**FUNKY CAUSATION**

G4900 *Topics in Early Modern Philosophy: Funky Causation*
Friday, 11:10-12:55, 716 Philo Hall

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Office Hours: (probably T 2:30-5)

**Funky Causation:** There are a number of causal notions in the history of metaphysics and science that differ significantly from contemporary philosophical views. This course is a survey of the most prominent of these “funky” notions. We’ll analyze emanative, immanent, formal, sympathetic, and occasional notions of causation through works by authors like Plotinus, Ficino, Aquinas, Suárez, Malebranche, Spinoza, Leibniz, Conway, and Newton.

**Books:** See separate sheet.

**Class Requirements:** Come to class prepared to discuss assigned material. Turn in a total of 16 pp. of philosophically rich analysis. These pages may be submitted in a series of short papers (4 papers of 4 pages, e.g.,) or one long paper. But I must see a plan and/or outline of a long paper project by mid-November.

**Weekly Schedule of Topics**

Courseworks will contain readings, detailed assignments (update every couple weeks), and additional materials to read. Emails will be sent announcing the added materials. Even if you’re not officially registered, make sure you’re put on Courseworks list.

9/11 *Introduction to Funky Causation*  
Topics: A brief history of causation. Causes as inactive things, as active things, as funky things.  
Readings: Some Aristotle, Aquinas, and Seneca, Hume, and Kant (details will be put on Courseworks by Friday, Sept. 4).

9/18 *Methodological Questions about the History of Philosophy*  
Topics: what are we doing when we do the history of philosophy, how can we do it well, and why should we do it at all?  

**PART 1. Emanation, Immanence, and Universal Sympathy**

9/25 *Plotinus and Ficino*  
Topics: Original notions of emanation, immanence, sympathy, and funky causal dependence  
Readings: (1) Plotinus’ *Enneads* is a several volume text (not too expensive in the Loeb edition if you are interested!) and available as an e-book. The Essential Plotinus is a good short collection. Read: (a) *Enneads*, Book I, sect. 6 (1-9) [*Essential Plotinus*, pp.33-57] and (b) Book VI, sect. 9 (1-10) [*Essential Plotinus*, pp.72-89]; Marsilio Ficino, *Platonic Theology*, tba. Also, read (3) Lloyd P.□ Gerson, “What is Platonism?□,” *Journal of the History of Philosophy - Volume 43*, Number 3, July 2005, pp. 253-276□; and (4) Eyjofur Emilsson, “Emanation and Activity in Plotinus.” Recommended: Mercer, *Leibniz’s Metaphysics*, relevant parts of chpt 5; Menn, *Descartes and Augustine*, relevant parts of chpt. 3.
Women, Philosophy, and History: Conference Celebrating Eileen O’Neill and her Work
This conference will take the place of our seminar meeting.

10/9 Spinoza
VISITOR: Yitzhak Melamed (Johns Hopkins).
Topic: What happens to funky causation in Spinoza.
Reading: Ethics, Part I [use Curley translation if possible]; and parts of Short Treatise (tba); and new paper by Melamend (tba).

10/16 Anne Conway
Topics: Emanation and sympathy
Readings: Conway’s Principles of the Most Ancient and Modern Philosophies, esp. Bks. 1-5; Mercer’s “Anne Conway and the Metaphysics of Pluralism.”

10/23 TBA [There may not be a seminar this week; we’ll reschedule it for later in the semester]

10/30 Malebranche
VISITOR: Steve Nadler (U. Wisconsin, Madison)
Topics: Immanent causation and Malebranche’s arguments for occasionalism
Readings: tba

PART 2. Formal Causation

11/6 Aristotelians, ancient, scholastic, and early modern
Topics: Formal causation in Aristotelianism, from ancient to Leibniz.
Readings: Aristotle, Aquinas, Suarez, and Leibniz (tba).
Robert Pasnau, “Form, Substance, and Mechanism,” Phil Review, Vol. 113, No. 1; Pasnau, chpt 4 of new book on scholasticism; Tad Schmaltz, Descartes on Causation (tba); Dennis Des Chene, Physiologia (tba).

11/13 Spinoza
VISITOR: Karolina Huebner (U. of Toronto)
Topic: What formal causation becomes in Spinoza
Reading: Ethics, Part I (including Appendix); and Huebner, "On the Significance of Formal Cause in Spinoza's Philosophy;” other readings tba.

11/20 Newton
VISITOR: Andrew Janiak (Duke University)
Topics: Emanation in Newton and the denial of formal causation
Reading: Newton’s De Gravitatione in Newton, Philosophical Writings, ed. Janiak.
New article by Janiak, tba.

11/27: Thanksgiving Recess
12/4 Leibniz and Preestablished Harmony
Topics: Leibniz on emanation, formal, sympathetic, and immanent causation
Readings: tba

12/11 Students’ Choice: What should we do for a finale?