

- Faculté des lettres et sciences humaines
- www.unine.ch/lettres

Séminaire I : Artifacts (2PH1313)

Filières concernées	Nombre d'heures	Validation	Crédits ECTS
Pilier principal B A - philosophie	Séminaire: 2 ph	Voir ci-dessous	4
Pilier secondaire B A - philosophie	Séminaire: 2 ph	Voir ci-dessous	4

ph=période hebdomadaire, pg=période globale, j=jour, dj=demi-jour, h=heure, min=minute

Période d'enseignement:

- Semestre Automne

Equipe enseignante

Kathrin Koslicki

Contenu

Metaphysics is the discipline which studies reality in the most general and all-encompassing way possible. As metaphysicians, we are interested in such concepts as existence, identity, change, parthood, essence, necessity, dependence, and the like. These concepts are not restricted to particular domains (e.g., mathematics, biology or music), but apply across the board. In this seminar, we will focus on the special features of artifacts which have presented philosophers with challenging questions since at least the time of Aristotle. Artifacts appear to be in some way dependent on the intentions of rational agents (e.g., their inventors, designers, or builders) who create them with a certain purpose in mind. Are artifacts nevertheless real, despite their apparent mind-dependence? How, if at all, does their ontological status differ from that of natural things? In this seminar, we will encounter different ways in which philosophers have grappled with the special features of artifacts and thereby gain a clearer understanding of what it takes for something to be a material object.

Forme de l'évaluation

The methods of assessment for this seminar are comprised of the following components:

- (1) Two short papers (50% of final grade, 25% each)
- (2) Short weekly comments (30% of final grade)
- (3) In-class presentations (10% of final grade)
- (4) Attendance and participation (10% of final grade)

(1) The two short papers should be approximately 4-5 pages long (~1000-1250 words). The first paper can be on any suitable topic relevant to the readings and materials discussed in class during the first half of the semester. The second paper can be on any suitable topic relevant to the readings and materials discussed in class during the second half of the semester. Guidelines and a detailed grading rubric with criteria of evaluation will be made available. Students will receive assistance in finding a suitable topic as well as feedback on a draft before handing in the final version of their papers. (2) The short weekly comments (max. 1 page) for each meeting should raise questions or objections concerning the readings discussed in the seminar during that week. Students are encouraged to bring up these questions or objections during class discussion. (3) Students will be asked to give an in-class presentation of approximately 15-20 minutes at least once, and possibly more than once, during the semester. The in-class presentation should ideally help students find a paper topic, although it is not required that the topic of the presentation will also become the topic of the paper. (4) Attendance and participation are expected and required. Students will receive high marks for participation, if they are successful at demonstrating their engagement with the material discussed in this seminar, e.g., by contributing to class discussions regularly and in a constructive way; by attending office hours or scheduling appointments; by communicating via email; etc. Work that is not submitted by the required deadline, without good cause, will not be accepted and will automatically result in a failing grade for that assessment.

Due Dates: The first short paper is due on November 15, 2020; the second short paper is due on January 15, 2021. Both papers will be returned to students with comments and a grade. If the grade is not satisfactory (below 4), students will have the opportunity to hand in a revised version of their papers by February 15, 2021.

Assessment criteria: level of preparedness; clarity of oral and written expression; specification of technical terms used; structure (e.g., plan, logical organization of ideas); ability to highlight key points; persuasiveness of arguments; originality and creativity of positions defended; speed of reflection during oral presentations.

Language of instruction: The language of instruction for this seminar will be English.

Documentation

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Baker, Lynne Rudder (2007): *The Metaphysics of Everyday Life: An Essay in Practical Realism*, Cambridge University Press, New York, NY

Bird, Alexander and Tobin, Emma (2018): "Natural Kinds", *The Stanford Encyclopedia of Philosophy* (Spring 2018 Edition), edited by Edward N. Zalta, <<https://plato.stanford.edu/archives/spr2018/entries/natural-kinds/>>, last accessed March 22, 2018

Elder, Crawford (2007): "On the Place of Artifacts in Ontology", in Margolis and Laurence (eds.), pp. 33-51

Evrine, Simon (2016a): *Making Objects and Events: A Hylomorphic Theory of Artifacts, Actions, and Organisms*, Oxford University Press, Oxford, UK

Franssen, Maarten, Kroes, Peter, Reydon, Thomas and Vermaas, Pieter (eds.) (2014): *Artefact Kinds: Ontology and the Human-Made World*, Springer, Dordrecht, The Netherlands

Katayama, Errol G. (1999): *Aristotle on Artifacts*, State University of New York Press, Albany, NY

Kornblith, Hilary (2007): "How to Refer to Artifacts", in Margolis and Laurence (eds.), pp. 138-149

Koslicki, Kathrin (2018): *Form, Matter, Substance*, Oxford University Press, Oxford, UK

Margolis, Eric, and Laurence, Stephen (eds.) (2007): *Creations of the Mind: Theories of Artifacts and Their Representation*, Oxford University Press, New York, NY

Preston, Beth (2018): "Artifact", *The Stanford Encyclopedia of Philosophy* (Summer 2019 Edition), edited by Edward N. Zalta, URL= <<https://plato.stanford.edu/archives/sum2019/entries/artifact/>>

Thomasson, Amie (2007b): "Artifacts and Human Concepts", in Margolis & Laurence (eds.), pp. 52-73

The readings for this course will be made available online.

Pré-requis

None.

Forme de l'enseignement

Seminar, 2 hours per week, Thursday, 14:00-16:00, Fall semester.

Objectifs d'apprentissage

Au terme de la formation l'étudiant-e doit être capable de :

- Discuss central texts on the metaphysics of artifacts
- Define key concepts and principles used in metaphysics in general and in the literature on artifacts more specifically, such as essence, definition, necessity, form, matter, and function.
- Identify the principal positions associated with prominent figures in the literature on artifacts.
- Work with other students to contribute to group projects.
- Formulate well-reasoned arguments orally and in writing for the acceptance or rejection of arguments and theories regarding the nature of artifacts.
- Describe the main influences and connections between the literature on artifacts and other areas of philosophy as well as connected disciplines, such as psychology, cognitive science, engineering, computer science, etc.
- Recognise how prominent figures in the literature on artifacts are influenced by, and have influenced, their predecessors or successors.
- Write well-organized and well-reasoned argumentative papers on a particular text, problem, or position on the metaphysics of artifacts.
- Examine how philosophers apply key concepts and principles to central problems regarding the metaphysics of artifacts.
- Analyse the principal historical and contemporary theories of artifacts.