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# PHILOSOPHY LECTURE PROSPECTUS

UNDERGRADUATE LECTURES

OTHER EVENTS

GRADUATE CLASSES

MICHAELMAS TERM 2025

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# Notes:

- The normal duration of an event is one hour. Where a class or lecture lasts longer than an hour, both the start and end times will be given.
- By convention, in-person lectures at Oxford begin five minutes past the hour and end five minutes before the hour.
- Unless otherwise specified, lectures and classes run during Weeks 1–8.
- Teaching takes place in person.
- The Faculty Canvas site for graduate courses contains a folder for each class. If you are taking a class, please visit the Canvas site for further information. Where no description appears in the published Prospectus, one is usually provided on Canvas nearer the start of term. Reading lists are often available on ORLO.
- Enquiries about class attendance should be addressed to [admin@philosophy.ox.ac.uk](mailto:admin@philosophy.ox.ac.uk).
- This Lecture Prospectus was published on **3 October 2025**. Every effort has been made to ensure the information is accurate at the start of term. However, occasional errors may occur. If you believe you have found a mistake, please contact the Education Support Officer at [ug.admin@philosophy.ox.ac.uk](mailto:ug.admin@philosophy.ox.ac.uk).
- The Lecture List details for each paper in this Prospectus were correct at the time of publication **14 October 2025**. Please note that these details may be subject to change. Any late updates will be clearly marked in **red** in the Lecture List MT25, which is available on the Faculty of Philosophy website: <https://www.philosophy.ox.ac.uk/lectures/>

# Undergraduate Lectures

## Lectures for the First Public Examination (Prelims or Mods)

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, PPL: Logic, Moral Philosophy, and General Philosophy

Mathematics and Philosophy, Physics and Philosophy, Computer Science and Philosophy: General Philosophy

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

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

Dr Stefan Sienkiewicz

Weeks 1-8 / Tuesdays and Thursdays / 12:00-13:00

Location: Schools

Tuesdays (Room 6) Weeks 1-3, 5-8 (Room 1) Week 4 (04.11.25)

Thursdays (South School) Weeks 1-4 + 6-8 (Room 6) in Week 5

These lectures are primarily intended for Classics Mods students who are offering Plato as their philosophy option. The lectures serve as an introduction to the philosophical issues and arguments raised by these two dialogues. Topics covered will include the Platonic dialogue form, the Socratic elenchus, the Euthyphro dilemma, Socratic definition, desire and the good, the paradox of enquiry, the method of hypothesis, the distinction between knowledge and true belief, and the relationship between virtue and knowledge.

Texts and translations: OCT (ed. E.A. Duke et al (Oxford, 1995); OCT (ed. J. Burnet (Oxford, 1903); *The Last Days of Socrates* trans H. Tredennick and H. Tarrant (Penguin, 1993); *Meno* trans R.W. Sharples (Aris and Phillips, 1985).

Provisional Schedule for term:

1. Plato, Socrates and the Dialogue Form
2. The Opening of the *Euthyphro*
3. The 'What is X?' Question and The Refutation of Euthyphro's First Definition
4. The Refutation of Euthyphro's Second Definition I
5. The Refutation of Euthyphro's Second Definition II
6. The Refutation of Euthyphro's Third Definition
7. A Positive Account of Piety in the *Euthyphro*?
8. The Opening of the *Meno* and the 'Socratic Fallacy'
9. Meno's First Definition and the Univocity Requirement
10. Meno's Second Definition and the Three Sample Definitions
11. Meno's Third Definition and Desiring the Good
12. The Paradox of Inquiry

13. Socrates' Response to the Paradox of Inquiry
14. The Method of Hypothesis I
15. The Method of Hypothesis II
16. Virtue, Knowledge and True Belief

## **General Philosophy**

Prof Alexander Kaiserman

Weeks 1-8 / Fridays / 12:00-13:00

Location: Schools (South School)

These lectures will cover the following topics: knowledge, scepticism, induction, perception, free will, mind and body, personal identity, and God and evil.

## **Introduction to Logic**

Dr Marco Grossi

Weeks 1-8 / Mondays / 12:00-13:00

Location: Schools (South School)

The lectures follow Volker Halbach's Logic Manual (Oxford University Press 2010). Further materials, including the Exercises Booklet, sample papers, and worked examples, are available at: <http://logicmanual.philosophy.ox.ac.uk>.

One chapter of the Logic Manual is covered in each lecture. It is recommended that you read each week's chapter before the lecture.

## **Moral Philosophy via Mill, Utilitarianism**

Prof Dale Dorsey

Weeks 1-8 / Wednesdays / 12:00 -13:00

Location: Schools (South School)

This set of lectures is intended to provide a broad introduction to moral philosophy, looking specifically at John Stuart Mill's classic text Utilitarianism. We will consider Mill's text and views, along with alternative interpretations of the key tenets of utilitarianism. In addition, we will consider classic objections to utilitarianism, and alternative approaches to ethical theory that purport to respond to those criticisms.

Weekly lecture topics:

1. An introduction to Mill and utilitarianism as a moral theory.
2. Interpreting consequentialism: act, rule, subjective, objective.
3. Interpreting welfarism: theories of the human good.
4. Interpreting impartialism: aggregation and equality.
5. Mill's proof and alternative arguments for utilitarianism.
6. Objection one: the separateness of persons, Kant, and contractualism.
7. Objection two: demandingness, Aristotle, and the virtues.
8. Objection three: myopia, prerogatives, and friendship.

## Lectures for the Honour Schools (Finals - FHS)

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.

Advanced undergraduates, especially but not only those considering graduate study of philosophy, are encouraged to consider attending relevant graduate classes as well. Permission should be sought from the class-giver(s): it is usually readily given.

### **101 Early Modern Philosophy: Descartes**

Prof Paul Lodge

Weeks 1– 8 / Tuesdays / 10:00-11:00

Location: Schools

Room 6 Weeks 1-3, 5-8 and Room 1 Week 4

This series will provide an overview of Descartes' philosophy suitable for those who are preparing for the FHS paper in Early Modern Philosophy.

Week 1 will consist of a general overview of Descartes' philosophical projects; thereafter, the lectures will be concerned with some of the main topics that arise when studying his ideas in greater depth.

The order of the lectures in weeks 2-8 will track the structure of the Meditations On First Philosophy as indicated. However, material from Descartes' other writings will be discussed in order to shed further light on the ideas under consideration.

Week 1: Introduction to the philosophy of Descartes

Week 2: The method of doubt (1<sup>st</sup> Meditation)

Week 3: The cogito and the nature of the mind (2<sup>nd</sup> Meditation)

Week 4: Cosmological arguments for God's existence (3<sup>rd</sup> Meditation)

Week 5: Knowledge and error (4<sup>th</sup> Meditation)

Week 6: The ontological argument for God's existence (5<sup>th</sup> Meditation)

Week 7: Substance and mind-body dualism (6<sup>th</sup> Meditation)

Week 8: The material world (6<sup>th</sup> Meditation)

## **101 Early Modern Philosophy: Hume**

Prof Peter Millican

Weeks 1-8 / Wednesdays / 10:00-11:00

Location: Schools (Room 6)

David Hume is widely considered the most important English-language philosopher of all time, and his *Treatise of Human Nature* – first published when he was only 27 – is an acknowledged masterpiece. Yet it is a difficult work to understand without help, and the aim of these lectures is to make it easily accessible, providing a clear and comprehensive overview of Book 1, together with a thorough understanding of the main topics. Students will also receive guidance on study and revision materials, which can be accessed on the web.

The first lecture gives an introduction, focusing particularly on Hume's theory of ideas and his conceptual empiricism. The second lecture goes deeper into his notion of "force and vivacity", and his theories of belief and association of ideas. The third lecture is devoted to Hume's faculty psychology and his logical framework, both of which provide essential context for his most important arguments. The fourth lecture then analyses his famous argument concerning induction and its implications. The fifth lecture discusses his theory of causation, while the sixth extends this with consideration of his rules for causal science, before turning to his notorious – and somewhat confusing – scepticism about the external world. The seventh lecture attempts to unravel Hume's ultimate position on material bodies, while considering also his views on mental substance and personal identity. The final lecture concludes by discussing the sceptical crisis that emerges at the end of *Treatise* Book 1, and why Hume's scepticism appears to change significantly in his later *Enquiry concerning Human Understanding*.

## **101 Early Modern Philosophy: Berkeley**

Prof Peter Kail

Location: Schools (Room 6)

Weeks 1-6 10:00-11:00 and Week 7 10:00-12:00

These lectures will consider Berkeley's *A Treatise on the Principles of Human Knowledge* Part I. I shall follow the order of that text and examine Berkeley's key claims, and try to show that his system is more powerful than some commentators think. The key themes covered are Berkeley's background, ideas and abstraction, immaterialism, God, reality, science and the self.

## **102 Knowledge and Reality: Epistemology**

Prof Bernhard Salow

Weeks 1-8 / Wednesdays / 10:00-11:00

Location: School (South School)

These lectures will focus on the nature of knowledge and justification, with a focus on structural principles and sceptical challenges.

**Week 1:** The Analysis of Knowledge

**Week 2:** Epistemic Closure

**Week 3:** Contextualism and Subject-Sensitivity

**Week 4:** Scepticism I: Externalist and Contextualist Responses

**Week 5:** Justification, Knowledge, and Statistics

**Week 6:** Internalism and Luminosity

**Week 7:** Scepticism II: Underdetermination

**Week 8:** The A Priori

## **103 Ethics – see also 128 below**

Dr Emma Curran (MT) and Nick Clanchy (HT)

Weeks 1-8 / Mondays / 10:00-11:00

Location: Schools (South School)

These lectures will cover some of the central debates in normative ethics. We begin with consequentialism, examining both its classical forms and recent refinements, before turning in Weeks 2 and 3 to the moral significance of distinctions such as doing versus allowing and intending versus foreseeing – distinctions that often constrain consequentialist thinking. From there, we shift in Weeks 4 and 5 to contractualism, a leading alternative to consequentialism, considering both its justificatory structure and its treatment of aggregation and risk. The course then widens its focus in Weeks 6 and 7 to distributive ethics, considering egalitarianism, prioritarianism and their relationship with desert. We conclude in Week 8 by asking not just what morality requires, but what it takes for an action to have moral worth.

### **Week 1. Consequentialism**

William Shaw. (2006). "The Consequentialist Perspective" in James Lawrence Dreier (ed). *Contemporary Debates in Moral Theory*, Malden, MA: Wiley-Blackwell

Michael Slote. (1984). Satisficing Consequentialism, *Aristotelian Society Supplementary Volume*, 58(1): 139-176

Alastair Norcross. (2008). "The Scalar Approach to Utilitarianism" in Henry West (ed). *The Blackwell Guide to Mill's Utilitarianism*, Malden, MA: Wiley-Blackwell

### **Week 2. Doing and Allowing**

Warren S. Quinn. (1989). Actions, Intentions, and Consequences: The Doctrine of Doing and Allowing, *Philosophical Review*, 98(3): 287-312

Samuel C. Rickless. (1997). The doctrine of doing and allowing, *Philosophical Review*, 106(4): 555-75

### **Week 3. Intending and Foreseeing**

Warren S. Quinn. (1989). Actions, Intentions, and Consequences: The Doctrine of Double Effect, *Philosophy & Public Affairs*, 18(4): 334-51

Judith Jarvis Thomson. (1985). The Trolley Problem, *The Yale Law Journal*, 94(6): 1395-1415

### **Week 4. Contractualism: Justifications and Aggregation**

T.M. Scanlon. (1989). *What We Owe To Each Other*, Cambridge, MA: Belknap Press

Rahul Kumar. (2003). Reasonable Reasons in Contractualist Moral Argument, *Ethics*, 114(1): 6-37

John Taurek. (1977). Should the numbers count?, *Philosophy & Public Affairs*, 6(4): 293-316



### **Week 5. Contractualism: Risk**

Johann Frick. (2015). Contractualism and Social Risk, *Philosophy & Public Affairs*, 43(3): 175-223

Michael Otsuka. (2015). "Risking Life and Limb: How to Discount Harms by Their Improbability" in I. Glenn Cohen, Norman Daniels, and Nir Eyal (eds). *Statistical versus Identified Victims: An Interdisciplinary Perspective*, New York: Oxford University Press

### **Week 6. Equality and Desert**

John Rawls. (1971). *A Theory of Justice*, Oxford: Oxford University Press: Ch. 1 (§1-4), Ch. 2 (§11-12), Ch.3 (§20, §24-26)

Shelly Kagan. (1999). "Equality and Desert" in Louis P. Pojman and Owen McLeod (eds). *What Do We Deserve? A Reader on Justice and Desert*, New York: Oxford University Press

### **Week 7. Prioritarianism**

Derek Parfit. (1997). Equality and Priority, *Ratio*, 10(3): 202-221

Michael Otsuka and Alex Voorhoeve. (2018). "Equality versus Priority" in Serena Olsaretti (ed). *The Oxford Handbook of Distributive Justice*, New York: Oxford University Press

### **Week 8. Moral Worth and Acting from Duty**

Christine Korsgaard. (2012). "Introduction" in M Gregor and J. Timmermann (eds). *Groundwork of the Metaphysics of Morals*, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2<sup>nd</sup> ed: pp.vii-xv

Julia Markovits. (2010). Acting for the Right Reasons, *The Philosophical Review*, 119(2): 201-42

## **104 Philosophy of Mind**

Prof Carlotta Pavese (MT) and Prof Raphael Milliere (HT)

Weeks 1-8 / Mondays / 10:00-11:00

Location: School (Room 6)

**General:** We will discuss classic problems in the philosophy of mind, such as the nature of the mental, the relation between the mind and the body, the nature of consciousness, of intentionality, of agency, and our epistemic access to our own mind and to the mind of others.

\* indicates books or articles that provide a particularly useful place in which to begin your reading.

### **Recommended Textbooks for Background Readings**

\*Kim, J. 2006. *The Philosophy of Mind* (2nd ed.) Cambridge, MA: Westview.

Crane, T. 2003. *The Mechanical Mind* (2nd ed.) London: Routledge.

### **Lecture #1**

#### **The Mark of the Mental and Dualism**

*Main Questions.* Is there a mark of the mental? What is the best argument for dualism? What, if anything, does the knowledge argument tell us about the mind?

*Main readings.*

\*Kim, J. 2006. *The Philosophy of Mind* (2nd ed.) Chapters 1-2.

\*Jackson, F. 1982. "Epiphenomenal qualia." *Philosophical Quarterly* 32: 127-136.

## **Lecture #2**

### **Behaviorism and Physicalism**

*Main Questions.* What is the private language argument and what, if anything, does it establish? What is to be a physicalist? What does the type identity theory say, and what would constitute a good argument for it?

*Main Readings.*

\*Kim, J. 2006. *The Philosophy of Mind* (2nd ed.) Chapters 3-4.

\*Crane, T. & D. H. Mellor 1990. There is no question of physicalism. *Mind*, 99 (394): 185-206.

Montero, B. 2009. What is the physical? In McLaughlin et al. 2009.

## **Lecture #3**

### **Functionalism**

*Main Questions.* Why does multiple realisation pose a threat to the type identity theory? What are the objections of chauvinism and liberalism to functionalism?

*Main Readings.*

\*Lewis, D. (1980). "Mad pain and Martian pain." *The Language and Thought Series*. Harvard University Press. 216-222.

\*Block, N. (1981). "Troubles with functionalism." In W. Savage (ed.) *Minnesota Studies in the Philosophy of Science*, Vol. IX, pp. 261-325. Reprinted in Chalmers 2002 and Lycan & Prinz 2008.

Kim, J. 2006. *The Philosophy of Mind* (2nd ed.) Chapter 5.

## **Lecture #4**

### **Consciousness**

*Main Questions.* How many types of consciousness are there? What is the explanatory gap, and what implications does it have for theories of consciousness? What, if anything, does the (apparent) conceivability of zombies tell us about the metaphysics of consciousness?

*Main Readings.*

\*Nagel, T. (1974). *The Philosophical Review*. *What is it Like to Be a Bat*, 435-450.

\*Gertler, B. 2002. Explanatory reduction, conceptual analysis, and conceivability arguments about the mind. *Noûs*, 36: 22-49.

Block, N. (1995). On a confusion about a function of consciousness. *Behavioral and brain sciences*, 18(2), 227-247.

Kim, J. 2006. *The Philosophy of Mind* (2nd ed.) Chapter 9.

## **Lecture #5**

### **Intentionality**

*Main Questions.* What is intentionality? What is Brentano's thesis? According to intentionalist (or 'representationalist') treatments of phenomenal consciousness, what is the relationship between phenomenal consciousness and intentionality? Might teleological considerations play a constitutively role in mental content?

### *Main Readings.*

\*Crane, T. 1998. Intentionality as the mark of the mental. In T. Crane (ed.), *Contemporary Issues in the Philosophy of Mind*. Cambridge University Press.

\*Neander, K. "Teleological Theories of Mental Content", *The Stanford Encyclopedia of Philosophy* (Summer 2022 Edition).

Millikan, R. 1989. Biosemantics. *Journal of Philosophy*, 86: 281-97. Reprinted in Lycan & Prinz 2008.

## **Lecture#6**

### **Agency**

*Main Questions.* What is an action? Are actions events? Do agents cause their actions? Is willing a mental act which precedes a voluntary action? Is reason explanation a form of causal explanation?

### *Main Readings.*

\*Davidson, D. (1980). 'Agency', in *Essays on Actions and Events*. Oxford: Oxford University Press.

\*Hornsby, J. (2004). Agency and actions. *Royal Institute of Philosophy Supplements*, 55, 1-23..

Davidson, D. (1980). 'Actions, reasons and causes' in *Essays on Actions and Events*. Oxford: Oxford University Press.

## **Lecture #7**

### **Self-Knowledge**

*Main Questions.* What, if anything, makes self knowledge special? What motivates skepticism about the reliability of self knowledge? Explain and evaluate inner-sense accounts of self-knowledge. Explain and evaluate transparency accounts of self-knowledge.

### *Main Readings.*

\*Dretske, F. 1994. Introspection. *Proceedings of the Aristotelian Society*, 94: 263-278.

\*Shoemaker, S. (1988). "On knowing one's own mind." *Philosophical Perspectives*, 2:183-209. Reprinted in Shoemaker, S. (1996) *The First-Person Perspective and Other Essays*. Cambridge: CUP.

\*Gertler, B. (2002). "The mechanics of self-knowledge." *Philosophical Topics*, 28: 125-46.

Fricker, E. 1998. Self-knowledge: special access versus artefact of grammar- a dichotomy rejected. In Wright et al. (eds.) *Knowing Our Own Minds*. Oxford: Oxford University Press, pp. 155-206.

## **Lecture #8**

### **The Problem of Other Minds**

*Main Questions.* In what sense is the problem of other minds a philosophical problem? What is the contrast between the epistemological and the conceptual versions of the problem of other minds? What is the lesson to be learnt from Wittgenstein's 'beetle in the box' analogy with respect to the problem of other minds? What is Block's so-called 'harder' problem of consciousness? Can it be solved? If so, how?

### *Main Readings.*

\* Wittgenstein, L. (1953/2001). *Philosophical Investigations* (trans. G.E.M. Anscombe) Oxford: Blackwell (§§243-315).

\* Block, N. 2002. The harder problem of consciousness. *The Journal of Philosophy*, 99: 391-425.

Dretske, F. 1973. Perception and other minds, *Nous*, 7: 34-44.

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

Dr James Kirkpatrick

Weeks 1-8 / Wednesdays / 10:00-11:00

Location: Schwarzman Centre - Lecture Theatre L1 (10.300)

These lectures will focus on theories of reference and meaning, from Frege to the present day. We will investigate questions such as: What are the meanings of specific expressions in English (e.g., proper names, definite descriptions, indexicals, and demonstratives)? What is the nature of meaning more generally, and how does this relate to communication? What is the relationship between natural and formal languages?

Here is the provisional schedule:

**Week 1.** Definite Descriptions

**Week 2.** Proper Names

**Week 3.** Indexicals and Demonstratives

**Week 4.** Meaning

**Week 5.** Pragmatics

**Week 6.** Implicit Content and Quantifier Domain Restriction

**Week 7.** Vagueness

**Week 8.** Metaphor

## **115 / 130 Plato: Republic**

Prof Alex Bown (MT) and Prof Luca Castagnoli (HT)

Weeks 1-8 / Thursdays / 10:00-11:00

Location: School (North School)

The *Republic* is probably Plato's most famous and influential work. It is best known for its central, surprising proposal that the ideal way of organising a city or state involves implementing rigid class distinctions based on natural capacities and reserving all political power for trained philosophers, who maintain it in part through what looks like propaganda (the so-called 'Noble Lie'). Along the way, it tackles a wide range of other questions, in ethics, political theory, psychology, metaphysics, epistemology, and even aesthetics.

This series of 8 lectures will introduce some of the main topics and problems from the first half of the dialogue. The aim is to cover Books 1–5; Books 6–10 will then be treated in a separate lecture series given by Prof. Luca Castagnoli in Hilary Term 2026. Topics to be addressed in these lectures include (but are not limited to) the following. (i) Plato's use of the dialogue form and aims and methods as a philosopher. (ii) Socrates' engagement with conventional views of morality and with immoralism, and his development and defence of his own, strikingly unconventional account of justice and other virtues, based on a tripartite psychology. (iii) The radical political proposals for the development of an ideal city and the education of its leaders first contemplated in Books 2 and 3 and taken to new extremes in

Book 5. (iv) The distinctive account of knowledge and opinion that emerges at the end of Book 5, purportedly to justify the claim that rulers ought to be philosophers and philosophers rule.

The lecture series is primarily intended for those taking the FHS paper 'Plato, *Republic*' (115/130), either in translation or in the original language, but anyone with an interest in the subject matter is welcome to attend. No knowledge of Greek will be presupposed. Those attending may find it useful to have a copy of the *Republic* to hand. A more detailed programme will be available on Canvas, as will the weekly hand-outs. For recommended bibliography, please consult the Faculty reading list.

## **120 Intermediate Philosophy of Physics: Quantum Mechanics**

Prof James Read

Weeks 1-8 / Mondays and Tuesdays / 11:00-12:00

Location: Schwarzman Centre - Lecture Theatre L1 (10.300)

**Week 3 on Tuesday moved to Monday 2-3pm**

This will be a sixteen lecture course looking in detail at the central conceptual problems of quantum theory. While the application of the mathematical structure of quantum theory has been unambiguously successful, having predictive and explanatory success across vast range of phenomena, there is little consensus on its physical interpretation.

Topics to be covered include:

- The formalism of quantum mechanics
- The measurement problem
- Dynamical collapse theories
- Hidden variable theories
- The Everett interpretation
- Non-locality and contextuality
- More recent approaches to QM, e.g. relational quantum mechanics and QBism

Optional pre-reading:

1. David Albert, *Quantum Mechanics and Experience*, Boston: Harvard University Press, 1994.
2. Tim Maudlin, *Philosophy of Physics Volume II: Quantum Mechanics*, Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2019.
3. Tim Maudlin, *Quantum Non-Locality and Relativity*, third edition, Oxford: Wiley-Blackwell, 2011.
4. John S. Bell, "Against Measurement", in *Speakable and Unspeakable in Quantum Mechanics*, second edition, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2004.
5. David Wallace, "Philosophy of Quantum Mechanics", in D. Rickles (ed.), *The Ashgate Companion to Contemporary Philosophy of Physics*, London: Routledge, 2008.

## **121 Advanced Philosophy of Physics**

Prof Adam Caulton and Prof Christopher Timpson (MT), Prof Sam Fletcher (HT)

Weeks 1-8 / Thursdays / 11:00-13:00

Location: Schwarzman Centre - Lecture Theatre L1 (10.300)

The overall topics this term will be philosophy of thermal physics in weeks 1-4, and advanced philosophy of quantum mechanics and quantum field theory in weeks 5-8.

A central theme of the first half of term will be the nature and origin of time asymmetry in thermal physics (thermodynamics and statistical mechanics). We will pay particular attention to the logical structure of classical (phenomenological) thermodynamics, before moving to competing interpretations of the foundations of statistical mechanics (Boltzmannian vs Gibbsian approaches), and competing conceptions of the nature of probabilities in statistical mechanics. If time allows we will discuss Maxwell's Demon and its (alleged) information-theoretic exorcism via Landauer's Principle.

In the second half of term, we will turn to quantum mechanics and quantum field theory. We will explore the role of decoherence in attempted solutions to the measurement problem, and the celebrated Deutsch-Wallace representation theorem in Everettian quantum mechanics. Then we will look at some foundational and conceptual problems specific to quantum field theory. We will end the term with a dive into the fraught matter of localisation for relativistic quantum particles.

The intended audience is 4<sup>th</sup> years reading Physics and Philosophy, MMathPhys students taking this paper as an option, MSt Physics and Philosophy students, and BPhil and DPhil students with an interest in philosophy of physics.

Useful preparatory reading for the first part of term is: David Albert *Time and Chance* (Harvard 2000) and Huw Price *Time's Arrow and Archimedes' Point* (OUP 1996). A reading list for the second part of term is on the Canvas site.

## **122 Philosophy of Mathematics**

Prof Beau Mount

Weeks 1-8 / Mondays / 12:00-13:00

Location: Schwarzman Centre - Lecture Theatre L1 (10.300)

These lectures will cover various topics in modern philosophy of mathematics. A reading list will be made available; students wishing to get an early start are invited to browse in Paul Benacerraf and Hilary Putnam, eds., *Philosophy of Mathematics: Selected Readings*, 2nd edn. (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1983), and Stewart Shapiro, ed., *The Oxford Handbook of Philosophy of Mathematics and Logic* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2005). A useful elementary textbook that can supplement the lectures is Stewart Shapiro, *Thinking about Mathematics* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2000).

**Week 1:** Frege and Neo-Fregeanism

**Week 2:** Hilbert's Programme

**Week 3:** Intuitionism

**Week 4:** Platonism and Nominalism (General)

**Week 5:** Indispensability and Explanation

**Week 6:** Fictionalism

**Week 7:** Structuralism

**Week 8:** Philosophy of Set Theory

## **124 Philosophy of Science**

Prof Sam Fletcher

Weeks 1-6 / Mondays and Tuesdays / 10:00-11:00

Location: Schwarzman Centre - Lecture Theatre L1 (10.300)

This is a course of twelve lectures on 20th-century and contemporary philosophy of science. They will concern primarily how science works (and fails) and what it achieves (and doesn't). The guiding text, which I recommend reading before the term begins, is Peter Godfrey-Smith's *Theory and Reality*, 2<sup>nd</sup> edition (Chicago, 2021). Here is a provisional plan for the lectures, with corresponding chapters of *T&R*:

1. Induction and Confirmation (Ch. 3)
2. Popper's Falsificationism (Ch. 4)
3. Kuhn on Normal Science (Ch. 5.1-5.4)
4. Kuhn on Revolutionary Science (Ch. 5.5-5.8)
5. After *Structure*: Lakatos, Laudan, and Feyerabend (Ch. 6)
6. The Sociology and Organization of Science (Ch. 7, 9.4-9.6, 13.5)
7. Feminist Philosophy of Science (Ch. 8.1-8.4)
8. Values in Science (Ch. 8.6)
9. Scientific Evidence, Revisited (Ch. 12, 13.6)
10. Scientific Realism (Ch. 10.1-10.3)
11. Scientific Anti-Realism (Ch. 10.4-10.6)
12. Scientific Explanation (Ch. 11)

More detailed reading lists for each topic will be provided on Canvas.

## **128 Practical Ethics / 103 Applied Ethics**

Uehiro Oxford Institute (MT) and Dr Emma Curran (HT)

Weeks 1-8 / Tuesdays / 10:00-11:00

Location: Schools (Room 9)

Thomas Douglas, Alberto Giubilini, Jonathan Pugh and Gabriel De Marco

The schedule, with readings, is as follows:

Oct. 14, Douglas, *Abortion*

### Readings:

- Thomson, J. J. (1971). 'A Defense of Abortion', *Philosophy & Public Affairs*, 1/1: 47–66. DOI: 10.2307/2265091
- Marquis, D. (1989). 'Why Abortion is Immoral', *The Journal of Philosophy*, 86/4: 183–202. DOI: 10.2307/2026961
- Little, M. O. (2005). 'Abortion'. Frey R. G. & Wellman C. H. (eds) *A Companion to Applied Ethics*, pp. 313–25. Blackwell Publishing Ltd: Oxford, UK. Available by clicking [here](#).

Oct. 21, Douglas, *Human Enhancement*

Readings:

- Michael Sandel (2004) The Case Against Perfection: What's Wrong with Designer Children, Bionic Athletes, and Genetic Engineering. In Bostrom and Savulescu, eds. *Human Enhancement* (OUP), pp. 71-90.
- Julian Savulescu and Guy Kahane (2009). The Moral Obligation to Create Children with the Best Chance of the Best Life. *Bioethics* 23, no. 5: 274–290.
- Thomas Douglas (2013) Enhancement, Biomedical. *International Encyclopedia of Ethics* (Wiley-Blackwell). Available here:  
<http://onlinelibrary.wiley.com/doi/10.1002/9781444367072.wbiee560/abstract>

Oct. 28 Pugh, *Consent/Advance Directives*

Readings:

- Principles of biomedical ethics  
Author: Beauchamp, Tom L.; Childress, James F. Type: Book ISBN: 0195143310, 0195143329 Publisher: Oxford University Press Place of Publication: Oxford Publication Date: 2001.  
Student note; Chapter 3 'Respect for Autonomy'
- Life's dominion: an argument about abortion, euthanasia, and individual freedom  
Author: Dworkin, Ronald Type: Book ISBN: 0679733191 Publisher: Vintage Place of Publication: New York. Publication Date: 1994 Edition: 1st Vintage Books ed. [with new Preface]  
Student note: Chapter Eight. Life past reason.

Nov. 4, De Marco, *Collective Action*

Readings:

- Kagan, S. (2011). Do I make a difference?. *Phil. & Pub. Aff.*, 39, 105.
- Nefsky, J. (2011). Consequentialism and the problem of collective harm: A reply to Kagan. *Philosophy & Public Affairs*, 39(4), 364-395.

Nov. 11, Giubilini, *Non-human animals*

Readings:

- Singer, P. (2023). *Animal Liberation Now" the Definitive Classic Renewed* (Updated edition / with a foreword by Yuval Noah Harari.). The Bodley Head, chapter 1: "All animals are equal..."
- Kagan, S. (2016). What's Wrong with Speciesism?. *J Appl Philos*, 33: 1-21.  
<https://doi.org/10.1111/japp.12164>
- Diamond, C. (1978). Eating Meat and Eating People. *Philosophy*, 53(206), 465–479
- Regan, T. (1986). A case for animal rights. In M.W. Fox & L.D. Mickley (Eds.), *Advances in animal welfare science 1986/87* (pp. 179-189). Washington, DC: The Humane Society of the United States.



Nov. 18, Giubilini, *Death*

Readings:

- Nagel, T., 1970. "Death," *Noûs* 4(1):73–80, reprinted in Nagel, T., *Mortal Questions*, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1979
- Williams B. The Makropulos case: reflections on the tedium of immortality. In: *Problems of the Self: Philosophical Papers 1956–1972*. Cambridge University Press; 1973:82-100
- McMahan, J. (1988). Death and the Value of Life. *Ethics*, 99(1), 32–61
- Luper, Steven, "Death", *The Stanford Encyclopedia of Philosophy* (Winter 2024 Edition), Edward N. Zalta & Uri Nodelman (eds.), URL = [<https://plato.stanford.edu/archives/win2024/entries/death/>](https://plato.stanford.edu/archives/win2024/entries/death/).

Nov. 25, De Marco, *Punishment*

Reading:

- Hoskins, Zachary and Antony Duff, "Legal Punishment", *The Stanford Encyclopedia of Philosophy* (Spring 2024 Edition), Edward N. Zalta & Uri Nodelman (eds.), URL = [<https://plato.stanford.edu/archives/spr2024/entries/legal-punishment/>](https://plato.stanford.edu/archives/spr2024/entries/legal-punishment/).

Dec. 2, Pugh, *Euthanasia*

Readings:

- Causing death and saving lives  
Author: Glover, Jonathan Type: Book ISBN: 0140220038, 9780140220032 Publisher: Penguin Place of Publication: Harmondsworth Publication Date: 1977  
Student note: Chapters 14 and 15.
- Active and Passive Euthanasia *New England Journal of Medicine*  
Author: Rachels, James Type: Article ISSN: 1533-4406 LCCN: LC 20-20456//r822  
Publisher: Massachusetts Medical Society, Place of Publication: Boston : Publication Date: 1975-01-09 Total Pages: 78-80 Pages: 78-80 Volume: 292 Issue: 2 DOI: 10.1056/NEJM197501092920206

## **131 / 137 Plato on Knowledge, Language and Reality in the *Theaetetus* and the *Sophist***

Prof Michail Peramatzis

Weeks 1-6 / Thursdays / 10:00-11:00

Location: Schwarzman Centre - Lecture Theatre L1 (10.300)

The lectures cover some of the most fascinating and rewarding arguments in Plato's late epistemology, philosophy of language, and metaphysics on the basis of his dialogues *Theaetetus* and *Sophist*. The first six lectures in MT25 will focus on the *Theaetetus*, Plato's dialogue about the nature of knowledge, and will discuss (1) the claim that knowledge is perception; (2) being and becoming; (3) the self-refutation of relativism and the refutation of the proposed definition of knowledge as sense perception; (4) knowledge as true belief; (5) false belief; (6) Socrates' dream; knowledge as true belief plus an 'account' (*logos*).

The next six lectures (to be given in HT26) will focus on the *Sophist*, the dialogue where Plato attempts to define what a sophist is, and will examine (1) the method of definition by division; (2) the view that it is impossible to say or think 'what is not'; (3) the discussion of the number and nature of what there is; (4) the view of the so-called 'Late-Learners'; the communion of kinds; (5) the analysis of negative predication, the 'fragmentation' of the kind

difference, and negative properties; and (6) the analysis of falsehood.

In discussing these topics, we will examine issues of interpretative and philosophical significance.

These twelve lectures are intended primarily for those undergraduate students who will sit paper 131 [Plato on Knowledge, Language, and Reality in the *Theaetetus* and the *Sophist* (in Greek)] or 137 [Plato on Knowledge, Language, and Reality in the *Theaetetus* and the *Sophist* (in translation)], and for students on the MSt in Ancient Philosophy who plan to write their Option A essay on Plato's *Theaetetus* or/and *Sophist*, but anyone with an interest in Ancient Greek Philosophy, Plato's theoretical philosophy, or the history of epistemology, metaphysics, and the philosophy of language is welcome to attend (knowledge of Greek is not required).

Greek Text:

*Platonis Opera I*, ed. by E. A. Duke, W. F. Hicken, W. S. M. Nicoll, D. B. Robinson, and J. C. G. Strachan, (Oxford, 1995).

Suggested English Translation:

*Theaetetus*, tr. Levett, revised by Burnyeat (Hackett, 1990).

*Sophist*, tr. White (Hackett, 1993).

NB: both of these translations are re-printed in J. Cooper's *Plato: Complete Works* (Hackett, 1997).

Hand-outs and further bibliographical suggestions will be given in the lectures.

## **134 / 136 / 139 Knowledge and Scepticism in Hellenistic Philosophy**

Prof Luca Castagnoli

Weeks 1-6 / Tuesdays / 10:00-12:00

Location: Oriel College / Room: Robert Beddard

'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. 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?

This course is primarily intended for those undergraduate students who plan to sit papers 134, 136 or 139 (Knowledge and Scepticism in Hellenistic Philosophy), but anyone (including graduate students) 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).

The main topics to be introduced in the lectures are provisionally scheduled as follows:

#### **Week 1**

- An introduction to Hellenistic philosophy and epistemology.
- Epicurean epistemology.
- Introduction to Stoic epistemology.

#### **Week 2**

- Cicero's *Academica*: Scepticism in Plato's Academy I: Academics vs. Stoics

#### **Week 3**

- Cicero's *Academica*: Scepticism in Plato's Academy II.

#### **Week 4**

- Sextus Empiricus' Pyrrhonism: beliefs, appearances, and the aim of Pyrrhonian scepticism.
- The modes of the suspension of judgement: Aenesidemus and Agrippa

#### **Week 5**

- The Pyrrhonian attack on logic: criteria of truth, signs and proofs.
- The self-refutation charge and the possibility of Pyrrhonian inquiry.
- The Pyrrhonian attack on physics: causes, motion and time.
- The Pyrrhonian attack on ethics and the possibility of a Pyrrhonian life.

#### **Week 6**

- Early Pyrrhonism: Pyrrho and Aenesidemus
- Conclusions

## 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.
- Cicero, *Academici libri & Lucullus*, transl. and comm. by T. Reinhardt, Oxford, Oxford University Press, 2023.
- 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.

## 198 Special Subject: Feminist Theory

Dr Aylon Cohen

Weeks 1-8 / Wednesdays / 11:00-12:00

Location: Schools (Room 6)

These lectures will explore some of the central questions and debates in feminist political theory. We will ask: How should power, oppression, and domination be understood? Can feminism be reconciled with liberalism? What is the relationship between gender, work, and capitalism, and how have feminists theorised reproductive labour and the family? We will also consider questions of identity and category: What is a "woman," and how have attempts to define or deconstruct this concept shaped feminist politics? Later lectures will investigate debates around sexuality and sexual liberation, the ethics and politics of sex work, and the challenges posed by queer theory to earlier feminist paradigms.

The lecture plan is as follows:

- **Week 1:** Power, Oppression, and Domination
- **Week 2:** Liberalism, the State, and Feminism
- **Week 3:** Reproduction and the Family
- **Week 4:** What is a Woman? Sex, Gender, and Intersectionality
- **Week 5:** Work, Exploitation and Capitalism
- **Week 6:** Sex Work
- **Week 7:** Sex, Pleasure and Sexuality
- **Week 8:** Queer Feminism

## **198 Special Subject: The Ethics of Artificial Intelligence and Digital Technology**

Prof Raphaël Millière

Weeks 1-8 / Tuesdays / 11:00-12:00

Location: Schwarzman Centre (Room 00.308)

This special subject provides an overview of the most pressing ethical and philosophical challenges raised by the rapid development of artificial intelligence and digital technologies. From algorithmic bias and surveillance capitalism to the prospect of superintelligence, this course will equip students with the conceptual tools to critically analyse the societal impact of AI.

### **Week 1 - Algorithmic Bias, Discrimination and Explainability**

**Lecturer: Dr Raphaël Millière**

This lecture will explore whether automated decision-making offers a reasonable prospect of overcoming human bias and discrimination, or if it risks perpetuating and reinforcing them. We will examine the different senses and sources of algorithmic bias, and discuss the philosophical basis for the 'right to an explanation' from AI systems.

#### **Readings**

- S. Fazelpour & D. Danks (2021). "Algorithmic bias: Senses, sources, solutions." *Philosophy Compass* 16(8): e12760.
- John Zerilli (2020). "Explaining machine learning decisions." *Philosophy of Science* 89: 1–19.
- Gabrielle Johnson (2021). "Algorithmic Bias: On the Implicit Biases of Social Technology." *Synthese* 198: 9941–9961.
- Cass Sunstein (2023). *Decisions About Decisions: Practical Reason in Ordinary Life*. Cambridge University Press, ch. 9.
- Kate Vredenburg (2021). "The right to an explanation." *The Journal of Political Philosophy*.

### **Week 2 - Responsibility**

**Lecturer: Dr Keri Grieman**

As AI systems become more autonomous, who is responsible when they cause harm? This lecture will address the challenge of assigning moral and legal responsibility for the actions of AI and robots, investigating whether increasing autonomy creates 'responsibility gaps' that our current ethical and legal frameworks cannot accommodate.

#### **Readings**

- Frank Hindriks & Herman Veluwenkamp (2023). "The risks of autonomous machines: from responsibility gaps to control gaps." *Synthese* 201(21): 1–17.
- M. Kiener (2025). "AI and Responsibility: No Gap, but Abundance." *Journal of Applied Philosophy* 42(1): 357–374.
- Optional: Alan Rubel, Clinton Castro, Adam Pham (2021). *Algorithms and Autonomy*. Cambridge University Press, ch. 2.

### **Week 3 - Privacy and Surveillance**

#### **Lecturer: Dr Federica Fedorczyk**

This lecture will examine the pervasive threat to privacy posed by the 'data economy' and the rise of AI-powered surveillance. We will ask what the right to privacy consists in and whether the systematic collection and analysis of personal data by technology companies and governments is ethically justifiable.

#### **Readings**

- Daniel Solove. "Artificial Intelligence and Privacy." [SSRN](#)
- Maria Angel & Ryan Calo. "Distinguishing Privacy Law." [JSTOR](#)
- Andrei Marmor (2015). "What is the Right to Privacy?" *Philosophy and Public Affairs* 43: 3–26.
- Benedict Rumbold & James Wilson (2019). "Privacy Rights and Public Information." *Journal of Political Philosophy* 27(1): 3–25.

Alicia Solow-Niederman. "Information Privacy in the Inference Economy." [ProQuest](#)

### **Week 4 - Moral Status and Rights of Artificial Agents**

#### **Lecturer: Dr Raphaël Millièvre**

Could an AI ever achieve a moral status comparable to that of a human being? This lecture will examine the criteria for moral status—such as consciousness and agency—and consider whether advanced AI systems could one day be considered rightsholders.

#### **Readings**

- S. Matthew Liao (2020). "The Moral Status and Rights of Artificial Intelligence." In S. M. Liao (ed.), *Ethics of Artificial Intelligence*. Oxford University Press.
- L. Dung (2024). "Understanding Artificial Agency." *The Philosophical Quarterly* 75(2): pqa010.
- Eric Schwitzgebel (2023). "AI Systems Must Not Confuse Users About Their Sentience or Moral Status." *Patterns* 4.

### **Week 5 - Robot-Human Relationships**

#### **Lecturer: Dr Raphaël Millièvre**

As social robots become integrated into areas like elder care, therapy, and companionship, we must consider the ethical implications of these relationships. We will discuss ways in which human-robot relationships could be beneficial in principle, and whether they are inherently inauthentic and risk damaging the quality of our relationships with other humans.

#### **Readings**

- Mark Coeckelbergh (2022). *Robot Ethics*, ch. 4: "Care Robots, Expertise, and the Quality of Health Care."
- A. van Wynsberghe (2013). "Designing Robots for Care: Care Centered Value-Sensitive Design." *Science and Engineering Ethics* 19: 407–433.  
<https://doi.org/10.1007/s11948-011-9343-6>
- J. Campbell (2020). "Social Robots." In *Causation in Psychology*. Harvard University Press.
- Optional: B. D. Earp et al. (2025). "Relational Norms for Human-AI Cooperation." arXiv. <https://doi.org/10.48550/arXiv.2502.12102>

## **Week 6 - Making Machines Moral**

**Lecturer: Dr Emma Curran**

This lecture focuses on the ‘alignment problem’: the challenge of ensuring that advanced AI systems act in accordance with human values. We will investigate the prospects and perils of various approaches to building ‘moral machines’, considering whether an AI can truly learn to be moral or if it is destined to remain a ‘moral zombie’.

### **Readings**

- Iason Gabriel (2020). “Artificial Intelligence, Values, and Alignment.” *Minds and Machines* 30(3): 411–437.
- William D’Alessandro (2024). “Deontology and safe artificial intelligence.” *Philosophical Studies*.
- Raphaël Millière (2025). “Normative conflicts and shallow AI alignment.” *Philosophical Studies*: 1–44.
- Carissa Véliz (2021). “Moral Zombies: Why Algorithms Are Not Moral Agents.” *AI & Society* 36: 487–497.

## **Week 7 - Superintelligence and the AI Apocalypse?**

**Lecturer: Dr Raphaël Millière**

How seriously should we take the risk of an ‘intelligence explosion’ leading to a superintelligent AI that we cannot control? We will critically assess arguments that superintelligence poses a significant existential risk to humanity and discuss what, if anything, can be done to mitigate such a threat.

### **Readings**

- Karina Vold & Daniel R. Harris (2023). “How Does Artificial Intelligence Pose an Existential Risk?” In C. Véliz (ed.), *Oxford Handbook of Digital Ethics*. Oxford University Press.
- Arvin Kasirzadeh (2025). “Two types of AI existential risk: Decisive and accumulative.” *Philosophical Studies*.
- Daniel Thorstad (2024). “Against the singularity hypothesis.” *Philosophical Studies*.

## **Week 8 - Work, Play, and Utopia**

**Lecturer: Dr Theodor Nenu**

This final lecture considers the future of human life in a world of advanced automation. What is the value of work, and how might that value be threatened by AI? We will evaluate the prospect of a post-work utopia, asking whether a life of leisure and play could be as meaningful as a life of productive work.

### **Readings**

- John Tasioulas (2024). “Work and Play in the Shadow of AI.” In D. Edmonds (ed.), *AI Morality*. Oxford University Press.
- Elizabeth Anderson (2023). *Hijacked: How Neo-Liberalism Turned the Work Ethic Against Workers and How Workers Can Take It Back*. Cambridge University Press, chs. 9–10.
- G. D. O’Brien (2025). “All Play and No Work? AI and Existential Unemployment.” *The Journal of Ethics*.
- W. J. Parmer (2024). “Meaningful Work and Achievement in Increasingly Automated Workplaces.” *The Journal of Ethics* 28(3): 527–551.

## Philosophy of Economics

Dr Jean Baccelli

Weeks 1-8 / Wednesdays / 12:00-13:00

Location: Schwarzman Centre - Lecture Theatre L1 (10.300)

*These lectures will introduce to selected topics in the contemporary philosophy of economics. Contact information: [jean.baccelli@philosophy.ox.ac.uk](mailto:jean.baccelli@philosophy.ox.ac.uk). The W4 lecture on Idealization (November 5) will be delivered by Prof. Nancy Cartwright, who is the University of Oxford 2025-2026 PPE Centenary Visiting Professor. In addition, Prof. Cartwright will deliver her inaugural PPE Centenary Lecture, "Is Economics Queen of the Social Sciences?", on November 12 (4.30-6pm, Queen's College).*

### 0 General Resources

#### 0.1 Textbooks

Julian Reiss. *Philosophy of Economics: A Contemporary Introduction*. New York: Routledge, 2013.

Daniel Hausman, Michael McPherson, and Debra Satz. *Economic Analysis, Moral Philosophy, and Public Policy*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press (Third Edition), 2016.

Marcel Boumans and John Davis. *Economic Methodology: Understanding Economics as a Science*. London: Macmillan, 2015.

#### 0.2 Handbooks

Harold Kincaid and Don Ross, editors. *The Oxford Handbook of Philosophy of Economics*. New York: Oxford University Press, 2009.

Conrad Heilmann and Julian Reiss, editors. *The Routledge Handbook of Philosophy of Economics*. New York: Routledge, 2022.

Uskali Mäki, editor. *Handbook of the Philosophy of Economics*. Amsterdam: North Holland, 2012.

John Davis, Alain Marciano, and Jochen Runde, editors. *The Elgar Companion to Economics and Philosophy*. Cheltenham: Edward Elgar Publishing Limited, 2005.

#### 0.3 Anthologies

Daniel Hausman, editor. *The Philosophy of Economics: An Anthology*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press (Third Edition), 2012b.

#### 0.4 Further Background

Harry Landreth and David Colander. *History of Economic Thought*. Boston: Houghton Mifflin College Division (Fourth Edition), 2002.

Peter Godfrey-Smith. *Theory and Reality. An Introduction to the Philosophy of Science*. Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2003.

Martin Curd, Jan Cover, and Christopher Pincock, editors. *Philosophy of Science: The Central Issues*. New York: Norton, 2012 (Second Edition).

Daniel Little. *Varieties of Social Explanation: An Introduction to the Philosophy of Social Science*. Boulder: Westview, 1991.

Mark Risjord. *Philosophy of Social Science: A Contemporary Introduction*. New York: Routledge, 2022 (Second Edition).

Nancy Cartwright and Eleonora Montuschi, editors. *Philosophy of Social Science: A New Introduction*. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2014.

Francesco Guala and Daniel Steel, editors. *The Philosophy of Social Science Reader*. New York: Routledge, 2010.



## **1 Rationality**

### **1.1 Core Readings**

Katie Steele. Choice Models. In Nancy Cartwright and Eleonora Montuschi, editors, *Philosophy of Social Science: A New Introduction*, pages 185–207. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2014.

Julian Reiss. *Philosophy of Economics: A Contemporary Introduction*. New York: Routledge, 2013, Chapters 3 (“Rational Choice Theory”) and 4 (“Game Theory”).

Catherine Herfeld. Revisiting the Criticisms of Rational Choice Theories. *Philosophy Compass*, 17(1):e12774, 2022.

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*, pages 156–172. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2009.

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

### **1.2 Further Readings**

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, pages 701–728. Amsterdam: North-Holland, 2014.

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

Amartya Sen. Rational Fools: A Critique of the Behavioral Foundations of Economic Theory. *Philosophy & Public Affairs*, 6(4):317–344, 1977.

Gary Becker. *The Economic Approach to Human Behavior*. Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1976, Chap. 1 (“The Economic Approach to Human Behaviour”).

Uskali Mäki. Economics Imperialism: Concept and Constraints. *Philosophy of the Social Sciences*, 39(3):351–380, 2009.

## **2 Preference**

### **2.1 Core Readings**

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?”).

Wade Hands. Foundations of Contemporary Revealed Preference Theory. *Erkenntnis*, 78(5):1081–1108, 2013.

Franz Dietrich and Christian List. Mentalism versus Behaviourism in Economics: A Philosophy-of-Science Perspective. *Economics & Philosophy*, 32(2):249–281, 2016.

Kate Vredenburg. The Economic Concept of a Preference. In Conrad Heilmann and Julian Reiss, editors, *The Routledge Handbook of Philosophy of Economics*, pages 67–82. New York: Routledge, 2022.

### **2.2 Further Readings**

Luigino Bruni and Robert Sugden. The Road Not Taken: How Psychology Was Removed from Economics, and How It Might Be Brought Back. *The Economic Journal*, 117(516):146–173, 2007.

Ivan Moscati. Behavioral and Heuristic Models Are As-if Models Too— And That’s Ok. *Economics & Philosophy*, forthcoming.

Faruk Gul and Wolfgang Pesendorfer. The Case for Mindless Economics. In Andrew Caplin and Andrew Schotter, editors, *The Foundations of Positive and Normative Economics*, pages 3–39. New York: Oxford University Press, 2008.

Johanna Thoma. In Defence of Revealed Preference Theory. *Economics & Philosophy*, 37(2):163–187, 2021.

Mikaël Cozic and Brian Hill. Representation Theorems and the Semantics of Decision-Theoretic Concepts. *Journal of Economic Methodology*, 22(3): 292–311, 2015.

### **3 Welfare**

#### **3.1 Core Readings**

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

Daniel Hausman, Michael McPherson, and Debra Satz. *Economic Analysis, Moral Philosophy, and Public Policy*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press (Third Edition), 2016, Chapter 8 (“Welfare”).

Erik Angner. Well-Being and Economics. In Guy Fletcher, editor, *The Routledge Handbook of Philosophy of Well-Being*, pages 492–503. London: Routledge, 2016.

Anna Alexandrova. Well-Being. In Nancy Cartwright and Eleonora Montuschi, editors, *Philosophy of Social Science: A New Introduction*, pages 9–30. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2014.

Guy Fletcher. *The Philosophy of Well-Being: An Introduction*. London: Routledge, 2016, Chapters 1 (“Hedonism”), 2 (“Desire-Fulfilment Theory”), and 3 (“Objective List Theories”).

#### **3.2 Further Readings**

Philippe Mongin and Claude d’Aspremont. Utility Theory and Ethics. In Salvador Barbera, Peter Hammond, and Christian Seidl, editors, *Handbook of Utility Theory, Volume I: Principles*, pages 371–481. Dordrecht: Kluwer Academic Press, 1998, Section 2 (“Some Philosophical and Historical Clarifications”).

Ingrid Robeyns. The Capability Approach: A Theoretical Survey. *Journal of Human Development and Capabilities*, 6(1):93–117, 2005.

Ingrid Robeyns. The Capability Approach in Practice. *Journal of Political Philosophy*, 14(3):351–376, 2006.

Carol Graham. Subjective Well-Being in Economics. In Matthew Adler and Marc Fleurbaey, editors, *The Oxford Handbook of Well-Being and Public Policy*, pages 424–452. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2016.

Koen Decanq and Dirk Neumann. Does the Choice of Well-Being Measure Matter Empirically? In Matthew Adler and Marc Fleurbaey, editors, *The Oxford Handbook of Well-Being and Public Policy*, pages 553–587. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2016.

### **4 Idealization [GUEST LECTURER: PROF. NANCY CARTWRIGHT]**

#### **4.1 Core Readings**

Julian Reiss. *Philosophy of Economics: A Contemporary Introduction*. New York: Routledge, 2013, Chapter 7 (“Models, Idealization, Explanation”).

Nancy Cartwright. The Vanity of Rigour in Economics: Theoretical Models and Galilean Experiments. In Philippe Fontaine and Robert Leonard, editors, *The Experiment in the History of Economics*, pages 118–134. New York: Routledge, 2005.

Mary Morgan and Tarja Knuuttila. Models and Modelling in Economics. In Uskali Mäki, editor, *Handbook of the Philosophy of Economics*, pages 49–87. Amsterdam: North Holland, 2012.

Robert Northcott and Anna Alexandrova. Prisoner's Dilemma Doesn't Explain Much. In Martin Peterson, editor, *The Prisoner's Dilemma*, pages 64–84. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2015.

Mary Morgan. Models, Stories and the Economic World. *Journal of Economic Methodology*, 8(3):361–384, 2001.

Milton Friedman. The Methodology of Positive Economics. In *Essays in Positive Economics*, pages 3–43. Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1953.

#### 4.2 Further Readings

Daniel Hausman. Why Look Under the Hood? In Daniel Hausman, editor, *The Philosophy of Economics: An Anthology*, pages 183–187. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press (Third Edition), 2012a.

Bruce Caldwell. *Beyond Positivism*. New York: Routledge (Revised Edition), 1994, Chapter 8 (“Friedman's Methodological Instrumentalism”).

Roman Frigg and Stephan Hartmann. Models in Science. *Stanford Encyclopedia of Philosophy*, 2020.

Alvin Roth. The Economist as Engineer. *Econometrica*, 70(4):1341–1378, 2002.

Esther Duflo. The Economist as Plumber. *American Economic Review*, 107(5):1–26, 2017.

### **5 The Limits of Efficiency, 1**

#### 5.1 Core Readings

Daniel Hausman, Michael McPherson, and Debra Satz. *Economic Analysis, Moral Philosophy, and Public Policy*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press (Third Edition), 2016, Chapter 9 (“Welfare Economics”).

Amartya Sen. *Collective Choice and Social Welfare*. Amsterdam: North Holland, 1970, Chapters 2 (“Unanimity”) and 2 (“Collective Choice Rules and Pareto Comparisons”).

Matthew Adler. Value and Cost-Benefit Analysis. In Iwao Hirose and Jonas Olson, editors, *The Oxford Handbook of Value Theory*, pages 317–337. New York: Oxford University Press, 2015.

John Chipman. Compensation Principle. In Steven Durlauf and Lawrence Blume, editors, *The New Palgrave: A Dictionary of Economics*, volume 2, pages 38–48. London: Palgrave–MacMillan, 2008.

Sven Ove Hansson. Philosophical Problems in Cost–Benefit Analysis. *Economics & Philosophy*, 23(2):163–183, 2007.

#### 5.2 Further Readings

Wade Hands. The Positive-Normative Dichotomy and Economics. In Uskali Mäki, editor, *Handbook of the Philosophy of Economics*, pages 219–239. Amsterdam: North Holland, 2012.

Philippe Mongin. Value Judgments and Value Neutrality in Economics. *Economica*, 73(290):257–286, 2006.

Antoinette Baujard. Values in Welfare Economics. In Conrad Heilmann and Julian Reiss, editors, *The Routledge Handbook of Philosophy of Economics*, pages 211–222. New York: Routledge, 2022.

Julian Reiss. Measurement and Value Judgments. In Conrad Heilmann and Julian Reiss, editors, *The Routledge Handbook of Philosophy of Economics*, pages 223–233. New York: Routledge, 2022.

Daniel Hausman, Michael McPherson, and Debra Satz. *Economic Analysis, Moral Philosophy, and Public Policy*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press (Third Edition), 2016, Appendix (“How Could Ethics Matter to Economics”).

## **6 The Limits of Efficiency, 2**

### **6.1 Core Readings**

- Amartya Sen. Liberty, Unanimity and Rights. *Economica*, 43(171):217–245, 1976.
- Amartya Sen. Personal Utilities and Public Judgements: or What's Wrong with Welfare Economics. *The Economic Journal*, 89(355):537–558, 1979a, Sections VI (“Limitations of Welfarism Even With Rich Utility Information”) and VII (“Limitations of Paretianism”).
- John Weymark. Conundrums for Nonconsequentialists. *Social Choice and Welfare*, 48(2):269–294, 2017.
- Philippe Mongin. Spurious Unanimity and the Pareto Principle. *Economics & Philosophy*, 32(3):511–532, 2016.
- Alvin Roth. Repugnance as a Constraint on Markets. *Journal of Economic Perspectives*, 21(3):37–58, 2007.

### **6.2 Further Readings**

- Itai Sher. How Perspective-Based Aggregation Undermines the Pareto Principle. *Politics, Philosophy & Economics*, 19(2):182–205, 2020.
- John Broome. *Weighing Goods: Equality, Uncertainty, and Time*. Oxford: Basil Blackwell, 1991b, Chapters 7 (“Coherence Against the Pareto Principle”), 8 (“The Principle of Personal Good”), and 9 (“Equality”).
- Gabrielle Gayer, Itzhak Gilboa, Larry Samuelson, and David Schmeidler. Pareto Efficiency with Different Beliefs. *The Journal of Legal Studies*, 43(S2): S151–S171, 2014.
- Marc Fleurbaey. Welfare Economics, Risk and Uncertainty. *Canadian Journal of Economics*, 51(1):5–40, 2018.
- Daniel Hausman, Michael McPherson, and Debra Satz. *Economic Analysis, Moral Philosophy, and Public Policy*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press (Third Edition), 2016, Chapter 6 (“The Ethical Limits to Markets”).

## **7 Public Policy**

### **7.1 Core Readings**

- Amartya Sen. Utilitarianism and Welfarism. *The Journal of Philosophy*, 76(9):463–489, 1979b.
- Amartya Sen. The Possibility of Social Choice. *American Economic Review*, 89(3):349–378, 1999.
- Wulf Gaertner. *A Primer in Social Choice Theory*. Oxford: Oxford University Press (Second Edition), 2009, Chapter 7 (“Distributive Justice: Rawlsian and Utilitarian Rules”).

Marc Fleurbaey and Peter Hammond. Interpersonally Comparable Utility. In Salvador Barbera, Peter Hammond, and Christian Seidl, editors, *Handbook of Utility Theory, Volume II: Extensions*, pages 1179–1285. Boston: Kluwer Academic Press, 2004, Sections 3 (“Social Choice without Interpersonal Comparisons”) and 4 (“Social Choice with Interpersonal Comparisons”).

Daniel Hausman, Michael McPherson, and Debra Satz. *Economic Analysis, Moral Philosophy, and Public Policy*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press (Third Edition), 2016, Chapter 11 (“Equality and Egalitarianism”).

### **7.2 Further Readings**

- Marc Fleurbaey. On the Informational Basis of Social Choice. *Social Choice and Welfare*, 21(2):347–384, 2003.
- Marc Fleurbaey and Bertil Tungodden. The Tyranny of Non-Aggregation versus the Tyranny of Aggregation in Social Choices: A Real Dilemma. *Economic Theory*, 44(3):399–414, 2010.

Daniel Hausman. The Impossibility of Interpersonal Utility Comparisons. *Mind*, 104(415):473–490, 1995.

Christian List. Are Interpersonal Comparisons of Utility Indeterminate? *Erkenntnis*, 58(2):229–260, 2003.

Hilary Greaves and Harvey Lederman. Extended Preferences and Interpersonal Comparisons of Well-being. *Philosophy and Phenomenological Research*, 96(3):636–667, 2018.

## **8 Behavioural Public Policy**

### **8.1 Core Readings**

Julian Reiss. *Philosophy of Economics: A Contemporary Introduction*. New York: Routledge, 2013, Chapter 15 (“Behavioral Economics and Nudge”).

Andreas Schmidt and Bart Engelen. The Ethics of Nudging: An Overview. *Philosophy Compass*, 15(4):e12658, 2020.

Luc Bovens. The Ethics of Nudge. In Till Grüne-Yanoff and Sven Ove Hansson, editors, *Preference Change*, pages 207–219. Heidelberg: Springer, 2009.

Till Grüne-Yanoff. Old Wine in New Casks: Libertarian Paternalism Still Violates Liberal Principles. *Social Choice and Welfare*, 38(4):635–645, 2012.

Daniel Hausman and Brynn Welch. Debate: To Nudge or Not To Nudge. *Journal of Political Philosophy*, 18(1):123–136, 2010.

### **8.2 Further Readings**

Pelle Hansen. The Definition of Nudge and Libertarian Paternalism: Does the Hand Fit the Glove? *European Journal of Risk Regulation*, 7(1):155–174, 2016.

Gerardo Infante, Guilhem Lecouteux, and Robert Sugden. Preference Purification and the Inner Rational Agent: A Critique of the Conventional Wisdom of Behavioural Welfare Economics. *Journal of Economic Methodology*, 23(1):1–25, 2016.

Till Grüne-Yanoff and Ralph Hertwig. Nudge versus Boost: How Coherent Are Policy and Theory? *Minds and Machines*, 26(1-2):149–183, 2016.

Johanna Thoma. Merely Means Paternalist? Prospect Theory and ‘Debiased’ Welfare Analysis. *Philosophy of Science*, forthcoming.

Cristina Bicchieri and Eugen Dimant. Nudging with Care: The Risks and Benefits of Social Information. *Public Choice*, 191(3-4):443–464, 2022.

# Other Lectures (suitable for all audiences)

## Graduate Lecture: Heidegger's Later Philosophy

Jonathan Krude

Weeks 1-4 / Wednesdays / 11:00-12:00

Location: Schwarzman Centre - Lecture Theatre L1 (10.300)

This lecture series introduces major topics from Martin Heidegger's philosophy after *Being and Time*. It shows how his treatments of art, technology, and philosophy form a coherent account of how metaphysics shapes our engagement with the world. It also discusses how Heidegger attempts to move beyond this metaphysical frame.

While the lecture series is particularly relevant for those studying for the Post-Kantian Philosophy (113) paper, it is open to anyone interested in engaging with an influential "non-analytic" thinker and his philosophical method. It does not require prior knowledge of Heidegger's work.

The lectures will be organised around the discussion of central texts and their respective argumentative strategies. Students should, therefore, aim to read the suggested reading before each class.

### Lecture 1: What is Metaphysics?

The first lecture introduces Heidegger's method of questioning and the scope of his philosophical project, as well as some of the controversies surrounding it. It discusses his understanding of metaphysics in its relation to the question of Being.

Reading: *What is Metaphysics?* (1929)

### Lecture 2: Art and Its World

The second lecture focusses on Heidegger's account of art as opening up a world. It deepens the discussion of his philosophical method and introduces his analysis of truth as unconcealment.

Reading: *The Origin of the Work of Art* (1935–1936)

### Lecture 3: Technology and Modernity

The third lecture presents Heidegger's understanding of technology. It traces his steps from technology itself to its essence, and further to his claim that it constitutes a fundamental shift in our way of engaging with the world.

Reading: *The Question Concerning Technology* (1953)

### Lecture 4: Thinking beyond Metaphysics

The final lecture revisits Heidegger's understanding of metaphysics and demonstrates how his accounts of art and technology feed back into his overarching philosophical project. It explores his preparations for a thinking that can overcome the framework of metaphysics.

Reading: *The End of Philosophy* (1964)

## **Graduate Lecture: Diagonalisation - The Road to Infiniteis, Truth and Gödel**

Mahin Hossain and Rasmus Bakken

Weeks 5-8 / Wednesdays / 11:00-12:00

Location: Schwarzman Centre - Lecture Theatre L1 (10.300)

A course of four lectures will be given on diagonalisation in mathematics. We will not prove theorems as exhaustively as in a typical maths course; we will introduce flashpoints of mathematical insight. We will demonstrate core methods in logic — bijection, dovetailing, diagonalisation, and encoding — with ample examples.

Our primary objective is for students to take away additions to their reasoning toolkit. Thinking carefully about the rules for constructing a sequence, the legitimacy of self-reference, and the distinctions between names and objects will be helpful for philosophical development. A secondary objective is to dispel errors and overstatements attending the folklore of logic. We will clarify what Russell's Paradox, the Undefinability of Truth, and the Incompleteness Theorems do — and do not — establish, disentangling mathematical conclusions from misconceptions both vulgar and subtle.

**Lecture 1: INFINITY** — We introduce number, one-to-one correspondence, and cardinality. We show how infinite sets like the naturals, evens, and rationals can be the same size. We present Cantor's diagonal argument and Russell's paradox.

**Lecture 2: NUMBERS ARE ALIVE** — We motivate Gödel-numbering as a precise way to achieve self-reference. We outline a Gödel-encoding scheme for symbols, sentences, and proofs, and illustrate it through worked examples.

**Lecture 3: TRUTH AND THE LIAR** — We introduce provability inside a formal system, prove Gödel's diagonal lemma, and use it to show the undefinability of truth in a formal logical setting.

**Lecture 4: GÖDEL** — We situate Hilbert's program historically, introduce the provability predicate, prove Gödel's First Incompleteness Theorem (noting the second), and discuss their genuine and alleged philosophical consequences.

# 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).

## **The Eastman Seminar: Pleasure in Ancient Greek Philosophy**

Prof Verity Harte and Prof Ursula Coope

Weeks 1-8 / Tuesdays / 14:00-16:00

Location: Schwarzman Centre (Ryle Room)

In this seminar, we shall discuss Plato's remarks about pleasure in the *Philebus* together with Aristotle's account of pleasure in *Nicomachean Ethics* VII.11-14 and X.1-5. We shall be asking to what extent, and how, Plato and Aristotle are in conversation with each other in these works. We shall focus, in particular, on questions about the metaphysics of pleasure, and on what the answers to such questions tell us about the value of pleasure. What is at stake in the debate over whether or not pleasure is a kind of becoming or process? What is the relation between the pleasure we take in something and that which we take pleasure in? Can Plato and Aristotle accommodate the variety of different kinds of pleasure? And what does all this imply about the relation between pleasure and goodness?

Though we shall sometimes need to talk about the Greek, the seminar will also be accessible to those studying the texts only in translation. All graduate students are welcome, whether on the BPhil, MSts, or DPhil.

In advance of the first class, it would be helpful to have read through Plato's *Philebus* in translation.

Texts:

### **Plato *Philebus***

English translation for use in class: Dorothea Frede, *Plato Philebus*, Indianapolis: Hackett [available as standalone volume, 1993, with Introduction and Notes; also in John Cooper ed. *Plato Complete Works*, Indianapolis: Hackett]

Greek text: OCT *Philebus* ed. John Burnet [Note also more recent Diès ed., Budé text]

### **Aristotle *Nicomachean Ethics***

English translation for use in class: Terence Irwin, *Aristotle Nicomachean Ethics* (2nd or 3rd Edition) Hackett

Greek text: OCT *Aristotelis Ethica Nicomachea*, ed I. Bywater

A full reading list will be distributed in the class and available on canvas.



Weekly Syllabus:

**Week 1:** Introductory questions

**Weeks 2, 3 & 4:** Plato Philebus

- a) Pleasure and restoration: Philebus 31b-36c, with 42d-43d
- b) Pleasure and purity: Philebus 50e-53c, against backdrop of 44b-50e
- c) Pleasure as genesis: Philebus 53c-55c

**Week 5:** Aristotle Nicomachean Ethics VII.11-14 (especially 11-12), against the view of pleasure as genesis.

**Weeks 6 and 7:** Aristotle Nicomachean Ethics X.1-5

- a) Pleasure is not a process: esp Nicomachean Ethics X.3-4. (cf also Metaphysics Theta 6.1048b18-25)
- b) Pleasure's relation to activity, different kinds of pleasure: Nicomachean Ethics X.4, 1174b15ff and Nicomachean Ethics X.5.

**Week 8:** Conclusions: Aristotle and Plato in conversation.

## **The Voluntary, Deliberation and Decision in Aristotle (introductory for MSt students)**

Prof Karen Margrethe Nielsen

Weeks 1-8 / Mondays / 11:00-13:00

Location: Schwarzman Centre (Ryle Room)

This seminar will consider Aristotle's discussion of voluntary action, deliberation and decision in the *Nicomachean Ethics* (*EN*) and *Eudemian Ethics* (*EE*). Why are human beings 'principles of action', and what does Aristotle mean when he defines virtue as a '*hexis prohairetikê*', or a decision-making state? We will consider the role that the notion of *prohairesis* (decision) plays in Aristotle's ethics and theory of action. Aristotle maintains that everything that we decide to do is voluntary, but not everything that is voluntary is caused by decision. What is voluntary action, according to Aristotle, and how do actions we decide to do differ from actions that are voluntary, but not caused by a decision? Does Aristotle offer a persuasive account of force (*bia*) and compulsion (*anankê*)? Can an act be compelled but nevertheless voluntary? Can an act be compelled but nevertheless caused by a deliberate decision? Are there noteworthy differences between the treatments of these topics in the *EN* and *EE*, and if so, what explains the differences?

The seminar is restricted to students in the MSt programme in Ancient Philosophy. DPhil students in the Faculty of Philosophy working on topics related to the seminar and BPhil students on the Ancient Philosophy track may request permission to attend.

## Medieval Philosophy

Prof Cecilia Trifogli (cecilia.trifogli@philosophy.ox.ac.uk)

Weeks 1-8 / Wednesdays / 09:00-11:00

Location: Schwarzman Centre (Ryle Room)

The medieval debate about universals is an ontological debate, a debate about what things there are. The central question is whether there are only individual things or also universal things, that is, things that are distinct from individuals but somehow related to them. For example, the controversial issue is whether the ontology also contains the "Universal Man", in addition to individual human beings, where the Universal man is understood as an extra-mental thing in some way common to all individual human beings.

These classes focus on two major contrasting views in the medieval debate: that of John Duns Scotus and that of William of Ockham. Scotus is a realist about universals; he maintains that there are universal things. On the contrary, Ockham argues against any realist view and maintains that the primary kind of universal items are concepts.

Provisional Programme:

**Week 1:** Introduction to the medieval debate about universals.

**Week 2:** Scotus on the existence and the ontological status of common natures.

**Week 3:** Ockham's critique of Scotus's view.

**Week 4:** Scotus on individuation.

**Week 5:** Ockham's rejection of realism about universals.

**Week 6:** Ockham's positive account of universals ('conceptualism').

**Week 7-8:** Presentations

### Texts

The texts on the problem of universals are available in English translation in: *Five Texts on the Mediaeval Problem of Universals*, transl. by Paul Vincent Spade, Hackett, Indianapolis 1994, 57-113 (Scotus), 114-231 (Ockham).

A selection of the most important passages from these texts with some comments is available on the Canvas page for these classes.

### Secondary Literature:

Scotus (1265-1308):

(1) R. Cross, 'Medieval Theories of Haecceity', in: *Stanford Encyclopedia of Philosophy*.

(2) S. Dumont, 'John Duns Scotus', in: *A Companion to Philosophy in the Middle Ages*, eds. J. Gracia & T. Noone, Oxford: Blackwell, 2003, 358-61.

(3) J. Hawthorne, 'Scotus on Universals', *Oxford Studies in Medieval Philosophy* 4 (2016).

(4) P. King, 'Duns Scotus on the Common Nature and the Individual Differentia', *Philosophical Topics* 20 (1992), 51-76.

(5) M. McCord Adams, *William Ockham*, Notre Dame, Indiana: University of Notre Dame Press, 1987, vol. I, 3-46.

(6) M. McCord Adams, 'Universals in the early fourteenth century', in: *The Cambridge History of Later Medieval Philosophy*, eds. N. Kretzmann et al., Cambridge: CUP, 1982, 411-39.

(7) T. Noone, 'Universals and Individuation', in: *The Cambridge Companion to Scotus*, ed. Thomas Williams, Cambridge: CUP, 2003, pp.100-28.

Ockham (1287-1347):

(1) C. Dutilh Novaes, 'The Ockham-Burley Dispute', in: *A Companion to Walter Burley*, ed. A. Conti, Leiden-Boston: Brill, 2013, 49-84.

(2) M. McCord Adams, *William Ockham*, vol. I, 3-141.

(3) M. McCord Adams, 'Universals in the early fourteenth century', in: *The Cambridge History of Later Medieval Philosophy*, 411-39.

(4) T. Noone, 'William of Ockham', in: *A Companion to Philosophy in the Middle Ages*, 697-706.

(5) P. Spade, 'Ockham's Nominalist Metaphysics: Some Main Themes', in: *The Cambridge Companion to Ockham*, ed. by P. Spade, Cambridge: CUP, 1999, 100-17.

Contemporary debate:

*The Problem of Universals in Contemporary Philosophy*, eds. G. Galluzzo and M. Loux, Cambridge: CUP, 2015. The essays by Loux, Lowe, Galluzzo contain references to Aristotelian/medieval views.

## **Nietzsche: Art, Perfectionism and Genealogy**

Prof Stephen Mulhall

Weeks 1-8 / Tuesdays / 09:00-11:00

Location: Schwarzman Centre (Ryle Room)

This class will examine Nietzsche's writings on themes in aesthetics and morality, as well as exploring the nature of the genealogical method that he develops over his lifetime. Three of his texts will be the primary focus of our discussions: two of his earliest writings – *The Birth of Tragedy* and the unpublished essay 'On Truth and Lying in an Extra-Moral Sense' – and perhaps the most famous of his later writings, *The Genealogy of Morality*. No previous familiarity with his thought will be presupposed.

We will begin with three sessions on *The Birth of Tragedy*, in which his views on religion, art and metaphysics develop from his attempt to account for the canonical status of Greek tragic drama in Western European culture. (So anyone unfamiliar with those tragic dramas should read 'Oedipus the King', ideally in the translation specified in the 'Background Reading'.) Each session will focus on a different phase in the historical narrative of birth, death and rebirth presented in this account, and attend to the ways in which the form and the content of that account are internally related. The fourth session will focus on the essay 'On Truth and Lying in an Extra-Moral Sense', and critically evaluate its notorious claims about the role of metaphor in the constitution of linguistic meaning. The final four sessions will be devoted to *The Genealogy of Morality*. The first two sessions will examine the debates over Nietzsche's naturalism, and consider the best way of interpreting the perfectionist stance on which his critique of (post-)religious moral values appears to depend. The final two will look at the genealogical method deployed in developing that critique, and its relevance to some contemporary debates in analytic philosophy.

One issue that will be addressed throughout the term is whether some of the most influential and sympathetic analytic interpretations of Nietzsche's work (in the writings of Clark and Leiter, for example) nonetheless exhibit significant blind spots. Another is the degree of continuity displayed in Nietzsche's work throughout his career, in terms of its subject-matter and its methods. A third is the philosophical significance of Nietzsche's style. A note on the recommended reading: beyond the specified sections of the primary texts, I will not be expecting participants in the class to have read every item on each week's list of readings. Some of them are there for you to follow up in your own time if certain issues central to that week's session hold your interest. Whenever anything in the secondary literature is either essential or strongly recommended for a given week's discussion, I will make that clear in the preceding week's class.

### Background Reading

Sophocles, 'Oedipus the King', in *The Three Theban Plays* (Fagles/Knox: Penguin)  
Ridley, Nietzsche on Art Ch 1

### **Week 1: Introduction**

Nietzsche, *The Birth of Tragedy* (Geuss/Spiers: Cambridge UP), Foreword and Sections 1-6  
Silk and Stern, Nietzsche on Tragedy – ch 4

### **Week 2**

BT, sections 7-15  
Silk and Stern, Nietzsche on Tragedy – chs 7, 8  
Nussbaum, 'The Transfigurations of Intoxication' (in Kemal, Gaskell and Conway (eds),  
Nietzsche, *Philosophy and the Arts*)  
Williams, 'Moral Luck' (in *Moral Luck*)

### **Week 3**

BT sections 16-25  
Scruton, *The Ring of Truth*, chs 3, 5, 7  
Kitcher and Schacht, *Finding an Ending*, chs 1, 5-8  
Mulhall, 'Orchestral Metaphysics' (in *The Self and Its Shadows*)

### **Week 4**

Nietzsche, 'On Truth and Lying in an Extra-Moral Sense' (in Cambridge ed. of BT)  
Clark, Nietzsche on Truth and Philosophy, chs 1-3 (esp. ch 3)  
Cavell, 'Aesthetic Problems of Modern Philosophy' (in *Must We Mean What We Say?*)

### **Week 5**

Nietzsche, *On the Genealogy of Morality*, Essay 1  
Leiter, Nietzsche on Morality 2nd Ed., chs 1, 3, Postscript  
Williams, 'Nietzsche's Minimalist Moral Psychology' (in *The Sense of the Past*)  
Pippin, Nietzsche, Psychology and First Philosophy chs 1, 4

## Week 6

Leiter, ch 6

Foot, Phillipa, 'Nietzsche: The Re-evaluation of Values' (in Leiter and Richardson (eds.) Nietzsche)

Conant, 'Nietzsche's Perfectionism' (in Schacht [ed], Nietzsche's Postmoralism)

## Week 7

GM, Essay 2

Leiter, chs 5, 7

M.Foucault, 'Nietzsche, Genealogy, History' (in Leiter and Richardson)

Mulhall, 'Introduction' to The Ascetic Ideal

## Week 8

GM, Essay 3

Leiter, ch 8

Srinivasan, 'Genealogy, Epistemology and World-Making' (PAS, CXIX (2), 2019)

Bernasconi, 'Will the Real Kant Please Stand Up' (Radical Philosophy 117, Jan/Feb 2003)

## Phenomenological Theories of Intentionality

Prof Joseph Schear

Weeks 1-8 / Thursdays / 14:00-16:00

Location: Christ Church (LR 2)

Our approach is historical, focused on some classical writings of Brentano, Husserl, and Heidegger. Brentano claimed famously that intentionality, the power of mind to be 'directed' at objects, or to be 'of' or 'about' objects, distinguishes the mental from the physical. Husserl and then Heidegger developed the notion of intentionality into a more wide-ranging and foundational phenomenological program. We will investigate key stages of this development to identify and assess the phenomenological contribution to our understanding of intentionality.

Provisional schedule (please use the translations listed below):

**Week 1:** Brentano, *Psychology from an Empirical Standpoint*, Book 2, chapter 1, 'The distinction between mental and physical phenomena', Routledge. Translated by A.C. Rancurello, D.B. Terrell, and L.L. McAlister.

**Week 2:** Husserl, *Logical Investigations*, Volume 2, Investigation V, 'Of Intentional Experience and their "Contents"', Routledge. Translated by J. N. Findlay

**Week 3:** Husserl, *Logical Investigations*, Volume 2, Investigation VI, 'Elements of a Phenomenological Elucidation of Knowledge', Routledge. Translated by J.N. Findlay

**Week 4:** Husserl, *Ideas for a Pure Phenomenology and Phenomenological Philosophy, First Book: General Introduction to Pure Phenomenology*, Hackett, translated by Daniel Dahlstrom (select sections)

- Week 5:** Heidegger, *History of the Concept of Time* §§4-13, Indiana U. Press, translated by Theodore Kisiel
- Week 6:** Heidegger, *The Basic Problems of Phenomenology*, Indiana U. Press, translated by Hofstadter. ch. 1 and §15 (of ch. 3)
- Week 7:** Heidegger, *Being and Time*, Harper, translated by Macquarrie & Robinson §§12-18
- Week 8:** Heidegger, *Being and Time*, Harper, translated by Macquarrie & Robinson, §§28-33

Recommended introductory reading on phenomenological theories of intentionality:

Charles Siewert, 'Consciousness and Intentionality', *Stanford Encyclopaedia of Philosophy*  
 Tim Crane, *Elements of Mind*, ch. 1  
 Walter Hopp, *Phenomenology: A Contemporary Introduction*, chs. 1-3  
 David Cerbone, *Understanding Phenomenology*, chs. 1-2

## Logic for Philosophy Graduate Students

Prof Alexander Paseau

Weeks 1-8 / Tuesdays / 11:00-13:00

Location: Schwarzman Centre (Ryle Room)

This course is intended to give graduate students in philosophy (BPhil, MSt, DPhil) greater familiarity with logical methods and rigorous proofs. Other students, postdocs, visiting researchers, etc. are welcome too. The treatment will be mathematical. Readings will be set from Propositional Logic, the lecturer's draft textbook to be published by MIT Press and available on Canvas. The first seminar will cover chapters 1 and 2 of that book: students should try to read those prior to the first seminar.

There should be something for everyone interested in logic in this course: those who have little logic will learn some core material and methods; those interested in teaching logic will consolidate their understanding; and logic specialists will also encounter some new material and gain a deeper understanding of core topics.

In more detail, we will cover the following topics. The provisional schedule is:

**Week 1:** Mathematical Prerequisites: Proofs, Set theory, Finite vs Countably Infinite vs Uncountable; Syntax and Semantics of Propositional Logic. Chapters 1–2 of Propositional Logic.

**Week 2:** Basic Facts about Propositional Logic; Duality; Expressive Adequacy. Chapters 3–5 of Propositional Logic and exercises for Chapters 1–2.

**Week 3:** Interpolation; The Compactness Theorem. Chapters 6–7 of Propositional Logic and exercises for Chapters 3–5.

**Week 4:** Proof Systems; Soundness and Completeness. Chapters 8–9 of Propositional Logic and exercises for Chapters 6–7.

**Week 5:** Lindenbaum-Tarski Algebras; Abstract Logic. Chapters 10–11 of Propositional Logic and exercises for Chapters 8–9.

**Week 6:** Modal Logic. Chapter 12 of Propositional Logic and exercises for Chapters 10–11.

**Week 7:** Intuitionistic Logic. Chapter 13 of Propositional Logic and exercises for Chapter 12.

**Week 8:** Infinitary Logic. Chapter 14 of Propositional Logic and exercises for Chapter 13.

## **Philosophy of Physics**

Prof Adam Caulton and Prof Christopher Timpson

Weeks 1-8 / Thursdays / 11:00-13:00

Location: Schwarzman Centre - Lecture Theatre L1 (10.300)

The overall topics this term will be philosophy of thermal physics in weeks 1-4, and advanced philosophy of quantum mechanics and quantum field theory in weeks 5-8.

A central theme of the first half of term will be the nature and origin of time asymmetry in thermal physics (thermodynamics and statistical mechanics). We will pay particular attention to the logical structure of classical (phenomenological) thermodynamics, before moving to competing interpretations of the foundations of statistical mechanics (Boltzmannian vs Gibbsian approaches), and competing conceptions of the nature of probabilities in statistical mechanics. If time allows we will discuss Maxwell's Demon and its (alleged) information-theoretic exorcism via Landauer's Principle.

In the second half of term, we will turn to quantum mechanics and quantum field theory. We will explore the role of decoherence in attempted solutions to the measurement problem, and the celebrated Deutsch-Wallace representation theorem in Everettian quantum mechanics. Then we will look at some foundational and conceptual problems specific to quantum field theory. We will end the term with a dive into the fraught matter of localisation for relativistic quantum particles.

The intended audience is 4th years reading Physics and Philosophy, MMathPhys students taking this paper as an option, MSt Physics and Philosophy students, and BPhil and DPhil students with an interest in philosophy of physics.

Useful preparatory reading for the first part of term is: David Albert *Time and Chance* (Harvard 2000) and Huw Price *Time's Arrow and Archimedes' Point* (OUP 1996). A reading list for the second part of term is on the Canvas site.

## **Moral Understanding**

Prof Alison Hills

Weeks 1-8 / Thursdays / 11:00-13:00

Location: Schwarzman Centre (Ryle Room)

This seminar will be based on my book manuscript, *Moral Understanding: its nature, role and value*. It will cover topics including understanding and knowledge, moral vision, moral motivation, virtue, right action, morally worthy action, moral testimony and disagreement (as below). I will introduce the topic each week, followed by a discussion. The main reading will be a chapter or two of my book. Reading the chapters each week is recommended but not essential

**Week 1** Explanatory understanding and knowledge.

1. Explanatory moral understanding
2. Grasping as knowing

**Week 2** Moral vision and moral mastery.

3. Grasping as seeing
4. Grasping as control

**Week 3** Full moral understanding, motivation and emotion.

5. Understanding the difference between right and wrong.
6. Is full moral understanding a single state?

**Week 4** Virtue, Action and Justification

7. Moral virtue
8. Action and justification.

**Week 5** Acting for moral reasons

9. Acting for moral reasons

**Week 6** Morally worthy action

10. Morally worthy action.

**Week 7** Moral testimony and moral disagreement

11. Moral testimony and moral advice
12. Can there be faultless moral disagreement?

**Week 8** Moral philosophy

13. Moral understanding and moral philosophy

**Advanced Political Philosophy**

Prof Cecile Fabre

Weeks 1-8 / Tuesdays / 11:00-13:00

Location: All Souls College (Wharton Room)

There are things, or places (monuments, certain kinds of buildings, artworks and cultural artefacts, etc.) which are central to our/other people's culture, which we value or indeed disvalue for that reason, and which we think are worth preserving, or on the contrary should be destroyed. In this class, we will address the following sets of questions: (1) What does it mean to value something, and which properties of cultural objects give us reasons to value or disvalue them? Are there cultural artefacts which have universal value? (2) What rights and duties, if any, do we have in respect of those things? Focusing on some of the normative issues raised by cultural objects will lead us to address some fundamental questions in political philosophy. For example, when we consider the question of whether cultural objects may be regarded as private property, we will have to think about justifications for property rights in general, as well as the ethics of markets in general. Moreover, there is relatively little work, in contemporary political philosophy, on the ethics of cultural heritage. Students will thus develop the skill of extracting relevant points and arguments from the readings.



## Introduction to Herculaneum Papyrology

Dr Michael McOsker

Weeks 1-8 / Mondays / 09:00-11:00

Location: Schwarzman Centre (Ryle Room)

In 79 CE, Mount Vesuvius erupted, burying both Pompeii and its less famous neighbour, Herculaneum. Just outside Herculaneum, along the road towards Naples, was a gigantic seaside villa—possibly the largest private residence known from Classical antiquity. In it was a library of philosophical texts, which were carbonized in the pyroclastic flow and buried underground. These circumstances paradoxically preserved them until they were rediscovered in 1752. The Herculaneum papyri are one of the most important sources for Hellenistic philosophy and for new Classical texts, but their precarious and fragmented state of conservation makes them difficult to edit and understand.

In this class, we will review the physical history of the papyri, from carbonization to dismemberment to contemporary attempts to reassemble them. The goal is to provide students with an advanced introduction to the innards of editions of these papyri. Students will become familiar with the 18th and 19th century sketches of the papyri (called ‘disegni’) that are a major source for lost parts of the text as well as the infrared photographs that are now the basic tool of contemporary Herculaneumists. Then we will proceed through a series of case studies of various texts, possibly including Epicurus, Chrysippus, Polystratus, and Philodemus, working through the sources for these texts—reading them and discussing editors’ choices—as well as their philosophical content. At the end of term, we will examine the most recently published texts recovered via x-ray tomography and a machine-learning algorithm from rolls that have never been physically unrolled (a book of Philodemus’ *On Vices* and a work, possibly on perception or music, by an unknown author, possibly Philodemus). Exact choice of case study will depend on student interest, and student presentations are encouraged (you learn by doing).

The class is addressed to anyone interested in the papyri, but knowledge of Ancient Greek is expected.

### Texts and Schedule

The instructor will provide editions and images for the texts chosen in consultation with the participants. Weeks 1 and 2 will be dedicated to background information about the papyri and their editions, possibly extending into Week 3; from Week 3 we will begin to read texts and examine their sources; Week 8 will be dedicated to the most recently published material.