



**PHI335**

**Autumn Semester 2011**

Joseph Kisolo-Ssonko

j.kisolo-ssonko@shef.ac.uk

### **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:

- Searle, J. (1995), *The Construction of Social Reality*
- Gilbert, M. (1989), *On Social Facts*

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?

- \* Searle, J. (1995), "The Building blocks of social reality", Chapter 1 from his *The Construction of Social Reality*, p.1-30
- Schmitt, F. (2003), "Socializing Metaphysics: An introduction", in *Socializing Metaphysics* ed. Schmitt, F.

## **Week 2: Conventions and social facts**

- \* Lewis, D. (2002) “Convention”, Chapter 1:Section 4 from his *Convention*, p. 37 – 42
- \* Searle, J. (2006), “Social ontology : Some basic principles”, *Anthropological Theory*, 6: 12
- Lewis, D. (2002) “Sample conventions”, chapter 5 from his *Convention*, p. 42 – 51
- Gilbert, M. (1996), “Notes on the concept of social convention”, chapter 3 from her *Living Together: Rationality Sociality & Obligation*
- Gilbert, M. (2001), “ Social Rules as Plural subject phenomena” in *On the Nature of Social and Institutional Reality*, eds. Lagerspetz, Ikaheimo and Kotkavirta
- Tumela, R. (2007) , “Social institutions”, chapter 8 from his *The philosophy of Society: A Shared Point of View*
- Marmor, A. (1996), “On Convention”, *Synthese*

## **Week 3: Social facts – Individualism -v- collectivism**

- \* Gilbert, M. “Concerning 'Individualism' versus 'Holism'”, in her *On social Facts*
- \* Quinton, A. (1975) ‘Social Objects’, *Proceedings of the Aristotelian Society*, New series – Vol. LXXVI
- Currie, G. (1984) “Individualism and Global Supervenience”, *The British Journal for the Philosophy of Science*, Vol. 35, No. 4, p. 345 - 358
- Schmid, H. (2009), “Overcoming the 'Cartesian Brainwash': Beyond Intentional Individualism”, chapter 2 in his *Plural Action: Essays in Philosophy and Social Science*
- Oliver, A. & Smiley, T. (2008), “Is plural denotation collective?”, *Analysis*, Vol. 68
- Meijers, A. (2003), “Can collective intentionality be individualised?”, *The American Journal of Economics and Sociology*, Vol. 62

## **Week 4: What is a collective?**

- \* Gilbert, M. (1992), “Introduction: everyday concepts and social reality”, chapter 1 from her *On social Facts*
- \* Keeley, M. (1981), “Organizations as non-persons”, *Journal of Value Enquiry*
- Oliver, A. and Smiley, T. (2008), “Is plural denotation collective?”, *Analysis*, Vol. 68
- Vincent, A. (1989), “Can groups be persons?”, *The Review of Metaphysics*, Vol. XLII
- Scruton, R. and Finnis J. (1989), “Corporate Person”, *The Aristotelian Society*, Supplementary Vol. LXIII

## **Week 5: Collective belief**

- \* Gilbert, M. (1987), “Modelling collective belief”, *Synthese*, Vol. 72
- \* Lewis, D. (1969), “Common Knowledge”, from his *Convention*
- Wray, (2002), “Collective Belief and Acceptance”
- Heal, J. (1978), “Common Knowledge”, *The Philosophical Quarterly*, Vol. 28
- Bradway, K. (2001) “Collective belief and acceptance”, *Synthese*, Vol. 129
- Tuomela, R. (1992) “Group Beliefs”, *Synthese*, Vol. 91

## **Week 6: Epistemology for collectives**

- \* Gilbert, M. (2000) “Collective Belief and Scientific Change”, chapter 3 in her *Sociality and Responsibility: New Essays in Plural subject theory*
- \* Schmitt, F. (1994), “The justification of group beliefs”, in *Socializing Epistemology: The Social Dimension of Knowledge*, ed. Schmitt, F.
- Solomon, M. (1994) “A more Social Epistemology”, in *Socializing Epistemology: The Social Dimension of Knowledge*, ed. Schmitt, F.

## **Week 8: Collective action**

- \* Gilbert, M. (1990) “Walking together: A paradigmatic social phenomenon” *Midwest Studies in Philosophy*, Vol. 15, pp. 1-14
- \* Bratman, M. (1999), “Shared Cooperative Activity”, in his *Faces of Intention*
- Gruner, R. (1976) “On the actions of social groups”, *Inquiry*, Vol. 19
- Tuomela, R. (1989) “Actions by collectives”, *Philosophical Perspective*, Vol. 3
- Ozar, D. (1984), “Social Rules and the actions of groups: Control of physical objects”, *Journal of Value Enquiry*, Vol.18
- Londey, D. (1978) “On the actions of teams”, *Inquiry*, Vol.21
- Copp, D. (1979) “Collective actions and secondary actions” *American Philosophical Quarterly*, Vol.16
- Kutz C. (2000) “Acting Together”, *Philosophy and Phenomenological Research*, Vol. 61, No. 1, p. 1 -31

## **Week 9: Collective intentions and desires**

- \* Velleman, D. (1997), “How to share an intention”, *Philosophy and Phenomenological Research*, Vol. 57
- \* Gilbert, M. (2000), “What is it for us to intend?”, chapter 2 in her *Sociality and Responsibility: New Essays in Plural subject theory*
- \* Bratman, M. (1999), “Shared Intention” in his *Faces of Intention*
- Swindler, J. (1996), “Social Intentions”, *Philosophy of the Social Sciences*

## **Week 10: Collective rationality**

- \* Weirich, P. (2007), “Collective, universal and joint rationality”, *Social Choice and Welfare*
- \* Pettit, P. “Groups with minds of their own”, in *Socializing Metaphysics: The nature of Social Reality*
- Pettit, P. (2002), “Collective Persons and Powers”, *Legal Theory*, Vol.8

## **Week 11: Obligation and Collective moral responsibility**

- \* Miller, S and Makela, P. (2005) “The collectivist approach to collective moral responsibility”, *Metaphilosophy*
- \* Gilbert, M. (2000) “Obligation and Joint Commitment”, chapter 4 in her *Sociality and Responsibility: New Essays in Plural subject theory*
- Gilbert, M. (2000) “Collective Remorse”, chapter 7 in her *Sociality and Responsibility: New Essays in Plural subject theory*
- Gilbert, M. (2000) “The idea of collective guilt”, chapter 8 in her *Sociality and Responsibility: New Essays in Plural subject theory*

## **Week 12: Dissent and module recap**

- \* Schmid, H. (2009), “On Not Doing Ones Part: Dissidence and the Normativity of Collective Intention” chapter 3 in his *Plural Action: Essays in Philosophy and Social Science*
- Searle, J. (2003), “Social Ontology and Political Power” in *Socializing Metaphysics: The nature of Social Reality*
- Graham, K. (2002), “Practical collective association and disassociation”, chapter 4 in his *Practical Reasoning in a Social World*