

Szymon Wróbel

**SEMINAR: Philosophy in the Process of Making Concepts**

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Author:	Prof. dr hab. Szymon Wróbel	
	<b>Philosophy in the Process of Making Concepts</b>	
	WINTER Semester	SPRING Semester
HOURS	30	30
FREQUENCY	4 x 45 every two weeks	4 x 45 every two weeks

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**THE COURSE CORRESPONDS TO TOPICS:** Contemporary philosophy, history of philosophy, history of ideas, social philosophy, political philosophy.

**ASSESSMENT:**

- The course is available to all students (General course open to all students)
- The course to be conducted in English
- Credit requirements: active participation in classes
- Time of classes: Thursday
- Begins: 17:00
- Duration: 17:00-20:00 (4 x 45 minutes) every two weeks (for a total of 60 hours)
- Commencement date: November 8<sup>th</sup>

**COURSE AIMS AND CONTENT:**

Hans-Georg Gadamer who observed that history of concepts is, in fact, philosophy, and that perhaps philosophy should consider itself the history of concepts due to the fact that it is always made *in* concepts and *by* concepts, whereby there are no other problems in philosophy than the sole question: *what are the concepts?* There is a history of concepts, which means that even concepts have their time. Throughout the history concepts have been static patterns in the world and moving "concepts in the head," they have been sets of generic features, the properties of construction modelling the use of expressions in different situations, they have been the effects of the use of generic names, the areas in space based on non-integrated coordinates, geometric space of differences and similarities of a certain constellations of beings, they have been prototypes and measures of deviation from those prototypes, they have been the descriptors of changes in intensity and saturation (supersaturation) and in the essential order of a certain set of features, they have been a cognitive form of representation in the mind, or semantic construction on the sets.

The main task of the seminar will be to rethink philosophy and its history understood as a "machine for the production of concepts"? Are concepts, however, produced? Concepts can be invented, discovered, fabricated and even expressed. I accept as a working hypothesis that the concepts in philosophy are melted and recast. But what does such melting process of concepts mean? In what sense can a concept's content be melted down or reshaped? Have there ever been in philosophy any source, output, axiomatic concepts that serve as raw material for further transformations? What is the concept and what is its future fate - this are the questions to raise students' interest in this academic year.

**KNOWLEDGE TO BE ACQUIRED:**

Participants are expected to acquire two types of knowledge: (1) orientation in the philosophy, (2) orientation in contemporary ways of interpreting series of concepts such as idea, concept, technique of thinking, rationality, argumentation, discussion, public debate.

**EDUCATIONAL OUTCOMES:****Knowledge:**

- Improved knowledge on the place and role of the humanities, the social, exact and natural sciences in early and contemporary culture;
- Comprehensive understanding of the terminology of the humanities and social sciences and knows how to use it;
- Knowing in depth the relationships among different humanities disciplines studying works of art in culture and the sociological context of cultural activity;
- Knowing and understanding the main methods of analysing and interpreting products of culture in conjunction with tradition;
- Having good organized knowledge on the main trends in philosophical and social thought in a historical and contemporary perspective.

**Skills:**

- Selecting and interpreting information from different textual, iconographic and electronic sources;
- Analysing artistic, philosophical and sociological texts using the appropriate research tools, and presenting the results of such work;
- Basic research skills enabling the formulation of research problems from the humanities, philosophy, literature, and arts;
- Basic skills in using interdisciplinary research methods and tools to analyse phenomena of contemporary culture;
- The capacity to take part in conferences, symposia and discussions on literary, artistic and philosophical topics.

**Social Competence:**

- Understanding the dynamics of scientific, cultural and social development and keeping up with new research methods and paradigms;
- Understanding the principles of tolerance and cultural differences;
- Understanding the importance of Europe's cultural diversity and heritage;
- Participating actively in cultural and social life taking advantage of all forms offered by media, the arts and science

**TIME & VENUE ROSTER:**

IFiS PAN (Staszic Palace) – Department of Logic and Cognitive Science, room 321, Thursday: 16.00-17.00.

**DESCRIPTION OF THE CLASSES AND CORRESPONDING LITERATURE:**

1. Plato or *Χώρα/Chora*. Idea, object, third genre. *Chora* as "territory outside of polis", "citizen outside the city", "a vessel without contents". *Chora* as an anachronism of being and something that anachronizes existence. *Chora* as an oscillation suspended between double exclusion (neither/nor) as well as a double inclusion (both this and that).

Readings: Plato, *Timaeus*, trans. Donald J. Zeyl, Hackett, Indianapolis/Cambridge, 2000.

2. Gottfried Leibniz or concepts as monads and peculiarities. Thinking as moving from the body to the folding of matter. Expression of the concept, infinity, plastic forces, consonance. Coils of matter and concept calculus. Disassembly and tuning of concepts.

Readings: Leibniz, Gottfried Wilhelm, *Logical Papers*, G trans. H. R. Parkinson, Oxford: Clarendon, 1966.

3. Benedict Spinoza or *conatus*. Common concepts: weaving concepts. Concepts are common not because they belong to all minds, but because they represent something common to the bodies. Thinking as moving from less to more common concepts.

Readings: Spinoza, Benedict de (1677/2002) *Ethics*, [in:] *Spinoza: Complete Works*, trans. Samuel Shirley and ed. Michael L. Morgan (Indianapolis: Hackett Publishing).

4. Hegel or concept as the subject of the process of externalization of content. Concept in time and concept as a whole without time. The concept of the end and the end of the concept. Concept as death. Thinking as a death instinct or ascend from "spectre figures" to "logic categories".

Readings: Georg Wilhelm Friedrich Hegel, *Phenomenology of Spirit*, translated by A. V. Miller Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1977.

5. Friedrich Nietzsche or genealogy of concepts. The concept of history as science "useful" or "harmful" for "life". Three types of history: monumental, antiquarian and critical. Criticism as a historical critical. Criticism as a historical criticism.

Readings: Friedrich Nietzsche, *The Use and Abuse History for Life*, [in:] Friedrich Nietzsche, *Untimely Meditations*, trans. R. J. Hollingdale, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press 1986, pp. 57-123.

6. Ludwig Wittgenstein or concepts in the process of therapy. Kinship of concepts: family resemblance, sets, openness, labyrinth of language. Losing the concept in the concept of language. Problemativeness of the rule, language without rules.

Readings: Ludwig Wittgenstein, *Philosophical Investigations*, trans. G. E. M. Anscombe. Basil Blackwell, Oxford. 1953.

7. Henri Bergson or concepts in matter and memory. Intuition, duration, time, mechanism, organism. The concept against élan vital and the process of actualisation. Intellect without concepts, and intuition in the concept of duration.

Readings: Henri Bergson, *Matter and Memory*, trans. Nancy M. Paul, W. Scott Palmer, New York: Zone Books, 1991.

8. Walter Benjamin or concepts as Faustian mothers seeking children that recognize them. Configurations and constellations: the idea as a picture of the world at a glance. Saving phenomena and illuminating ideas.

Readings: Walter Benjamin, *The Origin of German Tragic Drama*, trans. John Osborne, London: Verso, 1998.

9. Jacques Derrida or *différance*. The divergence, the difference between Dionysus and Apollo, between ardour and structure. Concept as a rupture, stratification, dissociation of Un-Fug. Balancing in undecidability and ambivalence.

Readings: Jacques Derrida, *Force and Signification*, trans. Alan Bass, [in:] Jacques Derrida, *Writing and Difference*, Chicago: University of Chicago Press 2017.

10. Gilles Deleuze or the monstrosity of concepts. Concepts as organisms and monsters: concepts in the plan of immanence. Concept and conceptual form: signing of concepts.

Readings: Deleuze, Gilles, Guattari, Félix. *What Is Philosophy?*, trans. H. Tomlinson, G. Burchell, New York: Columbia University Press 1994.