

- Faculté des lettres et sciences humaines
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## Seminary II : Philosophy of Science (2PH2165)

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

Since the 1970s, following the work of Saul Kripke, Hilary Putnam, Tyler Burge and others, natural kind essentialism has been a popular, though controversial, doctrine among philosophers of language, philosophers of science and metaphysicians. According to this approach, the essence of a physical, chemical or biological kind (e.g., electron, water, tiger), and the meaning of a natural kind term denoting it, can be discovered through empirical means by grasping its underlying mind-independent micro-structure (e.g., that quantities of water are composed of H<sub>2</sub>O-molecules). But does natural kind essentialism in fact provide a plausible approach to physical, biological, or chemical kinds? And can this framework be extended to social or human kinds, such as gender, race, emotions, mental disorders, money, or marriage? In this seminar, we will investigate philosophical issues surrounding the distinction between natural and social kinds, including realism vs. anti-realism, essentialism vs. anti-essentialism, as well as the role played by natural kinds in scientific practices such as classification, individuation, and explanation.

### Forme de l'évaluation

Internal methods of assessment:

- (1) A paper (50% of internal evaluation grade)
- (2) Short weekly comments (30% of internal evaluation grade)
- (3) In-class presentations (10% of internal evaluation grade)
- (4) Attendance and participation (10% 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) 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.

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 January 15, 2021 and 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 paper 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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## Seminary II : Philosophy of Science (2PH2165)

Ásta (2018): *Categories We Live By: The Construction of Sex, Gender, Race, and Other Social Categories* (Studies in Feminist Philosophy), Oxford University Press, Oxford, UK

Bach, Theodore (2012): "Gender is a Natural Kind with a Historical Essence", *Ethics*, Vol. 122, No. 2, pp. 231-272

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

Boyd, Richard (1999): "Kinds as the 'Workmanship of Men': Realism, Constructivism, and Natural Kinds", in: *Rationality, Realism, Revision: Proceedings of the 3rd International Congress of the Society for Analytic Philosophy*, ed. By J. Nida-Rümelin, de Gruyter, Berlin, Germany, pp. 52-89

Brigandt, Ingo (2009): "Natural Kinds in Evolution and Systematics: Metaphysical and Epistemological Considerations", *Acta Biotheoretica*, Vol. 57, pp. 77-97

Burge, Tyler (1979): "Individualism and the Mental", *Midwest Studies in Philosophy*, Vol. 4, No. 1, pp. 73-122

Dupré, John (1993): *The Disorder of Things: Metaphysical Foundations of the Disunity of Science*, Harvard University Press, Cambridge, MA

Ellis, Brian D. (2001): *Scientific Essentialism*, Cambridge University Press, Cambridge, UK

Ereshefsky, Marc (2001): *The Poverty of the Linnaean Hierarchy: A Philosophical Study of Biological Taxonomy*, Cambridge University Press, Cambridge, UK

Hacking, Ian (2007): "Natural Kinds: Rosy Dawn, Scholastic Twilight", *Royal Institute of Philosophy Supplement*, Vol. 61, pp. 203-239

Haslanger, Sally (2012): *Resisting Reality: Social Construction and Social Critique*, Oxford University Press, Oxford, UK

Khalidi, Muhammad (2013): *Natural Categories and Human Kinds: Classification in the Natural and Social Sciences*, Cambridge University Press, Cambridge, UK

Kripke, Saul (1971): "Identity and Necessity", in: *Identity and Individuation*, edited by Milton Karl Munitz, New York University Press, New York, NY, pp. 135-164

Kripke, Saul (1980): *Naming and Necessity*, Harvard University Press, Cambridge, MA, originally published in: *Semantics of Natural Language*, ed. by Donald Davidson and Gilbert Harman, D. Reidel Publishing Co., Dordrecht, Netherlands, 1972, pp.253-355 & pp. 763-769

Ladyman, James, and Ross, Dan (2007): *Everything Must Go: Metaphysics Naturalized*, with David Spurrett and John Collier, Oxford University Press, New York, NY

Mallon, Ron (2006): "'Race': Normative, Not Metaphysical or Semantic", *Ethics*, Vol. 116, pp. 525-551

Putnam, Hilary (1975): "The Meaning of 'Meaning'", *Minnesota Studies in the Philosophy of Science*, Vol. 7, pp. 131-193

Salmon, Nathan (1981): *Reference and Essence*, Princeton University Press, Princeton, NJ

Waters, C. Kenneth (2017): "No General Structure" in: *Metaphysics in Philosophy of Science*, edited by M. Slater and Z. Yudell, Oxford University Press, Oxford, UK, pp. 81-107

The readings for this course will be made available online.

### Pré-requis

None.

### Forme de l'enseignement

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

### Objectifs d'apprentissage

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

- Examine how philosophers apply key concepts and principles to central problems concerning natural and social kinds.

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### **Seminary II : Philosophy of Science (2PH2165)**

- Identify the principal positions associated with prominent figures in the literature on natural and social kinds.
- Define key concepts used in the philosophy of science in general and in the literature on natural and social kinds in particular.
- Describe the main influences and connections between the literature on natural and social kinds and other areas of philosophy as well as connected disciplines, such as psychology, sociology, political science, economics, etc.
- Discuss central texts concerning the distinction between natural and social kinds.
- Formulate well-reasoned arguments orally and in writing for the acceptance or rejection of arguments and theories concerning natural and social kinds.
- Analyse the principal historical and contemporary theories concerning natural and social kinds.
- Recognise how prominent figures in the literature on natural and social kinds 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 advanced in the literature on natural and social kinds.
- Work with other students to contribute to group projects.