

TOPICS IN THE PHILOSOPHY OF THE HUMAN AND SOCIAL SCIENCES (ToPHSS)

Course conductor: Maria Kronfeldner (kronfeldnerm@ceu.edu)
Time: Tue, 1:30-3:10; short break; 3:30-5:10
Room: N15, 106 (except for March 07, for which we have: Nador 15, 101)

Type: Advanced Research Seminar
Credit points: 4cp
Level: MA/PhD
Academic Programs (cross-listing): Philosophy, Cognitive Science, Gender Studies, Sociology and Social Anthropology

General description

The way scientists and scholars study human beings, their culture and society has often been considered to be different from the way other objects of science are studied, be it because of the reflexivity, freedom or normativity involved in studying human beings. In addition, none of the academic disciplines is studying humans as humans, be it biological disciplines such as evolutionary biology, social sciences or the humanities. In contemporary science, 'being human' has become partitioned into different phenomena (e.g., human evolution, social structure, culture, history, gender, etc), each with particular experts devoted to them. We will look at these peculiarities of the human and social sciences and analyze their specific methods and epistemic goals. What are the fundamental ontological commitments of these fields? Is there a human nature? Is there more than the individuals composing a society? What's left of the category of a self or person? Is the reflexivity involved only epistemic or is it making up people in reality, creating kinds of people (e.g. races) in reality, via looping effects or processes of embodiment? Is and should human and social sciences be pure, i.e., free of social biases and values? Is science contributing to inequalities by assuming a specific ontology? Can the knowledge of the different fields be combined to reach a unified idea of what it means to be human? In this seminar, these and similar questions will be addressed in a research-oriented manner, with experts from a variety of fields occasionally joining as guests.

The ToPHSS seminar is an advanced research seminar that builds on the course *Philosophy of Science: Core Contemporary Issues*. It will be offered each academic year. It is recommended to take the latter first, but qualified students can take the ToPHSS seminar even if they have not participated in the latter. The seminar is meant to attract an interdisciplinary crowd of CEU students and to discuss ontological and epistemic issues arising in the humanities and the social sciences from a reflective and interdisciplinary stance. It should be of special relevance to students from history, sociology and social anthropology, gender studies, legal studies, political sciences, nationalism studies and cognitive sciences. The course involves visiting guests and local experts. These will deliver lectures that are open to the public or participate in internal discussions (see timetable).

Learning goals

Students will

- learn to understand and appreciate the nature of philosophical problems,
- critically look at their discipline's goals, practices and kinds of knowledge produced thereby,
- train the ability to contextualize the humanities and social sciences within a broader scientific and social context, and
- practice close reading and argumentation.

Assignment and Grading

Grading: 80% written assignment; 20% participation in course

Written assignment: 3000 word argumentative term paper on a topic of choice, either from the line-up of texts or related. To get such a paper assigned you need to write an abstract with a list of references before the end of the term. In addition, there might be small written assignments announced during the meetings.

Participation in course: Students will be asked to present content (one core reading) in a manner that will be decided once it is clear who participates. Ideally it is 15 min presentations. For these student presentations, the syllabus offers a range of different readings (from a diversity of disciplinary perspectives), which approach the respective topic from different angles. The core reading chosen by the presenting student will then be circulated and all participants will read it as preparation. If you want to do a presentation at one of the early slots in the term, please feel free to contact Maria Kronfeldner before the course starts, to discuss the focus of the presentation. See also general rules for presentations and written assignments attached.

OVERVIEW OF TOPICS THAT WILL BE DISCUSSED IN 2016/17

The schedule of readings emerged in part from last year's discussions. That way, a continuous discussion over more than one course is possible.

We will start with a short introduction into historical and epistemological aspects of the fragmentation of the human and social sciences. After that, we will discuss *contested generalizations*, a follow up from last year's discussions. At focus will be the justification of generalizations about humans, given the diversity in all things considering humans. How are generalizations about humans possible nonetheless? In particular, we will ask "who is us?", i.e., whether it does matter that many studies in social and human sciences generalize from a rather restricted sample, namely the so-called "WEIRD" people (i.e., people from the 'West' that are educated and come from industrialized, rich and developed countries). Are they, as psychologists have recently claimed, the 'weirdest' people (in the normal sense of the term), i.e. far from representative for humanity?

Another question that we will discuss with respect to the issue about generalizations about humans is how to understand so-called 'generics' and whether they solve any of the epistemological problems that haunt universal generalizations. Generics do not say that 'all humans are X', but they say that 'humans are X'. Normalcy assumptions will be an important issue that we will discuss, another is whether generics further discrimination and dehumanization, issues often discussed in fields such as gender studies. (Guest: Jennifer Saul)

We will then discuss a line up of *contested conceptual divides*. We will start with the animal/human divide. We will ask what crossing ontological boundaries along that line historically meant and contemporarily means for those sciences concerned with humans. Philosophical questions attached to that issue are: how should the human and social sciences conceptualize this boundary, given that one also wants to understand violations of human rights that seem to involve crossing that boundary politically and ethically, by depicting, describing, regarding and treating certain humans as less than human. (Guest: Silvia Sebastiani; Thomas Brudholm)

Last year's special epistemic focus on the production of ignorance (a.k.a. agnotology) and the silencing of certain groups (in society and/or science) will be continued too. We will start with discussing the effect that certain anthropologies (e.g. a biological one contrasted with a philosophical one) have on attitudes towards human rights and on objectification, given that the one anthropology is treating the human as an object, the other as a subject. What follows from the subject/object divide for those sciences studying humans? What is made 'invisible' by concentrating on the one or the other? Are certain individuals (e.g. women) particularly vulnerable for objectification? (Guest: Magdalena Smieszek)

We will also discuss, for instance, what difference it makes how we conceptualize so-called 'thick' concepts such as pornography or rape. Are these concepts inherently normative and thus challenging the descriptive/normative divide that is assumed in the value-free ideal of science, a major topic from last year's course? Does it depend on how one uses these concepts whether certain things will be (often literally) 'seen' while studying humans? Discussing these issues will help us to understand better the normativity, pluralism and perspectivity in human and social sciences, which is a topic that might be continued with respect to the kind of causal explanations we give in social and human sciences (depending on interest of students). (Guest: Jennifer Hornsby)

Last year the nature/culture divide and race were discussed as two core ontological categories of the human and social sciences. This discussion will be continued but with a more decisive focus on special traditions in the social and human sciences (e.g. critical theory) and specific issues, e.g. the contrast between fixed/malleable and constructed/real and whether 'race' should be a term (because of its history) that should be eliminated from the human and social sciences. (Guest: Rebekka Hufendiek, Guest: David Ludwig)

Finally, we will discuss the contrast between individuals and groups (e.g. populations, societies), with a focus on the idea that societies are like organisms or organisms like nations. We will see that concepts from immunology are used to depict social relations and vice versa. We will follow the history of such comparisons, epistemically (how the individual versus the social is conceptualized; are the comparisons only metaphoric) and politically (which consequences does it have in the political realm?). We will discuss which role such comparisons play in contemporary human and social sciences. For instance, we will discuss how it figures in Derrida's philosophy and contrast this with the history of regarding the 'feeble-minded' in the US as 'cancerous' cells that infest the 'healthy' 'social body' and with respect to which the 'social body' needs to develop 'immunological responses' against them, e.g. by sterilizing these individual human beings. We will ask: is using biology by way of metaphor as dangerous as using it literally (i.e. to biologize social life), and should such comparisons be prevented? (Guest: Eszter Timar)

Finally, there will be a few open slots to accommodate interests that emerge from the discussions or that are of particular concern for students participating. The final two meetings will involve interactive [triadic feedback groups](#) so that the ideas for term papers can get discussed as part of the course.

All of the discussions will involve normative discussions about whether we should use the respective ontological categories or distinctions. Should we eliminate, i.e., stop using the respective concepts or terms (e.g. the term 'race', the standard concept of 'rape', that of 'dehumanization')? What is the kind of harm produced by not being careful about the generalizations and conceptual divides used? Are we producing certain kinds of ignorance that we should not produce or even direct harm?

Because of this normative focus, which is typical for philosophy, the introduction on the fragmentation of the human and social sciences will include remarks on how philosophy, social sciences and the other humanities can productively interact with each other, as part of a vision of science studies that also includes the human and social sciences not just as a resource for methods to analyze sciences, but to critically reflect on one's own practices and assumptions.

See **Timetable** below.

Lectures (open to the public) are announced at the Philosophy department's event listing (<https://philosophy.ceu.edu/events>) and at the ToPHSS webpage (<https://philosophy.ceu.edu/tophss>)

Readings and Announcements for students will be posted at the **e-learning site** (<https://ceulearning.ceu.edu/course/view.php?id=6354>). (Guests have to ask for the key to access the e-learning site).

<div> <div>Timetable, Topics and Readings</div> <div>ToPHSS 2016/17</div> </div>	
Jan 10	<p><u>Introduction</u>: How to study humans? - The fragmentation of the human and the kaleidoscope of knowledge.</p> <p>Reading: Smith, 1997, The Fontana history of the human sciences (pp. 7-19)</p> <p>Reading: Agamben, 2004, The open: Man and animal (Mysterium disjunctionis) (pp. 13-16)</p>
<i>Contested generalizations</i>	
Jan 10	<p><u>Discussion</u>: Who's us?</p> <p>Reading: Henrich et al, 2010, The weirdest people in the world?</p>
Jan 17	<p>1. <u>Discussion</u> with <i>Jennifer Saul</i>: Generics and the perpetuation of racist and sexist beliefs.</p> <p>Reading: Saul (draft), Are generics especially pernicious? (pre-circulated paper of guest)</p> <p>2. Reading: Haslanger, 2014, The normal, the natural and the good: Generics and ideology</p> <p>(If you want to do a presentation in this class, then please contact me before the course starts so that we can discuss whether Haslanger's paper fits your interest or whether you want to go in a different direction; this session is so early that I did not want to leave things as open as later in the course)</p>
<i>Contested divides</i>	
Jan 24	<p>Animal/human</p> <p>1. <u>ToPHSS Lecture</u>: <i>Silvia Sebastiani</i> – Humanization and dehumanization within Enlightenment debates: An attempt to contextualizing the ape/human divide.</p> <p>Reading: Sebastiani, 2016, Challenging boundaries: Apes and savages in Enlightenment.</p> <p>2. Reading/ Presentation (t.b.d. depending on interest of students): Desmond & Moore, Darwin's sacred cause; Abbattista, Trophying Human 'otherness'; Taylor, Beasts of burden; Costello, The role of animal-human similarity in promoting immigrant humanization; or similar.</p>
Jan 31	<p>1. <u>ToPHSS Workshop</u> with <i>Johannes Steizinger</i> – Ideological and psychological dehumanization: The case of National Socialism; <i>Helena Ivanov</i> – Dehumanization in genocide; <i>Perica Jovchevski</i> – Alienation as subtle dehumanization.</p> <p>Reading: pre-circulated papers of guests.</p> <p>2. <u>ToPHSS Lecture</u> (as part of philosophy coll, 5:30-7:10): <i>Thomas Brudholm</i> – Dehumanization as monstrification.</p> <p>Reading: pre-circulated papers of guest.</p>
Feb 07	<p>Object/subject</p> <p>1. <u>ToPHSS Lecture</u>: <i>Magdalena Smieszek</i> – The categorized and the categorical human in human rights.</p> <p>Reading: Chapters from Evans, 2016, What is a human? What the answers mean for human rights.</p> <p>2. Reading/Presentation (t.b.d. depending on interest of students): Mauron, Renovating the house of being: Genomes, Souls and Selves; Haslanger, On being objective and being objectified; Read et al, Prejudice, stigma and schizophrenia: The role of bio-genetic ideology; Gray et al, More than a body; or similar.</p>
Feb 14	<p>Descriptive/evaluative</p> <p>1. <u>Discussion</u> with <i>Jennifer Hornsby</i>: Pornography, speech acts and thick concepts.</p> <p>Reading: pre-circulated paper of guest.</p>

	2. Reading/Presentation (t.b.d. depending on interests of students): Putnam, The entanglement of fact and value; Dupré, Fact and value; Reitan, Rape as an essentially contested concept; Longino, What do we measure when we measure aggression; or similar.
Feb 21	Fixed/malleable 1. <u>ToPHSS Lecture</u> : <i>Rebekka Hufendieck</i> – The essentialist fallacy: Critical theory and naturalism. Reading: pre-circulated paper of guest 2. Reading/Presentation (t.b.d. depending on interests of students): Paul and Day, John Stuart Mill, innate differences, and the regulation of reproduction; Keller, The mirage of space between nature and nurture; Oyama, Terms in tension; Meloni, Epigenetics for the social sciences; or similar.
Feb 28	Real/made 1. <u>ToPHSS Lecture</u> : <i>David Ludwig</i> – Why race is still socially constructed. Reading: pre-circulated paper of guest 2. Reading/Presentation (t.b.d. depending on interests of students): Haslanger, A social constructionist analysis of race; Gannett, Questions asked and unasked: ... Debates about genetics and race; Kitcher, Does race have a future?; Glasgow, Constructivism, revisionism, and anti-realism; or similar.
Mar 07	Individual/social 1. <u>ToPHSS Lecture</u> : <i>Eszter Timar</i> – Celebrating Biodeconstruction. Reading: pre-circulated paper of guest (or equivalent). 2. Reading/Presentation (t.b.d. depending on interests of students): Levine, The organism metaphor in sociology; O'Brien, Protecting the social body; Anderson, Getting ahead of one's self? ... immunology and philosophy; Martin, Toward an anthropology of immunology; or similar.
<i>Open slots</i>	
Mar 14	t.b.d. with students t.b.d. with students
Mar 21	t.b.d. with students Discussion of ideas for term paper – bring your abstract and list of references for term paper
Mar 28	Discussion of term paper drafts Final issues

REFERENCES

Introduction

- Smith, R. (1997). *The Norton history of the human sciences*. New York: W.W. Norton.
- Agamben, G. (2004). *The open: Man and animal*. Stanford, CA: Stanford University Press.

Contested generalizations

- Henrich, J., Heine, S. J., & Norenzayan, A. (2010). The weirdest people in the world? *Behavioral and Brain Sciences*, 33, 61–83.
- Saul, J. (draft). Are generics especially pernicious? Pre-circulated paper (see e-learning site).
- Haslanger, S. (2014). The Normal, the Natural and the Good: Generics and Ideology. *Politica & Società: Periodico Di Filosofia Politica E Studi Sociali*, 3, 365–392.

Contested divides

Animal/human

- Abbattista, G. (2011). Trophying human “otherness”. From Christopher Columbus to contemporary ethno-ecology (fifteenth-twenty first centuries). In G. Abbattista (Ed.), *Encountering Otherness. Diversities and Transcultural Experiences in Early Modern European Culture* (pp. 19–41). Trieste: EUT Edizioni Università di Trieste.
- Costello, K., & Hodson, G. (2010). Exploring the roots of dehumanization: The role of animal-human similarity in promoting immigrant humanization. *Group Processes & Intergroup Relations*, 13, 3–22.
- Desmond, A. J., & Moore, J. R. (2009). *Darwin’s sacred cause: Race, slavery and the quest for human origins* (Intro, Ch. 13). London: Penguin.
- Sebastiani, S. (2016). Challenging boundaries: Apes and savages in Enlightenment. In W. D. Hund, C. W. Mills, & S. Sebastiani (Eds.), *Simianization: Apes, gender, class, and race* (pp. 105–137). Zürich: LIT Verlag.
- Taylor, S. (2011). Beasts of burden: Disability studies and animal rights. *Qui Parle: Critical Humanities and Social Sciences*, 19, 191–222.
- (Additional papers from guests, pre-circulated at e-learning site)

Object/subject

- Evans, J. H. (2016). *What is a human? What the answers mean for human rights* (Intro, Ch.2, Conclusion) Oxford: Oxford University Press.
- Gray, K., Knobe, J., Sheskin, M., Bloom, P., & Barrett, L. F. (2011). More Than a Body: Mind Perception and the Nature of Objectification. *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology*, 101, 1207–1220.
- Haslanger, S. (1993). On Being Objective and Being Objectified. In (2012) *Resisting reality: Social construction and social critique* (pp. 35–82). Oxford: Oxford University Press.
- Mauron, A. (2003). Renovating the house of being: Genomes, souls and selves. *Annals of the New York Academy of Sciences*, 1001, 240–252.
- Read, J., Haslam, N., & Magliano, L. (2004). Prejudice, stigma and “schizophrenia”: The role of bio-genetic ideology. In J. Read, L. R. Moshier, & R. P. Bentall (Eds.), *Models of madness: psychological, social and biological approaches to schizophrenia* (2nd ed., pp. 157–177). New York: Brunner-Routledge.

Descriptive/evaluative

- Dupré, J. 2007. Fact and value. In: Kincaid, H., J. Dupré, and A. Wylie. 2007. *Value-Free Science? Ideals and Illusions*. Oxford: Oxford University Press.
- Hornsby, J. draft. A new paper on hate speech and pornography
- Longino, H. E. (2001). What do we measure when we measure aggression? *Studies in History and Philosophy of Science Part A*, 32, 685–704.
- Putnam, H. (2002). The entanglement of fact and value. In Putnam, H. *The collapse of the fact/value dichotomy and other essays* (pp. 28-45). Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press.
- Reitan, E. (2001). Rape as an essentially contested concept. *Hypatia*, 16, 43–66.

Fixed/malleable

- Hufendieck, R. (draft). The essentialist fallacy: Critical theory and naturalism.
- Keller, E. F. (2010). *The mirage of a space between nature and nurture (Ch.1-2)*. Durham, NC: Duke University Press.
- Meloni, M. (2015). Epigenetics for the social sciences: Justice, embodiment, and inheritance in the postgenomic age. *New Genetics and Society*, 34, 125–151.
- Oyama, S. (2001). Terms in tension: What do you do when all the good words are taken? In S. Oyama, P. E. Griffiths, & R. D. Gray (Eds.), *Cycles of Contingency: Developmental Systems and Evolution* (pp. 177–193). Cambridge, MA: MIT Press.
- Paul, D. B., & Day, B. (2008). John Stuart Mill, innate differences, and the regulation of reproduction. *Studies in History and Philosophy of Science Part C: Studies in History and Philosophy of Biological and Biomedical Sciences*, 39, 222 – 231.

Real/made

- Gannett, L. (2010). Questions asked and unasked: How by worrying less about the ‘really real’ philosophers of science might better contribute to debates about genetics and race. *Synthese*, 177, 363–385.
- Glasgow, J. (2009). *A theory of race*. (Ch. 6). New York: Routledge.
- Haslanger, S. (2012 [2008]). A social constructionist analysis of race. In *Resisting reality: Social construction and social critique* (pp. 298–310). Oxford: Oxford University Press.
- Kitcher, P. (2007). Does “race” have a future? *Philosophy & Public Affairs*, 35, 293–317.
- Ludwig, D. (2014). Hysteria, race, and phlogiston: A model of ontological elimination in the human sciences. *Studies in History and Philosophy of Science Part C: Studies in History and Philosophy of Biological and Biomedical Sciences*, 45, 68–77.

Individual/social

- Anderson, W. (2014). Getting ahead of one’s self? The common culture of immunology and philosophy. *Isis*, 105, 606–616.
- Levine, D. (1995). The organism metaphor in sociology. *Social Research*, 62, 239–265.
- Martin, E. (1990). Toward an anthropology of ommunology: The Body as Nation State. *Medianthquar Medical Anthropology Quarterly*, 4, 410–426.
- O’Brien, G. (1999). Protecting the social body: Use of the organism metaphor in fighting the “menace of the feeble-minded.” *Mental Retardation*, 37, 188–200.
- Timar, E. (draft). A new paper on immunology and biodeconstruction.

Further readings for meetings will be decided depending on who participates. All core readings will be made available on the e-learning site. Always check the e-learning site before you prepare for class!

Recommended general background reading

Introductions, encyclopedia and historical introductions

- Delanty, G. (2005). *Social science: Philosophical and methodological foundations* (2nd ed.). Maidenhead: Open University Press.
- Kaldis, B. (Ed.). (2013). *Encyclopedia of philosophy and the social sciences*. Los Angeles: Sage Publications. (online via campus license)
- Manicas, P. T. (1987). *A history and philosophy of the social sciences*. New York: Basil Blackwell.
- Smith, R. (1997). *The Norton history of the human sciences*. New York: W.W. Norton.

Collections

- Delanty, G., & Strydom, P. (Eds). (2003). *Philosophies of social science: The classic and contemporary readings*. Maidenhead: Open University.
- French, P. A, Th. E. Uehling, and H. K. Wettstein (Eds). (1990). *The philosophy of the human sciences*. Notre Dame, IN: University of Notre Dame Press.
- Gutting, G. (2005). *Continental philosophy of science*. Malden, MA: Blackwell Pub.
- Kincaid, H. (Ed.). (2012). *The Oxford handbook of philosophy of social science*. Oxford: Oxford University Press.
- Martin, M., & McIntyre, L. C. (Eds). (1994). *Readings in the philosophy of social science*. Cambridge, MA: MIT Press.
- Steel, D. and F. Guala (Eds). (2011). *The philosophy of social science reader*. London; New York: Routledge.
- Turner, S. P., & Risjord, M. W. (Eds). (2007). *Philosophy of anthropology and sociology*. Amsterdam: Elsevier.

Series of events - in the framework of the annual [ToPHSS seminar](#) (Jan-Mar 2017).

- Jan 24, 1:30-3:10 (N15, 106): **Silvia Sebastiani** (Paris) - ToPHSS lecture on **"Humanization and Dehumanization within Enlightenment Debates: An Attempt to Contextualizing the Ape/Human Divide."** AB: What do "orangutans" make to our understanding of Enlightenment "science of man" – considered by historiography as a major contribution to the shaping of human and social sciences? How do they connect with the conceptualization of humankind and to what extent does such a conceptualization interplay with the humanization and/or dehumanization of peoples? My paper deals with the multiples uses to which comparative anatomy was put in different disciplinary frameworks, such as natural and philosophical histories, political as well as legal discourses, and even trials, in eighteenth-century Britain. Within this context, – I'll argue – the humanization of the "orangutan" went hand in hand with the dehumanization of a part of humankind. Physicians, natural historians, lawyers, judges, merchants or politicians engaged in the slave trade, while reshaping the boundaries between humans and apes, also contributed to increase the distance between the "savage" and the "civilized" peoples: whereas the human/animal divide lowered, the divide between human "races" increased and crystallized. In the our current context in which human and social sciences, as well as politics, have challenged and reconceptualized the human/animal divide, I suggest that a longer chronology - starting with the economic European domination of the global slave trade -, might contribute to a more nuanced and complex understanding of the question.
- Jan 31, 1:30-5:10 (N15, 106): **Workshop on dehumanization**, with **Johannes Steizinger** (Vienna) on **"Ideological and Psychological Dehumanization: The Case of National Socialism"**. AB: Dehumanization was at the core of Nazi ideology. National Socialism regarded itself as a political revolution that broke with the humanist tradition and realized a new concept of humanity. This attempt to redefine what it means to be human was accompanied by a radical animalistic dehumanization of certain groups of people. The *first part* of my talk examines this extreme form of dehumanization and analyses its foundation in a specific political anthropology. The *second part* raises the question what the significance of dehumanization for Nazi ideology can tell us about the psychology of Nazi perpetrators. Already in 1964, Alex Bein claimed that the image of the "Jewish parasite" belongs to the psychological roots of Shoah. Such views are controversial today. Johannes Lang, for instance, questions the involvement of dehumanization in the reality of Nazi mass murder. I will take up this issue from a methodical point of view and discuss what an account of Nazi *ideology* can contribute to the knowledge about the *psychology* of the Shoah. -- **Helena Ivanov** (Oxford) on **"Dehumanization in Genocide"**. AB: The victims of genocide are not perceived as human. The Jews were regarded as parasites, the Rwandan Tutsis as cockroaches, the Bosnian Muslims as balijs (those deemed unable to behave, barbarians), the Armenians as dogs, and the Kurds as cattle. They are stripped of their humanity and individuality - relegated to the category of 'subhuman'. Because it threatens the idea of integrated multicultural societies (by portraying 'the other' as less than human) and the security of human rights (by denying the human status to certain groups within the society), dehumanization stands in opposition with what political theorists perceive to be a just society. In my presentation I aim to do two things. First, I plan to clarify the difference between dehumanization that operates in genocide as opposed to dehumanization in non-violent instances, e.g. sexual objectification of women or inferior treatment of African Americans. Second, I plan to further substantiate this claim by looking into dehumanization of Jews in Nazi Germany, and dehumanization of Bosnian Muslims in the former Yugoslavia, with a particular emphasis on those who lived in Srebrenica. -- **Perica Jovchevski** (Budapest) on **"Alienation as Subtle Dehumanization"**. AB: Alienation has traditionally been understood as a form of dehumanization, both in its

socioeconomic dimension, as a loss of control over one's labor, as well as in its psychological dimension, as a distancing from one's authentic self. However, contemporary debates on dehumanization set the phenomena of alienation on the margins of the field. In my talk I will sketch an account of alienation as a subtle form of dehumanization, demonstrating that the theoretical marginalization of this phenomena is unjustified. I start by pointing out the origin and the historical developments of the notion of alienation. I then uncover some of the reasons behind the marginalization of alienation in the contemporary debates on dehumanization. I proceed further with an analysis of two manifestations of alienation in today's labor relations within organizational environments (the alienating consequences of emotional labor of service agents, the oppressive aspects in "dis-identification" between an occupational and an 'authentic' self). I conclude that both manifestations prevent the potential for development of traits of human nature such as emotional responsiveness, individuality and interpersonal warmth. In this respect both phenomena contribute to the development of subtle dehumanization.

- Jan 31, 5:30-7:00 (N15, 103): **Thomas Brudholm** (Copenhagen) - ToPHSS lecture on "**Dehumanization as Monstrification**". AB: How to understand dehumanization, given that it is involved in mass atrocities such as genocide? This talk discusses whether extreme forms of dehumanization can be further specified as monstrification. We are familiar with representations of entire groups as animals, diseases, or insentient things. Such evidence invites the thought that dehumanization is about not seeing the Other as a human being at all. Yet, a closer look at genocidal hate speech and violence invites another, a more complex perspective, according to which dehumanization involves recognizing members of the targeted group *at once* as not human *and* human: as rats, blood poisoning, and cargo, but – at the same time – also as evil and malevolent human beings. As Sartre put it, 'the Jew', in the imagination of the anti-Semite, is a strange being: free, but free *only* to will evil. In order to capture this ambivalence in cases of dehumanization similar to anti-semitic dehumanization of Jews, I propose the concept of monstrification.
- Feb 07, 1:30-3:10 (N15, 106) **Madgalena Smieszek** (CEU) - ToPHSS lecture on "**The Categorized and the Categorical Human in Human Rights**". AB: The question of what constitutes a human being, being human, humanness or humanity, in all its variations, has been a longstanding feature in academic and public discourse, and particularly in its relation with human rights. The varied answers and perspectives can influence attitudes and social behaviour that are either in line with or in opposition to human rights norms. The lecture will consider the various perspectives from philosophical, biological, theological, sociological and legal sources, and how these categorizations intersect with human rights objectives. Particular consideration will be given to how concepts of equality and dignity are incorporated or omitted in the categorizations, and finally, the necessity for consensus about what is categorically human, in light of the dangers that categorizations can lead to dehumanization and breaching of human rights standards.
- Feb 21, 1:30-3:10 (N15, 106) **Rebekka Huffendiek** (Basel) - ToPHSS lecture on "**The Essentialist Fallacy: Critical Theory and Naturalism**." AB: There is a strong tendency in critical theory to criticize naturalist takes on human features for describing them as biologically determined and thereby fixed. It is a central part of the ideological dimension of the nature-nurture debate that describing a feature as a result of nurture or social construction is associated with the features being changeable, and describing features as changeable is associated with progressive positions about what we are and what we could be. In this talk I argue that it is just as wrong to think of biological features as fixed or unchangeable as it is to think of social features as changeable and under our control. I call the identification of biological

traits with essential and unchangeable properties the essentialist fallacy. The essentialist fallacy can also occur in reverse form, where social properties are identified with contingent and malleable properties. I argue that the essentialist fallacy owes its seductive power to a long history in critical theory that aims to unveil what seems to us like a natural eternal order as a contingent product of social history that we can change. I suggest that while critical engagement with the ideological implications of scientific or naturalist takes on human features is highly relevant, the (often implicit) assumption should be dropped that there would be any interesting ideological implication in describing a feature as biologically or socially determined per se.

- Feb 28, 1:30-3:10 (N15, 106): **David Ludwig** (Amsterdam): ToPHSS lecture on "**Why Race is Still Socially Constructed**". AB: Social constructionism has become a widely endorsed position in contemporary philosophy of race. According to social constructionists, terms such as "white" and "black" refer to real human groups. However, they do not refer to biological populations but rather to social groups that have been created through racist privilege and subordination of people with different skin colors. While social constructionism has become the default position in philosophy of race, the constructionist mainstream has been challenged by both biological realism and antirealism. Biological realists argue that the rejection of racism is compatible with accounts of races as biological populations while antirealists insist that racial categories refer to false racist ideas. The aim of this talk is to evaluate social constructionism in the light of these challenges. I argue that the biological challenge should be rejected. While it is indeed sometimes necessary to talk about human biological variation, the use of racial terminology in biological contexts is both unnecessary and harmful. The antirealist challenge requires a more nuanced response. While social constructionism is preferable in some contexts (e.g. debates about social stratification in American society) antirealism seems more adequate in other contexts (e.g. debates about "Rasse" in Germany).
- Mar 07, 1:30-3:10 (N15, 101): **Eszter Timar** (Budapest): ToPHSS lecture on "**Celebrating Biodeconstruction**". AB: Derrida's work is often seen as overly removed from the world of things, life, and matter. However, arguments on deconstruction's capacity to capture some foundational logic of life also abound. First I will join the latter group by focusing on the Derridean terms "autoimmunity" ("Faith and Knowledge"), and allergy ("Plato's Pharmacy") in order to show that the recent theory of Thomas Pradeu and Clemens von Pirquet's 1906 coinage of allergy rely on a deconstruction of the immunis performed by Derrida: Pradeu's understands immunity as a dual activity of destructive inflammation and its regulatory suppression. Pirquet introduced the term allergy in order to suggest a similar duality in immune activity and conceived of allergy as the general organizing principle of immune activity instead of its pathology. However, instead of concluding along the lines of "Derrida is proved right by science", I want to suggest that the situation is more complicated. Placing Derrida on the side of biology as ontology as a rejoinder to accusations of irrelevance works by stopping short of critiquing the gesture of anointing what we can call live matter with special authenticating value. In order to demonstrate a resistance in Derrida's work to be simply proven right, I would like to consider what Derrida calls "life in general," where "natural life is not the whole of life" (Biodegradables)—and thus, the "domain of biology" can be read as part of a more general political thought.

GENERAL RULES: PARTICIPATION, PRESENTATIONS, WRITTEN ASSIGNMENTS

Maria Kronfeldner

Interaction in class should be based on mutual reliability and mutual respect, a fair and open intellectual exchange.

Participation

- Students are required to **attend classes regularly**.
- Students should **participate actively in seminar discussions** and have to **prepare the required reading** for the course.
- They should **be able to ask questions** and **make comments on that reading** and **respond to the presentations of other student**.

Presentations should

- include the **reconstruction of the main arguments of the text** and **interpretative remarks** or **questions for discussion**.
- If asked, students also have to **exhibit research skills** (e.g. referring to further literature regarding the topic)
- Students are expected to **prepare and distribute a maximum two page long handout** that they distribute before their presentation. A multimedia presentation (e.g. powerpoint) is possible but is not replacing the handout.

Written assignments

Format of the written assignments varies. See course syllabus on this. If a term paper is assigned as an argumentative piece, this can be:

- either a careful **critical reconstruction** of a particular and important argument for some position,
- a **comparison** between competing arguments about alternative solutions to a problem,
- or a **defense of some particular position/argument** against some relevant criticism.

In all these cases, your own argumentation, your critical voice, should be a significant part of the paper.

I will **evaluate assignments** according to the following criteria (if applicable):

Specific criteria	1 Yes	2	3	4	5 No
Does the paper have a precise, meaningful, independent and relevant question, structure and upshot?					
Are the arguments precise and coherent?					
Are important concepts explicated?					
Does the paper critically engage with the literature (e.g. anticipating counterarguments, developing an original argumentation)?					
Is there an indication for adequate comprehension of the relevant literature?					
Is the paper well-referenced (mentioning relevant references) and does it conform to the standards of academic writing?					