

Contemporary Issues in Ontology and Social Ontology
Central European University
Summer 2023

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Alex Grzankowski, Ferenc Huoranszki, Michaela McSweeney, Asya Passinsky

Block A: Mark Balaguer (Face-to-Face Lectures)

1. Metaontology and Anti-Metaphysics

Recommended Reading: Balaguer, *Metaphysics, Sophistry, and Illusion*, Chapter 7, minus the appendix (pp. 201-214).

2. Conceptual Analysis

Recommended Reading: Balaguer, *Metaphysics, Sophistry, and Illusion*, Chapter 8 (pp. 218-247).

3. Amelioration and Description

Recommended Reading: (i) Haslanger, “Gender and Race: (What) Are They? (What) Do We Want Them To Be?,” section I (pp.32-35); and (ii) Bettcher, excerpts (posted on the course website) from “Feminist Philosophical Engagements With Trans Studies,” “Theorizing Closeness,” “Trans Feminism: Recent Philosophical Developments,” and “Trans Theory Meets Feminist Philosophy” (20 pages total).

Block B: Talia Bettcher (Zoom Lecture)

1. W-Questions in Social Ontology: Why Ask Them?

Recommended Reading: Bettcher, excerpts (posted on the course website) from “Feminist Philosophical Engagements With Trans Studies,” “Theorizing Closeness,” “Trans Feminism: Recent Philosophical Developments,” and “Trans Theory Meets Feminist Philosophy” (20 pages total).

Block C: Åsa Burman (Face-to-Face Lectures)

1. Ideal and Nonideal Social Ontology

Readings: Burman (2023), *Nonideal Social Ontology*, Introduction pp. 1-18 (mandatory).
Background reading: Chapter 1 and Chapter 2, especially pp. 72-82.

2. Deontic Power and Telic Power

Mandatory Readings: Burman (2023), *Nonideal Social Ontology*, Chapter 5: Telic Power, pp. 176-195.

3. Structural Power and Other Forms of Social Power

Background reading: Muhammad Ali Khalidi, "Three kinds of Social Kinds", *Philosophy and Phenomenological Research*, 90:1, pp. 96-112, Mandatory reading: Burman (2023), *Nonideal Social Ontology*, Chapter 6: A Taxonomy of Social Facts, pp. 199-228.

Block D: Esa Diaz-Leon (Face-to-Face Lectures)

1. Characterizing Social Constructionism I: The problem of circularity
Recommended: Díaz-León, E. (2015) "In Defence of Historical Constructivism about Races", *Ergo* 2(21): 547-562
2. Characterizing Social Constructionism II: Concept-Dependence vs. Culture-Dependence.
Recommended reading: Díaz-León, E. (2018) "Kinds of Social Construction". In Pieranna Garavaso (ed.) *Bloomsbury Companion to Analytic Feminism*, Bloomsbury Academic, pp. 103-22.
3. Achieving Reference to Covert Social Constructions I
Recommended Reading: Mallon, Ron (2017) "Social Construction and Achieving Reference", *Noûs* 51 (1):113-131.
4. Achieving Reference to Covert Social Constructions II
Recommended Reading: Díaz-León, E. (2019) "On How to Achieve Reference to Covert Social Constructions." *Studia Phil*

Block E: Alex Grzankowski (Face-to-Face Lectures)

Useful background but not required:

- a. Section 7: <https://plato.stanford.edu/entries/propositions/#nature>
- b. <https://plato.stanford.edu/entries/prop-attitude-reports/>
- c. Hanks, Peter W. (2011). Structured Propositions as Types. *Mind* 120 (477):11-52.
- d. Soames, Scott. (2010). *What is Meaning?* Ch 2

1. It's Not 1990 (or 1890) Anymore
Recommended reading: Soames, Scott. *Rethinking Language, Mind, and Meaning*. *Precis*
2. Minimal Propositions
Recommended reading: Grzankowski, Alex & Buchanan, Ray (2019). Propositions on the cheap. *Philosophical Studies* 176 (12):3159-3178.
<https://philpapers.org/archive/GRZPOT.pdf>
3. Mental Content and Frege's Puzzle
Recommended reading: Grzankowski, Alex & Buchanan, Ray (forthcoming). Content Pluralism. *Inquiry: An Interdisciplinary Journal of Philosophy*
<https://philpapers.org/archive/GRZCP.pdf>

Block F: Ferenc Huoranszki (Face-to-Face Lectures)

1. Nature and Reason

Recommended reading: Huoranszki, *The Metaphysics of Contingency*, from Chapter 7, 198–218.

2. The Ground of Laws

Recommended reading: Huoranszki, *The Metaphysics of Contingency*, from Chapter 2, 53–59.

3. Properties and Systems

Recommended reading: Huoranszki, *The Metaphysics of Contingency*, from Chapter 3, 64–91.

Block G: Michaela McSweeney (Face-to-Face Lectures)

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- 2.
- 3.

Block H: Asya Passinsky (Face-to-Face Lectures)

1. Social Construction and Grounding

- **Mandatory reading:** Schaffer, “Social Construction as Grounding; Or: Fundamentality for Feminists, a Reply to Barnes and Mikkola,” sections 1–2 (pp. 2449–56).
- **Recommended reading:** Pagano, “What Social Construction Isn’t,” section 3.1 (pp. 1655–57).
- **Supplementary reading:** Passinsky, “Social Construction and Meta-Ground,” sections 1–5 (pp. 1–23).

2. Grounding and Anchoring in the Social Realm

- **Mandatory reading:** Epstein, *The Ant Trap: Rebuilding the Foundations of the Social Sciences*, chapter 6 (pp. 74–87).
- **Recommended reading:** (i) Schaffer, “Anchoring as Grounding: On Epstein’s the Ant Trap” (pp. 749–67); and (ii) Epstein, *The Ant Trap: Rebuilding the Foundations of the Social Sciences*, chapter 9 (pp. 115–28).
- **Supplementary reading:** Passinsky, “Social Construction and Meta-Ground,” section 6 (pp. 23–29).

3. Ameliorative Metaphysics, Part I

- **Mandatory reading:** Barnes, “Realism and Social Structure,” sections 1–3 (pp. 2417–22).
- **Recommended reading:** Dembroff, “What Is Sexual Orientation?,” section 1 and section 2 through the subsection “Framework I: Purposes” (pp. 1–6).

- **Supplementary reading:** Passinsky, “Ameliorative Metaphysics,” sections 1–5 (pp. 1–12).
- **Background reading:** Haslanger, “Gender and Race: (What) Are They? (What) Do We Want Them To Be?,” sections 1–2 (pp. 31–37).

4. Ameliorative Metaphysics, Part II

- **Mandatory reading:** Schaffer, “Social Construction as Grounding; Or: Fundamentality for Feminists, a Reply to Barnes and Mikkola,” section 3.3 (pp. 2462–63).
- **Recommended reading:** Guala, *Understanding Institutions: The Science and Philosophy of Living Together*, excerpt from chapter 14 (pp. 194–99).
- **Supplementary reading:** Passinsky, “Ameliorative Metaphysics,” sections 6–7 (pp. 12–18).

Block I: Student Presentations (Face-to-Face Presentations)