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MCMP/ LMU Munich

Summer Semester 2024

The Normativity of Logic

Seminar Description and Objectives

This seminar asks whether, and if so in which sense, logic is normative for reasoning. We consider it to be a bad thing to hold inconsistent beliefs. And, similarly, we criticize others for failing to appreciate the logical consequences of their beliefs (Steinberger 2020). On the other hand, psychological results appear to show that ordinary agents systematically fail to comply with certain principles of classical logic. Moreover, it is argued, there are principles of classical logic, such as the Ex Falso Quodlibet, with which ordinary agents not only fail to comply, but also should fail to comply.

So, we ask: Do principles of logic tell us what we ought to believe and how we ought to reason?

We will investigate that question by looking at contemporary articles in the philosophy of logic. We will discuss Harman's (1986) skeptical challenge to the normativity of logic, for which logic plays no special role for reasoning, and possible replies to Harman's challenge, including approaches that take logic (or better: certain logical principles) as constitutive of human reasoning. We will also investigate how the question of the normativity of logic relates to different philosophical theories of rationality (including the so-called theory of minimal rationality by Cherniak (1985)). Finally, we will discuss whether the normativity of logic is compatible with logical pluralism.

Schedule

Please note that the schedule might be subject to change.

[03.05 Introduction](#)

[Part 1: Harman's Challenges to Normativity, and Replies](#)

[10.05 Harman's Challenges.](#)

Required Reading: Gilbert Harman: *Change in View: Principles of Reasoning* (1984), Chapters 1-2.

Further readings: David Christensen: *Putting logic in its place: formal constraints on Rational Belief*, Chapters 3-4 (2004).

17.05 *Mind the Gap: Variety of Bridge Principles.*

Required Reading: John MacFarlane: *In What Sense (If Any) Is Logic Normative for Thought?* (manuscript, available on the author's webpage)

Further readings: John Broome: *Normative requirements* (1999).

24.05 *Preface Paradox and the Probabilistic Move.*

Required Reading: Hartry Field: *What is the Normative Role of Logic?* (2009) [only pp. 251-263]

Further readings: David Makinson: *The Paradox of the Preface* (1965); Henry Kyburg: *Conjunctivitis* (1970); Hannes Leitgeb: *A way out of the preface paradox* (2014); Gilbert Harman: *Field on the Normative Role of Logic* (2009)

31.05 *Kinds of Normativity for Logic.*

Required Reading: Florian Steinberger: *Consequence and Normative Guidance* (2019).

Further reading: Florian Steinberger: *Three ways logic may be normative* (2019).

07.06 *Logic as Constitutive for Thinking.*

Required Readings: Manish Oza: *The Value of Thinking and the Normativity of Logic* (2020).

Further readings: Jessica Leech: *Logic and the Laws of Thought* (2015).

Part 2: Logical Pluralism and Normativity

14.06 *Logical Pluralism and Normativity.*

Required Reading: Florian Steinberger: *Logical pluralism and logical normativity* (2019)

Further readings: JC Beall and Greg Restall: *Logical Pluralism* (2000); Roy Cook: *Let a Thousand Flowers Bloom: A Tour of Logical Pluralism* (2010); Teresa Kouri Kissel & Stewart Shapiro: *Logical pluralism and normativity* (2017); Greg Restall: *Carnap's Tolerance, Language Change and Logical Pluralism* (2001); Erik Stei:

Rivalry, normativity, and the collapse of logical pluralism (2020); Hartry Field: *Pluralism in Logic* (2009).

21.06 *Logical Pluralism without Normativity*

Required Reading: Gillian Russell: *Logic Isn't Normative* (2017).

Further reading: Christopher Blake-Turner & Gillian Russell: *Logical pluralism without the normativity* (2021).

Part 3: Oughts of Rationality

28.06 *Rationality as Responding to Reasons*

Required Reading: Niko Kolodny: *How does Coherence Matter?* (2007) [feel free to skip the discussion on Means-ends coherence at pp. 250-253]

Further readings: John Broome: *Rationality Through Reasoning* (2013); Niko Kolodny: *Why be disposed to be coherent?* (2008); Kenny Easwaran and Branden Fitelson: *Accuracy, Coherence and Evidence* (2015); Branden Fitelson: *Coherence* (manuscript). Sec. 5.1-5.2; Lara Buchak and Philip Pettit: *Reasons and Rationality* (2014); Diego Tajer: *The Normative Autonomy of Logic* (2020).

05.07 *Dialogical Rationality*

Required Readings: Catarina Dutilh Novaes: *A Dialogical, Multi-Agent Account of the Normativity of Logic* (2015) *only from section 3 (p. 595) onwards* **and** excerpts from: Hugo Mercier and Dan Sperber: *Why Do Humans Reason? Arguments for an Argumentative Theory* (2011) *from p. 57 until p.66 (i.e., from the start up to section 4.1, excluded)* and *from p.71 until p.73 (i.e, section 6)*.

Further readings: Sinan Dogramaci: *Communist Conventions for Deductive Reasoning* (2013); Hugo Mercier and Dan Sperber: *Bounded Reason in a Social World* (2021); Philipp Koralus and Salvador Mascarenhas: *The Erotetic Theory of Reasoning* (2013).

12.07 *Minimal Rationality*

Required Reading: Christopher Cherniak: *Minimal Rationality* (1985), Chapter 1.

Strongly recommended: Gerd Gigerenzer: *Fast and Frugal Heuristics: The Tools of Bounded Rationality* (2004); Gerd Gigerenzer: *Axiomatic rationality and ecological rationality* (2021).

Further readings: Gerd Gigerenzer: *The Bias Bias in Behavioral Economics* (2018); Rineke Verbrugge: *Logic and Social Cognition* (2009); Rineke Verbrugge and Lisette Mol: *Learning to Apply Theory of Mind* (2008).