence"
        White 2010: "Evidential Symmetry and Mushy Credence"

11/3   problem set 4 due

11/5   Adam Elga presenting: "Subjective Probabilities Should Be Sharp"