

- Faculté des lettres et sciences humaines
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Séminaire II : Social Ontology (2PH2192)

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 Printemps

Equipe enseignante

Kathrin Koslicki

Contenu

Social ontology is the philosophical study of the nature and characteristics of the social world. In this seminar, we will take a look at prominent topics and debates within social ontology, among them the following: What is the distinction between the social and the non-social? What are the building blocks of social reality? Does the creation of institutional social reality require collective intentionality? What determines an individual's membership in a social kind or category? What does it mean for a kind or category to be "socially constructed"? What kinds of entities are social groups? How do artifacts and artworks fit into the social world? And what distinguishes the philosophical study of social reality from the social sciences?

Forme de l'évaluation

Internal methods of assessment for MA students who are taking the seminar for 6 credits:

- (1) A paper (60% of internal evaluation grade); approximately 12 pages long (~3000 words).
- (2) In-class presentation (20% of internal evaluation grade); approximately 30 minutes plus discussion.
- (3) Attendance, participation, discussion forum (20% of internal evaluation grade)

External methods of assessment for MA students who are taking the seminar for 6 credits:

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, May 28, 2024, and will be returned to students with comments and a grade.

Methods of assessment for advanced BA in Philosophy students who are taking the seminar for 3 credits:

- (1) One longer paper (~2500 words) or two shorter papers (~1250 words) (60% of final grade, 30% for each of the two shorter papers)
- (2) In-class presentations (~20 minutes plus discussion) (20% of final grade)
- (3) Attendance, participation, discussion forum (20% of final grade)

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.

Due dates: the two shorter papers are due on April 9, 2024, and May 28, 2024. The longer paper is due on May 28, 2024.

Guidelines for papers 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.

Students will be asked to give an in-class presentation 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.

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.

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

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of reflection during oral presentations.

Language of instruction: The language of instruction for this seminar will be English and/or French, depending on the linguistic needs and competence of the students enrolled in the seminar.

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.

Modalités de rattrapage

Students who have handed in a first attempt of their paper(s) and received a grade that is not satisfactory (below 4), will have the opportunity to hand in a revised version(s) of their paper(s) as a second attempt by June 30, 2024.

Documentation

George Dickie, "Defining Art", *American Philosophical Quarterly*, Jul., 1969, Vol. 6, No. 3 (Jul., 1969), pp. 253-256

Fine, Kit (1982), "Acts, Events and Things", *Proceedings of the 6th International Wittgenstein Symposium ("Language and Ontology")*, Hölder-Pichler-Tempsky, Vienna, pp. 97–105

Fine, Kit (1999): "Things and Their Parts", *Midwest Studies in Philosophy*, Vol. 23, No. 1, pp. 61–74. DOI: <https://doi.org/10.1111/1475-4975.00004>

Fine, Kit (2010): "Towards a Theory of Part", *Journal of Philosophy*, Vol. 107, No. 11, pp. 559–589, DOI: <https://doi.org/10.5840/jphil20101071139>

Fine, Kit (2020): "The Identity of Social Groups", *Metaphysics*, Vol. 3, No. 1, pp. 81–91, DOI: <https://doi.org/10.5334/met.45>

Aaron Griffith, "Social Construction", forthcoming in: *Routledge Handbook of Essence in Philosophy*, edited by Kathrin Koslicki & Michael J. Raven, Routledge

Godman, Marion (2018): "Scientific Realism with Historical Essences: The Case of Species", *Synthese*, published online 17 December 2018, URL= <<https://doi.org/10.1007/s11229-018-02034-3>>

Harold Kincaid, "Assessing Functional Explanations in the Social Sciences", *PSA: Proceedings of the Biennial Meeting of the Philosophy of Science Association*, 1990, Vol. 1990, Volume One: Contributed Papers (1990), pp. 341-354

Koslicki, Kathrin (2008): *The Structure of Objects*, Oxford University Press, Oxford, UK

Ron Mallon, "Race", forthcoming in: *Routledge Handbook of Essence in Philosophy*, edited by Kathrin Koslicki & Michael J. Raven, Routledge

Asya Passinsky, "Artifacts, Artworks, and Social Objects", forthcoming in: *Routledge Handbook of Essence in Philosophy*, edited by Kathrin Koslicki & Michael J. Raven, Routledge

Ritchie, Katherine (2013): "What Are Groups?", *Philosophical Studies*, Vol. 166, No. 2, pp. 257–272, DOI: <https://doi.org/10.1007/s11098-012-0030-5>

Ritchie, Katherine (2015): "The Metaphysics of Social Groups", *Philosophy Compass*, Vol. 10, No. 5, pp. 310–321, DOI: <https://doi.org/10.1111/phc3.12213>

Ritchie, Katherine (2018): "Social Creationism and Social Groups", in: Kendy Hess, Violetta Igneski & Tracy Lynn Isaacs (eds.), *Collectivity: Ontology, Ethics, and Social Justice*, Rowman & Littlefield International. London, UK, pp. 13-34

Ritchie, Katherine (2020), "Social Structures and the Ontology of Social Groups", *Philosophy and Phenomenological Research*, Vol. 100, No. 2, pp. 402–424, DOI: <https://doi.org/10.1111/phpr.12555>

Esther Rosario, "Sex and Gender", forthcoming in: *Routledge Handbook of Essence in Philosophy*, edited by Kathrin Koslicki & Michael J. Raven, Routledge

John Searle (1995), *The Construction of Social Reality*, The Free Press, New York, Chapters 1-2

Barry Smith & John Searle, "The Construction of Social Reality, An Exchange", *American Journal of Economics and Sociology*, Vol. 62, No. 1 (January, 2003), pp. 285-309

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- Faculté des lettres et sciences humaines
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Séminaire II : Social Ontology (2PH2192)

Natalie Stoljar, "Social Justice", forthcoming in: Routledge Handbook of Essence in Philosophy, edited by Kathrin Koslicki & Michael J. Raven, Routledge

All readings and other materials will be made available on the seminar's Moodle page.

Pré-requis

BA in philosophy or equivalent.

Forme de l'enseignement

Seminar, 2 hours, Tuesday, 10:00-12:00, Spring semester.

Objectifs d'apprentissage

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

- Define key concepts and principles used in social ontology.
- Identify the principal positions associated with prominent figures in philosophical debates in social ontology.
- Describe the main influences and connections between philosophical debates concerning social ontology and other areas of philosophy as well as connected disciplines, such as sociology, political science, cognitive science, psychology, linguistics, etc.
- Examine how philosophers apply key concepts and principles to central problems in philosophical debates concerning social ontology.
- Recognise how prominent figures in philosophical debates concerning social ontology 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 social ontology.
- Formulate well-reasoned arguments orally and in writing for or against positions that are advanced in philosophical debates concerning social ontology.