Focus  This inaugural Michigan Nelson Seminar in Philosophy will be a high-level survey of topics in contemporary philosophy of language and related subfields. The seminar will welcome four visitors over the course of the semester. In addition to four sessions with visitors attending, the seminar will consist of discussion sessions in which we discuss the research of each visitor.

Materials  All readings will be posted on our course webpage at http://ctools.umich.edu.

Grading  Presentation at one discussion session: 30%
Referee reports submitted for two additional discussion sessions: 10%
Questions submitted for first three sessions with visitors attending: 15%
Research paper: 45%

The requirements for this course are designed to help you develop the wide range of skills that you need as a professional philosopher. If you are presenting at a discussion session, you must email me a detailed handout for your presentation at least 48 hours in advance of the seminar. If you are submitting a referee report for a discussion session, first read the 12-page “Guidelines on How to Referee” by Thom Brooks, posted on the course webpage. With these guidelines in mind, prepare a mock referee report for one of the papers we are discussing in that session. Referee reports must be emailed to me at least 48 hours in advance of the relevant seminar. Finally, questions for Dave Chalmers, Ted Sider, and Mark Schroeder must be submitted to me by email at least 48 hours in advance of the seminar they are attending. These questions will be assessed according to whether they reflect a long and serious effort to engage with the material to be discussed in the seminar.

Schedule  

9/7  introductory meeting

9/14  Chalmers 2011: introduction to Constructing the World
Chalmers 2011: Chapter 1, “Scrutability and the Aufbau”
Chalmers 2011: Chapter 2, “Varieties of Scrutability”

9/21  Chalmers 2011: Chapter 3, “Adventures with a Cosmoscope”
Chalmers 2011: Chapter 4, “The Case for A Priori Scrutability”

9/28  Quine 1951: “Two Dogmas of Empiricism”
Carnap 1956: “Meaning and Synonymy in Natural Language”
Chalmers 2011: Chapter 5, “Revisability and Conceptual Change”

10/3  Dave Chalmers visits
Pincock 2009: “Carnap’s Logical Structure of the World”
Chalmers 2011: Chapter 8, “Whither the Aufbau?”
10/12  Sider 2011: Chapter 1, “Structure”
       Sider 2011: Chapter 2, “Primitivism”
       Sider 2011: Chapter 3, “Connections”

10/19  Sider 2011: Chapter 4, “Substantivity”
       Sider 2011: Chapter 6, “Beyond the Predicate”

10/26  Ted Sider visits
       Sider 2011: Chapter 7, “Questions”

11/2   Schroeder 2008: “Expressivist Truth”
       Schroeder 2011: “Two Roles for Propositions: Cause for Divorce?”

11/9   Schroeder 2011: “Hard Cases for Combining Expressivism and Deflationist Truth”
       Ross and Schroeder 2011: “Reversibility or Disagreement”

11/16  Mark Schroeder visits
       Schroeder 2011: “Attitudes and Epistemics”

11/23  seminar rescheduled for 12/7 due to Thanksgiving holiday

12/7   John Hawthorne visits