PHILOSOPHY LECTURES PROSPECTUS:
GRADUATE CLASSES

MICHAELMAS TERM 2023
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.

- Teaching is now taking place in person.

- 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).
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: Theoretical Philosophy
Various class-givers and times

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 Michaelmas Term will cover key material in practical philosophy. Class-givers will contact their groups, specifying readings and confirming the class time, in advance of term.

Ancient epistemology (for MSt and BPhil students only)
Prof Alex Bown and Prof Simon Shogry – T. 9 – 11, Radcliffe Humanities (Ryle Room)

Meno’s Paradox is a puzzle about the possibility of inquiry: either we know what we’re inquiring into, making further inquiry pointless, or we do not, in which case it is impossible to recognise the target of our inquiry once it is found.

In this seminar, addressed to students in the MSt in Ancient Philosophy and BPhil students interested in ancient philosophy, we will investigate Meno’s Paradox, Plato’s solution(s) to it, as well as later responses from the Hellenistic philosophers (Epicureans, Stoics, and Pyrrhonian Sceptics).

We will also devote time to discussing general methodological questions arising from the study of the history of philosophy and consider various approaches to writing a successful essay in ancient philosophy.

Student presentations are strongly encouraged. A provisional schedule is below. The first week’s readings will be available on Canvas.

Week 1 - Welcome & Methodology

Menn, “The historical history of philosophy: a discussion with Michael Frede”. “How to Write Papers in Ancient Philosophy” (advice document)
Week 2 - Socratic Definition and Knowledge

Plato, *Euthyphro* (all)
Plato, *Meno* (up to 80d)
Geach, “Plato’s Euthyphro: An Analysis and Commentary”

Week 3 - Meno’s Paradox & Recollection

Plato, *Meno* (80d-86c, 96d-end)
Fine, “Inquiry in the *Meno*”
Schwab, “Explanation in the Epistemology of the *Meno*”
Schwab and Bronstein, “Is Plato an Innatist in the *Meno*?”

Week 4 - Introduction to Epicurean Epistemology

Long and Sedley, *Hellenistic Philosophers*, chapters 14-18 (including commentary)
Asmis, “Epicurean Epistemology” (focus on “Canonic”, “Perception”, and “Belief”)

Week 5 - Preconceptions, Inquiry, and Definition in Epicureanism

Long and Sedley, *Hellenistic Philosophers*, chapters 19, 23 (including commentary)
Asmis, “Epicurean Epistemology” (focus on “Preconceptions”)
Fine, “Epicurean Inquiry”, in *The Possibility of Inquiry*

Week 6 - Introduction to Stoic Epistemology

Long and Sedley, *Hellenistic Philosophers*, chapters 39-41 (including commentary)
Frede, “Stoic Epistemology”

Week 7 - Preconceptions, Inquiry, and Definition in Stoicism

Crivelli, “Stoics on Definition” in *Definition in Greek Philosophy*
Fine, “Stoic Inquiry” in *The Possibility of Inquiry*

Week 8 - Sextus on Inquiry

Sextus Empiricus, *Outlines of Pyrrhonism* 1.1-34, 187-241
Fine, “Sceptical Inquiry 1” and “Sceptical Inquiry 2” in *The Possibility of Inquiry*
Aristotle on Knowledge, Belief, & other Mental States in the *Posterior Analytics* & *Nicomachean Ethics VI*

Prof Michail Peramatzis—W. 9 – 11, Radcliffe Humanities (Ryle Room)

**Intended audience:** MSt in Ancient Philosophy students and any graduates with related interests.

In his *Posterior Analytics* (*APo*) Aristotle offers an account of knowledge (*epistêmê*) in terms of grasping demonstrative arguments structured axiomatically. The sixth book of the *Nicomachean Ethics* (*EN*) discusses knowledge along with other mental states which are ‘truth-attaining’. We shall discuss the interpretative and philosophical issues arising from some key passages of these influential works.

**Wk 1.** *Nicomachean Ethics* VI.2, 1139a1-31; *Categories* 8 (8b25-9a13; 11a20-38; cf. 7, 6b1-6): Soul, its ‘Parts’, States, and Excellences.

**Wk 2.** *Posterior Analytics* I.1 & *Prior Analytics* II.21 (67a5-b11): Teaching, Learning, & Pre-existing Knowledge: the Case of Recognising & Knowing Particulars.

**Wk 3.** *Posterior Analytics* I.2 & *Nicomachean Ethics* VI.3: the Definition of *Epistêmê*

**Wk 4.** *Posterior Analytics* I.13 & II.1-2: Knowledge of the ‘Fact’ and Knowledge of the ‘Reason Why’

**Wk 5.** *Posterior Analytics* I.33 & *Nicomachean Ethics* on Knowledge versus (True) Opinion (*APo* I.33; I.4-6; *EN* VI.5, 1140b25-30; VI.9, 1142a31-b15)

**Wk 6.** *Posterior Analytics* I.18 & 31: Sense Perception, ‘Induction’, and Knowledge

**Wk 7.** *Posterior Analytics* II.19 & *Nicomachean Ethics* VI.6: ‘Induction’ and *Nous* (also *EN* VI.8, 1142a23-30; VI.11, 1143a25-b5)

**Wk 8.** *Metaphysics* A.1-2 & *Nicomachean Ethics* VI.7: Wisdom

**Reading for week 1** (a longer reading list will be provided in class in week 1)

See texts under **Wk 1**.


**Hume**

Prof Peter Millican – M. 11 – 1, Radcliffe Humanities (Ryle Room)

A course description will follow on the Canvas page.

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**Wittgenstein on Solipsism and the First Person**

Prof Bill Child – W. 11 – 1, Radcliffe Humanities (Ryle Room)

The class is intended in the first instance for Philosophy BPhil and MSt students. It is also open to 4th year undergraduates in CSP, MP and PP. PRS and DPhil students in Philosophy are welcome to attend by prior arrangement. Others may also be admitted if space permits.

Please e-mail me (bill.child@univ.ox.ac.uk) in advance if you would like to come to these classes. If you are in one of the categories specified above (Philosophy BPhil and MSt students; 4th year CSP, MP and PP students; Philosophy PRS and DPhil students) you are entitled to participate; but it will help me to know likely numbers in advance. If you are not in one of those categories, please get in touch anyway; I will let you know before the first class whether I can accommodate you.

The class will deal with treatment of questions about subjectivity and the self that feature in Wittgenstein’s work from the *Tractatus* to *Philosophical Investigations* and will focus on two main themes: solipsism; and the first person. In his treatment of *solipsism*, we will look at:

(a) his discussion of solipsism as a general metaphysical view (‘the world is my world’ (Tractatus), ‘the problem discussed by realists, idealists, and solipsists’ (Blue Book)); and

(b) his discussion of solipsism as a view in the philosophy of mind in particular (‘Only I feel real pain, only I really see (or hear)’, ‘Only my own experiences are real’ (Blue Book)).

In Wittgenstein’s treatment of the first person, we will look at:

(c) his discussion of the meaning or function of the first-person pronoun, ‘I’; and

(d) his discussion of the first-person point of view more generally.

There is a small amount of required reading each week, listed below. In four weeks, the required reading is a work of Wittgenstein’s. In the other four weeks, it is drawn from the secondary literature; but you are also strongly encouraged to read the relevant primary text. A fuller reading list, with a selection of optional further readings, is available on Canvas and on ORLO (Oxford Reading Lists Online), where you can find electronic versions of most of the readings.

Participants are encouraged to e-mail me before each week’s class with questions arising from the reading that they would like to discuss. All questions are welcome – no question is too simple or basic to raise. I will do my best to address all questions that I receive in good time before the class.

I will post a handout on Canvas in advance of each meeting (but possibly only just in advance).
Week 1 ____________ Solipsism in the Tractatus: ‘The world is my world’
Required reading:

Suggested primary texts:
Ludwig Wittgenstein, *Notebooks 1914-16* – 23.5.15; 1.8.16 to 12.8.16; 2.9.16; 12.10.16-17.10.16
Ludwig Wittgenstein, *Tractatus* 5.541-5.5421, 5.6-5.641

Week 2 ________ Sensation Language in Russell and the Tractatus
Required reading:

Week 3 __________ _Philosophical Remarks_ - ‘I’, the self, and immediate experience
Required reading:

Week 4 __________ Wittgenstein’s Lectures, Feb-March 1933: ‘2 kinds of use of “I”’

Week 5 __________ *The Blue Book I*: Solipsism and the Philosophy of Mind
Ludwig Wittgenstein, *The Blue and Brown Books* pp. 44-74

Week 6 __________ *The Blue Book II*: The use of ‘I’ as subject and the use of ‘I’ as object

Week 7 __________ ‘I’, the Self, Subjectivity, and Solipsism in *Philosophical Investigations*

Week 8 __________ Anscombe on the First Person
Pragmatics and Conversation
Prof Natalia Waights Hickman – T. 2 - 4, Radcliffe Humanities (Ryle Room)

A course description will appear on the Canvas page.

Self and Mind
Dr Alex Geddes – T. 11 – 1, Radcliffe Humanities (Ryle Room)

In these classes, we be exploring some topics in the philosophy of mind that have a bearing on the nature of the self. First, we will be looking at the unity of consciousness and the significance of ‘split-brain’ subjects. Second, we will focus on mental preservation, and a cluster of relevant issues concerning memory, reference, and self-knowledge. Finally, we will examine the nature of imagination, and the role it plays in philosophical theorising about the self.

Please see the Canvas page for the required readings.

Philosophy of Physics
Prof Adam Caulton and Dr Owen Maroney – Th. 11 – 1, Radcliffe Humanities (Lecture Room)

Weeks 1-4: Classical Symmetries and Spacetime

This course of four classes is devoted to the topic of symmetry in classical spacetime and other field theories. The focus is largely on interpretative issues, such as the role of symmetries in identifying redundant representational structure in a theory’s formalism, and questions of ontology and explanation.

The intended audience includes MSt students in Philosophy of Physics, BPhil and DPhil students interested in naturalised metaphysics, and fourth year Physics & Philosophy undergraduates offering Advanced Philosophy of Physics. Others are welcome if there is space.

Week 1. The interpretation of symmetries
Week 2. The “hole argument” in general relativity
Week 3. The ontology of electrodynamics in light of the Aharonov-Bohm effect
Week 4. Symmetries and conservation laws: what explains what?

A reading list will be provided in the first session. The following should be read in advance for week 1 (and are easily available on-line):


Weeks 5 to 8

These sessions will deal with the conceptual problems involved in our best accounts of thermal physics.

The reduction of thermodynamics to statistical mechanics is one of the most prominent inter-theoretic reductions to be found in the literature. However, the statistical mechanical approach itself has been understood in two very different frameworks - the Gibbsian framework, emphasising the role of probability distributions, and the neo-Boltzmannian framework, focussed upon dynamical explanations of individual systems. The lectures will cover the differences between the two statistical mechanical frameworks, how they attempt to account for the time asymmetric phenomena described by thermodynamics, and how they treat phenomena that goes beyond thermodynamics, such as thermal fluctuations or particle symmetries.

Sibley’s Aesthetics
Prof James Grant – Th. 9 – 11, Radcliffe Humanities (Ryle Room) except week 3: Th. 2 – 4, Exeter College (Morris Room)

Frank Sibley (1923–1996) is one of the most influential aestheticians of the twentieth century. His paper ‘Aesthetic Concepts’ is arguably the most important single paper ever written in analytic aesthetics. The truth of its conclusions has often been taken for granted in subsequent discussions of aesthetic properties, aesthetic value, and aesthetic judgement. His views on perception have had a profound impact on how philosophers think about aesthetic experience. His views on evaluation have been central to the debate between aesthetic particularists and generalists.

Sibley’s work therefore provides an excellent advanced introduction to central topics in aesthetics. It also repays close study. His arguments are careful and subtle. It is easy to miss much of the nuance without careful reading. Reading a selection of his work reveals a broader picture of the aesthetic domain than is apparent from any one paper.

Each week will be devoted to one or two of Sibley’s papers. All the required readings are in the volume, Approach to Aesthetics. Handouts on the readings are available here.

Please note: the class in week 3 will be on Thursday 2-4 pm in the Morris Room in Exeter College.
Week 1: Aesthetic Concepts

Optional:
- Ted Cohen, *Aesthetic/Non-aesthetic and the concept of taste: a critique of Sibley’s position*
- Kendall Walton, *Categories of Art*

Week 2: Aesthetic and Non-Aesthetic

Optional:
- James Shelley, *The Problem of Non-Perceptual Art*
- Fabian Dorsch, *Non-Inferentialism About Justification: The Case of Aesthetic Judgements*

Week 3: Objectivity and Aesthetics

Optional:
- David Hume, *Of the Standard of Taste*

Week 4: Particularity, Art, and Evaluation

Optional:
- P.F. Strawson, *Aesthetic Appraisal and Works of Art*

Week 5: General Criteria and Reasons in Aesthetics

Optional:
- James Shelley, *Critical Compatibilism*
- Anna Bergqvist, *Why Sibley is Not a Generalist After All*
- Claire Kirwin, *Why Sibley Is (Probably) Not a Particularist After All*

Week 6: Originality and Value

Optional:
- Bruce Vermazen, *The Aesthetic Value of Originality*

Week 7: Aesthetics and the Looks of Things and Making Music Our Own

Optional:

Week 8: Tastes, Smells, and Aesthetics
Advanced Political Philosophy: Legitimate Authority, Democracy and Justice  
Prof Cecile Fabre  – F. 11 – 1, All Souls College (Wharton Room)

This class is restricted to 2nd year B.Phil students who intend to specialise in political philosophy – in the sense that they plan to write (a) two essays in political philosophy, or (b) one essay and their dissertation, or (c) two essays and their dissertation. No exception will be made. It will investigates three central questions in political philosophy: (1) What does it mean to say that a regime/government/political decision is legitimate? Has authority? (2) What are the conditions for legitimacy? (3) Are we under an obligation to obey the law? A detailed syllabus is available at: https://cfabre-politicalphilosophyteaching.weebly.com

Political Philosophy  
Prof David Enoch – M. 1 – 3, Faculty of Law (Seminar Room D)

Philosophy students interested in attending this class should contact the class-giver to see if a place is available.

We will be discussing some topics in contemporary political philosophy (in the analytic tradition). To the extent that there is a general topic for the seminar, it revolves around the value of autonomy, consent, and in particular, flawed consent, in political philosophy. Topics I plan to discuss: Against Public Reason, Raz’ conception of autonomy, third-party coercion, false consciousness and liberalism, and nudging.

I plan to discuss in detail the texts in bold letters. The others are mostly for background or further reading.

Week 1, Oct 9th: Against Public Reason  

Week 2, Oct. 16th: Public Reason and Epistemology  
Week 3, Oct 23rd: Raz on Autonomy
- **Joseph Raz, *The Morality of Freedom*, chaps. 14-5.**

Week 4, Oct 30th: More Raz

Week 5, Nov 6th: Third-Party Coercion
- My “Contrastive Consent and Third-Party Coercion” (draft).

Week 6, Nov 13th: Adaptive Preferences and False Consciousness

Week 7, Nov 20th
Contd. (I suspect there will be “spillover” from previous sessions. If not, we can worry about the reading for this session later on.)
Week 8, Nov 27th: Nudging

- My “How Nudging Upsets Autonomy”.

Feminism and Speech
Dr Sebastien Bishop – W. 4 – 6, Radcliffe Humanities (Ryle Room)

Optional background reading
- Indeed, just generally all the MacKinnon work you can get your hands on!

Week 1: Deontological Free Speech Arguments – Autonomy
Required:

Recommended:

Further:

**Week 2: Deontological Free Speech Arguments – Status**

**Required:**


**Further:**

- Baker

**Week 3: Deontological Free Speech Arguments – Democratic Participation**

**Required:**


**Recommended, especially if you like a challenge:**


**Further:**


**Week 4: The Inversion Strategy**

**Required:**


**Further:**

Week 5: Speech That Threatens Speech – Silencing
Required:

Recommended:

Further:

Week 6: Speech That Threatens Speech – Credibility Loss
Required:

Further:

Week 7: Speech and the Self
Required:

Further:
Week 8: Offensive Speech
Required:

Further:
  - Clarification: the author now goes by Quill Kukla. But per their instructions, I’m citing this paper as by ‘Rebecca Kukla’, as this is the name the paper was originally published under. But were I to talk about this paper, again per their instructions, I would refer to the author as Quill Kukla.

AI Ethics and Safety
Prof Hilary Greaves – W. 2 – 4, Radcliffe Humanities (Ryle Room)

This class will examine issues of ethics and value around current and possible future artificial intelligence. Topics covered are likely to include algorithmic bias, privacy and surveillance, the future of work, democracy, interpretability, digital minds and existential risk. Readings will be placed on the class Canvas page by Wednesday of week 0.