

- Faculté des lettres et sciences humaines
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Séminaire II : Emergence (2PH2184)

Filières concernées	Nombre d'heures	Validation	Crédits ECTS
Pilier principal M A - philosophie	Séminaire: 2 ph	Voir ci-dessous	6
Pilier secondaire M A - philosophie	Séminaire: 2 ph	Voir ci-dessous	6

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

Is a flock of birds or a school of fish an emergent entity, whose movements are emergent features? What about a "glider" in Conway's "Game of Life"? Macroscopic entities, such as organisms or artifacts, which we encounter in ordinary life and in the special sciences, seem to exhibit features that are at once dependent on their physical underpinnings, while at the same time exhibiting a degree of causal autonomy. Consciousness and (libertarian) free will are perhaps among the best examples of such features that are sometimes referred to as "emergent". What is meant by "emergence" in such contexts? Might there be distinct varieties of emergence, e.g., "weak" and "strong emergence"? If so, how do we tell them apart and which (if any) of these varieties of emergence are actually instantiated? Is the acceptance of emergence compatible with physicalism? These fascinating and timely questions cut across many subdisciplines of philosophy, such as the philosophy of mind, metaphysics, and the philosophy of science; but they are of course also central to our more general and scientific understanding of the world. In this seminar, we will investigate these and other central questions relating to the phenomenon of emergence. In particular, we will engage in a close reading of Jessica Wilson's recent book, *Metaphysical Emergence* (Oxford University Press, 2021), culminating with a live discussion with the book's author, in which Prof. Wilson will join our seminar online to respond to the questions and comments we have accumulated over the course of the semester.

Forme de l'évaluation

Internal methods of assessment:

- (1) A paper (60% of internal evaluation grade)
- (2) In-class presentation (20% of internal evaluation grade)
- (3) Attendance, participation, discussion forum (20% of internal evaluation grade)

(1) The paper should be approximately 12 pages long (~3000 words). 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) Students will be asked to give an in-class presentation of approximately 15-20 minutes at some point during the semester. The in-class presentation should ideally help students find and develop a paper topic, although it is not required that the topic of the presentation will also become the topic of the paper. (3) Attendance and participation, in class and on the discussion forum, 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 and the discussion forum regularly and in a constructive way. 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.

External methods of assessment: MA students in Philosophy are required to take a 30-minute oral examination on the material covered in this seminar. The internal and external evaluation grade each count for 50% of the final grade for this seminar.

Due Dates: Papers are due on Tuesday, December 20, 2022, and will be returned to students with comments and a grade. Students who have handed in a first attempt of their paper and received a grade that is not satisfactory (below 4), will have the opportunity to hand in a revised version of their paper as a second attempt by January 31, 2023.

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 French and English.

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Documentation

Brian P. McLaughlin (1992), "The Rise and Fall of British Emergentism", in: Ansgar Beckerman, Hans Flohr, and Jaegwon Kim (eds.), *Emergence or Reduction? Essays on the Prospects of Non-reductive Physicalism*, De Gruyter, Berlin, pp. 49–93.

Timothy O'Connor (2020), "Emergent Properties", *The Stanford Encyclopedia of Philosophy* (Winter 2021 Edition), Edward N. Zalta (ed.), URL = <https://plato.stanford.edu/archives/win2021/entries/properties-emergent/>.

Jessica M. Wilson (2021), *Metaphysical Emergence*, Oxford University Press, Oxford, UK.

Pré-requis

None.

Forme de l'enseignement

Seminar, 2 hours per week, Tuesdays, 14:00-16:00.

Objectifs d'apprentissage

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

- Identify the principal positions associated with prominent figures in philosophical debates concerning emergence.
- Describe the main influences and connections between philosophical debates concerning emergence and other areas of philosophy as well as connected disciplines, such as cognitive science, psychology, linguistics, etc.
- Define key concepts and principles used in philosophical debates concerning emergence.
- Examine how philosophers apply key concepts and principles to central problems in philosophical debates concerning emergence.
- Recognise how prominent figures in philosophical debates concerning emergence are influenced by, and have influenced, their predecessors or successors.

Compétences transférables

- Work with other students to contribute to group projects.
- Discuss central texts in the philosophical debate concerning emergence.
- Formulate well-reasoned arguments orally and in writing for or against positions that are advanced in philosophical debates concerning emergence.