

Philosophy 550: First Year Seminar

Princeton University
Fall 2020
Mondays 10-12 a.m.

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Overview. The seminar is divided into two parts, the first of which will last for the first four meetings of the semester, the second of which will last for the final eight. In the first part, we'll look at a handful of seminal works (in metaethics, epistemology, metaphysics, and the philosophy of language) from the second half of the 20th century that have proven to be of lasting significance for the subsequent development of philosophy in the broadly analytic tradition. These include J.L. Mackie's challenge to the objectivity of ethics (via arguments from disagreement and "queerness") and his error-theoretic account of moral discourse; Nelson Goodman's introduction of the method of reflective equilibrium, the new riddle of induction, and 'grue'; Edmund Gettier's decisive refutation of 'the traditional analysis of knowledge'; and Saul Kripke's stunning reversals of philosophical orthodoxies about the nature of necessity, the mechanisms of reference, and a number of related topics. It's understood that some participants in the seminar might be very familiar with these texts while other participants might be completely unfamiliar with them, but we'll approach them in a way that's calculated to provide a worthwhile intellectual experience for everyone, regardless of their level of prior familiarity.

In the second part of the seminar, we'll read a number of *very* recent papers. (Seven of the eight have appeared since 2019, or are yet to appear.) The organizing theme for this part of the seminar will be *norms*, but this will be understood broadly enough so as to cover cutting edge work in the philosophy of law (Moss), the theory of moral responsibility (Sliwa), political philosophy (Enoch), the philosophy of action (Marusic), epistemology (Kelly), metaphysics (Dasgupta), and on the nature of lying (Holguín) and hypocrisy (Dover).

Some mechanics: Each week every student should do the assigned reading and write a *short* (2-3 double-spaced pages; no more than 750 words) paper focused on some aspect of the reading. Please e-mail your papers to me at the above address no later than 24 hours in advance of that week's meeting (i.e., by 10 a.m. on the preceding Sunday). There is one book that you should purchase for the seminar if you don't already own it: Saul Kripke's *Naming and Necessity*. All other readings will be available from the Course Blackboard site under "Course Materials," so you should definitely make sure that you officially register for the course so that you'll have access to those.

Schedule (subject to change at the discretion of the instructor)

Part 1

1. The Status of Ethics (9/7)

- Mackie, "The Subjectivity of Values." Chapter 1 of his *Ethics: Inventing Right and Wrong* (1977).

2. Knowledge, Induction, and Naturalness (9/14)

- Gettier, "Is Justified True Belief Knowledge?" *Analysis* (1963).
- Goodman, "The New Riddle of Induction." In his *Fact, Fiction, and Forecast* (1955).

3. Necessity, Reference, etc. (9/21)

- Kripke, *Naming and Necessity* (1970/1980), Lecture I.

4. Necessity, Reference, etc. (continued) (9/28)

- Kripke, *Naming and Necessity*, Lecture II and Lecture III, up to p.144.

Part 2

5. Bias (10/5).

- Thomas Kelly, "Bias and Norms" (manuscript).

10/12 No Class, Fall Break

6. Proof (10/19).

- Sarah Moss, "Knowledge and Legal Proof." Forthcoming in the 2021 volume of *Oxford Studies in Epistemology*, winner of the 2019 Sanders Prize.

7. Consent (10/26).

- David Enoch, "False Consciousness for Liberals, Part I: Consent, Autonomy, and Adaptive Preferences." *Philosophical Review* (2020).

8. Excuses (11/2).

- Paulina Sliwa, "The Power of Excuses." *Philosophy and Public Affairs* (2019).

9. Hypocrisy (11/9).

- Daniela Dover, "The Walk and the Talk" *Philosophical Review* (2019).

10. Promises, Resolutions, and Intentions (11/16).

- Berislav Marusic, "Promising and Resolving Against the Evidence." Chapter 1 of his *Evidence and Agency: Norms for Promising and Resolving* (2015).

11. Realism (11/23)

- Shamik Dasgupta, "Realism and the Absence of Value," *Philosophical Review* (2019).

12. Lies (TBA)

- Ben Holguín, "Lying and Knowing," *Synthese* (2019).