

# The Philosophy of David Lewis

21/22

Semester 2

David Lewis (1941–2001) was one of the most important philosophers of the twentieth century. He made significant contributions to philosophy of mathematics, philosophy of science, decision theory, epistemology, metaethics and aesthetics, and most significantly to philosophy of language, philosophy of mind, and metaphysics. Despite the wide range of issues addressed in Lewis’s work, there’s a unifying method. This course is intended to introduce some of Lewis’s key contributions by focusing on a selection of his writings. The course is oriented around a single philosopher and his work, but attention will also be given to the connections between Lewis’s philosophy and the enduring problems of traditional philosophy.

## Course Organiser:

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## Lecturer:

Dr Mahrad Almotahari

## Course Secretary:

Ms Anne-Marie Cowie

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## Lecture Times and Location

Seminars will be held every Monday from 4:10 to 6pm in DSB 3.10/3.11.

## Lecture Topics and Readings

Week	Topic	Core Reading
Week 1	Modality	“Anselm and Actuality” (1970) “Counterparts of Persons and Their Bodies” (1971)
Week 2	Ontological commitment	“Holes” (1970)
Week 3	Metaphysics and method	“New Work for a Theory of Universals” (1983)
Week 4	Identity over time	“Survival and Identity” (1976)

Week	Topic	Core Reading
Week 5	Material objects and vagueness	“Vague Identity: Evans Misunderstood” (1988) “Many, But Almost One” (1993)
Week 6	Materialism	“Psychophysical and Theoretical Identifications” (1972)
Week 7	<i>De se</i> thought	“Attitudes <i>De Dicto</i> and <i>De Se</i> ” (1979)
Week 8	Experience	“What Experience Teaches” (1988)
Week 9	Context	“Scorekeeping in a Language Game” (1979)
Week 10	Context	“Elusive Knowledge” (1996)
Week 11	Buffer	

### Further advice on Readings

Encyclopaedias are a good source of extra reading. Avoid Wikipedia (it is often inaccurate on philosophy), but there are good internet encyclopaedias that can be useful:

[The Stanford Encyclopedia of Philosophy](#) (SEP)

[The Internet Encyclopedia of Philosophy](#) (IEP)

### Websites

We also recommend the following as starting points for your research:

[PhilPapers](#)

[Philosophy Compass](#)

[The Diversity Reading List](#)

You will need to know how to track down sources, including electronic journals, using the library search engine [DiscoverED](#).

## Assessment

This course has two assessments: **ten reading analyses** (one per week, 150 words), each worth 2% of your total mark, and a **final essay** (2500 words), worth 50% of your total mark.

Detailed information concerning assignments will be available on Learn.

## Visiting undergraduates

The assessment arrangements for visiting undergraduates are the same as for other students.

## Mark Schemes

For Philosophy-specific marking guidelines go here:

[Grade-related marking guidelines for Philosophy](#)

For the University's general marking scheme go here:

[Common Marking Scheme](#)

## Learning Resources

### LEARN

You should regularly check your university email and check for announcements on the course *Learn* page.

The course *Learn* page will provide information concerning:

- General information and announcement about the course
- Lecture notes and slides
- Tutorial arrangements
- Information about assessment arrangements

### University of Edinburgh Library

The library's hard-copy and online resources can be searched online via *DiscoverEd*.

### Autonomous Learning Groups

Each course has dedicated Autonomous Learning Groups. It is up to you, the members of the ALG, to organise the meetings. You decide how often to meet and what to do in your ALG. ALGs are designed to help you learn and get to know your classmates; they are not a formal requirement of the course. It is important to note that assessment in your courses is non-competitive: you aren't competing against your classmates, only against the general grade criteria. It is in your interests to help each other.

You could use ALG meetings to:

- Read and discuss the papers together
- Discuss essay-writing and time-management techniques
- Constructively critique draft essays or plans
- Work on presentations or discussion posts that the class may involve
- Share tips on career advice

Please email the Course Organiser if you feel that it would be useful for the group if they joined one of your sessions. Please contact the course secretary if you find it necessary during the semester to transfer into a different group.

## Getting in Touch

If you have a question regarding lecture content you should ask it in your tutorial group and/or visit the relevant lecturer to discuss it during their office hour.

For other specifically academic matters you can contact the Course Organiser.

If you have questions not specifically about lecture content, you should contact the Course Secretary.