

Space, Cyberspace and the Self

Level Three (30 Credits)

Qualifying course for MA (Creative and Cultural Studies),
MA (Philosophical Studies)
and MA (European Civilisation)

Class Hour: Daily at 1pm throughout Semester 2

Class Convenor: Susan Stuart

2009–2010

Contact Information

For	Dr Susan Stuart:
Email	S.Stuart@philosophy.arts.gla.ac.uk
Telephone	(0141) 330 5046 (direct line)
Office Hour	9.30am–11am every Tuesday in term time
Location	Room 503, 11 University Gardens.

For	Dr Stephen Bostock:
Email	mail@stephenbostock.fsnet.co.uk
Telephone	(0141) 330 5046 (direct line)
Office Hour	2.30pm – 3.30pm every Monday in term time
Location	Room 503, 11 University Gardens.

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1 Broad Course Outline

The course will examine, from a number of perspectives, the notions of space, cyberspace, time and self-identity. Students will gain an insight into how different disciplines address areas of central concern. An approach of this sort will increase the breadth and depth of their understanding of the subject area whilst, at the same time, enabling them to conceive and consider comparisons and analogies that can be made between the disciplines.

1.1 Course Aims

To develop an understanding of issues surrounding the notions of space and time as employed in philosophy, the media, and literature.

To learn to engage critically with an exciting and current interdisciplinary area.

To be open to different influences as a means to understanding a subject more fully.

To have understood that no single perspective can offer a definitive explanation for complex phenomena, but that together they can be instructive in moving our knowledge of a subject matter forward.

1.2 Intended Learning Outcomes

By the time students have completed this course they should be able to:

- Develop questions arising from their assessed seminar presentations that encourage peer group participation.
- Design and implement web pages that correspond to some element of the course.
- Explain and assess the philosophical theories about the nature of space presented by Newton, Leibniz and Kant.
- Apply those philosophical theories within the contexts of film, art and literature and examine how they would impinge on our conception of our identity.
- Critically examine what is meant by a virtual space and relate it to other conceptions of space and identity presented in the course.
- Understand what is meant by the creation of an 'avatar' in cyberspace and consider the flexibility that an avatar can present in determining an identity in cyberspace.
- Outline the various ways in which one might think about space and spatial relations (absolute, allocentric, egocentric, etc.).
- Discuss the various kinds of particulars that might occupy space (points, lines, areas, volumes, physical objects) and consider whether any are more fundamental.
- See the relevance of the above to the question of how one must think of oneself if one is to conceive of oneself as located in space.
- Discuss the question of whether bodily awareness is necessary for self-awareness and consider what this might consist in.

- Discuss the claim that a sense of identity is only possible where there is locomotion and interaction, and that this locomotion and interaction is possible in virtual space.

And, time permitting, students should also be able to:

- Explain how time - as quantity and as affective experience - functions within comparable media - film, television and literature.
- Explain the economic and social significance of the manipulation of space and time in media in the construction of a public sphere.
- Demonstrate the relationship between experiential time (the 'time' of the viewer) and the construction of time as narrative in different genre texts within film, art and literature.

1.3 General Topics

In any one year you can expect to cover a selection of these topics:

- the metaphysics of space and time: Newton, Leibniz and Kant
- embedded technology
- phenomenology / sensate knowledge
- spatial aesthetics and cultural geography
- experiential time and time as a narrative

2 Contact hours

There are approximately 30 contact hours: at least 18 lectures, approx. 10 seminars, and 2 workshops.

The class meets on **Mondays, Tuesdays, and Thursdays** at 1pm.

N.B. There are **no** classes on *Wednesdays* or *Fridays*, though it might be necessary to run a seminar group on Wednesday at 1pm; for the members of that seminar group there would be no seminar on Thursdays.

	Timetable		
	Monday	Tuesday	Thursday
Week One	11 January Lecture	12 January Lecture	14 January Lecture
Week Two	18 January Lecture	19 January Lecture	21 January Seminar
Week Three	25 January Lecture	26 January Lecture	27 January Seminar
Week Four	1 February Lecture	2 February Lecture	4 February Seminar
Week Five	8 February Lecture	9 February Lecture	11 February Seminar
Week Six	15 February Lecture	16 February Lecture	18 February Seminar
Week Seven	22 February Lecture	23 February Lecture	25 February Seminar+ Essay Due Date
Week Eight	1 March Workshop	2 March Workshop	4 March Seminar
Week Nine	8 March Lecture	9 March Lecture	11 March Seminar
Week Ten	15 March Lecture	16 March Lecture	18 March Seminar+ Webpage Due
Week Eleven	22 March Seminar	23 March Seminar	25 March Seminar
Week Twelve	- -	- -	- -

2.1 Class Rooms

Lectures: Mondays & Tuesdays: TBC

Seminars: Thursdays, with Stephen: TBC

Seminars: Thursdays, with Susan: TBC

3 Seminar Topics

3.1 Philosophical Accounts of the Self

- Does Hume's account of the self accord with your own account of the self?
- Could a wicked witch turn you into a weasel? Is this a logically meaningless idea?

3.2 Philosophical Theories of Space and Time

Read: Leibniz at <http://www.iep.utm.edu/1/leib-met.htm>
It concentrates on the Leibniz / Clarke correspondence but that's what you want.

- What advantages does Leibniz's conception of space offer over Newton's?
- Is Kant justified in saying that space and time are a priori forms of intuition? What are the implications for our idea of space and time as absolutes?
- Could two things occupy the same space? Could two things be exactly alike?

3.3 Movement and the Self

Read: Meijsing, M. (2000) 'Self-Consciousness and the Body', *Journal of Consciousness Studies*, Vol. 7, No. 6, pp 34 - 52

- How important are our senses in our having a sense of self? What role does proprioception play in developing this sense of self?
- Is a body schema necessary for our being self-conscious?

3.4 Identity and Narrative

Read: Daniel Dennett's 'The self as a center of narrative gravity', available at <http://ase.tufts.edu/cogstud/papers/selfctr.htm>

- Do we need a narrative structure to have a sense of identity? Does a sense of identity require endurance through time?

3.5 Identity and Cyberspace

Read: Curry, M. R. 'Cyberspace and Cyberplaces: Rethinking the identity of individual and place', available at http://www.komdat.sbg.ac.at/ectp/CURRY_P.HTM

Suler, J. *The Psychology of Cyberspace*, at <http://www.rider.edu/~suler/psycyber/psycyber.html>
and
<http://www.rider.edu/suler/psycyber/index.html>

- Do you represent yourself differently in cyberspace from your ordinary spatial existence? Are there advantages? Are there disadvantages?

- Is there any sense in which space is important to your representation of yourself in cyberspace?
- Does, or will, cyberspace offer a utopian alternative to life in the physical world?

Read: Dibbell, J. (1993) 'A Rape In Cyberspace or How an Evil Clown, a Haitian Trickster Spirit, Two Wizards, and a Cast of Dozens Turned a Database Into a Society', *The Village Voice*, December 21, 1993, 36-42. Also available at <http://www.juliandibbell.com/texts/bungle.html>

- To what extent ought someone in the real world be held responsible for the actions of their avatar in cyberspace?

Read: Turkle, S. (1995) *Life on the Screen: Identity in the Age of the Internet*, Simon & Schuster

Dery, M. (1996) *Escape Velocity: Cyberculture at the End of the Century*, Hodder and Stoughton, London

- Is there a difference between 'external' and 'internal' selves, that is, the way others perceive us and the way we perceive ourselves? How might it be affected by body dysmorphia or other neuropathologies?
- Is someone with cybernetic implants still themselves? Is there a point at which you would say, if you would, that they stop being themselves and become someone or something else?

3.6 In Relation to Works of Art

- Can an individual's identity, their narrative structure, be presented in a two-dimensional work of art?

4 Methods of Assessment

Assessment will be both formative (assessment that does not count toward your final grade, but which helps you to better understand the course material) and summative (assessment that counts towards your final grade).

4.1 Summative Assessment

The summative assessment will be a mixture of group work and individual work.

Group Work

The group work will be centred around devising, in groups of three, a web page that presents some aspect of the course in the form of an on-line lecture. This piece of work will be worth 25%. There will be two workshops in Week 3 that all students will be expected to attend and which will provide instruction on how to write and develop a web page.

In the first meeting students will be divided into numbered groups and topics, for example, Group 1 might be asked to produce a web page that examined different notions of what is meant by 'space and extension', and Group 5 might be asked to develop a page on the implications for personal identity of body dysmorphia or the problem of the expression of personae in cyberspace.

Technicalities

Everyone will be given a special log-in address and password that they can use to access their web space. There are computers in HATII (Humanities Advanced Technology and Information Institute), George Service House, 11 University Gardens, that are available for your use. HATII is on the same side of the road as the Maths Building and the Boyd Orr Building, but at the University Avenue end.

Before you consider the technicalities of writing your web page in HTML (Hypertext Markup Language) you should work out what you want the content to be and what you would like the page to look like. Think carefully about how to divide up the important tasks between members of your group, though do bear in mind that this exercise counts towards 25% of your overall course mark and I will want to see an individual, short journal reviewing the development process of the page and, in particular, the part you played in creating it.

I will establish an index from our course site to these pages so that everyone can see them and make use of them. For this reason it is important that you express your ideas clearly and succinctly on your page, and that you make your page attractive and engaging. There is little worse than a web page which is just a block of text with nothing to lift the eye. Finally, you should only use material that is relevant. Long quotations are not acceptable. The quotation of technical terms is only permissible if you go on to explain them. You should always remember that you are writing to help others in the class understand what's going on and your success at doing this will feed into your overall mark.

Individual Work

The individual work will consist of one essay (25%), an examination (30%) and seminar contribution (20%).

Essay

Essay length: 1500–1800 words.

There are two essay questions. You must write an essay on **one, and only one**, of them. Both topics require careful thought, so take your time, think about the points you want to make, consider in some detail how you would support them with evidence and good argument, and develop a structure. Remember to hand in your draft essay plan by Monday 16th February

Essay questions

1. Do phantom limb phenomena shed any light on the nature of the self?
2. What criteria are necessary for identifying a person as the same person over a period of time? Are any of the criteria sufficient?

Important notes

- Essays should be typed and double-spaced with a wide left-hand margin for comments.
- Number your pages. If you can't figure out how to make your word processor do it, then do it by hand.
- Staple the sheets together or put them together in a folder.
- If you want to print on the back of used paper to help the environment, please do. But please cross out the material on the wrong side in some unmistakable way.
- The paper's date should be the date of submission, not the due date, when the two differ.
- Put your matriculation number and your email address on the front page by your name.

It is better to submit a essay with amendments than submit an incorrect or unclear essay. If you do not catch your spelling, punctuation, grammar, citation, and factual errors as you type and revise, then please correct them by hand as you proofread.

4.2 Seminar

The seminar contribution is fairly substantial – it is worth 20% overall. Each student will be expected to give a ten minute presentation to the class. This presentation will consist of an introduction to a topic, some discussion of pertinent issues and questions to which the rest of the group will respond. Students will be encouraged to say what they found valuable in what they read and why, and whether they would recommend the text to the others in their group. We will aim to keep seminar groups quite small so that discussion will be focussed.

Seminar participation is part of your seminar grade. However, not all participation is equally weighted and your tutor will look primarily at the quality, not quantity, of your oral contributions. Here are some general rules to guide you: Always reflect before speaking, build on previous comments, help discover the meaning that others are struggling to express, be open to persuasion, and bend to the weight of evidence

and reasoning. You must be prepared to substantiate your factual or textual claims, to defend your value judgements, to show the connection between your premises and conclusions, and to use the diversity of insights and perspectives in the class to advance your understanding of our texts and their themes. Your final seminar grade will be obtained as an average of your seminar marks.

Seminar Attendance - please note

It will normally be the case that for every two seminars a student misses one mark will be deducted from their possible seminar score of 20. Thus, if a student is absent from two seminars – not necessarily consecutively – their seminar grade, if it is still to be done, will be marked out of 19 or, if it has been done, will be reduced by 1 mark.

4.3 Examination

The one and a half hour examination consists of six questions. Students must answer **two** questions.

4.4 Working Out Your Final Grade

Three pieces of work have marks in a higher band and a consistent, though not as high, mark in the fourth will normally guarantee that the upper band will be awarded. Thus a student who has three marks in the A band but who receives a B grade for a piece of work that would then drop them to the B band overall will, everything else considered, be given the benefit of the doubt and receive the A grade overall.

5 Formative Assessment

The formative assessment will be in the form of an individual, short journal reviewing the development process of their web page; and also the submission of a one page draft extract from the essay (which is to be submitted in Week Eight as part of the summative assessment). It is not obligatory to submit the draft extract, but it is strongly advised if you want to benefit from some feedback before you submit the final essay.

6 Deadlines

The one page draft extract from the essay is due in on Monday the 15th February. Please hand in these extracts, or send them by email, to Susan Stuart and not to the Philosophy Department Secretaries.

The essay is due in on Thursday the 25th February 2009 by 4pm. Essays must be submitted to the Class Convenor, Dr Susan Stuart.

In the rare event that I am not in my office, please leave your essay with Mrs Elaine Wilson, the HATII secretary. Her office is opposite mine.

The Web Page – and your short journal – is due in on Thursday 18th March 2009.

6.1 Webpage submission

You can submit your webpages to me in one of two ways:

1. Send every file, and that includes images, movies, sounds, and so on, as email attachments to me. (If you want to do this, and you've got lots to send, you might want to make them into a .zip file first. Please ignore this if you have no idea what a zip file is.)
2. Burn all your files, including images, movies, sounds, and so on, onto a CD and give it to me personally or leave it in my mailbox in the entrance of 11 University Gardens (where the HATII multi-media lab is).
3. DON'T give me a floppy disk. I won't be able to read it.

Please let me know if there is anything about these instructions that you don't understand.

6.1.1 Copyright

Be aware that you might be the subject of legal action if you don't take notice of this!

- It is necessary to provide full references for all academic work. It need not be in the form of a formal bibliography; it might be a reference you put in beside a picture, movie, photograph, or some quoted text. You can mail the owner of the image, movie, whatever and ask for permission to reproduce it on your page, or there is what's known as a 'fair use' exemption, which means that if you're using it in some context, for example, in scholarly work, and you explain it, its use in the context of page, and you supply a proper reference, then you needn't apply for permission.
- DON'T use music files unless you've written and performed the music yourself! [Even then, unless you're jolly good, don't use music files!]

6.2 Finally ...

N.B. (i) **All submission deadlines must be met.** If you cannot meet a deadline, you must see the Course Convenor before the deadline to discuss the situation. (ii) All pieces of coursework must be completed if you are to be permitted to sit the final examination.

7 Plagiarism

Trying to pass off another's work as one's own is a serious offence in a university and may render you liable to disciplinary action. If you draw on a book or article in writing an essay, you must give a page-reference for each and every direct quotation, paraphrase, or appropriation of some idea or piece of information. It is not sufficient simply to list a source in a general bibliography. The University Calendar says:

32.2 Plagiarism is defined as the submission or presentation of work, in any form, which is not one's own, without acknowledgement of the sources. Special cases of plagiarism can also arise from one student copying another student's work or from inappropriate collaboration.

32.3 The incorporation of material without formal and proper acknowledgement (even with no deliberate intent to cheat) can constitute plagiarism. Work may be considered to be plagiarised if it consists of:

- a direct quotation;
- a close paraphrase;
- an unacknowledged summary of a source;
- direct copying or transcription.

With regard to essays, reports and dissertations, the rule is: if information or ideas are obtained from any source, that source must be acknowledged according to the appropriate convention in that discipline; and any direct quotation must be placed in quotation marks and the source cited immediately. Any failure to acknowledge adequately or to cite properly other sources in submitted work is plagiarism.

32.4 Plagiarism is considered to be an act of fraudulence and an offence against University discipline. Alleged plagiarism, at whatever stage of a student's studies, whether before or after graduation, will be investigated and dealt with appropriately by the University.

N.B. The full text of the University's Plagiarism Statement (giving details of, among other things, procedures to be followed where plagiarism is suspected) can be found on the University of Glasgow website. <http://senate.gla.ac.uk/academic/plagiarism/index.html>

7.1 The Application of these Principles to your Work

The application of these principles to your work in Philosophy is largely a matter of common-sense, but it may be useful to emphasise the following points:

Just because you've 'changed the words', that doesn't mean it's not plagiarism. Whether you quote the author's words exactly or whether you alter them a bit or whether you paraphrase them or whether you merely draw on an idea expressed by an author, the source must be acknowledged.

It's not enough just to list works consulted in a general bibliography at the end of your essay. Every single borrowing from a source, whether or not you quote the author's words exactly, must be separately acknowledged. This could mean several references to the same source within a single paragraph of your text: the fact that you have given a footnote reference to one borrowing from a given source does not excuse you from giving similar references to each and every other borrowing from that same source. 'But I mentioned that book on p. 2 of my essay' does not excuse an unattributed quotation on p. 6.

The heart of a philosophy essay is the reasoning it displays, and you should therefore be particularly careful to give references where the arguments you deploy are not devised by you. If your argument against the claim that reasons are different from causes derives from Davidson, then a reference to Davidson is in order. (We are less likely to care about where you found out the place and year of (say) Descartes' birth – but then, it is unlikely that such information would be relevant to an essay on Descartes.)

Lecturers' handouts must be acknowledged, too, if you draw on them, as well as published books or published articles or websites. Don't look upon handouts as simply 'there to be copied from' without references. (And even if there is no intent to cheat, trying to write an essay simply by recycling a handout shows an insufficiently sophisticated approach to university work.)

Some students found guilty of plagiarism have said that in their school work they were not required to acknowledge sources. That may have been so; here you do have to acknowledge sources.

Play safe. If you are not sure whether to give a source-reference or not, give it.

'How should I give a reference?' What is important is that references should be given; whether you give them in the form of footnotes, in the form of end-notes, or by means of insertions in brackets in the body of your text is up to you.

Originality does not mean no sources. Although we encourage students to develop their own ideas and to try to reason their way to their own conclusions, this does not mean that an essay containing many references to sources is at once dismissed as lacking originality. It is perfectly possible in a philosophy essay to derive a good deal of material from sources yet at the same time to show great originality in how you handle that material and reach conclusions about it and the question set.

'Do we have to give references in exam answers?' We certainly don't expect direct quotations or page references in exam answers, and we appreciate that in the hurry of an exam a student may not have time to give sources and may not even be aware of them. Nevertheless, you should name major sources.

Plagiarism includes copying from another student, and copying from another student includes drawing on an essay submitted in a previous year the topic was set.

It may help to avoid a charge of plagiarism if you bear in mind that a philosophy essay is supposed to be your attempt to reach a reasoned conclusion about the question set. Students who think of writing a philosophy essay simply as a matter of hunting out ('researching') sources to plunder have a wrong attitude to essay-writing in philosophy. When you write your essay think of yourself as a member of a community of scholars, willingly acknowledging your debt to others who have worked on the topic in question while genuinely exercising your own mind to reach a reasoned view on it.

8 Background and Introductory Readings

No one single text is recommended for this course. Appropriate readings will be made available during the course and, on top of this, you will be expected to do some research of your own to find course / topic-relevant material.

8.1 General Background

Strawson, P.F. (1959) *Individuals*, London: Methuen, Chapter 1

Wertheim, M. (1999) *The Pearly Gates of Cyberspace*, Time Warner Books

8.2 Course Readings

Bauby, J-D. (1997) *The Diving-Bell and The Butterfly*, London: Fourth Estate, Harper Perennial 2004

Bell, D. (2001) *An Introduction to Cybercultures*, Routledge, London

Cole, J. (2005) *Imagination after neurological losses of movement and sensation: The experience of spinal cord injury*, *Phenomenology and the Cognitive Sciences*, Vol. 4: 183-195

Curry, M. R. *Cyberspace and Cyberplaces: Rethinking the identity of individual and place*, at http://www.komdat.sbg.ac.at/ectp/CURRY_P.HTM

Dery, M. (1996) *Escape Velocity: Cyberculture at the End of the Century*, Hodder and Stoughton, London

René Descartes' *Principles of Philosophy*, sections IV-XXI

Dibbell, J. (1993) 'A Rape In Cyberspace or How an Evil Clown, a Haitian Trickster Spirit, Two Wizards, and a Cast of Dozens Turned a Database Into a Society', *The Village Voice*, December 21, 1993, 36-42. Also available at <http://www.juliandibbell.com/texts/bungle.html>

Hume, D. *A Treatise of Human Nature*, Book I, Part IV, Chapter VI, p.251 of the Selby-Bigge edition.

Gallagher, S. (2000) "Philosophical conceptions of the self: implications for cognitive science", *Trends in Cognitive Science*, Vol. 4 (1):14-21

Gottfried Wilhelm Leibniz' correspondence with Samuel Clarke, known as the *Leibniz-Clarke Correspondence* at <http://www.friesian.com/space.htm>

John Locke's *An Essay Concerning Human Understanding*, 'Place and Extension', Book II, Chapters 13 & 14

Isaac Newton's *Scholium* at http://www.gn.net/~fwagner/ev/absolutel_space_and_relativity.html

Meijsing, M. (2000) 'Self-Consciousness and the Body', *Journal of Consciousness Studies*, Vol. 7, No. 6, pp 34 - 52

Ramachandran, V.S. (2003) *The Emerging Mind*, BBC in association with Profile Books Ltd., London

Sacks, O. (1985) *The Man Who Mistook His Wife For A Hat*, Picador

Strawson, G. (1997) 'The Self', *Journal of Consciousness Studies*, Vol. 4, 5/6, 405-28 at <http://www.imprint.co.uk/strawson.htm>

Suler, J. *The Psychology of Cyberspace*, at
<http://www.rider.edu/~suler/psycyber/psycyber.html>
and
<http://www.rider.edu/~suler/psycyber/index.html>

Turkle, S. (1995) *Life on the Screen: Identity in the Age of the Internet*, Simon & Schuster

Zahavi, D. (2007) 'Self and other: The limits of narrative understanding' in D.D. Hutto (eds): *Narrative and Understanding Persons*, Royal Institute of Philosophy Supplement 60. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 179-201
<http://www.philosophy.ucr.edu/conference/SelfandOther.pdf>

9 Web Resources

The Internet Philosopher: <http://www.humbul.ac.uk/vts/philosophy/index.htm>

The Self and Personal Identity: <http://consc.net/online2.html#self>

Ramachandran, V.S., *The Emerging Mind*: <http://www.bbc.co.uk/radio4/reith2003/lecturer.shtml>

Jonathan Cole: *Phantom Limbs*: <http://www.wellcome.ac.uk/en/pain/microsite/medicine2.html>

Cognitive Science, Humanities and the Arts, bibliographic references: <http://www.hfac.uh.edu/cogsci/biblio/index.cfm>

Course Handouts and Webpages from previous years: <http://www.gla.ac.uk/Acad/Philosophy/Personnel/susan/courseinfo.html#scats>

10 Past Examination Papers

10.1 Wednesday, 21st May 2003, 2.30 – 4.00 p.m.

University of Glasgow
DEGREE OF M.A. (Designated)
Space, Cyberspace and the Self
Level 3

Candidates should attempt only two questions in one and a half hours.

1. Critically discuss the claim that movement and interaction are necessary for there to be a continuing sense of self.
2. What advantages does Leibniz's conception of space offer over Newton's?
3. To what extent ought someone in the real world be held responsible for the actions of their avatar in cyberspace?
4. Critically discuss the advantages, if any, for the individual in expressing their identity in cyberspace.
5. In what sense can it be claimed that physical objects exist? Is this sense robust?
6. What is necessary for narrative structure? Can such a structure be presented in a two-dimensional work of art?

End.

10.2 Thursday 13th May 2004, 2.30 – 4.00 p.m.

University of Glasgow
DEGREE OF M.A. (Designated)
Space, Cyberspace and the Self
Level 3

Candidates should attempt only two questions in one and a half hours.

1. In what ways and with what significance is our conception of time linked to our conception of space?
2. Is Newton right to say that the world is 'as it appears', or is there more to our perception and understanding of our world than that?
3. If our identity is linked to our having the body we have and through illness or choice we replace or augment our body parts, is there a point at which our identity loses its clarity?
4. Is the treatment of animals involved in xenotransplantation morally justified?
5. Would it be possible to exist in a virtual environment or is there something privileged about your existence within a physical world?
6. What is narrative structure and how might it be represented in a two-dimensional work of art?

End.

10.3 Wednesday 12th January 2005, 9.30 – 11a.m.

University of Glasgow
DEGREE OF M.A. (Designated)
Space, Cyberspace and the Self
Level 3

Candidates should attempt only two questions in one and a half hours.

1. Is there any reason to believe that we are disembodied in cyberspace?
2. Choose either Leibniz or Kant and discuss how their theory about space and time might be seen as an improvement on Newton's.
3. Do phantom limb phenomena shed any light on the nature of the self?
4. How important are memory and/or emotion to our sense of self?
5. In what sense is a voice necessary for a sense of self?
6. Is there any point at which having cybernetic adaptations changes irrevocably the nature of the recipient?

End.

10.4 Wednesday 10th May 2006, 2.30 – 4.00 p.m

University of Glasgow
DEGREE OF M.A. (Designated)
Space, Cyberspace and the Self
Level 3

Candidates should attempt only two questions in one and a half hours.

1. Is Locke's criterion for the self satisfactory? If not, how might you augment it?
2. "Physical punishment for physical crimes; cyberspace punishment for cyberspace crimes." Discuss the plausibility of this statement in relation to A Rape in Cyberspace.
3. Dennett talks about selves being narratives or stories, and we know that text is important in digital communication, but how important is language to our sense of self?
4. Is Kant right to claim that there is only one unitary time, or are there parallel fictional, theatrical, cinematic, cyberspace or other times?
5. Is there a greater flexibility of identity in a cyberspace environment as opposed to the physical world and, if there is, is it an advantage?
6. Virtual Reality suits will provide a plenisentient experience and, thus, the rich illusion of being in a spatial environment. How might one best characterize the differences or similarities between such a spatial environment and the spatial world we feel or sense we are in now?

End.

10.5 Tuesday 11th May 2007, 2.30 – 4.00 p.m

University of Glasgow
DEGREE OF M.A. (Designated)
Space, Cyberspace and the Self
Level 3

Candidates should attempt only two questions in one and a half hours.

1. How important is self-directed action to the development of a sense of self? Could a similar sense of self develop if your world were merely virtual?
2. How far do physical alterations or additions to the body alter who you are?
3. Cyberspace creates “a decentered self that exists in many worlds, that plays many roles at the same time”. (Turkle 1995) Is the age of the single, spatially-extended unified self now past?
4. In the light of neurophysiological evidence, could a case be made for the existence of more than one self?
5. Does Leibniz’s conception of space imply that the world we think of as real is no more real than a virtual world? Are they both merely appearances?
6. Are you really nothing more than a set of narratives or stories?

End.

10.6 Friday 9th May 2008, 9.30 – 11.00 a.m

University of Glasgow
DEGREE OF M.A. (Designated)
Space, Cyberspace and the Self
Level 3

Candidates should attempt only two questions in one and a half hours.

1. Is there any respect in which we might be considered to be two or more selves?
2. How far should someone in the real world be held responsible for the actions of their avatar in cyberspace?
3. To what extent is the identity of a person over time similar to the identity of an animal or plant over time?
4. Could one exist solely in a virtual environment?
5. Is Descartes right that phantom limb phenomena demonstrate the non-corporeality of consciousness?
6. Can there be two things that are exactly alike?

End.

10.7 Tuesday 12th May 2009, 9.30 – 11.00 a.m

University of Glasgow
DEGREE OF M.A. (Designated)
Space, Cyberspace and the Self
Level 3

Candidates should attempt only two questions in one and a half hours.

1. Discuss the claim that a body schema is a necessary but not sufficient criterion for a sense of self.
2. Are you simply the narrator of a life or is there more to your identity than that?
3. Since there are no bodies directly involved and there is relative anonymity, does it matter what you do in Cyberspace?
4. If you could upload the contents of your brain to a computer, would the upload be you?
5. Is there any justification for talking about the left and right selves?
6. In what way do prostheses and enhancements alter your identity?[This really should have been “In what way might prostheses and enhancements alter your identity?”].

End.

11 Notes

