

87 Freshman Seminar: Paradox

Christian Wüthrich

Fall 2007

Class schedule: Mon 10:00-11:50am, HSS 7077
Seminar will meet October 1, 8, 15, 22.
Section ID: 606452
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Apart from presenting intriguing puzzles, paradoxes often offer direct routes to deep insights into logic, mathematics, philosophy, and science. This course shall explore paradoxes both for the fun of it and for the more serious purpose of discovering the foundational lessons they teach us.

Prerequisites: Please contact the Undergraduate Advisor in Philosophy, Nina Cooper, for information concerning registration. Her phone number is 858-534-3077 and her email is nina@ucsd.edu.

P.S. This sentence is false.

Required texts

For each meeting, the assigned texts must be read in advance, **including the first meeting**.

- R M Sainsbury, *Paradoxes*, Cambridge University Press (Cambridge, 1995). This book is available at the Price Center Bookstore.
- There will also be articles by Davies, Poundstone, and Smullyan available through e-reserves.

Course requirements and evaluation

The grade for this course will be determined from three types of evaluation:

1. *Class presentation* (30%): Each participant must give (at least) one presentation of 15 minutes. These presentations will be given in groups of two or three students. Topics will be assigned in the first meeting.
2. *Short paper* (30%): The paper should be short (700-1000 words) and develop a particular issue that was presented in the readings and discussed in class. It can be on a topic that you present in class. The paper is due on **12 November 2007**. All sources, including presentations by classmates, must be appropriately acknowledged. *The paper*

must be entirely in your own wording. Closely paraphrasing or simply copying the work of others (such as authors of books or articles, or classmates) is not allowed and will be severely penalized. You must observe the University's Policy on Integrity of Scholarship, which can be found at <http://www-senate.ucsd.edu/manual/appendices/app2.htm>.

3. *Class participation* (40%): Class discussion and participation is essential.

Tentative schedule

Date	Topic and readings
1 Oct	Paradoxes of space, time, and motion Sainsbury, Ch 1 Paul Davies, "How to Build a Time Machine", <i>Scientific American</i> , Sep 2002, pp. 50-55
8 Oct	Infinity and supertasks William Poundstone, <i>Labyrinths of Reason</i> , Anchor Press: New York, 1988, "Building a Thomson Lamp", pp. 146-149 "The Paradox of Tristram Shandy", pp. 157-159 Raymond M Smullyan, <i>Satan, Cantor, And Infinity</i> , Knopf, 1992, Chs 18-19
15 Oct	Believing rationally Sainsbury, Ch 4 (particularly 4.1 and 4.2)
22 Oct	Classes and truth Sainsbury, Ch 5



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