PHI335
Autumn Semester 2011

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Course Overview:
Recently philosophers have become increasingly interested in the underlying nature of social facts leading to several new avenues of enquiry. These enquiries start from the idea that our lives are thoroughly social - we navigate social structures, we negotiate collective positions, and we craft our actions with reference to other agents. Together they can be taken to form a new branch of analytic philosophy; The Philosophy of Society.

This module will be an introduction to this emerging field. It will look at the different topics that comprise it and the different positions on them of philosophers such as; John Searle, Margaret Gilbert, Michael Bratman and David Velleman. Questions addressed will include: the constitution of social rules and conventions, the relation between a collective and its individual members, the possibility of collective belief/knowledge, the nature of collective action, and the ontological effect of dissent. By the end of the course a picture will have been built up of the connections between these topics and the approaches that can be taken to them.

Timetable:
There will be two lectures each week

**Monday:** 11:00 – 11:50  **HI-LT4**  
**Tuesday:** 11:00 – 11:50  **HI-LTB**

Please note that all lectures now start on the hour, and finish at ten minutes to the hour

You must also attend one discussion seminar, possible slots are

**Tuesday:** 2:00 – 2:50  **JB-SR 117**  
**Friday:** 1:00 – 1:50  **JB-SR 117**

Writing week: Week 7 of the Autumn Semester (7-11 November 2011) is a writing week. There will be no lectures or discussion seminars in the department that week.

Office Hours: My office hours for Autumn semester are after both lectures i.e. Monday 12:00 – 1:00 and Tuesday 12:00 – 1:00. I am sometimes available at other times also. If you want to arrange a meeting please email me.
Topics:
Objectivity and subjectivity
'Individualism' -vs- 'Collectivism'
Collective belief
Collective action
Collective rationality
Conventions and normativity
Distinguishing collectives from 'mere sets'
Collective knowledge
Collective intentions and desires
Obligation and dissent

Reading List:
The following reading list offers a good place to start. It is not by any means exhaustive, and you are encouraged to go away and find other relevant readings (in fact it will help us all out if you find things that I may have missed!) For further reading a good search resource is the Philosopher's Index, it can be accessed via MUSE.

For an overview introduction to the area a good starting point is the Collective Intentionality article in the The Internet Encyclopedia of Philosophy [http://www.iep.utm.edu/coll-int/]. The following collection of essays is also recommended:

- Schmitt, F. ed. (2003), Socializing Metaphysics

For influential approaches that have shaped the subject area see:


Each week there will be at least one required reading. These are marked with a (*). If you read them before start of the week this will help you get more out of the lectures. Discussion of these will form the starting point of the seminars so it is essential that they are read before the seminars. Those readings that are not available online are collected together in a course pack. Additionally, I have listed some suggested additional readings corresponding to each week's main topics that are available online or in the library.

Week 1: What is social philosophy?


Week 2: Conventions and social facts


Week 3: Social facts – Individualism -v- collectivism

- Gilbert, M. “Concerning 'Individualism' versus 'Holism’”, in her On social Facts


Week 4: What is a collective?


Week 5: Collective belief


**Week 6: Epistemology for collectives**


**Week 8: Collective action**
* Bratman, M. (1999), “Shared Cooperative Activity”, in his *Faces of Intention*


**Week 9: Collective intentions and desires**


**Week 10: Collective rationality**
* Pettit, P. “Groups with minds of their own”, in *Socializing Metaphysics: The nature of Social Reality*

Week 11: Obligation and Collective moral responsibility


Week 12: Dissent and module recap