



Experience Day Philosophy: Global and Comparative Perspectives 29 November 2019

Lecture:

Title: Narrative Self and Meaningful Life-Story

Lecturer: Dr. J. Li

Dr. Jingjing Li is a university lecturer at the Institute for Philosophy. She is interested in theories of mind and consciousness preserved in East Asian and Continental philosophical traditions, with particular foci on Chinese Wei Shi (or "consciousness-only) philosophy and Edmund Husserl's phenomenology. She believes these traditions can be brought into fruitful engagement with one another in a global context. Currently, she is working on a project that explores theories of other minds in East Asian Buddhist philosophy, an exploration that will open door for rethinking human nature and gender from non-Western perspectives. For the program Philosophy: Global and Comparatives, she is teaching courses on concepts selfhood, Buddhist philosophy of non-duality, and feminist theories in Chinese and Japanese Philosophies.

Abstract:

Whenever we entertain the notion of the self, we tend to associate it with consciousness — I am the subject of my flow of consciousness that runs from the past to the present and further to the future. Nonetheless, what we take to be self-evident can always be problematized by philosophical skeptics: Can we maintain our sense of the self when consciousness gets interrupted and stops in deep sleep or in short coma? How do we really know what we have experience in our mind is real? How can we make sense of scenarios when we are so sure about our memory but only to find that our memory does not confirm to factual reality? These questions prompt us to explore an alternative approach to our self through which we can define our selfhood beyond consciousness. One of the alternatives that have been proposed and promoted by philosophers, Buddhists, cognitive scientists, neuroscientists, and psychiatrists, depicts the self in a narrative sense as that who can exercise agency to author a coherent and meaningful story for one's life. In the lecture, students will be introduced to the theory of narrative self, enquiring into how the narrative sense of self can respond to skeptics' challenge and examining how pure narrativity is a fruit of intellectual efforts in interdisciplinary studies of the self.

Tutorial:

Title: David Hume on the Standard of Taste

Lecturer: Dr.W.F. Kalf

Wouter Kalf (PhD (Leeds) 2013) is a university lecturer at the Institute for Philosophy. He is interested in meta-ethics, political philosophy and value theory. He has published a monograph entitled Moral Error Theory with Palgrave Macmillan in 2018 and his papers have appeared in journals such as Philosophical Studies, Ethical Theory and Moral Practice and Inquiry. Before coming to Leiden, he taught philosophy in the UK and held a research position in Utrecht.

Abstract:

David Hume (1711 - 1776) was a Scottish philosopher and a famous figure in the history of Western Philosophy. For instance, his books and essays have had a monumental influence on the development of Immanuel Kant's (1724 - 1804) philosophy. For this seminar, we will read and discuss Hume's essay 'Of the Standard of Taste'. We will use this text as our way into a number of fundamental questions in philosophy. First, (how) can we criticize art on moral grounds? Second, and just focusing on the aesthetic value and disvalue of art, are there expert art critics who can tell us which works of art are better than other works of art? Or is aesthetic appreciation wholly subjective and not subject to a 'standard of taste'? Third, if there are aesthetic experts, how can we recognize them, can we all become expert art critics, and which method (if any) do expert art critics use to come to their verdicts? Time permitting, we will explore the relevance of this discussion in aesthetics for other fields of philosophical inquiry, such as ethics and metaphysics.

Preparation:

In preparation for the tutorial, please read <https://davidhume.org/texts/empl1/st>.