

PHIL-GA 3003-002, Spring 2016

PSYCHOLOGY OF PHILOSOPHY STRUCTURE

Time & Place Second floor seminar room, Philosophy Building (5 Washington Place)
Monday 11 AM to 1 PM

Texts Readings will be posted at www.nyu.edu/classes/strevens/PsychPhil16.
A user name and password are required (to be announced in class).

Content What is going through the heads of philosophers doing a priori philosophy? Focusing on the classic case of philosophical analysis (aka the method of cases, "conceptual analysis", and so on), we will bring empirical psychology, and in particular the psychology of concepts, to bear on answering the question. Naturally, we will give special attention to the epistemology of it all: does empirical psychology debunk philosophical claims to a priori knowledge? I am especially interested in the contrary possibility, that such claims can be *defended* by recourse to empirical psychology (and a few other things). Note that this is not a class about experimental philosophy as such, but we will be reading work from experimental philosophers that bears on the big epistemological issue.

Evaluation Your grade is based on two papers (50% each).

- The first paper should be 10 to 12 pages long. The second paper may be another essay of the same length on a different topic, or a 20 to 24 page extension and rewrite of the first. If you pursue this latter option, then, you will submit a 12 page paper and then a 24 page paper that is based on (and may incorporate all of) the shorter paper.
- The first paper is due on March 28th. The second paper is due on the last day of classes, which is May 9th.
- In the event of your taking an incomplete, all coursework must be submitted before the first day of classes of the fall semester 2016, or you will receive a failing grade. No extensions: this is a fixed deadline.

Contact strevens@nyu.edu

Office hours by appointment

Michael Strevens ■ Room 603

PSYCHOLOGY OF PHILOSOPHY READINGS

Jan 25 Introduction

- ▷ Strevens, M., *Philosophical Knowledge*, chapter 1
- ▷ Machery, E., *Philosophy Within Its Proper Bounds*, introduction and chapter 1

Concepts and Conceptual Analysis

Feb 1 Traditional Conceptual Analysis

- ▷ Strevens, M., *Philosophical Knowledge*, §§2.1, 2.2, 2.3
- ▷ Williamson, T., *The Philosophy of Philosophy*, §§4.1, 4.2, 4.3
- ▷ Optional: Fodor, J. A., M. F. Garrett, E. C. T. Walker, and C. H. Parkes, "Against definitions"

Feb 8 Concepts and Intuitions; Theories of Concepts

- ▷ Strevens, M., *Philosophical Knowledge*, chapter 3
- ▷ De Cruz, H., "Where do intuitions come from?"
- ▷ Smith, E. E., "Concepts and categorization", 3-19
- ▷ Keil, F. C., *Concepts, Kinds and Conceptual Development*, pp. 183-194, 307-309
- ▷ Strevens, M., *Philosophical Knowledge*, chapter 4
- ▷ Optional: Strevens, M., "The essentialist aspect of naive theories"

Feb 15 President's Day - no class

Feb 22 Conceptual Inductivism

- ▷ Strevens, M., *Philosophical Knowledge*, chapter 5, §§7.1 to 7.3, 7.5

Feb 29 Conceptual Analysis Renewed

- ▷ Jackson, F., *From Metaphysics to Ethics: A Defence of Conceptual Analysis*, chapter 2
- ▷ Chalmers, D. J., *Constructing the World*, chapter 1 and §4.3
- ▷ Optional: Strevens, M., *Philosophical Knowledge*, §§2.4, 2.5, 2.6

The Failures of Philosophical Analysis

Mar 7 Unreliability of Case Judgments

- ▷ Machery, E., *Philosophy Within Its Proper Bounds*, chapter 2, chapter 3 pp. 34–60
- ▷ Strevens, M., *Philosophical Knowledge*, §9.1

Mar 14 Spring Break – no class

Mar 21 Unreliability of Case Judgments continued

- ▷ Optional: Strevens, M., *Philosophical Knowledge*, §§9.4, 9.5, 9.6
- ▷ Optional: Wright, J. C., “On intuitional stability: The clear, the strong, and the paradigmatic”

Mar 28 Hybrid Theories of Concepts

- ▷ Knobe, J., S. Prasada, and G. E. Newman, “Dual character concepts and the normative dimension of conceptual representation”

Apr 4 Opaque Conceptual Structure

- ▷ Johnston, M. and S.-J. Leslie, “Concepts, analysis, generics and the Canberra Plan”

Apr 11 No Essential Natures?

- ▷ Strevens, M., *Philosophical Knowledge*, §§9.2, 9.3, 9.7

The Vindication of Philosophical Analysis

Apr 18 Reflexive Reference

- ▷ Strevens, M., *Philosophical Knowledge*, §7.4, chapter 8
- ▷ Optional: Weatherson, B., “What good are counterexamples?”

Apr 25 Substance

- ▷ Machery, E., *Philosophy Within Its Proper Bounds*, §4.2 (“Parochialism”)
- ▷ Strevens, M., *Philosophical Knowledge*, chapter 10

May 2 Case Certainty

- ▷ Williamson, T., *The Philosophy of Philosophy*, 163–169
- ▷ Strevens, M., *Philosophical Knowledge*, chapter 11

May 9 The vindication of philosophical analysis, continued; wrapping up

Papers are due on March 28th and May 9th.

PSYCHOLOGY OF PHILOSOPHY REFERENCES

- Chalmers, D. J. (2012). *Constructing the World*. Oxford University Press, Oxford.
- De Cruz, H. (2015). Where do intuitions come from? *Australasian Journal of Philosophy* 93:233–249.
- Fodor, J. A., M. F. Garrett, E. C. T. Walker, and C. H. Parkes. (1980). Against definitions. *Cognition* 8:1–105.
- Jackson, F. (1998). *From Metaphysics to Ethics: A Defence of Conceptual Analysis*. Oxford University Press, Oxford.
- Johnston, M. and S.-J. Leslie. (2012). Concepts, analysis, generics and the Canberra Plan. *Philosophical Perspectives* 26:113–171.
- Keil, F. C. (1989). *Concepts, Kinds and Conceptual Development*. MIT Press, Cambridge, MA.
- Knobe, J., S. Prasada, and G. E. Newman. (2013). Dual character concepts and the normative dimension of conceptual representation. *Cognition* 127:242–257.
- Machery, E. (manuscript). *Philosophy Within Its Proper Bounds*.
- Smith, E. E. (1995). Concepts and categorization. In E. E. Smith and D. N. Osherson (eds.), *An Invitation to Cognitive Science: Thinking*, pp. 3–33. MIT Press, Cambridge, MA.
- Stevens, M. (2000). The essentialist aspect of naive theories. *Cognition* 74:149–175.
- . (manuscript). *Philosophical Knowledge*.
- Weatherston, B. (2003). What good are counterexamples? *Philosophical Studies* 115:1–31.
- Williamson, T. (2007). *The Philosophy of Philosophy*. Oxford University Press, Oxford.
- Wright, J. C. (2010). On intuitional stability: The clear, the strong, and the paradigmatic. *Cognition* 115:491–503.