

INSTITUT FÜR PHILOSOPHIE UNIVERSITÄT LEIPZIG

HUMBOLDT GUEST PROFESSOR WS 2021/2022



Martin Gustafsson is Professor of Philosophy at Åbo Akademi University, Finland, since 2010. He took his PhD at Uppsala University in 2000. Before he moved to ÅAU, he did post-doc research at the University of Chicago, Uppsala University and Stockholm University. His main research interests are in the philosophy of language, philosophy of action, philosophy of logic and the history of analytic philosophy. He has written papers on a wide range of philosophers, including Anscombe, Austin, Berkeley, Carnap, Cavell, Davidson, McDowell, Quine and Wittgenstein.

MARTIN GUSTAFSSON

INTENSIVE SEMINAR

The Paradox of Analysis in Analytic Philosophy – Revisionist and Non-Revisionist Responses

Analytic philosophy cannot understand its own aims and procedures unless it understands the significance of analysis as philosophical method. But how can such a method be of any use? On the one hand, it would seem that an analysis can be helpful only if it somehow produces new knowledge. On the other hand, isn't an analysis correct simply in virtue of laying bare what was already known? In this course, we study how some of the central thinkers in the analytic tradition have handled this 'paradox of analysis'.

Revisionists grasp the first horn of the dilemma, and argue that an analysis should not merely spell out but transform what gets analyzed, and even replace established concepts or forms of discourse with new and better ones. We will look at the roots of such revisionism in the application of quantificational theory in Frege and Russell, and then consider how it becomes fully self-conscious in Carnap's and Quine's conceptions of explication, as well as in Rorty's conception of vocabulary replacement. We will also consider the most recent variety of revisionism as proposed by contemporary advocates of "conceptual engineering".

Non-revisionists, on the other hand, grasp the second horn of the dilemma, and argue that the task of philosophy is not to provide new information, but to in some sense remind us of and help us overview what we already know. We will look at deeply different varieties of such non-revisionism in the works of Moore, Wittgenstein, Strawson and McDowell. Interestingly, both the revisionist and non-revisionist developments lead up to radical criticisms of the very notion of 'conceptual analysis' as it figures in early analytic philosophy. Some figures that are difficult to fit into either the revisionist or non-revisionist strand will also be discussed, including Sellars and Anscombe.

A central element of the course will be to explore how the methodological difficulties are interconnected with and arise in the context of the struggle with other philosophical problems. Indeed, rather than being a study in 'meta-philosophy', this course aims to undermine the very idea that methodological issues can be meaningfully pursued at a 'meta'-level. Hence, the relation between the methodological questions and other philosophical controversies will be explored in some detail. Of particular interest will be the disagreements over empiricist and pragmatist conceptions of knowledge, logic and language characteristic of many central debates within the analytic tradition.

For further information visit:
fagi.uni-leipzig.de

DATES

Fridays

3 - 6 pm:

November 12, 19, and 26

Saturdays

10 am - 1 pm

& 2 - 4 pm:

November 13, 20, and 27

LOCATION

GWZ Room 2 1.16