

FACULTY OF PHILOSOPHY
UNIVERSITY OF OXFORD



PHILOSOPHY GRADUATE CLASS PROSPECTUS

HILARY TERM 2022

NOTES:

- The normal duration of an event is one hour. Where the class or lecture lasts longer than an hour, the start time and end time will be given.
- By convention, in-person lectures at Oxford begin at 5 minutes past the hour and end at 5 minutes before the hour.
- Unless otherwise specified, the lectures and classes are given for all of weeks 1 to 8.
- Much teaching is now taking place in person and live. Some teaching is given online and live. For some courses an existing recording will be made available.
- Links will be made available on Canvas for live online teaching, and to previous recordings.
- **FACE MASKS:** Face coverings are essential for reducing the spread of COVID-19 and should be worn by all students and staff when moving around University buildings. They are mandated in University teaching and assessment settings, libraries and departmental study spaces (unless individuals are exempt). For up-to-date information please see <https://www.ox.ac.uk/coronavirus/students>.
- Every effort is made to ensure that the information contained in this Prospectus is accurate at the start of term, but sometimes errors persist. If you think you have found a mistake, please contact James Knight (james.knight@philosophy.ox.ac.uk).

Times given here are UK times. Students attending remotely in other timezones should adjust their times accordingly.

Graduate Classes

Graduate classes are, except where otherwise indicated, intended for the Faculty's BPhil and MSt students. Other students may attend, and are welcome, provided they first seek and obtain the permission of the class-giver(s).

BPhil Pro-Seminar: Practical Philosophy

Various class-givers and locations – times to be confirmed

Group 1: TBC

Group 2: Prof James Grant

Group 3: Prof Carissa Veliz

Group 4: Prof Alison Hills

The Pro-seminar introduces students to study, practice, and standards in graduate-level philosophy. Every starting BPhil student will attend four sessions with one class-giver, then change group midway through term for four sessions with another class-giver. Seminars in Hilary Term will cover key material in practical philosophy, with groups 1 and 2 focussing on aesthetics and the philosophy of art, and groups 3 and 4 covering moral philosophy in either metaethics or normative ethics or both. Class-givers will contact their groups, specifying readings and confirming the class time, in advance of term.

Happiness and Time in Ancient Philosophy

Prof Ursula Coope - Th. 11 – 1, Radcliffe Humanities (Ryle Room)

We'll look at some ancient discussions of the relation between happiness and time. Our main question will be: is happiness the kind of thing that is cumulative over time? (i.e. Can we add up the happiness a person achieves at different times in her life, to give a sum total of happiness achieved over her whole life? Does someone who is happy for 40 years have a happier life than someone who enjoys the same level of happiness, but only for 20 years?) This is the topic of Plotinus's treatise *Ennead I.5*, which will be the focus of our discussion in the last weeks of the seminar. But earlier ancient philosophers also had relevant things to say, and we'll start by looking at them.

Other questions we'll consider: Are facts about the past/future relevant to whether you are happy now? Is it bad for us to care about the past/future? Is true happiness eternal/timeless? What is the relation between the happiness of a life and happiness at a time: is one derivative from the other? What difference does our view of the nature of time make to how we should answer the above questions? Can we make sense of the notion of degrees of happiness, and if so, how?

A good general introduction to ancient discussions of some of these questions:
Emilsson, E. K (2015) 'On happiness and time' in *The quest for the good life: ancient philosophers on happiness*, ed. Rabbas, Emilsson, Fosheim, Tuominen. (OUP).

Provisional schedule:

Week 1: Introduction to the seminar. Plato on desiring to possess the good forever.

Primary reading:

Plato, *Symposium* 206a-212a. (It would be useful to read this in advance of the first meeting.)

Week 2: Aristotle on happiness and a 'complete life'.

Why does Aristotle say that happiness must be in a 'complete life'? Does he hold that one's life is better if one is happy for longer?

Primary reading:

Aristotle *Nicomachean Ethics* I.7, I.10, X.7; *Eudemian Ethics* II.1.

Week 3: Aristotle on happiness and the activity/change (energeia/kinêsis) distinction

What does Aristotle mean when he says that happiness is activity (*energeia*) as opposed to change (kinesis), and hence is complete at the now? Can the claim that happiness is activity be reconciled with the claim that it requires a complete life?

Primary reading:

Aristotle *Metaphysics* IX.6, 1048b18-35; *Nicomachean Ethics* X.4; *Physics* III.1-2.

Week 4: Epicureans and Cyrenaics

Why does Epicurus think that 'infinite time and finite time have equal pleasure'? What is the relation between the happiness of a whole life and the happiness of moments within that life? What is the role of the notion of a 'complete life' in Epicurean thought?

Primary reading:

Long and Sedley, *The Hellenistic Philosophers*, chapters 21 and 24. For further relevant texts, see Warren, J. (2004), *Facing Death. Epicurus and his critics*. chapter 4 and Sedley, D. (2017) 'Epicurean versus Cyrenaic Happiness' in *Selfhood and the Soul. Essays on Ancient Thought and Literature in Honour of Christopher Gill*, ed. Seaford, Wilkins and Wright (Oxford: OUP).

Week 5: Stoic views on happiness and time.

What justifies the Stoic view that a life cannot be happier by being happy for longer? Why do certain Stoics argue (more generally) that there cannot be degrees of happiness or virtue? Why do certain Stoics claim that all that matters to happiness is what is present?

Primary Reading:

Plutarch, *Moralia* (Loeb vol XIII, part 2), *Against the Stoics on Common Conceptions*, 1061F-1062B (Long and Sedley 63I) and *Stoic Self-Contradictions*, 1046C-E; Cicero, *De Finibus (On Moral Ends)* 3.45-8, 5.83.

See also (on the role of the present): texts from Marcus Aurelius and Seneca collected in Sorabji, 'What is new on emotion in stoicism after 100BC?' section 7, pp172-4, in *Bulletin of the Institute of Classical Studies*, 2007.

And (on gradability), see texts in Ierodiakonou, 2015, 'How feasible is the Stoic conception of eudaimonia?' in *The quest for the good life: ancient philosophers on happiness*, ed. Rabbas, Emilsson, Fossheim, Tuominen (OUP), especially: Simplicius, *Commentary on Aristotle's Categories*, 284.12-285.8 (trans. B Fleet)

Weeks 6-8: Plotinus on happiness and time

How does Plotinus argue that the past and future are irrelevant to happiness? How closely is he following Stoic views here? How does he justify the claim that happiness is something eternal (not merely something present now)? Given that human contemplation occurs at a time, can Plotinus really avoid the conclusion that a life in which I engage in contemplation for a longer time is better than a life in which I engage in contemplation for a shorter time?

Primary reading:

Plotinus, *Ennead* I.5. We'll also consult *Ennead* I.4 (for Plotinus's views on virtue), and *Ennead* III.7 (on eternity and time).

Seneca's Moral Letters

Prof Simon Shogry and Prof Barnaby Taylor (Classics) - T. 11 – 1, Radcliffe Humanities (Ryle Room)

This is a joint philosophy and classics seminar on Seneca's *Moral Letters (Epistulae Morales ad Lucilium)*. Written in the 60s CE, towards the end of Seneca's life, these letters offer an accessible introduction to the central doctrines of Stoic ethics -- to Stoic views on the emotions; virtue and happiness; the value of wealth, health, and other 'preferred indifferents'; friendship; the soul; and the contribution of knowledge of physics and logic to the good life -- and undertake a critical examination of the arguments which Stoic philosophers advanced in support of these doctrines. No less, the *Letters* are one of the great masterpieces of Latin prose.

We warmly welcome the participation of any philosophy graduate student with an interest in ancient philosophy: MSt students and BPhil students on the ancient track are especially encouraged to attend. No knowledge of Latin is required, however we will devote some time in each session to translation work and textual issues.

The schedule for the term can be found below. We are looking for volunteer presenters (up to two per week, excluding week 1) willing to introduce a letter or a section of a letter, giving a brief account of its contents, arguments, and features of particular interest. 15-20 minutes would suffice. Please do contact us directly if you would like to present.

Week 1: Introduction and *Epistle* 33 [Seneca's relationship with the Greek Stoics]

Week 2: *Epistle* 76 [why virtue is the sole good]

Week 3: *Epistle* 87 [why wealth is not a good]

Week 4: *Epistles* 70 and 77 [suicide]

Week 5: *Epistles* 79 and 92 [physics and psychology]

Week 6: *Epistles* 116 and 118 [emotions and the virtuous pursuit of indifferents] [presentation from Madeleine Parkinson]

Week 7: *Epistles* 9 and 109 [friendship] [presentation from Theo Davies]

Week 8: *Epistles* 121 and 124 [the Stoic 'cradle argument'; rationality and happiness]

The best critical text is that of Reynolds (OCT); the best translation that of Graver and Long (Chicago, 2015). As preliminary reading, those who are interested may want to look at (1) the chapter on Stoic ethics in the *Cambridge History of Hellenistic Philosophy* (CUP: 1996), pp. 675-738, and (2) the introduction to Inwood's *Seneca: Selected Philosophical Letters* (OUP: 2010). Both should be available online via SOLO.

Universals

Prof Cecilia Trifogli, W. 11 – 1, Radcliffe Humanities (Ryle Room)

I will present and discuss two major views in the medieval debate about the ontological status of universals: that of John Duns Scotus and that of William of Ockham. I will cover the following topics:

- (1) Scotus on the existence and ontological status of common natures.
- (2) Scotus's theory of individuation ('haecceity').
- (3) Ockham's arguments against realism about universals.
- (4) Ockham's positive account of universals ('conceptualism').

The texts of Scotus and Ockham are available in English translation in:

Five Texts on the Mediaeval Problem of Universals, transl. Paul Vincent Spade, Hackett, Indianapolis 1994, pp. 57-113 (Scotus), 114-231 (Ockham).

Introductory reading:

M. McCord Adams, 'Universals in the early fourteenth century' in: *The Cambridge History of Later Medieval Philosophy*, ed. N. Kretzmann, A. Kenny, J. Pinborg, CUP 1982, pp. 411-439.

Dogmatism

Prof Rachel Fraser and Prof Bernhard Salow, F. 2 – 4, Radcliffe Humanities (Ryle Room)

This class will consider dogmatism (the ignoring or avoiding of evidence against one's views) from a variety of epistemological perspectives. Topics to be covered include the dogmatism paradox (according to which knowledge breeds dogmatism); treatments of the value of learning in Bayesian Epistemology; and the risks and benefits of dogmatism in contexts that are cognitively or socially non-ideal. The class will also serve as an introduction to a range of topics in contemporary epistemology, including but not limited to: inquiry, defeat, permissivism, closure, disagreement, and higher-order evidence. Please note that the further reading is included to aid students wishing to explore these topics beyond the class; students are not *expected* to do the further reading.

Class attendees will be expected to contribute one question about the week's reading to the following document:

https://unioxfordnexus-my.sharepoint.com/:w:/g/personal/sedm3010_ox_ac_uk/EdkUPbw0Ke9Dk3SybNxMC2kBAIzdfGdApnfWApseYJCj5JA?e=FIDR1M

This should be done by 9pm the night before.

Links to each week's readings will appear on the Canvas page for the course.

Week 1 – The Dogmatism Paradox (RF)

Roy Sorensen, 'Dogmatism, Junk Knowledge, and Conditionals', *The Philosophical Quarterly* 1988, pp. 433-454.

Saul Kripke, 'Two Paradoxes of Knowledge' in his *Philosophical Troubles* (OUP 2011), pp.43-45 (from 'I want to try to prove the principle that I earlier declared to be false' to the end of the main paper) and Appendix III

Further Reading

Gilbert Harman, *Thought*, 1973. Chapter 9.

John Hawthorne, *Knowledge and Lotteries*. OUP, 2004. Chapter 2, 'Closure and Junk', 'Easy Knowledge and Closure', 'Question Sensitivity'.

Jane Friedman, 'Junk Beliefs and Interest-Driven Epistemology', 2018.

Assaf Sharon and Levi Spectre, 'Dogmatism Repuzzled', *Philosophical Studies*, 2010.

Steve Yablo, 'Open Knowledge and Changing the Subject', *Philosophical Studies*, 2017.

Week 2 -- Introduction to Bayesian Epistemology (BS)

We will cover some basics of Bayesian Epistemology, in preparation for Week 3: the probability calculus, conditionalization, the law total probability, and expected utility theory. Depending on your background, read one of the following two:

Michael Titelbaum 'Precise Credences' in Pettigrew and Weisberg (eds) *The Open Handbook of Formal Epistemology*. Intro, sections 1.1-1.3, 2.2 (concise, but hard-going)

Brian Weatherson 'Decision Theory', chs 1-9 (more accessible, but ~52 pages)

Week 3 -- The Value of Evidence in Bayesian Epistemology (BS)

I.J. Good, 'On the Principle of Total Evidence', *British Journal for the Philosophy of Science* 17: 319-21, 1967

Lara Buchak, 'Instrumental Rationality, Epistemic Rationality, and Evidence Gathering', *Philosophical Perspectives* 24: 85-120, 2010. Sections 0-2

Further Reading

Bernhard Salow 'The Value of Evidence' (forthcoming) Lasonen-Aarnio and Littlejohn (eds.) *The Routledge Handbook of the Philosophy of Evidence*; and references therein

Week 4 – Fallibility and Dogmatism (RF)

Bernhard Salow, 'Fallibility and Dogmatism', m.s.

Further Reading

Alex Worsnip, 'Possibly False Knowledge', *Journal of Philosophy*, 2015.

Richard Feldman, 'Fallibilism and Knowing That One Knows', *The Philosophical Review* 1981.

Timothy Williamson, *Knowledge and Its Limits*. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2000. Chapter 9.

Week 5 – Disagreement (RF)

Lara Buchak, 'A Faithful Response to Disagreement', *The Philosophical Review*, 2021.

Further Reading

Tom Kelly, 'Peer Disagreement and Higher Order Evidence', in Richard Feldman and Ted Warfield (eds.), *Disagreement*, 2010.

David Christensen, 'Epistemology of Disagreement: The Good News', *Philosophical Review*, 2007.

Roger White, 'Epistemic Permissiveness 2005 - *Philosophical Perspectives* 19 (1):445–459.

Ginger Schultheis, 'Living on the Edge: Against Epistemic Permissivism', *Mind*, 2018.

Week 6 – Permissible Dogmatism (BS)

Rachel Fraser, 'The Will in Belief,' *Oxford Studies in Epistemology*, forthcoming.

Further Reading

Maria Lasonen-Aarnio, 'The Dogmatism Puzzle', *Australasian Journal of Philosophy*, 2014.

Bob Beddor, 'The Toxin and the Dogmatist', *Australasian Journal of Philosophy* 97 (4):727-740, 2019.

Jeremy Fantl, *The Limitations of the Open Mind*. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2018. Chapters 2 and 3.

Susanna Rinard, 'Why Philosophy Can Overturn Common Sense', *Oxford Studies in Epistemology*, 2013.

Tom Kelly, 'Following the argument where it leads', *Philosophical Studies*, 2011.

Week 7 – Grit (RF)

Sarah Paul and Jennifer Morton, 'Grit', *Ethics*, 2018.

Further Reading

Lara Buchak, 'Can it be rational to have faith?', in Jake Chandler and Victoria S. Harrison (eds.), *Probability in the Philosophy of Religion*, 225-247.

Jennifer Morton, 'Resisting Pessimism Traps: The Limits of Believing in Oneself'. *Philosophy and Phenomenological Research*, forthcoming.

Jennifer Morton, 'Reasoning Under Scarcity.' *Australasian Journal of Philosophy*, 2017.

Week 8 – Bubbles (BS)

C. Thi Nguyen, 'Echo Chambers and Epistemic Bubbles' *Episteme* 17 (2):141-161 (2020)

Further Reading

Thomas Kelly, 'Disagreement, Dogmatism, and Belief Polarization', *Journal of Philosophy*, 2008.

Endre Begby, 'Evidential Preemption', *Philosophy and Phenomenological Research*, 2021.

Kevin Dorst, 'Rational Polarization', m.s.

Philosophy of Logic

Prof Timothy Williamson, W. 4 – 6, Radcliffe Humanities (Ryle Room)

Each meeting will be based on the reading(s) for that week, which all participants will be expected to have read.

Week 1 Alfred Tarski, 'On the concept of logical consequence', in his *Logic, Semantics, Metamathematics* and 'What are logical notions?', *History and Philosophy of Logic*, 1986.

Week 2 W.V.O. Quine, 'Two dogmas of empiricism', in *From a Logical Point of View*, and 'Deviant logics' in *Philosophy of Logic*.
Adam Morton, 'Denying the doctrine and changing the subject', *Journal of Philosophy*, 1973.

Week 3 Michael Dummett, 'The justification of deduction', in *Truth and Other Enigmas*.
Susan Haack, 'Dummett's justification of deduction', *Mind*, 1982.

Week 4 John MacFarlane, 'Is logic a normative discipline?'
<https://johnmacfarlane.net/normative.pdf>

Week 5 David Ripley, 'Experimental philosophical logic', in Justin Sytsma and Wesley Buckwalter (eds.), *A Companion to Experimental Philosophy*.
<https://davewripley.rocks/papers/xpl.pdf>

Week 6 Gil Sagi, 'Logic as a methodological discipline', *Synthese*, 2021.

Week 7 Gillian Russell, 'Deviance and vice: strength as a theoretical virtue in the epistemology of logic', *Philosophy and Phenomenological Research*, 2019.

Week 8 Mark Jago, 'Logical information and epistemic space', *Synthese*, 2009.

Philosophy of Physics

Dr Owen Maroney - Th. 11 – 1 (weeks 1 to 4), Radcliffe Humanities (Lecture Room)

This series of classes covers contemporary topics in the philosophy of physics. The primary intended audience is MSt students in Philosophy of Physics and fourth year Physics & Philosophy undergraduates studying the Advanced Philosophy of Physics paper, and BPhil and DPhil students with a philosophy of physics interest. Others are welcome if there is space.

Hilary Term's series of four lectures will cover advanced topics in the interpretation of quantum theory, covering specific issues within:

- the implications of quantum no-go theorems beyond the Bell-CHSH Inequality;
- whether spatially localised objects can emerge in quantum theory without presupposing extra structure to the quantum wavefunction;
- the compatibility of realist approaches to quantum theory with relativistic invariance;
- and the issue of probability within Everettian quantum mechanics.

Familiarity with the contents of the finals course, Intermediate Philosophy of Physics: Quantum Mechanics, will be assumed.

The provisional schedule, alongside some recommended introductory reading, is:

Week 1. Quantum No-Go Theorems: Ontological Models and Experimental Metaphysics

Bell, 'The theory of local beables' *Epistemological Letters* (1976)

Reprinted in Bell 'Speakable and Unspeakable in Quantum Mechanics'
(2nd Ed, CUP, 2004)

Spekkens, 'Contextuality for preparations, transformations, and unsharp measurements'
Physical Review A 71 (2005)

Harrigan and Spekkens, 'Einstein, Incompleteness, and the Epistemic View of Quantum States' *Foundations of Physics* 40 (2010)

Week 2. Can the World be only Wavefunction?

Saunders 'The Everett interpretation: Structure', in Knox and Wilson (eds.) 'A Companion to the Philosophy of Physics' (2020, Routledge)

Maudlin 'Can the World be Only Wavefunction?' in Albert and Ney (eds.) 'The Wave Function: Essays on the Metaphysics of Quantum Mechanics' (2013, OUP)

Wallace Chapter 2 'The Emergent Multiverse: Quantum theory according to the Everett Interpretation' (2012, OUP)

Week 3. Non-locality, Relativity and Collapse.

Albert 'Physics and Narrative' in Struppa and Tollaksen (eds.) 'Quantum Theory: A Two-Time Success Story' (2014, Springer)

Myrvold 'Relativistic Quantum Becoming' British Journal for the Philosophy of Science 54 (2003)

Wallace and Timpson, 'Quantum Mechanics on Spacetime I: Spacetime State Realism.' British Journal for the Philosophy of Science 61 (2010)

Week 4. Probabilities in the Everett Picture.

Timpson 'Probabilities in Realist Views of Quantum Mechanics' in Beisbart and Hartmann 'Probabilities in Physics' (2011, OUP)

Saunders 'The Everett interpretation: Probability', in Knox and Wilson (eds.) 'A Companion to the Philosophy of Physics' (2020, Routledge)

Wallace Chapter 4 'The Emergent Multiverse: Quantum theory according to the Everett Interpretation' (2012, OUP)

Philosophy of Science

Dr Sophie Allen - M. 2 – 4, St Peter's College (Theberge Room)

In this BPhil course, we will discuss a variety of topics from the contemporary literature. The seminars are intended primarily for students doing the BPhil in Philosophy and the MSt in Philosophy of Physics, but all interested and engaged participants are welcome.

Below are the proposed topics for the first four classes, in the anticipated order. Updates will be posted to Canvas as we progress through term. Each week, the topic will be introduced with a short presentation given by one of the participants (with the convenor presenting for the first week).

Those attending the class should be sure to have read the essential reading(s) for each session in advance. Some background reading and some further reading will also be suggested. If possible, these seminars will be held in person at St Peter's College but please make sure that the convenor has your email address in case we need to go online at short notice.

1. Reference over theory-change

Essential readings:

- Stein, H., 'Yes, but... Some skeptical remarks on realism and anti-realism', *Dialectica* 43 (1989), pp. 47–65. <https://www.istor.org/stable/42970610>
- Myrvold, W., "'—It would be possible to do a lengthy dialectical number on this;'" Preprint (2019), available at: <http://philsci-archive.pitt.edu/16675/>

2. Varieties of reduction

Essential readings:

- Lewis, D. K., 'How to define theoretical terms', *Journal of Philosophy* 67 (1970), pp. 427–446. <https://www.istor.org/stable/2023861>
- Dizadji-Bahmani, F., Frigg, R. & Hartmann, S. 'Who's afraid of Nagelian reduction?', *Erkenntnis* 73 (2010), pp. 393–412. <https://doi.org/10.1007/s10670-010-9239-x>

Background:

- Schaffner, K. F., 'Approaches to reduction', *Philosophy of science* 34 (1967), pp. 137–147. <https://www.istor.org/stable/186101>

3. Theoretical equivalence

Essential readings:

- Glymour, C., 'Theoretical realism and theoretical equivalence', PSA: Proceedings of the biennial meeting of the philosophy of science association. Vol. 1970. (D. Reidel Publishing, 1970). <https://www.jstor.org/stable/495769>
- Barrett, T. W. and Halvorson, H. 'Glymour and Quine on theoretical equivalence.' *Journal of Philosophical Logic* 45.5 (2016): 467-483. <https://link.springer.com/article/10.1007/s10992-015-9382-6>

4. Data vs. phenomena

Essential readings:

- Bogen, J. & Woodward, J., 'Saving the phenomena', *The Philosophical Review* 97 (1988), pp. 303–352. <https://www.jstor.org/stable/2185445>
- Glymour, B. 'Data and Phenomena: A Distinction Reconsidered', *Erkenntnis* 52 (2000), pp. 29–37. <https://www.jstor.org/stable/20012966>

Decision Theory

Prof Jean Baccelli – Th. 9 – 11, Radcliffe Humanities (Ryle Room)

This class will introduce to selected technical and conceptual topics in the contemporary theory of individual decision-making. The following outline and background reading list are tentative and may be revised along the way.

1. Preference

Simon French. *Decision Theory: An Introduction to the Mathematics of Rationality*. Chichester: Ellis Horwood Limited, 1986. Chapter 3 ("Preference Orders and Value Functions").

Paul Anand. Rationality and Intransitive Preference – Foundations for the Modern View. In Paul Anand, Prasanta Pattanaik, and Clemens Puppe, editors, *The Handbook of Rational and Social Choice*, 156–172. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2009.

John Broome. Utility. *Economics and Philosophy*, 7(1):1–12, 1991.

2. Choice

Christopher Chambers and Federico Echenique. *Revealed Preference Theory*. New York: Cambridge University Press, 2016. Chapter 2 ("Classical Abstract Choice Theory").

Amartya Sen. Behaviour and the Concept of Preference. *Economica*, 40 (159):241–259, 1973.

Amartya Sen. *Internal Consistency of Choice*. *Econometrica*, 61(3):495–521, 1993. Sections 2 ("Choice, Correspondence and Consistency") and 3 ("What is the Problem with Internal Consistency of Choice?")

3. Risk

Itzhak Gilboa. *Theory of Decision under Uncertainty*. New York: Cambridge University Press, 2009. Chapter 8 ("von Neumann-Morgenstern's Theorem").

John Quiggin. Non-Expected Utility Models Under Objective Uncertainty. In Mark Machina and William Viscusi, editors, *Handbook of the Economics of Risk and Uncertainty*, volume 1, 701–728. Amsterdam: North-Holland, 2014.

Philippe Mongin. The Allais Paradox: What It Became, What It Really Was, What It Now Suggests to Us. *Economics & Philosophy*, 35(3):423–459, 2019.

4. Uncertainty

Itzhak Gilboa. *Theory of Decision under Uncertainty*. New York: Cambridge University Press, 2009. Chapters 10 (“Savage’s Theorem”) and 12 (“A Critique of Savage”).

Jürgen Eichberger and David Kelsey. Ambiguity. In Paul Anand, Prasanta Pattanaik, and Clemens Puppe, editors, *The Handbook of Rational and Social Choice*, 113–139. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2008.

Mark Machina. Event-Separability in the Ellsberg Urn. *Economic Theory*, 48(2-3):425–436, 2011.

5. Dynamic Consistency

Peter Wakker. Justifying Bayesianism by Dynamic Decision Principles. Unpublished note, accessible at <https://personal.eur.nl/wakker/pdf/alias.pdf>, 1999.

Mark Machina. Dynamic Consistency and Non-Expected Utility Models of Choice under Uncertainty. *Journal of Economic Literature*, 27(4):1622–1668, 1989.

Paolo Ghirardato. Revisiting Savage in a Conditional World. *Economic Theory*, 20(1):83–92, 2002.

6. Ignorance

Simon French. *Decision Theory: An Introduction to the Mathematics of Rationality*. Chichester: Ellis Horwood Limited, 1986. Chapter 2 (“Decision Theory under Strict Uncertainty”).

Salvador Barbera, Walter Bossert, and Prasanta Pattanaik. Ranking Sets of Objects. In Salvador Barbera, Peter Hammond, and Christian Seidl, editors, *Handbook of Utility Theory, Volume II: Extensions*, 893–977. Boston: Kluwer Academic Press, 2004. Section 3 (“Complete Uncertainty”).

John Rawls. Some Reasons for the Maximin Criterion. *The American Economic Review*, 64(2):141–146, 1974.

John Harsanyi. Can the Maximin Principle Serve as a Basis for Morality? A Critique of John Rawls’s Theory. *American Political Science Review*, 69(2): 594–606, 1975.

7. Unawareness

Edi Karni and Marie-Louise Vierø. ‘Reverse Bayesianism’: A Choice-Based Theory of Growing Awareness. *The American Economic Review*, 103(7):2790– 2810, 2013.

Edi Karni and Marie-Louise Vierø. Awareness of Unawareness: A Theory of Decision-Making in the Face of Ignorance. *Journal of Economic Theory*, 168: 301–328, 2017.

Katie Steele and Orri Stefánsson. Belief Revision for Growing Awareness. *Mind*, 130(520): 1207–1232, 2021.

8. Time

Paola Manzini and Marco Mariotti. Choice Over Time. In Paul Anand, Prasanta Pattanaik, and Clemens Puppe, editors, *The Handbook of Rational and Social Choice*, 239–270. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2008.

Keith Ericson and David Laibson. Intertemporal Choice. In Douglas Bernheim, Stefano DellaVigna, and David Laibson, editors, *Handbook of Behavioral Economics: Applications and Foundations 2*, 1–67. Amsterdam: North-Holland, 2019. Section 2 (“Present-Focused

Preferences: Theoretical Commonalities”).

Craig Callender. The Normative Standard for Future Discounting. *Australasian Journal of Philosophy*, forthcoming.

Wisdom

Prof Paul Lodge and Prof Mark Wynn – M. 11 – 1, Radcliffe Humanities (Ryle Room)

This seminar series aims to provide a philosophical introduction to conceptions of wisdom through a selection of representative thinkers and approaches.

Week 1 General Introduction – Paul Lodge

Reading

Sharon Ryan, ‘Wisdom’, in *The Stanford Encyclopedia of Philosophy* (<https://plato.stanford.edu/entries/wisdom/>)

Week 2 Wisdom and Philosophy as a Way of Life – Paul Lodge

Reading

Pierre Hadot, ‘Philosophy as a Way of Life’ in P. Hadot *Philosophy as a Way of Life* (Blackwell, 1995), 264-76.

John Cooper ‘Introduction: On Philosophy as a Way of Life’ in *Pursuits of Wisdom* (OUP, 2012), 1-23.

Week 3 Thomas Aquinas – Mark Wynn

Reading

Thomas Aquinas, excerpts from *Summa Theologiae*, e.g. 2a2ae Qu 45.

Paul O’Grady, ‘Theoretical Wisdom’, *The Journal of Value Inquiry* 53 (2019), 415-31.

Eleonore Stump, ‘A Representative Intellectual Virtue: Wisdom’, in E. Stump, *Aquinas* (Routledge, 2003), Ch. 11.

Week 4 Leibniz – Paul Lodge

Reading

G. W. Leibniz ‘On Wisdom’ in L. Loemker ed. *Gottfried Wilhelm Leibniz Philosophical Papers and Letters* (Dordrecht: Reidel, 1969), 425-428.

G. W. Leibniz ‘Aphorisms Concerning Happiness, Charity, Wisdom, and Justice’ in L. Strickland ed. *Leibniz on God and Religion: A Reader* (Bloomsbury, 2016), 137-41.

M.R. Antognazza ‘What is Wisdom? Leibniz’s view in the context of traditional debates’, in *Sapience. Les transformations de la sagesse dans la philosophie de la première*

modernité et des Lumières. ed. A. Pelletier. Paris: Vrin, 2022), 93-111

P. Lodge 'Leibniz's Philosophy as a Way of Life', *Metaphilosophy* 51 (2020), 459-79.

Week 5 John Henry Newman – Mark Wynn

Reading

John Henry Newman, *An Essay in Aid of a Grammar of Assent* (1870; CUP, 2010), Chs IV and IX.

Frederick Aquino, *An Integrative Habit of Mind: John Henry Newman on the Path to Wisdom* (Cornell UP, 2012), Ch. 1.

Week 6 Wisdom and the Natural World: Some Eco-phenomenological Perspectives – Mark Wynn

Reading

David Abram, *The Spell of the Sensuous: Perception and Language in a More-Than-Human World* (Vintage Books, 1996), Ch. 1.

Erazim Kohák, *The Embers and the Stars: A Philosophical Inquiry into the Moral Sense of Nature* (University of Chicago Press, 1984), Section 5, e.g. 179-95.

Week 7 Contemporary Psychological Approaches – Paul Lodge

Reading

Igor Grossman et al. "The Science of Wisdom in a Polarized World: Knowns and Unknowns" *Psychological Enquiry* 31:2, 103-33.

Also

see:

<https://uwaterloo.ca/wisdom-and-culture-lab/>

<https://wisdomcenter.uchicago.edu/>

Week 8 Wisdom and Contemporary Virtue Theory – Mark Wynn

Reading

Linda Zagzebski, *Exemplarist Moral Theory* (OUP, 2017), Ch. 3.

Ian James Kidd, 'Adversity, Wisdom and Exemplarism', *The Journal of Value Inquiry* 52 (2018), 379-93.

Ethics: Reasons and Rationality

Dr Joseph Cunningham - T. 2 – 4, Radcliffe Humanities (Ryle Room)

Overview

This is an 8-week research seminar aimed at graduate students at both BPhil and DPhil levels. The topic of the seminar is *Reasons & Rationality*. More precisely: We're going to investigate a number of contemporary issues in the theory of reasons, the theory of rationality, and points of overlap between them. We'll be examining questions such as:

- What are normative reasons? Are they facts, events, mental states...? And what hangs on this issue, anyway? (Meeting 1)
- Are reasons in any interesting sense the most *fundamental* normative category? That is, for any normative category (value, obligation, virtue...), should that category be reduced to, or be thought of as essentially grounded in, facts about normative reasons? (Meetings 2–3)
- What's the difference between there being a reason for one to do something and one's *having* or *possessing* it, so that it can have an impact on what one says and does and so that it can determine what it's rational for one to do? What's the nature of the psychological linkage which constitutes reason-possession? (Meeting 4)
- Suppose one possesses a reason and then one goes ahead and acts motivated by it. What does *that* psychological condition consist in? (Meeting 5)
- On the one hand, there's what it's correct for one to do or think. On the other hand, there's what it's *rational* for one to do or think. Objective normative reasons are often thought to determine the former. But what about the latter? We'll examine two views which deny that rationality consists in responding correctly to objective normative reasons (Meetings 6–7) and a recent attempt at defending that suggestion (Meeting 8).

Each week, I will supply a required reading and a further list of supplementary readings. The expectation is that all attendees come to class having undertaken a detailed reading of the *required* piece, which will be a cutting-edge paper in this area. Attendees who would like to develop their understanding of the required piece further should look to the supplementary readings.

Meeting 1 | The Ontology of Reasons

Required Reading:

- Fogal, Daniel (2016). '[Reasons, Reason, and Context](#)'. In: Lord & Maguire (eds.) *Weighing Reasons*. Oxford: Oxford University Press.

Supplementary Reading:

- Alvarez, María (2010). [Kinds of Reasons: An Essay in the Philosophy of Action](#). Oxford: Oxford University Press. Chs1—2.
- Dancy, Jonathan (2000). [Practical Reality](#). Oxford: Oxford University Press. Chs.1—3.
- Fogal, Daniel (2018). '[Deflationary Pluralism About Motivating Reasons](#)'. In: Mitova (ed.) *The Factive Turn in Epistemology*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
- Pryor, Jim (2007). '[Reasons and That-Clauses](#)'. *Philosophical Issues* 17(1): 217—244
- Raz, Joseph (1975). [Practical Reasons and Norms](#). Oxford: Oxford University Press. Ch.1.
- Raz, Joseph (2011). [From Normativity to Responsibility](#). Oxford: Oxford University Press. Ch.2.
- Scanlon, T.M. (1998). [What We Owe to Each Other](#). Camb. M.A.: Harvard University Press. Ch.1.

The Ethics of Creating, Preserving, and Ending Lives

Prof Jeff McMahan - M. 2 – 4, Radcliffe Humanities (Lecture Room)

This seminar began in Michaelmas term 2021 and will continue over Hilary term 2022. It is concerned with foundational issues in population ethics and their relevance to a variety of issues in practical ethics. The issues we are addressing are concerned more with what moral reasons there are than with the evaluation of outcomes, or axiology.

During Michaelmas term, we discussed a variety of fundamental issues in population ethics, such as whether individuals can be benefited or harmed by being caused to exist, the nature and strength of the reason not to cause a miserable person to exist, whether there is a moral reason to cause a person to exist just because that person would be well off, whether there is a presumption against the permissibility of procreation, what the bases of rational egoistic concern are, both over time and across possible lives, and so on. We also discussed how these various issues bear on the morality of abortion and prenatal injury.

In Hilary term we will continue these discussions. I will endeavor to ensure that those who are joining the seminar for the first time are not disadvantaged by having not participated in the discussions during Michaelmas term. We will begin by exploring one further problem in population ethics – namely, whether the common sense view (which I refer to as the *Selection Principle*) that

there is a strong moral reason to cause a well-off individual to exist when the alternative is that a different, less well-off individual will come into existence instead

is compatible with the common sense view (a component of the view known as the *Asymmetry*) that

there is *no* moral reason to cause a well-off individual (perhaps even the same individual) to exist when the alternative is that no individual will come into existence.

After this, we will begin to examine a range of issues in practical ethics that I believe cannot be adequately understood without taking into account the issues in population ethics that we will have discussed. Among these issues are the following:

- Is the Selection Principle objectionably eugenicist?
- What are the implications of the Selection Principle for screening for disability or disease, embryo selection, and gene editing? As means of preventing certain genetic diseases, are embryo selection and gene editing morally different?
- What are the implications of the Selection Principle for the possibility of genetic enhancement?
- What Parfit calls the “Non-Identity Problem” arises when acts that affect well-being also determine which individuals exist. In these instances, an act can have a bad effect in a person’s life without being worse for that person, as the person would not have existed if the act had not been done. Is the reason not to do such an act as strong as the reason not to do an act that has an equivalent bad effect that *is* worse for the person in whose life it occurs? In short, does it matter morally whether a bad effect is worse for someone?
- Is the reason not to cause, or to prevent, the worst effects of climate change a century from now weakened because of the Non-Identity Problem – that is, because the potential victims who would suffer these effects if they were to occur would never exist if we were to act now to prevent the effects?
- Can the descendants of the victims of historical injustice coherently claim to be entitled to reparations when they would not have existed if these injustices had not occurred?
- Is the legal notion of “wrongful life” or “wrongful conception” morally coherent? Can an individual be entitled to compensation for some adverse physical or psychological condition when that that individual could not have existed without having that condition? Can an individual be compensated when that individual’s life cannot be made to be worth living?
- When wars are fought, many of the most important good and bad effects will predictably occur in the future, some after many years. Because of the Non-Identity Problem, the good effects will not be better for many of those in whose lives they will occur and that bad effects will not be worse for many of those in whose lives they will occur. In assessing whether a war would be proportionate, how do these

good and bad effects weigh against good and bad effects that *are* better or worse for those who would experience them?

- The Non-Identity Problem arises in many instances in which our acts affect the well-being of animals. For example, our action in causing climate change will not be worse for most of the animals who will suffer the bad effects of that action. And if we were to intervene to reduce the amount of animal suffering in the wild, this would not be better for most of the animals who would experience the good effects of our action. This raises the question whether non-identity matters less to the extent that identity matters less. If it does, does that mean that the Non-Identity Problem matters less in cases involving animals than in cases involving persons?
- Suppose that we cause animals to exist specifically in order to be able to eat them. But we ensure that they have lives that are better than those of most animals living in the wild. We then kill these animals prematurely but painlessly. Does the fact that they would never have existed with good lives if we had not intended to eat them somehow make the practice as a whole permissible?
- When a “saviour sibling” would not be caused to exist if a pre-existing child did not require the use of some part of its body, is causing that sibling to exist objectionable on the ground that it is being used as a means?
- Are there moral reasons to prevent the extinction of human beings? If so, what are these reasons and how strong are they?
- Is there a general moral asymmetry between promoting happiness and preventing suffering? If so, what is the precise nature of this asymmetry and does it apply to causing individuals to exist in the same way that it applies to acts that affect existing individuals?

My thinking about these questions is uncertain and exploratory. I am writing a book on these issues and am eager to discuss them with others. I will begin each seminar by sketching some ideas and arguments but I hope that much of each seminar will be devoted to critical discussions of the problems and of my ideas about them. I want mostly to concentrate on the problems themselves rather than on the literature, but we will also, of course, discuss the published views of the most important writers in the area. Access to the literature is through ORLO. Literature that I have posted thus far can be found through the link below. I will add further literature as the term progresses.

<https://rl.talis.com/3/oxford/lists/63E9920D-A209-0D06-0CDB-5440DBEA7E05.html?draft=1&lang=en-us&login=1>