

SEMINAR ON APPROACHES TO SCIENCE AND THE SELF

COURSE NO.: PHIL 890-03

UNITS: 3

FIRST OFFERING (SEMESTER): FALL 2010

PRELIMINARY ANNOUNCEMENT OF TENTATIVE SYLLABUS

DESCRIPTION:

This seminar engages current and recent approaches to the Self, that take very different forms in different areas: philosophy of perception, cognitive science, and philosophy of logic and language. The focus will be on the question of how first-person perspectives relate to scientific representation.

OUTLINE OF COURSE CONTENT:

With its recent emphasis on practice and modeling, philosophy of science has come in significant contact, on certain issues, with research in, on one side, cognitive science, and on another side, philosophy of logic and language. How users of scientific theories and models locate themselves with respect to scientific representations of their situation, in general, bears a formal parallel to how perception is necessarily situated, with its content involving a vantage point and perspective as well as a target. At the same time, perception is not passive, and the activity involved in conscious perception displays a parallel to forms of scientific experimental inquiry. This seminar will inquire into the effect of such studies on traditional philosophical problems concerning the Self..

Topics:

Models in scientific practice and their use for representation of cognition and consciousness, embodied cognition and the theory of enaction, the logic of self-location, the essential indexical, physicalism and the concept of supervenience, experimental methods in the sciences, scientific representation of phenomena, identification of experimental targets, instrumentation and classification of instrumental roles, assessment of models in terms of predictive power and accuracy as well as heuristic value.

Required Text:

1. Chemero, Anthony *Radical Embodied Cognitive Science*. MIT Press, 2009.
2. Cassam, Q. (ed). 1994. *Self-Knowledge*. Oxford: Oxford University Press.

Required reading includes selections from:

3. Bergoffen, D. B. 1978. Sartre's transcendence of the ego: A methodological reading. *Philosophy Today* 22: 224-51.
4. Cassam, Q. 1997. *Self and World*. Oxford: Clarendon Press.
5. Cassam, Q. 1995. Introspection and bodily self-ascription. In J. Bermúdez, A. J. Marcel, and N. Eilan (eds.), *The Body and the Self* (pp. 311-36). Cambridge: MIT Press.

6. Castañeda, H.-N. 1966. "'He': A Study in the Logic of Self-Consciousness." *Ratio* 8: 130-157.
7. Gennaro, R. J. 2002. Jean-Paul Sartre and the hot theory of consciousness *Canadian Journal of Philosophy* 32(3): 293-330.
8. Georgalis, Nicholas *The Primacy of the Subjective: Foundations for a Unified Theory of Mind and Language*. MIT Press, 2005.
9. Ismael, Jenann *The Situated Self*. Oxford University Press, 2007.
10. Peschard, Isabelle "Heat, temperature and mental concepts: A critique of a standard reductionist confusion", (with M. Bitbol), pp. 155-174 in E. Wright (ed.) *The Case for Qualia*, MIT Press, 2008.
11. van Fraassen, Bas C. "Transcendence of the Ego: *The Non-Existent Knight*", *Ratio* (new series) XVII (2004), 453-477.

EVALUATION:

There will be a strong emphasis on class participation, which includes both presentations and preparation for in-seminar discussion (35%). There will be a paper due in the 5th seminar session (30%) and a final paper (draft due in the 12th seminar session, 10%; revised final version 25%).