Philosophy 868: Topics in Philosophy of Language
Spring 2021

Last updated 1 February 2021

Time: T 3:00–4:45 PM
Instructor: Ben Caplan (he/him/his)
Office hours: T Th 12:15–1:00 PM, or by appointment
Email: caplan@ku.edu

Zoom meeting rooms

Information on Zoom meeting rooms for seminar meetings and office hours is on Blackboard (under Announcements). This information will also be emailed to you.

Description

This seminar will be on the work of E. E. Constance Jones (1848–1922), particularly her monograph *A New Law of Thought and Its Logical Bearings* (1911).

We will focus on three topics:

(*i*)   Jones's distinction between *denotation* (or *extension*) and *intension*;

(*ii*)   her analysis of *categorical propositions* (i.e. sentences of the form *S is P* and *S is not P*) as asserting "identity of denotation in diversity of intension" (e.g. p. 47); and

(*iii*) her view that every object of thought has some kind of existence and that, in particular, round-squares have a kind of existence "in the universe (or region) of hypothesis or supposition" (p. 61).

We will read *A New Law of Thought* in the context both of other work by Jones and of work by others, including Gottlob Frege (1848–1925), W. Stanley Jevons (1835–1882), John Neville Keynes (1852–1949), Christine Ladd Franklin (1847–1930), Alexius Meinong (1853–1920), Bertrand Russell (1872–1970), G. F. Stout (1860–1944), and Kasimir (or Kazimierz) Twardowski (1866–1938).

Requirements

Short writing assignment   10%
Two short papers   40% (20% each)
Final paper   50%

The short writing assignment should be one or two paragraphs long, certainly less than a page. Each of the two short papers should be 1 or 2 pages long. The final paper should be about 10 pages long.

The due dates for the short writing assignment and the short papers will be announced at least one week in advance. The final paper will be due at the end of finals week, on **Friday, 14 May 2021**.

Topics for the short writing assignment and the short papers will be assigned. Topics for the final paper will not be assigned; you will need to come up with your own topic. You are required to get the topic for your final paper approved by me, and you are encouraged to consult with me in coming up with your own topic.

You are required to discuss your short papers and final paper with me before submitting them.

Your final paper will count for 100% of your final grade if your grade on the final paper is higher than your grade on the short writing assignment and the short papers.

Readings

Readings are, or will be, available on Blackboard. We will often read and discuss small amounts of text in seminar meetings. This will make more sense if you have the relevant text in front of you.

Grading

Numerical grades will be converted to letter grades using the following scheme.[1]

From	To	Letter grade
93.50	100.00	A
90.00	93.49	A–
86.50	89.99	B+
83.50	86.49	B
80.00	83.49	B–
76.50	79.99	C+
73.50	76.49	C
70.00	73.49	C–
66.50	69.99	D+
63.50	66.49	D
60.00	63.49	D–
00.00	59.99	F

I won't be using Blackboard to calculate your final grade; rather, I'll be using my own spreadsheet. If you're curious about your grade at any point, please email me.

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[1] See Ben Eggleston, "Plus/Minus Grading," available at benegg.net/plus-minus_grading.pdf.

Academic misconduct

The university policy on academic misconduct is set out in Article II, Section 6 of the University Senate Rules and Regulations. Examples of academic misconduct include (but are not limited to) "giving or receiving of unauthorized aid on … assignments," "knowingly misrepresenting the source of any academic work," and "plagiarizing another's work." Penalties for academic misconduct include receiving a failing grade for the course, being suspended from the university, and being expelled. For further details, see https://policy.ku.edu/governance/USRR #art2sect6.

Accessibility

I'm committed to making this seminar as accessible as possible. If you have any particular accommodation requests, please let me know as soon as possible.

If you anticipate or encounter any technical problems with taking this seminar remotely, please let me know as soon as possible.

Schedule

The precise schedule will depend on the pace at which we work through the material. Information about what we're doing in any given week will be available on Blackboard.

The first seminar meeting is Tuesday, 2 February 2021. The last seminar meeting is Tuesday, 4 May 2021. The final paper is due at the end of finals week, on Friday, 14 May 2021.

Tentative outline

The outline is tentative. I might make changes, depending on what we're interested in and how things go. I'll announce changes in seminar and on Blackboard.

1. **Denotation (or extension) and intension**

   Jones

   > *A New Law of Thought* (1911), esp. pp. 9–14, p. 71

   > *Elements of Logic as a Science of Propositions* (1890), §2, §4

   Other readings

   > Jevons, *Elementary Lessons in Logic* (1878), Lesson 5

   > Keynes, *Studies and Exercises in Formal Logic*, 4th ed. (1906), Part 1, Chapter 2

   > Frege, "On Sense and Reference" (1892), esp. pp. 25–27

   > Russell, *The Principles of Mathematics* (1903), Appendix A, esp. §§475–476

2. Categorical propositions

Jones

    A New Law of Thought (1911), esp. pp. 14–15, 19–22, 41–48, 59–60, 70–71

    Elements of Logic (1890), §6, esp. pp. 44–54

Other readings

    Ladd Franklin, review of *Elements of Logic* (1890)

    Keynes, *Formal Logic*, 3rd ed. (1894), Part 2, Chapter 5, §97

    Keynes, *Formal Logic*, 4th ed. (1906), Part 2, Chapter 6, §135

    Russell, "On Denoting" (1905)

3. Round squares and other objects of thought

Jones

    A New Law of Thought (1911), esp. pp. 58–59, pp. 60–66

    Elements of Logic (1890), §11, esp. pp. 86–94

    Review of Hillebrand (1892), esp. pp. 276–277

    "The Import of Categorical Propositions" (1893), esp. 220–221 n. 3

    "On the Nature of Logical Judgment" (1893), esp. pp. 443–445, 454–455

    "A New Law of Thought" (1910–1911), esp. pp. 177–179

    "Analysis of Categorical Propositions" (1913), esp. pp. 526–528

    "The Import of Propositions" (1914–1915), esp. p. 361

Meinong

    "Objects of Higher Order" (1899), Chapter 2, esp. pp. 381–383

    "The Theory of Objects" (1904), esp. §3

Russell

    "An Analysis of Mathematical Reasoning" (1898), Book 1, Chapter 1, esp. pp. 168–170

    Principles of Mathematics (1903), Chapter 4, §47, esp. 43; Chapter 51, §427, esp. p. 449

Stout

    Review of Twardowski (1894)

    Analytic Psychology (1896), Vol. 1, Book 1, Chapter 1, §2, esp. pp. 45–46

    "The Common-Sense Conception of a Material Thing" (1900–1901), esp. pp. 8–9

Twardowski

On the Content and Object of Presentations (1894), Chapter 5–6