

Scientific Programme Postgraduate Course “Fundamentality and Perspectivity”

Fundamentality and perspectivity in the philosophies of mind and world

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May the world be fundamentally perspectival? For centuries, many people, in- and outside of philosophy have been attracted by this idea, but no systematic theory has ever been worked out. Within contemporary academic philosophy, the very idea is quickly dismissed, most of the time, as a form of relativism. Recent work in metaphysics and the philosophies of mind and language has put into question this assumption: in very different contexts, it has been maintained that perspectival phenomena may be metaphysically fundamental.

The aim of the present postgraduate course is to pursue these questions, within an educational framework designed to maximise the academic benefits of the participating PhD students, most of which are part of the recently re-launched pro*doc programme „Metaphysics of the Mind“, with the activities of which the course will be closely linked.

The research programme of this postgraduate course brings together two important strands in current philosophical research: the metaphysical problem of how to characterise the concept of *fundamentality*, which has important ramifications in the philosophy of physics, and the epistemological problem of how to account for the perspectivity of our knowledge of the world, of much current interest in the philosophy of mind, language and perception. These two strands correspond to two research projects currently being pursued at *eidós*, the Genevan Centre for Metaphysics.

Topics of the workshops

Traditionally, the concept of *fundamentality* has been taken to be a modal notion: what is fundamental is what does not, and cannot change, what forms the necessary framework within which contingent events take place. Understood this way, fundamentality and perspectivity are clearly incompatible: perspectival facts, it may be safely assumed, are facts that depend on perspectives, and so change in accordance with variations in these perspectives. Recent work in the foundations of modality has questioned the traditional modal understanding of fundamentality, making room for non-modal notions of fundamentality, aiming to elucidate this central concept in terms of grounding,

essence or supervenience. This recent work, the primary exponent of which is Kit Fine, will be the topic of the **first workshop**.

Both modal and non-modal conceptions of fundamentality crucially use the idea of truthmaking. Physicalism, for example, - the view that only physical phenomena are fundamental - is standardly stated as the thesis that attributions of mental predicates to persons are made true (when they are) by some of these persons' physical states. The fundamentality of perspectives, understood this way, raises many difficult questions: does it imply, for example, that we are ontologically committed to perspectives (but what are these weird entities)? does it mean that perspectives make true what is true according to them (and are thus in some way self-verifying)? These questions will be addressed in the **second workshop**.

The **third workshop** addresses one of the oldest problems of philosophy, of particular relevance to the problem of the fundamentality of perspectives. A standard argument against relativism, of both the metaphysical and the epistemological kind, is that it cannot account for the dialectic of sameness and difference, so to speak, for example by making it impossible for two perspectives to be perspectives on the *same* thing. How can two perspectival realities both be realities, and thereby have something in common? To answer these questions, elucidation will be sought in the age-old debate about universals.

The **fourth workshop** examines a further central problem of the fundamentality of perspectives: perspectives are relations, and a strong tradition within the history of metaphysics has denied that anything relational may be fundamental. This classic picture, of intrinsically natured atoms giving rise, in virtue of their natures and their configuration, to the manifold of the perceptual world, has problems acknowledging not just the fundamentality, but the very reality of perspectives.

The **fifth workshop** will try to bring these different strands together, and examine one at least at first sight promising way in which perspectives may be fundamental. If facts are *adverbially* perspectival, i.e. if the properties exemplified within them are adverbially modified (differently according to different perspectives), both the sameness/difference and the relationality problems may be solved. We will discuss some recent proposals going in this direction, and examine their relative strengths and weaknesses.

Programme

The present graduate school aims at organising a series of five workshops, devoted to the following aspects of the question whether reality may be fundamentally perspectival: (i) grounding and determination; (ii) truthmaking; (iii) universals and tropes; (iv) structure and relations; (v) exemplification and other predicative ties.

1st workshop: Grounding and determination, 4th and 5th of March 2011

provisional list of speakers: Kit Fine (NYU), Scott Sturgeon (London), Stephan Leuenberger (Glasgow)

2nd workshop: Truthmaking, 1st and 2nd of April 2011

provisional list of speakers: John Bigelow (Melbourne), Ross Cameron (Leeds), Philip Goff (Birmingham)

3rd workshop: Universals and Tropes, 22nd and 23rd of April 2011

provisional list of speakers: Peter Simons (Dublin), Ariana Betti (Amsterdam), Manfred Kupffer (Frankfurt)

4th workshop: Structure and Relations, 13th and 14th of May 2011

provisional list of speakers: Josh Parsons (Otago), Fraser Macbride (Cambridge), Kristopher McDaniel (Syracuse)

5th workshop: Exemplification and other Predicative Ties, 10th and 11th of June 2011

provisional list of speakers: Benjamin Schnieder (Humboldt University Berlin), Nick Mantegani (Texas), Ingvar Johansson (Lund).

Apart from the invited speakers and (some of) the 46 PhD listed below, the following will take an active part in the five workshops:

Prof. Kevin Mulligan (University of Geneva)
Prof. Fabrice Correia (University of Geneva)
Prof. Julien Deonna (University of Geneva)
Prof. Gianfranco Soldati (University of Fribourg)
Prof. Michael Esfeld (University of Lausanne)
Dr. Philipp Keller (University of Geneva)
Dr. Julien Dutant (University of Geneva)
Dr. Anne Meylan (University of Geneva)
Dr. Olivier Massin (University of Geneva)
Dr. Ghislain Guigon (University of Geneva)
Dr. Christian Sachse (University of Lausanne)
Dr. Vincent Lam (University of Lausanne)
Dr. Fabrice Teroni (Universities of Berne and Geneva)
Dr. Jiri Benovsky (University of Fribourg)

Budget

The organisation of the five workshops at the University of Geneva allows us to take advantage of the existing infrastructure and reduces accommodation costs as a large number of the participating

PhD students live in Geneva and can provide accommodation for the PhD students coming from elsewhere.

The organisation of the past workshops has shown that the chosen format is particularly cost-effective. The travel costs of approx. 9 participating PhD students not living in Geneva amount to 450 CHF, the costs of meals and coffee breaks for the expected number of 25 participating PhD students to 9060 CHF. We calculate with 7990 CHF for the accommodation for the invited speakers (47 nights at 110 CHF, 60 CHF for meals per day) and with 7500 CHF for their travel costs (8x400 CHF for Great Britain, Germany and France, 2x800 CHF for the US and 2x1025 for Australia).

To total costs of the series of five conferences therefore amount to **25000 CHF**.

Contribution to the scientific competence of the participating PhD students

The principal aim of this “*école doctorale*” is to give some of the 46 PhD students the opportunity to improve their knowledge of philosophy, acquire dialectical and scientific skills and to learn from the invited experts and each other. In particular, the “*école doctorale*” will be very closely integrated with the pro*doc programme and its teaching module.

Compared to the past years, more emphasis will be laid upon the active participation of the PhD students. To achieve this aim, the participating senior philosophers will offer preparatory meetings, reading and discussing some of the relevant literature, to optimally prepare the PhD students for the workshops and to encourage them to ask questions.

With the foundation of the research centre *eidos* (www.philosophie.ch/eidos/), Geneva has become the main centre for metaphysics on the European Continent. *Eidos* coordinates and associates a large number of research projects, many of which are funded by the Swiss National Science Foundation. In particular, *eidos* provides a productive environment for the new candocs working in one of the three research modules of the now established pro*doc programme "Mind, Normativity, Self, and Properties" (www.philosophie.ch/prodoc).

As the projects bring together a total of 49 PhD students, 5 professors and 9 scientific collaborators, they provide an ideal environment for fruitful graduate workshops.

Experts

We propose the following as internationally respected experts:

- Prof. Peter Simons, University of Leeds, England (p.m.simons@leeds.ac.uk)
- Prof. E.J. Lowe, University of Durham, England (e.j.lowe@durham.ac.uk)

Participating PhD students

- Robert Michels, Université de Genève (supervisor: Kevin Mulligan)
- Emma Tieffenbach, Université de Genève (supervisor: Kevin Mulligan)
- Willy Manseya, Université de Genève (supervisor: Kevin Mulligan)
- Paolo Bonardi, Université de Genève (supervisor: Kevin Mulligan)
- Damiano Costa, Université de Genève (supervisor: Kevin Mulligan)
- Davide Fassio, Université de Genève (supervisor: Pascal Engel)
- Ariel Cecchi, Université de Genève (supervisor: Pascal Engel)
- Katsuya Takhashi, Université de Genève (supervisor: Pascal Engel)
- Arturs Logins, Université de Genève (supervisor: Pascal Engel)
- Jessica Leech, Université de Genève (supervisor: Fabrice Correia)
- Akiko Frischhut, Université de Genève (supervisor: Fabrice Correia)
- Johannes Stern, Université de Genève (supervisor: Fabrice Correia)
- Amanda Garcia, Université de Genève (supervisor: Fabrice Correia)
- Marion Hämmerli, Université de Genève (supervisor: Fabrice Correia)
- Salim Hirèche, Université de Genève (supervisor: Fabrice Correia)
- David Furrer, Université de Genève (supervisor: Julien Deonna)
- François Jaquet, Université de Genève (supervisor: Julien Deonna)
- Patrice Soom, Université de Lausanne (supervisor: Michael Esfeld)
- Pietro Snider, Université de Lausanne (supervisor: Michael Esfeld)
- Michael Sollberger, Université de Lausanne (supervisor: Michael Esfeld)
- Laurent Cordonier, Université de Lausanne (supervisor: Michael Esfeld)
- Matthias Egg, Université de Lausanne (supervisor: Michael Esfeld)
- Thomas Müller, Université de Lausanne (supervisor: Michael Esfeld)
- Tim Raez, Université de Lausanne (supervisor: Michael Esfeld)
- Michael Hertig, Université de Lausanne (supervisor: Alexandrine Schniewind)

- Rim Essafi, Université de Lausanne (supervisor: Alexandrine Schniewind)
- Martine Vonlanthen, Université de Lausanne (supervisor: Alexandrine Schniewind)
- Mael Goarzin, Université de Lausanne (supervisor: Alexandrine Schniewind)
- Jack Darach, Université de Fribourg (supervisor: Gianfranco Soldati)
- Coralie Dorsaz, Université de Fribourg (supervisor: Gianfranco Soldati)
- Andrea Giananti, Université de Fribourg (supervisor: Gianfranco Soldati)
- Jean Bohnert, Université de Fribourg (supervisor: Gianfranco Soldati)
- Thomas Jacobi, Université de Fribourg (supervisor: Gianfranco Soldati)
- Patryk Dziuros-Serafinowicz, Université de Fribourg (supervisor: Gianfranco Soldati)
- Marek Dobrzeniecki, Université de Fribourg (supervisor: Gianfranco Soldati)
- Federico Lauria, Université de Fribourg (supervisor: Gianfranco Soldati)
- Alain Pé-Curto, Université de Fribourg (supervisor: Gianfranco Soldati)
- Flavio Marelli, Université de Fribourg (supervisor: Gianfranco Soldati)
- Julia Schärer, Université de Fribourg (supervisor: Gianfranco Soldati)
- Jacob Naito, Université de Fribourg (supervisor: Martine Nida-Rümelin)
- Emmanuel Baierlé, Université de Fribourg (supervisor: Martine Nida-Rümelin)
- Franziska Müller, Université de Fribourg (supervisor: Martine Nida-Rümelin)
- Fabrice Theler, Université de Fribourg (supervisor: Martine Nida-Rümelin)
- Guido Speiser, Université de Fribourg (supervisor: Martine Nida-Rümelin)
- Peter Ulber, Université de Fribourg (supervisor: Martine Nida-Rümelin)
- Tzu-Keng Fu, Université de Fribourg (supervisor: Martine Nida-Rümelin)