

# *ousia* – Swiss Doctoral Programme in Philosophy 2017–2020

Programme 2018

January 16, 2018

Universities of Lucerne (leading house), Geneva and Lugano

## **Scientific Profile**

**Aim.** In order to develop scientific competence in research, to transmit transversal knowledge, and to facilitate scientific socialisation and networking among Swiss philosophy PhD students across language regions and sub-disciplines, the programme offers four thematic workshops per year with few invited speakers focussed on specific topics and preceded by an intensive, structured and tutored preparation, conducted not just in English, but in German, French and Italian as well. To bridge the cultural and sociological gap between historically and systematically oriented philosophers, the programme proposes to swap their methodologies.

**Institutional context.** The doctoral school is an integral part of *ousia*, the recently established Centre for the Philosophy and Theology of Being at the University of Lucerne. Its activities are coordinated with the courses offered by the members of the Chair of Philosophy of the Faculty of Theology and are designed to make both the planned specialised MA in metaphysics and the philosophy of religion and the envisaged “fellowship programme” (Templeton foundation application and fellowship programme application for the Marie Skłodowska-Curie Co-funding of regional, national and international programmes, H2020-MSCA-COFUND-2017) more attractive. Conversely, participating PhD candidates and post-graduates will profit from the participation of well-prepared MA students and international fellows.

**Format: cross-fertilisation through ‘inversion’ of methodologies.** The study of the history of philosophy is usually conducted in a person-centred way, through focussing on one particular thinker at a time. This type of approach will over time allow students to appreciate interconnections and lines of historical development, but it requires a lot of training and expertise to answer thematic questions such as: how did the Aristotelian conception of relatives evolve in the later Middle Ages? what is the scholastic conception of the Eucharist and how does it compare to Frege’s conception of numbers as higher-order quantifiers? how did medieval thinkers conceive of the relation (we now call) reference? Systematic metaphysicians, on the other hand, work primarily on questions, as they surface in clusters of articles interrelated by cross-citations. Through this focus on several particular arguments and rejoinders, questions of motivation, background, systematic coherence and theoretical ancestry get little attention; students tend to end up with some (tentative) views on some very particular questions, with little or no idea how they could fit into a more general conception of the world. This doctoral programme makes the unprecedented move to inverse these contingent, even accidental, links between methodologies and disciplines, to apply a people-centred approach to contemporary metaphysics (‘midway’-workshops), and a question-centred approach to the history of philosophy (‘flashlight’-workshops). This will not only make it much easier for the respective practitioners to feel at home in unfamiliar territory, but also be systematically fruitful for both fields at once.

**Selection of candidates.** The workshops will be advertised through the mailing list of [www.philosophie.ch](http://www.philosophie.ch), the Swiss portal of philosophy, to invite the approx. 320 PhD candidates in philosophy at Swiss universities, but also PhD candidates in other, related, disciplines, to submit their applications. We will allocate 20 places fairly and transparently on the basis of a letter of interest describing the candidates’ reasons for their desire to participate.

**Organisation and coordination.** The doctoral programme is anchored at the Chair of Philosophy of the Faculty of Theology of the University of Lucerne, occupied by Prof. Giovanni Ventimiglia. Dr. Philipp Blum ([philipp.blum@unilu.ch](mailto:philipp.blum@unilu.ch)) will be primarily responsible for the organisation and implementation of the program. The universities of Geneva (Prof. Laurent Cesalli) and Lugano (Prof. Kevin Mulligan) are cooperation partners of the doctoral programme.

Within the wider scientific network, Philipp Blum will closely collaborate, both in the general orientation of the programme and the concrete planning of workshops, not just with Prof. Laurent Cesalli, head of the research group in medieval philosophy at the University of Geneva, and Prof. Kevin Mulligan, Director of Research at University of Italian-Speaking Switzerland in Lugano and co-director of *eidōs*, the Geneva-Neuchâtel-Lugano Centre for Metaphysics, but also with Prof. Gianfranco Soldati, head of the research group in epistemology at the University of Fribourg, Prof. Anne Meylan, expert in epistemology at the University of Basel, Prof. Olivier Massin, expert in the philosophy of values at the University of Zurich and Prof. Richard King, chair of the history of philosophy at the University of Berne.

**Added value.** To achieve the program’s main objectives – to develop scientific competence in research, transversal knowledge and, primarily, scientific socialisation and networking across specialisations and language barriers (cf. “L’excellence par la recherche”, CRUS, January 17, 2014) – no alternative funding model is available. Given the recent flourishing of Swiss academic philosophy, a very large number of PhD candidates will be able to participate in the program (the CUSO database alone comprises 127 names, to which we must add approx. 200 PhD candidates in German- and Italian-speaking Switzerland). Each workshop will be openly advertised well in advance, and places will be allocated fairly and transparently on the basis of a letter of interest describing the candidates’ reasons for their desire to participate.

**Network.** The programme is anchored at the University of Lucerne, but counts the philosophy departments of the Université de Genève and the Università della Svizzera italiana among its coordination partners.

**Durability.** We plan to make this programme permanent, continuing well beyond 2020, partly through third-party funding, partly through having PhD candidates pay for participating in the workshops. Even though this practice is not yet widespread in philosophy, we believe this plan to be feasible for three reasons: (i) it is already customary to pay for the participation in colloquia and summer schools within the sub-discipline of philosophy of physics, in many ways a trend-setter in sociological and practical ways; the two successful summerschools Philipp Blum organised were to a large extent financed by participation fees; (ii) there are important precedents of successful for-profit doctoral programs, as e.g. the summerschools organised at the Central European University in Budapest; in comparison, the Lucerne workshops will be very cheap; (iii) philosophy departments all over the world increasingly recognise the need to help their graduate students acquire international experience, and set apart funds for PhD students to acquire knowledge and experience abroad; Switzerland, and Lucerne in particular, is very well placed to successfully compete in this market, once it has acquired the reputation this programme is designed to win for it. Of central importance in ensuring the durability of the proposed school, will be the *Collegium Philosophicum*, a privately organised not-for-profit organisation, that not only offers an ideal location for a doctoral school, but also allows for running it on a tight budget.

## Methodology

As mentioned above, we propose to adopt a quite innovative methodology for the planned activities, distinguishing between ‘midway’ and ‘flashlight’ workshops.

**‘Midway’ workshops: ‘mid-term’ assessments of middle-career philosophers.** Let us take, for example, Tim, a student of philosophy who just starts his PhD on a topic in medieval metaphysics. Tim will have a quite general knowledge of different areas of systematic philosophy, and some more specific knowledge in ancient and medieval philosophy as well. His knowledge of contemporary metaphysics, however, will typically be quite limited, and he will not have, at least during the first two years of his PhD, much time to take specialised, semester-long courses. He will also find the research conferences in contemporary metaphysics organised, e.g. by *eidōs*, quite hermetic and un-understandable, as they are designed for specialists of contemporary metaphysics. He will equally be disappointed by a lack of connection between what he hears at these conferences and the ‘big name’ introductory books (say, an introduction to David Lewis, a general survey of metaphysics by E.J. Lowe).

Tim will find attractive, however, what the doctoral programme promises to offer him: a mid-term assessment of a particular younger, mid-career figure of contemporary metaphysics, such as, to take an example, Ross Cameron (other examples: Ted

Sider, Jonathan Schaffer, Kris McDaniel, Jason Turner, etc. etc.). At such a workshop of four days, ideally held extra-muros to improve focus and concentration, contemporary metaphysicians, both PhD candidates and post-docs, will present comments and criticism of different aspects of Ross Cameron's work, grouped together thematically, offering comprehensive coverage of his 'intellectual world'. This will make Tim aware of the interconnections of the different themes, of the background of the (often startling) claims made and exhibit a type of approach he is already familiar with. Under the guidance of some teaching personnel, the students, both of history and of contemporary metaphysics, will put together a catalogue of questions, criticism, objections and requests for clarification.

On the third and fourth day, Ross Cameron, together with perhaps two or three of his intellectual peers, will be invited for extensive discussion sessions of these matters, for which Tim will be well prepared and in which he will be able to actively participate. In just four days, he will thus acquire comprehensive and in-depth knowledge of one specific facet of contemporary metaphysics, which he will be able to use in his own work.

**'Flashlight' workshops: spotlights into history.** Another PhD student, let us call her Sarah, works on a specific topic of contemporary metaphysics. Given the background in logic, philosophy of science, epistemology and philosophy of language required for the successful pursuit of her thesis, her knowledge of history will be quite scarce, often not reaching far beyond a very general impression of the thinking of some specific figures in ancient and early modern philosophy (a bit of Aristotle, say, and a bit of Descartes). Pursuing her own systematic questions, she will, however, become quickly aware that many, if not all, of them have historical antecedents, that there are important historical developments of, say, non-modal conceptions of essence, primitive identities or haecceities, types of formal distinctions, non-Fregean accounts of the relation between number and existence etc. etc. She will have trouble to find, however, thematically organised accounts of such topics, and will not have time for, and, if she has, rather be confused by, the general introductions to individual thinkers and specific periods.

A 'spotlight' workshop, such as those proposed by the present programme, will help her greatly in this respect, with focussed presentations on the narrowly chosen question during the first two days, introductions to the literature and chartings of the intellectual space in which these questions are situated, conducted under the guidance of the teaching personnel, by herself and her historically minded peers. Though valuable (and rare!) as they are, such 'streamlining' of historical complexities always risks being falsifying, as the often very superficial and schematic treatment of historical themes in the contemporary literature shows.

This is why Sarah will also receive, on the third and fourth day of the workshop, expert advice to the extant scholarly controversies and exegetical questions surrounding the questions and positions. Sarah will thus, on this particular systematic question, proceed from the stage where she can only uncritically quote one particular interpretation of some historical figure, to a more synoptic view that allows her to autonomously take a stance on interpretational questions, thus enriching her contemporary treatment of her research question.

## **Budget**

**Requested costs.** For the 8 workshops planned in Switzerland for 2018, as well as for the international conference in Palermo, we have applied for **65'235 CHF**, covering a total of seven 4-day workshops (February 28 – March 4, 2018; April 25-29, 2018; June 3-7, 2018; June 27 – July 1, 2018; August 22-26, 2018; November 7-11, 2018; and November 28 - December 2) and 1 3-day workshop (January 26-29, 2018), i.e. 6'790 CHF per 4-day workshop, 5'705 CHF for the 3-day workshop and 12'000 for the workshop in Palermo. Of these, we have received for 2018 a total of **27'595 CHF** (FoKo 17-073-GV).

**Matching funds.** The Faculty of Theology of the University of Lucerne has agreed to contribute matching funds in the form of "virtual money", by providing the infrastructure for the organisation of the workshops and providing for the dissemination of the information. Its contribution in "real money" lies primarily in its employment of the program's coordinator who will devote 15 % of his time to the coordination of the program and the organisation of the workshops. Together, this sums up to 51'303 CHF.

To secure the continuation of the doctoral programme over the period 2017-2020, the University of Geneva has transferred a total of **68'193.80 CHF** to Lucerne. The USI in Lugano will contribute with **50'000 CHF** to the organisation of the international conference in Palermo (cf. below). We will seek to cover travel costs for participating students through the CUSO programme.

**Details.** Detailed budget per workshop (four days): The conferences are planned to take place in the “Aarbergerhus” in Ligerz, on the shores of the lake of Biel/Bienne. We’re calculating with 130 CHF / night per teacher and 113 CHF / night per post-doc, including full board, coffee and the rent of the seminar room. We believe this tariff to be very cost-effective. In addition to travel costs, the only other locally occurred costs are organisational (150 CHF per workshop, for photocopies and the cleaning of the seminar room) and 300 CHF for a three hour excursion to Prêles.

	program costs	matching funds
4 externals: full board, 4 days, travel	4080 CHF	
20 can-/postdocs: full board, 4 days	2260 CHF	6780 CHF
travel costs (60 CHF / person)	0 CHF	1440 CHF
excursion	300 CHF	
organisational costs, cleaning	150 CHF	
preparation, teaching		3750 CHF
infrastructure, publicity, dissemination		2175 CHF
organisation, coordination		1575
total FoKo	6790 CHF	
total matching funds		15720 CHF

## Description of planned activities 2018

**1st workshop. Aristotle’s *Physics* from a Contemporary Perspective** (January 26-29 2018, arrival Friday evening, departure Monday noon)

**CfP.** In his *Physics*, Aristotle presents a challenging metaphysics of change, matter, motion and time, and develops both the matter/form and the potentiality/actuality distinctions, of crucial importance to his overall system. The aim of this informal 3 day workshop is to ask and address contemporary questions about Aristotle’s topics and views, and explore the potential of his theory for systematic metaphysics, particularly, but not exclusively, with respect to the problem of change, contemporary theories of location, the ontology of time, event-based theories of locational adverbials, the instant of change, contemporary power metaphysics and continuum-based accounts of the paradoxes of motion.

**Participants.** Rögnvaldur Ingthorsson, David Ebrey, Jacob Rosen, Carlo Rovelli (TBC), Chiara Martini, Christopher Frey, Christian Pfeiffer, Takashi Oki, Christoph Lichdi, Jeannette Bölsterli-Studer.

**2nd workshop. The Analogy of Being** (February 28 - March 4 2018, arrival Wednesday evening, departure Sunday noon)

**CfP.** In what sense do we predicate “exists” of people, chairs, God, numbers and fictional creatures? What senses of being does Aristotle distinguish in *Met. A*? How are they related? Are some prior to others? How, if at all, do these ancient and medieval distinctions match up with contemporary talk about ‘degrees’ or ‘modes’ of being? Related questions concern the distinction between abstract and concrete and between causally interacting and merely ‘intentional’ objects – do they too exist in fundamentally different ways? Of particular interest is the distinction – if, indeed, there is one at all – between (what are now called) the “is” of predication and the “is” of existence, a distinction which received a lot of critical discussion by Brentano and in the reist tradition. A related, but also independent, interesting and under-researched question concerns the relation between ‘ordinary’ property exemplification and its modalised forms: is there, in addition to the “is” of predication, an “is” of essence, of necessity, of futurity? Can we understand “is necessarily”, “is essentially” and “will be” as separate forms of copulae, in analogy to the syllogistic distinction between a-, o-, i- and e-predications, or are they, as is nowadays normally assumed, higher-order modifications of one basic a-modal and a-temporal ‘is’?

**Invited Participants.** Tim Button, Kris McDaniel, Frank A. Lewis, Robert Trueman, Jeff Sanford Russell, Nick Stang.

**3rd workshop. Self-Knowledge and Transparency** (April 25-29, 2018, arrival Wednesday evening, departure Sunday noon)

**CfP.** Under certain conditions, one may settle questions about one’s own beliefs by simply considering questions about their object. Richard Moran says that in such cases, questions about one’s belief are “transparent to” questions about their object. The notion of transparency serves three different but closely related purposes. First, it highlights the phenomenological fact that we can know that we are in certain mental states without being aware of anything other than their object. Second, it differentiates an “I – now” perspective, i.e. the first person perspective onto one’s current mental states, from a “this person -

that time” perspective. The former can be characterized as the perspective from which the question whether I am in a mental state  $\phi$  can be transparent to questions about  $\phi$ ’s object. Third, transparency reveals a normative issue: the perspective from which the question about a mental state is transparent to questions about its object is the perspective of the one who is responsible for this state. More recently, philosophers have entertained the notion of a “transparency method”, which is supposed to provide a general account of how we know our own minds. One way of stating this method, for the case of belief, is to say that whenever I am in a position to assert that p, I am eo ipso in a position to assert that I believe that p. The aim of the workshop is to pursue these and related questions, with a special view to the epistemology of religion.

**Possible Participants.** Boris Hennig, David Hunter, Thomas Land, Richard Moran, Jordi Fernandez, Akeel Bilgrami, Matthew Boyle, Johannes Roessler, Sarah Paul, Jonathan Way, Nishi Shah, Nicholas Silins.

**4th workshop. The ontological and cosmological arguments for the existence of God – then and now** (June 3-7, 2018)

**CfP.** Recent work in metaphysics bears in many ways on traditional debates about the ontological and cosmological proofs of God’s existence. Of potential relevance are, among many others, the following themes: grounding as a form of ontological explanation and its relation to the PSR, light-weight existence and modes of existence, the acceptability of infinite regresses, causal/temporal loops and ‘ontologically infinite’ (e.g. gunky or junky) worlds, distinctions between different ‘modes’ or ‘degrees’ of being, non-standard relations between essence and existence for non-standard entities (fictional entities, lesser/dependent entities, ‘total’ entities such as the world), dispositionalist and structuralist accounts of physical entities. In light of these and related developments in contemporary metaphysics, we will revisit traditional arguments for the existence of God.

**Participants.** Mark Johnston, Bill Vallicella, Travis Dumsday, Hermann Weidemann, Stephen L. Brock, L. Aryeh Kosman.

**5th workshop. Leibniz and the Scholastics** (June 27 – July 1, 2018, arrival Wednesday evening, departure Sunday noon)

**CfP.** Leibniz is famous for his metaphysical system, even though it is notoriously hard to understand. Picking up on our *Hauptseminar* in spring term 2018, we address some of the more important questions, and examine their contemporary and systematic significance. Particular consideration will be given to the scholastic roots of Leibniz’s system, its ramification into the German Schulphilosophie, and its uptake by Kant. In addition to the doctoral students participating in the program, the workshop also welcomes advanced distance-learning students from UniLu.

**Invited Participants.** Matteo Favaretti Camposampiero, Catharine Diel, Marco Lamanna, Alice Ragni, other yet to be determined.

**6th workshop. Belief, hope, fear, desire: the metaphysics of the mind** (August 22-26, 2018, arrival Wednesday evening, departure Sunday noon)

**CfP.** Recent work in the metaphysics of the mind has largely focussed on beliefs and emotions, leaving telic attitudes such as hope, fear, intention and desire to the side. Such attitudes, in addition to be of great practical importance, are also metaphysically quite puzzling. Despite the surge in interest in the history of the philosophy of mind, its metaphysics has been comparatively neglected. There is, however, much to learn from tradition when it comes to such important, but rarely squarely addressed questions as: how are we to understand the distinction between mental states and processes? are perception, imagination, knowledge and belief relations, and if so, what are their relata? what grounds the representational powers of (at least some) mental states, in virtue of what do they possess intentionality? how does the mass/count distinction apply in the mental realm, to such things as beliefs, odours, mental images? This conference brings together both historians and contemporary exponents of the philosophy of mind, to shed new light on its metaphysics.

**Invited Participants.** Gyula Klima, Stephan Schmid, Mark Kalderon, others yet to be determined.

**International conference and summerschool. Philosophy in the Mediterranean** (September 2-9, 2018)

Together with the University of Lugano, we are planning to organise an international conference and summerschool in Palermo. The FoKo contribution will cover only a part of the travel and accommodation costs of the Swiss participants.

**CfP.** In recent years, the Mediterranean has mostly made negative headlines, as a theatre of war and desperation. Sadly, this has almost eclipsed the many much more optimistic signs. The sea that has shaped European history is once more about to become an important arena of international collaboration, of collaborative research and intercultural exchange. Palermo in particular has become a laboratorium for new integrative opportunities. It has been selected as Italian’s Capital of Culture for the year 2018 and will host the *Manifesta*, an international art fair. This is not by accident: Sicily has integration in its DNA,

having been the centre of the mediterranean realm in the 12th and the 13th century, combining ancient Greek, Islamic, Jewish and early Christian culture in an unique way. Interreligious dialogue, in particular, has been one of the main areas of focus of Palermo's mayor and he intends to pursue further steps in this direction. In recent years, research in the history of philosophy has shed new light on this important period of European history, and newly established research centres on the shores of the Mediterranean have picked up the fallen torch, reinvigorating European research with new ideas. Tunis, Barcelona, It is only appropriate, therefore, to present the state of the art of this research in Sicily.

**Programme of the Summerschool.** The summerschool will take place at the Castello di Falconara.

1st part: the philosophy in the Mediterranean yesterday

- Monday morning: Christoph Rapp, Aristotle's *Metaphysics* – the State of the Art
- Monday afternoon: Steven Harvey, Aristotle's *Metaphysics* in Medieval Jewish Philosophy
- Tuesday morning: Nadja Germann, Aristotle's *Metaphysics* in Medieval Islamic Philosophy
- Tuesday afternoon: Pasquale Porro, Aristotle's *Metaphysics* in Medieval Christian Philosophy
- Tuesday evening lecture: Laurent Cesalli, Aristotelianism and the Austrian Tradition

2nd part: the philosophy of the Mediterranean today

- Wednesday morning: Anna Marmodoro, Hylomorphism
- Wednesday afternoon: Peter Simons, Categories
- Thursday morning: Gyula Klima, Essentialism

In immediate succession to the summerschool, there will be a two-day **international conference** in Palermo (Villa Niscemi):

- Dimitri Gutas, Aristotle's *Metaphysics* in Medieval Arabic Philosophy
- Stephen Harvey, Aristotle's *Metaphysics* in Medieval Jewish Philosophy
- Pasquale Porro, Aristotle's *Metaphysics* in Medieval Christian Philosophy
- evening lecture: Dimitri Gutas
- Gilles Kepel, The Mediterranean Today
- How to create a Centre of Philosophy: the examples of Barcelona and Tunis: Manuel García-Carpintero, Mélika Ouelbani

**7th workshop.** Indiscernibility-of-Identical Arguments and Non-Standard Ontologies (November 7-11, 2018, arrival Wednesday evening, departure Sunday noon)

**CfP.** So-called Leibniz Law arguments are often taken to constraint ontological theorising: whatever entities we may believe in, they have to satisfy the putatively logical principle that things that differ in some respect cannot be identical. Leibniz's Law, in first order logic, licenses substitution of co-referential terms *salva veritate*. Beyond extensional formal languages, such substitution principles have to be restricted to so-called "referentially transparent contexts". Starting with the discussion of impossible worlds, many metaphysicians have taken steps towards hyperintensional ontologies, but their relation to the indiscernibility-of-identicals principle has not yet explored in detail.

**Invited Participants.** To be determined.

**8th workshop.** God, time and timelessness (November 28 – December 2, 2018, arrival Wednesday evening, departure Sunday noon)

**CfP.** What relation of metaphysical priority, if any, is there between being and being-at-a-time, or being-for-some-time? How are we to understand, for temporal entities, the connection between their existence and their existing now, then, or in the future? Both within mainstream contemporary metaphysics and in analytic approaches to the history of philosophy, distinctions between manners of persistence and entities (objects, events, processes, states) essentially characterised by them have played important roles. Until now, however, these demarcations suffer from insufficient clarity. Very little work has been done, e.g., on the question how temporally extended things persist through time, i.e. in virtue of what their existence at one time is (at least partly) grounded in their existence at an earlier time, and whether this question receives different answers for particulars, events and processes. This question, largely ignored today, concerning becoming and change was at the heart of medieval ontological investigation.

**Possible Participants.** Alessandro Giordani, John Marenbon, Can Laurens Loewe, Brian Davies, Christopher Martin, Paul O'Grady, Brian Leftow, Eleonore Stump, E.Y. Mullins.