

FACULTY OF PHILOSOPHY  
UNIVERSITY OF OXFORD



# PHILOSOPHY LECTURES PROSPECTUS

TRINITY TERM 2021

## 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.
- Unless otherwise specified, the lectures and classes are given for all of weeks 1 to 8.
- 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)).

*Undergraduate lectures are being delivered electronically, either by means of pre-recorded lectures or through Microsoft Teams for live events. Links to the Teams events, or the pre-recorded lectures, can be found in the Philosophy Canvas site (under the sections [Mods and Prelims Classes](#) and [FHS Classes](#)).*

*Graduate classes in Hilary Term 2021 are being delivered by Microsoft Teams, unless otherwise indicated. Graduate students will receive, by the start of week 1, invitations on Microsoft Teams for all the classes available to them.*

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

# Lectures for the First Public Examination

Students preparing for their First Public Examination (Prelims or Mods) should attend the following lectures this term:

*PPE, Philosophy and Modern Languages, Philosophy and Theology, Psychology and Philosophy: Moral Philosophy, and General Philosophy*

*Mathematics and Philosophy, Physics and Philosophy, Computer Science and Philosophy: Elements of Deductive Logic, and General Philosophy*

*Literae Humaniores*: any listed Prelims/Mods lecture that corresponds to their chosen Philosophy option for Mods

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

Prof Lindsay Judson – recordings on Canvas

Intended audience: Primarily intended for Classics Mods students who are doing the Plato special subject.

Brief description:

This is the first half of a course of 16 lectures, primarily for Classics Mods students offering these dialogues as their philosophy option; there will be 8 further lectures in Michaelmas Term. I shall pay particular attention to introducing philosophical concepts, analysing arguments, and explaining how to read Platonic dialogues. The lectures will begin with an introduction to philosophy as whole, and ask the question ‘what is it?’. I shall also say something about why Plato wrote dialogues and how we should approach them. In the next 5 lectures I shall look at the *Euthyphro*, exploring the two dialogues it contains – the one between Socrates and Euthyphro and the one between Plato and his readers. In the last two lectures this term and in the Michaelmas Term lectures I shall discuss the *Meno*: topics discussed will include definition and the ‘Socratic fallacy’; the view that everyone always desires what is good; the paradox of inquiry and Plato’s response to it; hypotheses, knowledge, and true belief.

Handouts and bibliography will be available in the Philosophy section of Weblearn (also accessible via my web-page).

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

Prof Peter Millican – recordings on Canvas

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.

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

Prof Simon Saunders – recordings on Canvas **and** live Zoom, F. 2 – 3.30 (*weeks 1 to 4*)

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, and to Leibniz's metaphysics, with readings from Descartes, Newton, and Leibniz, with particular focus on the Leibniz-Clarke correspondence. You should be sure to have available a copy of the Correspondence by second week (recommended is the edition edited by H. G. Alexander, which contains useful extracts from Newton's *Principia*).

Recordings of lectures are available on Canvas. In weeks 1-4 there will be weekly zoom meetings for discussion of the lectures. Be sure to have watched the first recording before the first discussion class.

# Lectures for the Honour Schools

Lectures listed in this section are **core lectures** for the papers in the Honour Schools: that is, these are lectures intended especially for students taking those papers at Finals. Questions set in Finals papers usually take the content of core lectures into account. It is therefore very much in your interest if you are a finalist to attend as many relevant core lectures as your schedule permits.

Students should also refer to the section *Other Lectures*, following. Lectures listed there are not official core lectures, but sometimes cover topics of relevance to the Finals papers.

## **102 Knowledge and Reality: revision lectures**

Prof Nicholas Jones – M. 10 – 12 (*weeks 1 to 4*), live on Teams

In these revision classes, we will discuss how one might go about answering some previous Finals questions. If there are particular topics or questions that you would like to be covered, please contact Prof Jones directly.

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

Prof Paul Elbourne – recordings on Canvas

These lectures will concentrate on the philosophy of language and will explore the central topics of meaning (including theories of meaning and internalism and externalism about meanings), truth, and reference (including the semantics of definite descriptions, names, and indexicals).

## **109 Aesthetics and the Philosophy of Criticism: revision lectures**

Prof Louise Hanson – T. 10 – 12 (*weeks 1 to 4*), live on Teams

In these revision classes, we will discuss how one might go about answering some previous Finals questions. If there are particular topics or questions that you would like to be covered, please contact Prof Hanson directly.

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

Prof Mark Wrathall – recordings on Canvas

These lectures are designed for students taking the Post-Kantian paper (113), but anyone interested in Hegel and the history of 19<sup>th</sup> century European philosophy is welcome to attend. We will cover Hegel's dialectical method, his account of consciousness and the transition to self-consciousness, his critique of Kant's moral theory, his philosophy of action, and the development of ethical life. We will be studying portions of the *Phenomenology of*

*Spirit* (students are encouraged to use one of the new translations – either Inwood’s with Oxford University Press, or Pinkard’s with Cambridge University Press). We will also be reading portions of the *Outlines of the Philosophy of Right* (recommended version is Houlgate’s revised translation published by Oxford World’s Classics).

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

Prof Joseph Schear – Th. 10 – 11.30 (*weeks 1 to 6*), live on Teams

The lectures focus primarily on Jean-Paul Sartre’s 1943 book, *Being and Nothingness*. Passages will be cited from the 2018 Routledge edition, translated by Sarah Richmond. The lectures are aimed at undergraduates taking Post-Kantian Philosophy (paper 113) but anyone is welcome to attend. There will be up to a half-hour for discussion after each lecture.

Schedule:

1. The early writings & the project of *Being and Nothingness*
2. Consciousness, nothingness, selfhood
3. Bad faith & the critique of Freud
4. Solipsism & the Look of the Other
5. Love, hate, desire, etc.
6. Freedom

### **129 The Philosophy of Wittgenstein**

Prof Natalia Waights Hickman – Th. 10 (*weeks 1 to 3*), live on Teams

*These lectures continue and complete the series started in HT2021, for which the following was the Prospectus entry.*

This lecture series gives an overview of select topics in Wittgenstein’s philosophy, where possible exploring problems and themes that are continuous between the *Tractatus Logico-Philosophicus* (TLP) and *Philosophical Investigations* (PI). Central among these is the concern with the nature, conditions and limits of sense.

The majority of lectures will focus on Wittgenstein’s later work, but the first three will reflect on key issues in TLP which aid assessment of the later work, and engage some of its central preoccupations: the relationship between meaning and metaphysics, and the aims and nature of philosophy.

## Other Lectures (suitable for all audiences)

### An Introduction to Chinese Philosophy

Dr Rafal Banka – T. Th. 3, live on Teams

The series of lectures is aimed at presenting an outline of the Chinese philosophical tradition. It is subdivided into three parts:

- the distinctive features and intuitions of Chinese philosophy
- the discussion of the most important and influential schools of classical Chinese philosophy
- showing how Chinese philosophy is continued nowadays

Where relevant, Sino-Western comparisons and the possible contribution of Chinese thought to contemporary philosophical research will be discussed.

The lectures will cover the following topics:

1. Characteristic features of Chinese philosophy.
2. The proto-metaphysical character of the *Book of Changes* (*Yijing* 易經).
3. Metaphysics in philosophical Daoism (*Daojia* 道家) in the *Daodejing* (道德經).
4. The practical dimension of Daoism in the *Zhuangzi* (莊子).
5. Introducing Confucianism: the *Analects* (*Lunyu* 論語).
6. Confucian concept of human nature: the *Mencius* (*Mengzi* 孟子).
7. Beyond the Confucian mainstream: the *Xunzi* (*Xunzi* 荀子).
8. Mohist critique of Confucianism — the *Mozi* (墨子).
9. The political philosophy of the Legalists (*Fajia* 法家).
10. The relevance of Chinese philosophy to selected ethical issues I: experimental philosophy approach.
11. The relevance of Chinese philosophy to selected ethical issues I: the ethics of care.
12. Chinese philosophy and language.
13. Buddhism in Chinese philosophy.
14. Neo-Confucianism.
15. Trajectories of Chinese Philosophy in the 20th and 21st Century I: Xiong Shili (熊十力).
16. Trajectories of Chinese Philosophy in the 20th and 21st Century II: Li Zehou.

No obligatory reading is required for course completion. However, the participants are encouraged to read relevant chapters from the following book (as general reading):

Lai, Karyn L. 2008. *An Introduction to Chinese Philosophy*. New York: Cambridge University Press.

As for the specific lecture topics, reading of primary sources is especially encouraged. All reading resources will be listed at Canvas and ORLO.

### **Philosophy, Rhetoric, and Sophistry - Plato on the Norms of Political Discourse**

Ms Sybilla Pereira – F. 10 (*weeks 5 to 8*), live on Teams

To follow.

### **Knowing and Acting**

Dr Nick Hughes – Th. 12 (*weeks 1 to 4*), live on Teams

*Knowledge is power.* This is a refrain one often hears. But what does it mean? And is it true? In these lectures we will look at one approach to answering these questions, which focuses on the relationship between knowing and acting.

Traditionally, philosophers and psychologists have tried to understand action in terms of *beliefs* and *desires*. According to this view, we can explain why someone acted as they did by pointing to what they wanted and what they believed. For example, we can explain why pharmaceutical companies have spent the last year working on Covid-19 vaccines by citing their desire to end the pandemic, and their belief that in order to do so, they have to develop vaccines. Likewise, we can explain why you are studying right now by citing your desire to pass the exam and your belief that in order to pass, you need to study.

*Knowledge* is conspicuously absent from the belief-desire paradigm. But our everyday assessments of action frequently invoke knowledge or its absence. Had Pfizer rolled out their vaccine without knowing that it was safe, they would have been open to criticism for acting in a reckless and irresponsible manner. This suggests that knowledge is essential for correct action. Knowledge also often features in the explanation of action. If I want to explain how you were able to pass the exam, I might point out that you *knew* the answers. This suggests that knowledge is essential for the explanation of successful action.

In these lectures, we will consider whether a 'knowledge-desire' paradigm should replace the belief-desire paradigm. In Lecture 1 we will familiarise ourselves with the belief-desire paradigm and some important distinctions between believing and knowing. In Lecture 2, we will look at the *normative* aspect of the knowledge-desire paradigm, which says that in order to act correctly, you should act on knowledge. In Lecture 3, we will look at the *explanatory* aspect of the knowledge-desire paradigm, which claims that explanations of successful action that make reference to one's knowledge are better explanations than those that merely make

reference to one's beliefs. In Lecture 4 we will consider how the knowledge-desire paradigm might play a role in decision theory, which attempts to understand how one should act in conditions of uncertainty.

# 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: History of Philosophy**

Various class-givers – live on Teams – times to be confirmed

*Group 1:* Prof William Mander

*Group 2:* Prof Peter Kail

*Group 3:* Prof Paul Lodge

*Group 4:* Prof Simon Shogry

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 Trinity Term will cover key material in history of philosophy, with groups 1 to 3 focussing on the early modern period, and group 4 on ancient philosophy. Class-givers will contact their groups, specifying readings and confirming the class time, in advance of term.

## **Stoic philosophy of language and speech act theory**

Prof Susanne Bobzien – F. 2.30 – 4.30, live on Teams

**Overview:** We will study and discuss some important contributions Stoic philosophers have made to various areas of philosophy of language and logic that touch on speech act theory. These include their notions of complete *lekta* (sayables, ~meanings), which include *axiōmata* (assertibles, ~propositions), questions, commands, oaths, suppositions, prayers, curses, among others. This will lead us to consider Stoic notions of meaning, of truth, of communication, and more.

**Intended audience:** MSt in Ancient Philosophy, BPhil and DPhil in Philosophy.

**Prerequisites:** Basic knowledge of propositional and predicate logic; basic knowledge of Greek.

## Topics:

Week 1: Stoic logic and complete *lekta* (sayables, ~meanings)

Week 2: Complete sayables and Stoic *axiōmata* (assertibles, ~propositions)

Week 3: ‘Yes or no’ questions and ‘wh’ questions

Week 4: Commands

Week 5: Oaths

Week 6: Suppositions

Week 7: Addresses, prayers, and curses

Week 8: Quasi-*axiōmata* (Thursday 4pm, attendance optional)

Week 8: General results (the role of truth-values, completeness,

In each Friday session I will start with an introduction on the topic of the week. This will be followed by our working through some primary texts and discussing philosophical issues that arise from them, partially guided by some secondary literature. (Warning: the extant primary sources are sparse and we will study them very carefully.) In the last five weeks participants are invited to present short introductions on specific issues.

## Reading:

Reading for Week 1

(i) As general preparation read an introduction to Stoic logic. Any of the following will do: chapter ‘Stoic logic’ in Mary Louise Gill & Pierre Pellegrin (eds) *A Companion to Ancient Philosophy*; chapter ‘Stoic logic’ in Brad Inwood (ed), *Cambridge Companion to Stoic Philosophy*; chapter ‘La logique des Stoïciennes’ in J.-B. Gourinat and J. Barnes (eds.), *Lire les Stoïciennes*, Paris (Vrin); or the chapter on Stoic logic in Martha Kneale & William Kneale, *The Development of Logic*.

(ii) Primary texts discussed in the session: Diogenes Laertius, *Lives of the Philosophers*, Book 7, sections 57, 65-68 (DL 7.57, 65-68); Sextus Empiricus, *Against the Logicians*, Book 2, sections 69-74 (SE M.8.69-74).

(Reading for weeks 2 to 8 and further general reading will be listed on canvas. I also aim to post copies of a good part of the reading there.)

## **Aristotle's *Metaphysics*: the Project of the Central Books**

Prof Michail Peramatzis and Prof David Charles (Yale) – Th. 11 – 1, live on Teams

We shall discuss Aristotle's *Metaphysics* Books Z and (time permitting) H. We propose to read the argument of these books as relying on the requirements of priority and unity: primary substance ought to be prior to the things it is the substance of, and it ought to account for the unity of natural substance-kinds and their members. Each week we shall introduce our reading of a few chapters of Aristotle's text and discuss it with the participants.

### **Week 1**

The central themes of *Metaphysics* ZH $\Theta$  and the Requirements of Priority and Unity (MP & DC)

### **Week 2**

Z.1-3 (DC)

### **Week 3**

Z.4-6 (MP)

### **Week 4**

Z.7-9 (DC)

### **Week 5**

Z.10-12 (part I) (MP)

### **Week 6**

Z.10-12 (part II) (MP)

### **Week 7**

Z.13-16 (DC)

### **Week 8**

Z.17 and (perhaps) H (MP & DC)

### **Readings**

Before each meeting it would be useful to read the relevant parts of the text, translation, and commentaries. We will also recommend one or at most two articles or chapters per meeting. The readings for week 1 are

Owen G. E. L. (1978 - 1979), *'Particular and General'*, *Proceedings of the Aristotelian Society* 79, 1-21

Burnyeat M. F. (2001), *A Map of Metaphysics Zeta*, Pittsburgh, 1-29

### **Text, Translation, and Commentaries**

- Bostock D. (1994), *Aristotle: Metaphysics Z and H*, Oxford: OUP
- Burnyeat M. F. *et al.* (1979), *Notes on Book Zeta of Aristotle's Metaphysics*, Oxford: Philosophy Faculty
- Burnyeat M. F. *et al.* (1984), *Notes on Books Eta and Theta of Aristotle's Metaphysics*, Oxford: Philosophy Faculty
- Frede M. & Patzig G. (1988), *Aristoteles Metaphysik Z*, Munich: Verlag C. H. Beck
- Jaeger W. (1957), *Aristotelis, Metaphysica*, OCT, Oxford: OUP
- Ross W. D. (1924), *Aristotle: Metaphysics (text & commentary)*, Oxford: OUP

### **General**

- Ainsworth T. (2016), 'Form vs. Matter' in *Stanford Encyclopedia of Philosophy* (<http://plato.stanford.edu/entries/form-matter/#Bib>)
- Burnyeat M. F. (2001), *A Map of Metaphysics Zeta*, Pittsburgh
- Caston, V. (2008), 'Commentary on Charles' *Proceedings of the Boston Area Colloquium in Ancient Philosophy*, 24, 31–49
- Code, A. (1983), 'Aristotle: Essence and Accident' in: *Philosophical Grounds of Rationality: Intentions, Categories, Ends*, R. Grandy and R. Warner, eds. Oxford), 411-439
- Charles D. (2021), *The Undivided Self: Aristotle and the 'Mind-Body Problem'*, Oxford: OUP, chapter 2
- Charles D. (2011), 'Some Remarks on Substance and Essence in *Metaphysics Z.6*' in Ierodiakonou K. and Morison B. (eds.), *Episteme etc.: Essays in Honour of Jonathan Barnes*, OUP
- Charles, D. (2010), 'Definition and Explanation in the *Posterior Analytics and Metaphysics*' in Charles, D (ed.), *Definition in Greek Philosophy*, 286–328. Oxford: OUP
- Charles, D. (2010), '*Metaphysics*  $\Theta$ .7 and 8: Some Issues concerning Actuality and Potentiality' in Lennox, J. G. and Bolton, R. (eds.), *Being, Nature, and Life in Aristotle*, Cambridge: CUP, 168–197
- Charles D. (2008), 'Aristotle's Psychological Theory' *Proceedings of the Boston Area Colloquium in Ancient Philosophy*, 24, 2008, pp. 1–30
- Charles D. (2000), *Aristotle on Meaning and Essence*, Oxford, 2000.
- Charles, D. (1994), Matter and Form: Unity, Persistence, and Identity. In: Scaltsas, Charles, and Gill (eds.)
- Code, A. (2015), 'The "Matter" of Sleep' in Ebrey, D (ed.), *Theory and Practice in Aristotle's Natural Science*, Cambridge: CUP, 11–45
- Code, A. (2011), 'Commentary on Devereux' *Proceedings of the Boston Area Colloquium in Ancient Philosophy*, 26 (2011), 63–76
- Code, A. (1985), 'On the Origins of Some Aristotelian Theses About Predication' in: J. Bogen and J. E. McGuire (eds.), *How Things Are: Studies in Predication and the History of Philosophy*, Dordrecht, Reidel, 101-131
- Corkum P. (2013), 'Substance and Independence in Aristotle' in Schnieder B., Steinberg A. and Miguel Hoeltje (eds), *Varieties of Dependence*, Basic Philosophical Concepts Series, Philosophia Verlag: Munich
- Corkum P. (2008), 'Aristotle on Ontological Dependence', *Phronesis*, 53: 65-92
- Dahl N. (2019), *Substance in Aristotle's Metaphysics Zeta*, Palgrave Macmillan

- Devereux, D. (2011), 'Aristotle on the Form and Definition of a Human Being: Definitions and their Parts in *Metaphysics Z.10 & 11*' *Proceedings of the Boston Area Colloquium in Ancient Philosophy*, 26, 2011
- Ferejohn, M. (1994), 'The Definition of Generated Composites in Aristotle's *Metaphysics*' in Scaltsas, Charles, and Gill (eds.), 291–318
- Frede, M. (1990), 'The Definition of Sensible Substances in Met. Z' in *Biologie, Logique et Métaphysique chez Aristote* (pp. 113–129), edited by D. Devereux and P. Pellegrin. Paris: Éditions du CNRS
- Frede M. (1987), *Essays in Ancient Philosophy*, Minnesota, essays 3-4
- Gill, ML. (2010), 'Unity of Definition in *Metaphysics H.6 and Z.12*' in Lennox, JG and Bolton R (eds.), *Being, Nature, and Life in Aristotle: Essays in Honor of Allan Gotthelf*, Cambridge: CUP, 97–121
- Gill, ML. (2001), 'Aristotle's Attack on Universals' *Oxford Studies in Ancient Philosophy*, XIX: 235–60
- Gill, ML. (1993), 'Matter against Substance', *Synthese*, 96(3): 379–97
- Gill M. L. (1989), *Aristotle on Substance*, Princeton.
- Irwin T. (1988), *Aristotle's First Principles*, Oxford: OUP
- Judson L. R. (2000), 'Formlessness and the Priority of Form: *Metaphysics Zeta 7-9 and Lambda 3*', in David Charles and Michael Frede (eds), *Aristotle's Metaphysics Lambda: Symposium Aristotelicum*, OUP: Oxford
- Lewis F. (2013), *How Aristotle Gets by in Metaphysics Zeta*, Oxford: OUP
- Lewis F. (1991), *Substance & Predication in Aristotle*, Cambridge: CUP
- Loux M. (1991), *Primary Ousia*, Cornell
- Meister S. (2020), '[Aristotle on the Purity of Forms in Metaphysics Z.10–11](#)' *Erqo: An Open Access Journal of Philosophy* 7 (1):1-33
- Meister S. (forthcoming), '[Aristotle on the Relation between Substance and Essence](#)' *Ancient Philosophy*
- Menn S. (draft), *The Aim and the Argument of Aristotle's Metaphysics*, available at <https://www.philosophie.hu-berlin.de/de/lehrbereiche/antike/mitarbeiter/menn/contents>
- Owen G. E. L. (1978 - 1979), 'Particular and General', *Proceedings of the Aristotelian Society* 79, 1-21
- Peramatzis M. (2018), 'Aristotle's Hylomorphism: The Causal-Explanatory Model', *Metaphysics*. 1(1), pp. 12–32. DOI: <http://doi.org/10.5334/met.2>
- Peramatzis M. (2015), 'What is a Form in Aristotle's Hylomorphism?', *History of Philosophy Quarterly* 32.3, 195-216.
- Peramatzis M. (2014), 'Sameness, Definition, and Essence', *Studia Philosophica Estonica*, 7.3, Special Aristotle Issue, 1–26.
- Peramatzis M. (2013-4), 'Matter in Scientific Definitions in Aristotle' in *Oxford Handbooks Online*. New York: Oxford University Press
- Peramatzis M. (2017), 'Aristotle's "Logical" Level of Metaphysical Investigation' in Christina Thörnqvist (ed.), *The Reception of Aristotle in the Middle Ages: The Works on Logic and Metaphysics*, Pontifical Institute of Mediaeval Studies, Toronto
- Peramatzis M. (2011), *Priority in Aristotle's Metaphysics*, Oxford: OUP
- Peramatzis M. (2010), 'Essence & per se Predication in Aristotle's *Metaphysics Z.4*' *Oxford Studies in Ancient Philosophy*, 39, pp. 121-182

Pfeiffer C. (2018), *Aristotle's Theory of Bodies*, Oxford: OUP  
Reeve D. (2000), *Substantial Knowledge*, Hackett, 2000.  
Scaltsas, D, Charles, D and Gill, ML. (eds.) (1994), *Unity, Identity, and Explanation in Aristotle's Metaphysics*, Oxford: OUP  
Scaltsas T. (1994), *Substances & Universals in Aristotle's Metaphysics*, Cornell  
Wedin M. (2000), *Aristotle's Theory of Substance*, Oxford: OUP  
Whiting, J. (1991), 'Metasubstance: Critical Notice of Frede-Patzig and Furth' *The Philosophical Review*, 100(4): 607–639  
Whiting, J (1986), 'Form and Individuation in Aristotle' *History of Philosophy Quarterly*, 3(4): 359–377  
Witt C. (1989), *Substance & Essence in Aristotle*, Cornell

## Philosophy and Literature

Prof Stephen Mulhall – T. 11 – 1, live on Teams

This class will not focus primarily on what is generally called ‘the philosophy of literature’, although various topics central to that field (eg the status of fictional entities, the relationship between author and reader, the significance of authorial intention) will surface along the way. My interest lies rather in the relationship between literature and philosophy more broadly conceived, and in particular upon the ways in which literature (contrary to its fateful Platonic banishment from the just city) might claim the right to make pertinent contributions not only to specific branches of philosophy (ethics, philosophy of language, philosophy of mind) but to revising philosophy’s conception of its own nature – its goals, its methods, and its resources.

The course will begin by examining the ways in which some philosophers have recently argued that literary texts should be seen as having a particularly important role to play in our thinking about ethics. The work of Nussbaum and Diamond will be discussed in relation to some of their most prominent philosophical critics (McMahan, O’Neill), and in relation to specific literary texts by Henry James and Iris Murdoch. These discussions quickly broaden out to encompass questions about the nature of rationality, its relation to emotion and embodiment, and the implications of these matters for our understanding of philosophy’s own presuppositions as an intellectual enterprise. The primary reference point here will be Coetzee’s Tanner Lectures, *The Lives of Animals*, which have prompted rich responses from a number of philosophers (Singer, McDowell, Diamond and Cavell), a full understanding of which will require not only an engagement with the moral standing of non-human animals but also a broader excursion into the nature of realism and modernism in the arts, particularly as interpreted by the art historian, critic and theorist Michael Fried. The final weeks of the course will then follow out some of the implications of this material, either by looking in detail at more recent work by Coetzee (the ‘Jesus’ novels) or by David Foster Wallace (both his fiction and his non-fiction writing). The class participants will be able to choose which of these paths is taken.

The class will presuppose no prior understanding of the material to be discussed, and so will be accessible to students at any stage of the B. Phil programme (although it may of course be of particular relevance to students intending to write on topics in ethics and aesthetics). Graduate students in other programmes (in the philosophy faculty and in other faculties) will also be welcome to attend, with the class-giver’s permission.

A draft reading list will be made available on ORLO. As the list makes clear, we will be discussing in detail a number of novels as we go along, and the first two (which are also the longest) will be encountered relatively early on in term; so it might be a good idea to read at least some of them before the class begins, rather than trying to do so together with the other assigned reading in any given week during term. The novels, in order of appearance, are:

Henry James, 'The Golden Bowl'  
Iris Murdoch, 'The Black Prince'  
J.M.Coetzee, 'Elizabeth Costello'

J.M. Coetzee, 'The Childhood of Jesus'

### **The Medieval Debate about Universals**

Prof Cecilia Trifogli – M. 4 – 6, live on Teams

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.

### **Hume**

Prof Peter Millican – M. 11 – 1, live on Teams

The primary aim of this class is to provide a good understanding of the main strands of Hume's philosophy, and of the requirements for producing first class work in the area. It should thus assist graduate students to develop this as a useful "Area of Competence" which is historically focused, but also connects to a great deal of contemporary philosophy. Hume's work is full of interesting arguments of continuing relevance, so our discussions will be highly philosophical as well as scholarly.

To facilitate this philosophical focus without having to devote too much time to the earlier development of Hume's philosophy, we will mainly consider his mature and more polished works, especially his two *Enquiries* (and also, if desired, his works on religion). However any serious study of Hume also requires familiarity with the main themes of his *Treatise of Human Nature*, mostly published in 1739 when Hume was aged only 27 (though later renounced by him in favour of the *Enquiries*). The *Treatise* is fascinating and ingenious, but relatively long, complex, and sometimes rather confusing. So as to enable participants to acquire such familiarity without having to read it alongside the class, they will be asked to keep pace with relevant parts of the 2018-19 lectures available online at [www.millican.org/hume.htm](http://www.millican.org/hume.htm) (or through Canvas).

We will be starting from Hume's general epistemology and metaphysics (as presented in his 1748 *Enquiry concerning Human Understanding*), before proceeding to his moral philosophy (in his 1751 *Enquiry concerning the Principles of Morals*) and then, if desired, his philosophy of religion (in his posthumous *Dialogues concerning Natural Religion* and other works). The recommended edition of the first *Enquiry* – in the Oxford *World's Classics* series – includes various study aids, but note also that Hume's complete published works are available (and searchable) online at [www.davidhume.org](http://www.davidhume.org).

Each week, participants will be asked to read in advance some material for discussion, usually equivalent to one article or book chapter. Each class will start with an introductory session in which I will outline the material that we are to discuss, and give plenty of opportunity for questions to clarify issues of comprehension arising from the pre-reading (and pre-watching). This will help to ensure a suitable background for participating fully in the subsequent discussion, which will make a point of raising broader philosophical issues arising both from Hume's philosophy and from the other material that we are considering.

Topics covered are likely to include empiricism and rationalism; naturalism and scepticism; apriority, conceivability and necessity; induction, probability and scientific inference; causation; free will and the explanation of action; motivation and egoism; miracles and religious belief; the nature of morality; and the attempt to make sense of ourselves as a natural animal in a godless world.

The seminar will be supported by a web page at [www.millican.org/humebphil.htm](http://www.millican.org/humebphil.htm), containing links to the relevant material on an ongoing basis.

## **Kant**

Prof Anil Gomes and Prof Adrian Moore – T. 2 – 4, live on Teams

Kant's explanation of the possibility of metaphysics turns on his account of the structure of our minds. He holds that there is an a priori element to our faculty of sensibility and an a priori element to our faculty of understanding. But how immutable are these a priori elements? Could there be creatures like us, with both sensibility and the understanding, who nevertheless sense and think in different ways? In this seminar we will be exploring these questions, with particular focus on whether Kant thinks that there could be finite beings with different pure concepts, with different pure forms of sensibility, or whose thinking is governed by different logical laws. In the second part of the term, we will consider how Kant's works beyond his theoretical philosophy bear on these questions.

Weeks 1 and 2

'On the Necessity of the Categories' (ms.)

Anil Gomes, Adrian Moore, and Andrew Stephenson

*Does Kant allow the possibility of finite beings with different pure concepts, different categories? The first week will consider textual considerations which bear on this question; the second week will look at more systematic issues.*

Week 3

'Kant on the Pure Forms of Sensibility' (ms.)

Anil Gomes and Andrew Stephenson

*Kant is explicit that we cannot rule out the possibility of finite beings with other forms of sensibility. But what are his reasons for saying this?*

Week 4

['Logical Mistakes, Logical Aliens, and the Laws of Kant's Pure General Logic'](#)

Tyke Nunez, *MIND* 2019,

*Does Kant think that the laws of logic are constitutive of thinking or does he allow the possibility of logical aliens, creatures whose thinking is governed by different logical laws?*

Week 5

Critique of the Power of Judgement, §§76 -77

*Kant draws various contrasts between finite beings whose understanding involves concepts and an infinite being whose understanding is intuitive. How do any of these contrasts bear on the issues raised in previous weeks?*

Week 6

Critique of Practical Reason, 5: 42 – 67, 136 – 137, and 141

*Kant holds that we can put our pure concepts to a practical use that goes beyond any theoretical use to which we can put them. How does this bear on the issues raised in previous weeks?*

Weeks 7 and 8

We will decide in the seminar what to cover in the final two weeks. We can either push on into some further texts such as the *Religion* or allow some time for student presentations and discussion.

## Philosophy of Cognitive Science

Prof Will Davies and Prof Philipp Koralus – T. 4 – 6, live on Teams

This seminar will provide a graduate-level foundation in the philosophy of cognitive science. While the seminar is intended primarily for BPhil students, DPhil students are welcome to attend. Topics may include: levels of explanation, systematicity, the modularity of perception, unconscious perception, reasoning, decision making and action, and perhaps others. If you are interested in attending this seminar, please email [philipp.koralus@philosophy.ox.ac.uk](mailto:philipp.koralus@philosophy.ox.ac.uk) and [will.davies@philosophy.ox.ac.uk](mailto:will.davies@philosophy.ox.ac.uk).

## Epistemology

Prof Timothy Williamson – W. 2 – 4, live on Teams

Discussion will be on the basis of the following papers:

- Week 1 Fred Dretske, "Simple seeing", in his *Perception, Knowledge and Belief* (Cambridge University Press, 2000): 97-112.
- Week 2 Mona Simion, "Knowledge-first functionalism", *Philosophical Issues*, 29 (2019): 254-267.
- Week 3 Jennifer Nagel, "Losing knowledge by thinking about thinking", <https://philpapers.org/rec/NAGLKB>
- Week 4 Robert Gordon, "Simulation. Predictive Coding, and the Shared World."
- Week 5 David Chalmers, "Verbal disputes", *Philosophical Review*, 120 (2011): 515-566.
- Week 6 Paulina Sliwa, "Understanding and knowing", *Proceedings of the Aristotelian Society*, 115 (2015): 57-74.
- Week 7 David Velleman, "The guise of the good", *Noûs*, 26 (1992): 3-26.
- Week 8 Timothy Williamson, "Acting on knowledge how".  
The paper will not be available in advance but suitable background reading is: Jason Stanley and TW, "Knowing how", *The Journal of Philosophy* 98 (2001): 411-444, and TW, "Acting on knowledge", in J.A. Carter, E. Gordon, and B. Jarvis (eds.), *Knowledge-First* (Oxford University Press, 2017), 163-181.

## Truth and Meaning

Prof Ian Rumfitt – M. 2 – 4, live on Teams

The seminar is devoted to meaning, truth, and to some connections between them. It will meet online. Topics and readings for each session are below.

Week One (26 April): Specifying sentence meanings

Reading:

P.F. Strawson, 'Meaning and Truth'. In his *Logico-Linguistic Papers* (London: Methuen, 1971), pp.170-89

J.R. Searle, *Speech Acts: An Essay in the Philosophy of Language* (Cambridge: CUP 1969), ch.2

P.F. Strawson, *Introduction to Logical Theory* (London: Methuen, 1952), ch.6, part III §§6, 7, 10

M. Dummett, Preface to *Truth and Other Enigmas* (London: Duckworth, 1978), pp.xv-xvii

Week Two (3 May): The structure of relational speech acts

Reading:

J.L. Austin, *How to Do Things with Words*, 2<sup>nd</sup> ed. (Oxford: OUP, 1975), pp.91-107

M. Dummett, 'What do I Know when I Know a Language?' In his *The Seas of Language* (Oxford: OUP, 1993), pp.94-105

J. Hornsby, 'Semantic Knowledge and Practical Knowledge'. *Proceedings of the Aristotelian Society Supplementary Volume 79* (2005): 107-30

J. Stanley, 'Hornsby on the Phenomenology of Speech'. *Proceedings of the Aristotelian Society Supplementary Volume 79* (2005): 131-45

Week Three (10 May): Understanding and knowledge of meaning

Reading:

J.H. McDowell, 'Anti-realism and the epistemology of understanding' §§6-9. In his *Meaning, Knowledge and Reality* (Cambridge Mass.: Harvard UP, 1998), pp.326-43

E. Fricker, 'Understanding and knowledge of what is said'. In A. Barber, ed., *Epistemology of Language* (Oxford: OUP, 2003), pp.325-66

Week Four (17 May): Sentence meaning and word meaning

Reading:

D. Davidson, 'Truth and meaning', 'Radical Interpretation', and 'Reply to Foster'. In his *Inquiries into Truth and Interpretation* (Oxford: OUP, 1984), pp.16-36, 125-39, and 171-9

J. Foster, 'Meaning and truth theory' in G. Evans & J.H. McDowell, eds., *Truth and Meaning: Essays in Semantics* (Oxford: OUP, 1976), pp.1-32

D. Davidson, *The Structure of Truth: The 1970 John Locke Lectures* (Oxford: OUP, 2020) Lectures I and II

M. Davies, *Meaning, Quantification and Necessity* (London: Routledge, 1981),

Week Five (24 May): Telling someone that *P* and truth conditions

Reading:

J.H. McDowell, 'Meaning, communication, and knowledge'. In Z. van Straaten, ed., *Philosophical Subjects: Essays Presented to P.F. Strawson* (Oxford: OUP, 1980), pp.117-39  
R. Moran, *The Exchange of Words: Speech, Testimony, and Intersubjectivity* (Oxford: OUP, 2018), ch.2

Week Six (31 May): Truth conditions and Kripke's theory of truth

Reading:

S. Kripke, 'Outline of a theory of truth', in R.L. Martin, ed., *Recent Essays on Truth and the Liar Paradox* (Oxford: OUP, 1984), pp.53-81  
Halbach, V. & L.F. Horsten, 'Axiomatizing Kripke's Theory of Truth', *The Journal of Symbolic Logic* **71** (2006): 677-712

Week Seven (7 June): The problem of generalized quantifiers

Reading:

T. Maudlin, *Truth and Paradox: Solving the Riddles* (New York: OUP, 2004), pp.59-64  
H. Field, 'Indicative conditionals, restricted quantification, and naïve truth'. *The Review of Symbolic Logic* **9** (2016): 181-208  
M. Fitting, 'Notes on the mathematical aspects of Kripke's Theory of Truth'. *Notre Dame Journal of Formal Logic* **27** (1986): 75-88  
B. Whittle, 'Truth and generalized quantification'. *Australasian Journal of Philosophy* **97** (2019): 340-53

Week Eight (14 June): Conditionals and conditional telling that/telling to

Reading:

D. Edgington, 'The mystery of the missing matter of fact'. *Proceedings of the Aristotelian Society Supplementary Volume* **65** (1991): 185-209  
D. Rothschild, 'Do indicative conditionals express propositions?' *Nous* **47** (2013): 49-68  
D. Rothschild, 'A note on conditionals and restrictors', in L. Walters & J. Hawthorne, eds., *Conditionals, Probability, and Paradox* (Oxford: OUP, 2021), pp.19-39

## **Metaphysics**

Prof Gonzalo Rodriguez-Pereyra – Th. 4 – 6, live on Zoom

Each week we shall discuss one or two papers on different topics in metaphysics, covering the status of metaphysics, the principle of sufficient reasons, the problem of change and a few others. Sometimes the authors of the papers to be discussed will be guests and so we will have an opportunity to discuss their papers with them. A detailed schedule will be posted in the class's site in Canvas, where there will be a Zoom link for the meetings.

## **Population Ethics**

Prof Jeff McMahan – M. 2 – 4, live on Teams

This seminar, which will continue over Trinity term as well, will be concerned with foundational issues in population ethics and their relevance to a variety of issues in practical ethics. The issues we will discuss will be more concerned with what reasons there are than with matters of axiology. Questions in population ethics that we will attempt to answer include the following. Is there a reason to cause an individual to exist just because that individual would have a good life, or a life worth living? Is there a reason not to cause an individual to exist if that individual would have a bad life, that is, a life in which the bad elements would outweigh the good? In determining whether it is permissible to cause an individual to exist, how does the good the individual's life would contain weigh against the suffering it would contain? If there are reasons to cause individuals to exist, or not to cause individuals to exist, what is the nature of those reasons? Are they what Parfit calls wide individual-affecting reasons, impersonal reasons, or reasons of some other kind? Is there a reason to cause or allow a better-off individual to exist rather than cause or allow a less well-off individual to exist? If so, what kind of reason is it? Is it a wide individual-affecting reason, an impersonal reason, what Johann Frick calls a standard-regarding reason, or a reason of some other kind? Is it defensible to believe that there is a reason to cause a well-off individual to exist when the alternative is that a less well-off individual will exist instead while simultaneously denying that there is a reason to cause a well-off individual to exist when the alternative is that no new individual will come into existence? If an individual in one outcome and a different individual in another outcome have the same level of well-being, does it make a moral difference that being at that level of well-being is worse for one of them but not worse for the other because the only alternative for this other individual was never to exist at all? If so, why does this matter, and to what extent?

We will discuss these questions in part by exploring the ways in which they arise in relation to various problems in practical ethics, such as abortion, prenatal injury, legal claims of wrongful life, eugenics, causing animals to exist in order to kill and eat them, climate change, war, existential risk, and so on. None of these problems can, I believe, be adequately understood unless one appreciates the ways in which the questions in population ethics cited above are relevant to them – or, ultimately, without finding defensible answers to these questions.

My own work on all of these issues is still exploratory. I am in the early stages of writing a book on them and am eager to discuss them. I will begin each seminar by sketching some ideas and arguments but I hope much of each seminar will be devoted to critical discussions of the problems and my ideas about them. I want mostly to concentrate on the problems themselves but we will also, of course, discuss some of the literature. I will identify and provide access to the writing that I think is most important as the term progresses but for those who want to do some reading in advance, I recommend the following pieces, roughly in the order in which they are listed.

Derek Parfit, *Reasons and Persons*, part 4

Johann Frick, "Conditional Reasons and the Procreation Asymmetry," *Philosophical Perspectives* (2020)

Jeff McMahan, "Climate Change, War, and the Non-Identity Problem," *Journal of Moral Philosophy*, <https://brill.com/view/journals/jmp/aop/article-10.1163-17455243-1706A002/article-10.1163-17455243-1706A002.xml>

Michael Otsuka, "How it makes a difference that one is worse off than one could have been," *Politics, Philosophy, & Economics* (2017)

Jacob Nebel, "Asymmetries in the Value of Existence," *Philosophical Perspectives* 33 (2019)

John Broome, "Should We Value Population?," *Journal of Political Philosophy* 13 (2005)

Derek Parfit, "Future People, the Non-Identity Problem, and Person-Affecting Principles," *Philosophy & Public Affairs* 45 (2017)