

FACULTY OF PHILOSOPHY  
UNIVERSITY OF OXFORD



PHILOSOPHY LECTURES PROSPECTUS:  
UNDERGRADUATE LECTURES,  
OTHER EVENTS

TRINITY TERM 2020

*This Lecture Prospectus covers the Undergraduate Lectures, and Other Events, from the Faculty's Trinity Term 2020 list. A separate Prospectus is available for Graduate Classes.*

*All classes and lectures are being delivered electronically, either by means of pre-recorded lectures or through Microsoft Teams for live events. Information on the delivery method can be found in the Philosophy Canvas site.*

*Access to the courses in Trinity Term 2020 will be available only to registered Philosophy students.*

#### **NOTES:**

- 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](mailto:james.knight@philosophy.ox.ac.uk)).
- Times given here are UK times. Students attending remotely in other timezones should adjust their times accordingly.
- Lecture times are – in the case of recorded lectures - notional: these are the times agreed with lecturers before the Covid pandemic forced teaching online. Check the relevant Canvas pages for information and updates on recordings. Of course, some lectures will be “live” and these will start at the advertised time.
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## Undergraduate Lectures

Undergraduate lectures as delivered online are intended solely for the Faculty's registered undergraduate students. Student should check the new Canvas site for details on how to access each course.

Other people may attend, and are welcome, subject to the permission of the class-giver(s) and compatibility of software. The Faculty does not have the resources to help outside parties with the IT necessary to do this.

### Lectures for the First Public Examination ("Prelims" and "Mods")

#### **Plato: *Euthyphro* and *Meno***

Prof Lindsay Judson – W. 11

#### **Alan Turing on Computability and Intelligence**

Prof Peter Millican – Th. 12

These lectures, designed for the first year course in Computer Science and Philosophy, start with the background to Alan Turing's 1936 paper "On Computable Numbers", including Hilbert's programme, Gödel's incompleteness theorem, and Cantor's results concerning the countability of infinite sets. They then work in detail through the 1936 paper, using Charles Petzold's book *The Annotated Turing* (which contains the entire paper, together with comprehensive discussion) as a basis. Finally, the last three lectures will turn to Turing's 1950 paper "Computing Machinery and Intelligence", discussing some of the philosophical issues arising from the Turing Test and Searle's Chinese Room thought-experiment.

#### **Frege: *Foundations of Arithmetic***

Prof James Studd – T. W. 12 (*weeks 1 to 4*)

These are the core lectures for first-year mathematic and philosophy students. We'll consider, among other things, Frege's attack on Mill's empiricism, Frege's views on number ascriptions, the 'Julius Caesar' problem, and Frege's attempt at a logicist reduction of arithmetic to Hume's Principle, and ultimately to his ill-fated theory of extensions.

Set Text: Frege, *Foundations of Arithmetic* (trans. J. L. Austin)

### **The Leibniz-Clarke Correspondence**

Prof Simon Saunders – M. 1.45 – 3.15 (*weeks 1 to 6*)

Audience: Physics and Philosophy students preparing for prelims.

These lectures will consist of an introduction to the philosophy of space, time and motion in the early modern period, with particular focus on the writings of Descartes and Newton, and on the Leibniz-Clarke correspondence.

### Lectures for the Honour Schools in Philosophy

#### **101 Early Modern Philosophy: Leibniz**

Prof Gonzalo Rodriguez-Pereyra – W. 11

The lectures will cover the main aspects of Leibniz's metaphysics, epistemology, and philosophical theology as they are deployed in his *Discourse on Metaphysics*.

#### **106b Philosophy of Social Science**

Prof Alexander Prescott-Couch – W. 10

Contemporary social science is extremely heterogeneous, with seemingly little consensus about methods and fundamental assumptions. While some social scientific projects take the form of causal analysis of large data sets, others primarily employ case studies or involve the construction of highly idealized models that bear only an indirect relation to real-world phenomena. Many anthropologists are interested less in causal questions and more in understanding the “meanings” of events or cultural practices. Some theorists believe that a deep understanding of society requires a functional analysis of key institutions, while other, more historically inclined researchers hold that understanding these institutions requires historical narratives or “genealogies.”

How should we think about this heterogeneity? Are these differences superficial, masking a single underlying set of fundamental aims and a unitary logic of scientific inference? Or do they indicate deep disagreement about the correct approach to studying society? Moreover, if such deep disagreements do exist, to what extent should we look to the natural sciences as a model in order to resolve them?

These lectures address these (and other) questions by examining classic debates in the philosophy of social science in light of contemporary social science and recent philosophy of science. Topics will include scientific explanation, the doctrine of *Verstehen*, idealization and modeling, functional explanation, historical narrative, critical theory and ideology, social metaphysics, and the role of values in science. The aim is to show how examining social

science can provide a fuller picture of substantive and methodological commitments of the sciences as well as how philosophical analysis might inform methodological discussion within social science itself.

### **108 Philosophy of Logic and Language**

Prof Paul Elbourne – Th. 10

These lectures will cover selected topics in the philosophy of logic and language, concentrating largely on the philosophy of language. We will cover truth, meaning (the nature of propositions, internalism and externalism about meaning), and reference (the semantics of names, demonstratives, and definite descriptions).

### **109 Aesthetics and the Philosophy of Criticism**

Prof James Grant – T. 2

These lectures cover the following topics:

1. Plato's Philosophy of Art
2. Aristotle's Poetics
3. Hume and the Standard of Taste
- 4-5. Kant's Critique of Judgement
6. Literary Interpretation
7. Musical Expression
8. Defining Art

Recordings are available here: <http://podcasts.ox.ac.uk/series/aesthetics-and-philosophy-art-lectures>

Detailed handouts are available here: [https://unioxfordnexus-my.sharepoint.com/:f/g/personal/ball1694\\_ox\\_ac\\_uk/Esj83a1-iiRBjSOHgi0V3awBnoLkyHzdArCkzKBtAcKmAq?e=s56Qu8](https://unioxfordnexus-my.sharepoint.com/:f/g/personal/ball1694_ox_ac_uk/Esj83a1-iiRBjSOHgi0V3awBnoLkyHzdArCkzKBtAcKmAq?e=s56Qu8)

This page also contains handouts on the following topics: aesthetics and ethics; metaphor; ontology of art; and pictorial representation.

Please feel free to email me with any questions you may have about these topics at [james.grant@philosophy.ox.ac.uk](mailto:james.grant@philosophy.ox.ac.uk).

### **113 Post-Kantian Philosophy: Schopenhauer**

Prof William Mander – Th. 10 (weeks 1 to 4)

These lectures continue the series started in Hilary Term 2020.

Week 1 – Pessimism and the platonic ideas

Week 2 – Aesthetic appreciation

Week 3 – Pessimism, death, and suicide

Week 4 – Character, free-will, ethics, and asceticism

### **113 Post-Kantian Philosophy: Husserl**

Prof Dan Zahavi – M. W. 2 – 4 (week 3 only; 2 hours on each day = 2 lectures)

This lecture course will focus on Husserl's phenomenology. It will discuss his overarching project as well as central themes in his work.

#### *Lecture 1: Husserl's philosophical project*

Text: E. Husserl (1982), *Ideas Pertaining to a Pure Phenomenology and to a Phenomenological Philosophy, First Book: General Introduction to a Pure Phenomenology*, trans. by F. Kersten. The Hague: Martinus Nijhoff, pp. 51-75, 86-113, 128-130. Reprinted in D. Welton (ed.) (1999), *The Essential Husserl. Basic Writings in Transcendental Phenomenology*. Bloomington: Indiana University Press, pp. 60-85.

#### *Lecture 2: Perception and embodiment*

Text: E. Husserl (2001), *Analyses Concerning Passive and Active Synthesis: Lectures on Transcendental Logic*, trans. A. Steinbock. Dordrecht: Kluwer Academic Publishers, pp. 39-62. Reprinted in D. Welton (ed.) (1999), *The Essential Husserl. Basic Writings in Transcendental Phenomenology*. Bloomington: Indiana University Press, pp. 221-233.

#### *Lecture 3: Subjectivity and selfhood*

Text: E. Husserl (1999). *Cartesian Meditations: An Introduction to Phenomenology*, trans. by D. Cairns. The Hague: Martinus Nijhoff, pp. 65-81. Reprinted in D. Welton (ed.) (1999), *The Essential Husserl. Basic Writings in Transcendental Phenomenology*. Bloomington: Indiana University Press, pp. 307-316.

#### *Lecture 4: Empathy and intersubjectivity*

Text: E. Husserl (1999). *Cartesian Meditations: An Introduction to Phenomenology*, trans. by D. Cairns. The Hague: Martinus Nijhoff, pp. 89-131, 148-151. Reprinted in D. Welton (ed.) (1999), *The Essential Husserl. Basic Writings in Transcendental Phenomenology*. Bloomington: Indiana University Press, pp. 135-160.

Required reading:

Donn Welton (ed.), *The Essential Husserl: Basic writing in transcendental phenomenology* (Indiana University Press 1999).

Recommended reading:

Dan Zahavi, *Husserl's Phenomenology* (Stanford University Press 2003)

Dan Zahavi, *Phenomenology: The Basics* (Routledge 2019).

### **133 Aristotle on Nature, Life and Mind**

Prof Ursula Coope – F. 12 (*weeks 1, 2, 4, 5*)

This course of lectures is designed primarily for undergraduate students taking the paper, Aristotle on Nature Life and Mind, and for MSt students taking this as one of their options. Other graduate or undergraduate students who are interested in the topics are very welcome to attend. There were 8 lectures in HT and will a further 4 lectures in TT. The lectures in TT will focus mainly on passages from Aristotle's *De Anima*. We shall discuss the relation between the mind and the body, and the nature of perception and thought.

### **134 Knowledge and Scepticism in Hellenistic Philosophy**

Prof Luca Castagnoli – M. 10 – 12 (*weeks 1 to 6*)

'Human beings have a natural desire for knowledge', said Aristotle. However, both before and after him the philosophical quest for knowledge led some to the view that it was a hopeless or misguided aspiration. In the Hellenistic age the debate on the possibility of knowledge took centre stage as Plato's school, the Academy, 'turned sceptical' with Arcesilaus and Carneades and argued against the epistemological optimism of the two major rival Hellenistic schools, Stoicism and Epicureanism. To complicate things, not long before Zeno of Citium and Epicurus founded their schools, Pyrrho embraced and embodied the anti-dogmatic ideal of a human life stripped of knowledge and belief and thereby free from anxiety as a recipe for human happiness. That ideal was revived and developed more than two centuries later by Aenesidemus, the founder of the Pyrrhonian school, a brand of Scepticism different from the Academic one and in competition with it (the late writings of Sextus Empiricus are our best source). The lectures will introduce some of the central Hellenistic epistemological views and debates as they developed between (and within) these philosophical schools. They aim to offer an understanding of

- some of the main sources for philosophical scepticism from the fourth century BC to the 3rd century AD, and for the 'empiricist' epistemologies of Stoicism and Epicureanism;
- the variety of different positions encompassed by the term 'Sceptic';
- the Sceptics' attacks on 'dogmatic' epistemology and the various strategies adopted by the 'dogmatists' to defend the possibility of knowledge;

- the 'dogmatic' counter-attacks against the Sceptical positions, and the Sceptics' attempts to defend themselves;
- how the issue of epistemology impacted on the field of ethics: do we need knowledge to live a good and happy life? Is it possible and desirable to *live* one's Scepticism in a consistent way?

Two of the lectures will examine Cicero's presentation of the epistemology of Plato's Academy in his *Academic Books*, from Arcesilaus to Antiochus of Ascalon. The final three lectures will examine passages from Sextus Empiricus' *Outlines of Pyrrhonism*, focusing especially on his detailed account in book 1 of the origins, aims, distinctive nature and argumentative strategies of the Pyrrhonian sceptic. We will also discuss how Sextus' Pyrrhonism differs from other ancient forms of scepticism, and examine Sextus' replies to the most common objections raised against Pyrrhonian scepticism, that it is self-refuting and that it is impossible to live a sceptical life (and that such a life would not be desirable anyway). Finally, we will survey a selection of Pyrrhonian arguments against dogmatic philosophical concepts and theories in the three main areas of logic, physics and ethics (books 2 and 3).

This course is primarily intended for those undergraduate students who will sit papers 134, 136 or 139 (Knowledge and Scepticism in Hellenistic Philosophy) in 2020, and for Ancient Philosophy MSt students, but anyone with an interest in ancient Greek philosophy, philosophical scepticism and the history of epistemology is welcome to attend (knowledge of ancient Greek or Latin is not required).

### Main Texts

- A. A. Long, D. N. Sedley, *The Hellenistic Philosophers*, 2 vols., Cambridge: CUP, 1987. Vol. I: esp. sections 1-3 (Pyrrho); 15-19 (Epicureans); 39-42 (Stoics); 68-70 (Academics); 71-72 (Aenesidemus).
- Cicero, *Academic Books*, transl. by C. Brittain, Indianapolis: Hackett, 2006.
- Sextus Empiricus, *Outlines of Scepticism*, trans. by J. Annas and J. Barnes, Cambridge: CUP, 2000.

### Introductory readings

- K. Vogt, 'Ancient Skepticism', *The Stanford Encyclopedia of Philosophy* (Summer 2014 Edition), Edward N. Zalta (ed.), URL <http://plato.stanford.edu/archives/sum2014/entries/skepticism-ancient/>.
- D. Sedley, 'The Protagonists', in M. Schofield, M. Burnyeat, J. Barnes (eds.), *Doubt and Dogmatism: Studies in Hellenistic Epistemology*, Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1980, 1-19.



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Other Events

**Manuscript class: *Movements of the Mind***

Prof Wayne Wu (Carnegie Mellon) – F. 11 – 1

This is a manuscript seminar for *Movements of the Mind*. The book provides a theory of the structure of agency in all its forms with emphasis on mental action: attending, remembering, reasoning, introspecting and additional aspects of thinking. It covers topics at the intersection of philosophy of mind and cognitive science and should appeal to theorists working on mind, action, cognitive science and any area where a substantive understanding of action is crucial.

I have planned for eight meetings as I expect discussion in each meeting will overflow into the next. These meetings will be organized on Zoom. Interested students and other potential participants should email me to be put on an email list for distribution of materials (do email even if you are only remotely interested...you can be taken off later): [waynewu@cmu.edu](mailto:waynewu@cmu.edu). Please use subject line: **Wu Oxford Book Seminar**. Do note your own interests and what you work on.

I'll send out a Zoom link to that list. It will also allow me to see if there's enough participation to carry on.

Chapter 1 is available here and will be discussed at Meeting 1, Friday 11-1, May 1

<https://bit.ly/MoMChapter1Wu>

The Chapter and Session themes are as follows:

**Chapter 1: The Structure of Agency**

We will discuss agency in terms of control and guidance as explicated within a psychological causal structure. First in the order of explanation is intentional action in the sense of acting with an intention. The control and guidance roles of intention and attention respectively are explained. An analysis of control and automaticity will be given, two concepts central to understanding skilled action. The central role of intention-in-action will be established.

Chapter based on the following papers: Wu (2011) *Noûs* "Confronting Many-Many Problems", Wu *PPR* (2016) "Experts and Deviants", Wu (2013) "Mental Action and the Threat of Automaticity" (OUP volume)

**Chapter 2: Attention and Attending**

Every action involves attention. We will discuss the nature of attention, drawing on a theory of attention often called the selection for action view. We explore attending as a mental action. The discussion connects philosophical theory of attention to empirical work on it. Different "kinds" of attention will be discussed including bottom-up and top-down forms, different targets of attention, and different modes of attention such as vigilance and diffuse attention.

Chapter based on: Wu (2008) *Mind* "Attention, Conceptual Content and Doing it Right", Wu *Analysis* (2018) "Action always involves attention", Wu (2017) *JPhil* "Shaking the Mind's Ground Floor" and Wu (2014) *Attention* (Routledge).

### **Chapter 3: Intending and Remembering**

I will discuss the controlling role of intention-in-action in terms of working memory: the exercise of the capacity for action control in intention is the exercise of the capacity investigated in the cognitive science of working memory. We'll examine the nature of working memory and how it helps us understand the activity of intention. In particular, we will explicate the ideas of vigilance, the readiness for action, and steadfastness, the ability to keep on keeping on, avoiding distractions (traditionally, the agent's role in sustaining action).

### **Chapter 4: The Dynamics of Intention and Practical Memory**

Intending is active. This chapter explores how intention is tied to past, present and future through practical reasoning and action. Again, the empirical understanding of memory provides a crucial basis for understanding intention's dynamics, how it must keep track of the past to ground present action as it reaches towards its intended end. Along the way, we will examine how this activity involves the continued deployment of capacities for practical reasoning in action. We end with reflection on the subjectivity of agency and on the agent's distinctive, direct, privileged and non-observational access to her action.

### **Chapter 5: Reasoning and Skill**

We consider reasoning, with initial focus on deduction but allowing for "open-ended" reasoning. Working memory is further discussed, especially its connection to long term memory as a basis for the exercise of inferential skill. Care will be paid to learning and expertise drawing on the development of agentive capacities. We'll consider specific topics concerning knowledge-how, "taking", and how to draw the contrast between certain forms of inference and associative thought.

### **Chapter 6: Introspecting Perceptual Consciousness**

How we have direct access to phenomenal states of mind remains mysterious: there are no adequate psychological theories of it. This chapter provides such a theory. Care will be paid to concrete principles for assessing when introspection is reliable and when it is not. We critically examine notable cases: visual blur and bodily ownership. Substantial doubt is thrown on much of the introspective data assumed in philosophical discussions of consciousness. Lessons for the theory of consciousness will be discussed.

### **Chapter 7: The Edges of Agency**

We discuss cases at the edges of agency focusing on automaticity and agency. We will consider the idea of a purely automatic action. Further, we will discuss the nature of distraction and mind wandering, and examine distortions of agency when automaticity runs amok including thought phenomena in schizophrenia and challenges to attention in agency as in distraction or fixation (e.g. in ADHD and OCD).

A possible Chapter 8 would concern imagining and mental construction, but I am not sure that will be completed in time for the seminar or whether it will be discussed in the book.

### **Knowledge and Social Reality**

Ms Annina Loets – F. 11 (*weeks 5 to 8*)

This lecture series is designed to supplement the faculty lectures for PHIL102: Knowledge and Reality. The lectures will explore how core debates in Metaphysics and Epistemology can be made fruitful to advance our understanding of social reality and knowledge within a social world. The first two lectures will discuss topics in social epistemology, the second two lectures will cover topics in social metaphysics. The course is closely aligned with the Faculty reading list for Knowledge & Reality: each lecture will make use of resources covered in K&R to advance the debate in question.

### **Lecture 1: Socially Conditioned Belief**

Many of our beliefs and attitudes are shaped by our social environment. Had we grown up in a different social environment or been educated differently, we might have had radically different beliefs. The first lecture examines to what extent, if any, such observations have the potential to undermine positive epistemic status for such beliefs.

#### Background Readings:

Roger White (2010): 'You just believe that because...', *Philosophical Perspectives* 24, 573-615.

Amia Srinivasan (2015): 'The Archimedian Urge', *Philosophical Perspectives* 29, 325-362.

Miriam Schoenfield: 'Meditations on Beliefs Formed Arbitrarily', Forthcoming in *Oxford Studies in Epistemology*.

## Lecture 2: Knowledge and Standpoints

A central claim of standpoint theory is that the oppressed are in an epistemologically privileged position to acquire certain kinds of knowledge. A related claim often made is that the non-oppressed are in an epistemically worse position to acquire the relevant knowledge and should therefore defer to the oppressed on certain matters. This lecture sharpens the notion of epistemic privilege with which standpoint theory credits oppressed groups and examines the case for this sort of privilege as well as its implications for norms of deference.

### Background Readings:

Nancy Hartsock (1983): 'The Feminist Standpoint: Developing the Ground For A Specifically Feminist Historical Materialism.' Reprinted in: *The Feminist Standpoint Revisited and Other Essays*. Routledge (1983), 105-135.

Patricia Hill Collins (2000): 'Black Feminist Epistemology'. In: *Black Feminist Thought*, Routledge, ch.11.

Alison Wylie: 'Why Standpoint Matters' In: Figueroa & Harding (eds.) *Sciences and Other Cultures*, Routledge, Ch.2, 26-48.

## Lecture 3: Social Constitution, Social Construction.

A key topic in metaphysics is material constitution. This lecture explores the relation between material and social constitution. What, if anything, is the difference between a piece of clay constituting a clay statue and a piece of paper constituting a pound note? How are we to think of the relation between a person and their gender or race? And is there an important distinction between social constitution and social construction?

### Background Readings:

Sally Haslanger (1995): 'Ontology and Social Construction', *Philosophical Topics* 23, 95-125.

Brian Epstein (2015): 'Groups and Constitution', In: *The Ant Trap*, Oxford University Press, Ch.10.

Ásta (2018): 'Social Construction as Social Significance', In: *The Categories We Live By*, Oxford University Press, Ch.2.

## Lecture 4: Social Power

In a social world, people often wield power over others. But what is power? A natural thought is that power is an ability: to have power is to be able to do or make other people do certain

things. This lecture explores different accounts of power as an ability, paying close attention to central questions in social theory, e.g. whether power is a property of agents/group agents or a property of social systems, distinctions between prohibitive and productive power, and what it might be for power to attach to a social position.

#### Background Readings:

Philip Pettit (1996): 'Freedom as Antipower', *Ethics* 106, 576-604.

Amy Allen (1998): 'Rethinking Power', *Hypatia* 13, 21-40.

Peter Morriss (1987): *Power: A Philosophical Analysis*, Manchester University Press.

#### **Philosophy of Climate Change**

Ms Alice Evatt (Convener) – W. 2 – 4 (*even weeks – schedule subject to change*)

The series brings together some of the world's leading experts in climate ethics — John Broome, Simon Caney, Megan Blomfield and Henry Shue — to showcase the latest and cutting edge work in the area. This series is intended to spark interest in questions relating to philosophy and climate change and unite people across the university interested in issues of climate change and the role of philosophy in furthering climate research, action and discussion. The first hour will consist of a lecture and then the floor will be open to questions and discussion

The seminar is open to everyone across the university.

#### **Dynamic Semantics**

Dr Matthew Mandelkern – Th. 1 – 3 (*weeks 1 to 4*)

We will explore some motivations for, and the benefits and drawbacks of, dynamic semantics. A course website can be found at <http://users.ox.ac.uk/~sfop0776/ds.html>