

Philosophy 232
Epistemology
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Graduate Seminar: Quine & the Direction of Philosophy

Philosophy in the 20th-century started with the “linguistic turn” and ended with naturalism. Arguably, the main catalyst of the change from analytic to naturalistic philosophy was Quine. Quine revolutionized philosophy, and in particular epistemology, at least twice in the course of his career: first with the new model of knowledge introduced in “Two Dogmas of Empiricism” (1951), and later with his naturalistic manifesto “Epistemology Naturalized” (1969). In addition, Quine’s works on indeterminacy, ontological relativity, and other topics had an important impact on the development of many branches of philosophy.

In this seminar I would like to focus on Quine’s two epistemic revolutions and understand their impact on the direction of philosophy. How shall we understand Quine’s revolutions? What roads have they opened for philosophy and what roads have they missed or closed?

Here are two opposing outlooks on Quine’s revolutions:

1. In his first revolution Quine freed empiricism from its traditional dogmas, opening the road to a new, enlightened (holistic) empiricist epistemology. In his second revolution Quine finessed his empiricist approach to epistemology, setting it on the secure course of naturalism, a course that will continue to guide us as far into the 21st-century as we can now see.
2. In his first revolution Quine freed epistemology from its traditional dogmas, opening the road to a new approach to epistemology, one that is neither empiricist nor apriorist, neither foundationalist nor coherentist. This revolution was based on a shift in gestalt on the order of Kant’s “Copernican revolution”, and it enables us to pursue the classical (pre-analytic) goals of epistemology in an altogether new (holistic) way. Quine’s second revolution closed the door opened by his first revolution. This it did by limiting the epistemologist to a narrow naturalist conception of philosophy, according to which epistemology is replaced by psychology (or the empirical sciences of cognition more generally), and the philosopher functions either as a co-worker, or as an assistant, or as a speculative advisor of the psychologist.

These, of course, are not the only interpretations of Quine’s revolutions, and as formulated here they are largely caricatures. But if we want to understand the direction of philosophy in the coming decades, and if we want to decide, for ourselves, what to take from Quine’s revolutions and what to reject, a critical examination of these revolutions is essential.

Although this may not sound as a *core* topic in epistemology, I plan to pursue it through a close, direct reading of Quine’s original texts. As a result, the seminar can count as a core seminar in epistemology, devoted to Quinean epistemology.

Syllabus

T 1/10 Introduction to Seminar

Philosophy Before Quine

T 1/17 *The Logico-Linguistic Turn*

- The Logical Revolution
- Linguistic Analysis
- Philosophy & Natural Language

Basic Readings:

1. P. King & S. Shapiro. 1995. "The History of Logic". *The Oxford Companion to Philosophy*. Oxford.
2. R. Rorty. "Metaphilosophical Difficulties of Linguistic Philosophy". 1967. Introduction. *The Linguistic Turn: Recent Essays in Philosophical Method*. Chicago.

T 1/24 *Logical Empiricism & the Foundation of Knowledge*

- Epistemology & Science
- Carnap's Model of Knowledge
- Tradition & Innovation
- Is Carnap's Model a Foundational Model?
- The Place of Philosophy in Carnap's Model

Basic Readings:

1. Carnap: *The Logical Structure of the World*. 1928. UC 1967. Selection.
2. "Empiricism, Semantics, and Ontology". 1950. In *Meaning and Necessity*. Chicago.

Quine's First Revolution

T 1/31 *Quine's Model of Knowledge in "Two Dogmas of Empiricism"*

- "Liberating" Philosophy from Traditional Dogmas
- Should We Reject the Analytic-Synthetic Distinction and Why?
- Quine's Two Conceptions of Holism
- The Duhem-Quine Thesis and Its Alleged Problems
- What Do "Center" and "Periphery" Represent in Quine's Model?
- Inner Tensions in Quine's Model
- Empiricism's Influence on Quine's Model
- Is Quine's Model a Foundational Model?
- The Place of Philosophy in Quine's Model

Basic Readings:

1. W.V. Quine. "Two Dogmas of Empiricism". 1951. *From a Logical Point of View*. Harvard.
2. W.V. Quine. "Truth by Convention". 1935. *The Ways of Paradox and Other*

Essays. Harvard.

3. W.V. Quine. "Carnap and Logical Truth". 1954. *The Ways of Paradox and Other Essays*. Harvard.

T 2/7

New Directions: A Neo- (or Post-) Quinean Model of Knowledge

- Solutions to the Inner Tensions in Quine's Model
- From a (Relatively) Static to a (Veritably) Dynamic Model of Knowledge
- Foundation Without Foundationalism: A Proposal
- Approach to Truth, Reality, Realism, and Reason
- Differences from Quine
- Immunity to Criticisms of Quine's Model
- The Place of Philosophy in the Neo- (Post-) Quinean Model

Basic Readings:

1. G. Sher. "Is There a Place for Philosophy in Quine's Theory?". 1999. *Journal of Philosophy* 96.
2. M. Dummett. "The Significance of Quine's Indeterminacy Thesis". 1973. *Truth and Other Enigmas*. 1978.

Quine's Second Revolution

T 2/14

Quine's "Naturalized Epistemology" Model

- The Argument for Naturalism: Structure, Assumptions, Reasoning, Validity
- Naturalism & Empiricism
- Naturalized Epistemology & the Normative Challenge
- Naturalized Epistemology & the Narrowness Challenge
- The Place of Philosophy in Quine's Naturalistic Model

Basic Readings:

1. W.V. Quine. "Epistemology Naturalized". 1968. *Ontological Relativity and Other Essays*. Columbia, 1969.
2. W.V. Quine. "Five Milestones of Empiricism". 1981. *Theories and Things*. Harvard.

T 2/21

New Options, Missed Opportunities

- Quine's Naturalist Model & His "Two Dogmas Model": Continuation or Change of Direction?
- Quine's Naturalist Model & The Neo- (Post-) Quinean Model
- Changing Conceptions of Naturalism: Kitcher, Goldman, Kornblith, ...
- Critics: Bealer, Bonjour, Stroud, Kim, ...

Basic Readings:

1. P. Kitcher. "The Naturalists Return". 1992. *Philosophical Review*, 101.
2. A. Goldman. "A Priori Warrant and Naturalistic Epistemology". 1999.

- Philosophical Perspectives* 13.
3. H. Kornblith. *Knowledge and Its Place in Nature*, Chs. 1,4. 2002. Oxford.
 4. G. Bealer. "A Theory of the A Priori". 2000. *Pacific Philosophical Quarterly* 81.
 5. L. BonJour. "Against Naturalized Epistemology". 1994. *Midwest Studies in Philosophy* 19.
 6. B. Stroud. "The Significance of Naturalized Epistemology". 1981. *Midwest Studies in Philosophy* 6.
 7. J. Kim. "What is 'Naturalized Epistemology'?" 1988. *Philosophical Perspectives* 2.

Philosophy After Quine

F 2/24

Reason

- The "New Apriori"
- Friedman's "Dynamics of Reason"
- Reason & the Multiple Routes from Mind to Reality

Basic Readings:

1. M. Friedman. "The Relativized A Priori". 2001. *Dynamics of Reason*. CSLI.
2. *New Essays on the A Priori*. Eds. P. Boghossian & C. Peacocke. 2000. Selection.
3. G. Sher. "Forms of Correspondence: The Intricate Route from Thought to Reality". Forthcoming. *Alethic Pluralism: Current Debates*. Eds. Wright & Pedersen. Oxford.

T 2/28

Normativity

- The Nature of Normativity
- The Normative & the Factual
- The Normativity of Truth
- Normativity in Ethics & Epistemology: Similarities & Differences

Basic Readings:

1. C. Korsgaard. *The Sources of Normativity*. 1996. Cambridge. Selection.
2. R. Wedgwood. "The Normative Force of Reasoning". 2009. *Nous* 40.

T 3/6

Logic

- Is Logic in the Mind or in the World?
- Are we Ready to Solve the Foundational Problem of Logic?

Basic Readings:

1. G. Sher. "Is Logic in the Mind or in the World?". 2011. *Synthese* 181.
2. G. Sher. Work in progress on the foundational problem of logic.

Additional Readings: A wide selection of additional readings can be found in the seminar section, Philosophy Library.