

Departmental Seminars

Seminars meet on **Thursdays at 4.30pm in Seminar Room 2**, Department of History and Philosophy of Science, Free School Lane, Cambridge. There is tea beforehand in Seminar Room 1 at 4pm.

Organised by Simon Schaffer.

- 22 January **Jutta Schickore (HPS, Cambridge)**
The productivity of faulty procedures: microscopy of the nerves in the 1820s and 1830s
- 29 January **Charles Weijer (Dalhousie University)**
Dispatches from the placebo wars
- 5 February **Jim Secord (HPS, Cambridge)**
Inaugural Lecture: 5pm in Mill Lane Lecture Room 3. See back page for details.
- 12 February **Nick Wilding (HPS, Cambridge)**
The war of writing
- 19 February **Michela Massimi (Girton College, Cambridge)**
Reconsidering Kuhnian incommensurability
- 26 February **Pamela Smith (Pomona College, California)**
Matter and mind: early modern artisans, material culture and the production of knowledge
- 4 March **Ian Maclean (All Souls College, Oxford)**
Harriot on combinations
- 11 March **Simon Singh**
The history of codes and codebreaking

Special Seminar

Gordon Brittan (Montana State University)
Does traditional epistemology rest on a mistake?

Monday 8 March at 4pm in Seminar Room 1

Seminar Programmes are sent out at the start of every term to the names on our mailing list. Please contact the Department if you would like to be added to or removed from the mailing list, or if you change your address. Seminar information is also available at www.hps.cam.ac.uk/seminars.

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Abstracts

22 January **Jutta Schickore (HPS, Cambridge)**

The productivity of faulty procedures: microscopy of the nerves in the 1820s and 1830s

Very often, historians have ascribed a largely negative role to error, failure, and fault. Error – the erroneous result – is an obstacle to scientific advancement, something that has to be identified and removed so as to allow science to progress. In my paper, I seek to show that errors can play a much more productive part for the practice of research. To do so, I concentrate on the so-called ‘globular theory’ of organic matter, which was widely advocated among microscopists in the early decades of the nineteenth century. According to this theory, muscular and nerve fibres consist of strings of tiny globules. Historians of the microscope have claimed that the ‘erroneous’ globular hypothesis could eventually be overcome when better instruments were introduced and novel histological theories came to be adopted. While I do not deny that technical advancements did occur in the early decades of the nineteenth century, I wish to stress that they were inextricably intertwined with a novel awareness of the limits and impediments of microscopical vision, which informed both the practicalities of making and of applying the instrument. I argue that the microscopists’ novel methodological concerns with the nature of light and especially with the effects of preparation procedures were crucial both for the refutation of the globular hypothesis and for the emergence of alternative views of nervous tissue. I conclude the presentation with some more general considerations as to the role of errors, faults, and failures in scientific practice.

29 January **Charles Weijer (Dalhousie University)**

Dispatches from the placebo wars

The dispute in research ethics as to the proper role of placebo controls in clinical trials testing new drugs has become both bitter and entrenched. Placebo critics point out that fiduciary obligations between physician and patient require that placebo controls be restricted to cases in which there is no standard treatment for the condition under study. Placebo proponents argue that claims for therapeutic obligations in clinical research are groundless. So long as harm is limited and consent is obtained, placebo controls may be used widely, even when standard treatment is available. I want to suggest that this stalemate in moral argument is symptomatic of a deeper dispute as to the requirements of sound scientific inquiry. Thus, its resolution calls for an inquiry into epistemic presumptions in claims as to the scientific necessity of placebo controls.

12 February **Nick Wilding (HPS, Cambridge)**

The war of writing

The debate was one of the central instruments for producing matters of fact in early modern natural philosophy. But what happened when an adversary was found to be masked or anonymous? In this paper I wish to analyse the motives and techniques used in constructing and decoding pseudonyms, pseudonyms’ function within natural philosophical debate and their epistemological status. Concentrating on examples concerning Galileo, I shall reread his troubled engagement with masked Jesuit authors in the light of the *guerra della scrittura* of the Venetian Interdict, where pseudonyms were employed by major political players on both sides. Questions of property, propriety, identity and authority were crucial in these debates, and the correct engagement with a supposedly hidden author posed peculiar problems in the related realms of both politics and natural philosophy.

19 February **Michela Massimi (Girton College, Cambridge)**
Reconsidering Kuhnian incommensurability

In his later writings, Thomas Kuhn interpreted incommensurability as untranslatability between scientific lexicons. On this view, statements of the older lexicon would not be accessible by means of a translation that uses the current lexicon, and the only way of understanding the activity of scientists working with the old lexicon would be by language learning, i.e. bilingualism. Kuhn's central claim is that bilingualism does not imply translatability. Learning different lexicons would give access to incommensurable and non-overlapping worlds. In this talk I will argue that incommensurability does not necessarily follow from the conditions that Kuhn established for scientific lexicons. This argument is illustrated by an episode in the passage from the old quantum theory lexicon to the new quantum theory lexicon in the 1920s.

26 February **Pamela Smith (Pomona College, California)**
Matter and mind: early modern artisans, material culture and the production of knowledge

How did early modern European artisans understand nature and their own ability to transform natural materials into objects? How can historians get at this understanding? This paper considers what insight into artisanal knowledge can be gained by reconstructing their techniques, how making relates to knowing, and why this matters to historians of science.

4 March **Ian Maclean (All Souls College, Oxford)**
Harriot on combinations

Thomas Harriot (1560-1621) is known today as an elegant and innovative mathematician, a natural philosopher and astronomer, a traveller to the New World, about which he wrote, and a member of the Northumberland circle with wide intellectual interests. This paper will look at his interest in combinations in three contexts: language, natural philosophy (the question of atomism) and mathematics, in order to assess where to situate him in the range of occult and scientific mentalities associated with the late Renaissance.

11 March **Simon Singh**
The history of codes and codebreaking

As each encryption system is broken, then new stronger forms of encryption have been developed. Simon Singh will look at the evolution of encryption from simple ancient ciphers to the more complex and secure forms of encryption in the Information Age, including the simultaneous discovery of public key cryptography. In particular, he will talk about the development of the Enigma machine, how it was used by the German military in the Second World War, how it was cracked by codebreakers at Bletchley Park and the influence of this breakthrough on the course of the war. Simon will also demonstrate a genuine Enigma cipher machine.

History of Medicine Seminars

History of Medicine seminars are held on **Tuesdays at 5pm in Seminar Room 1**. Tea is available from 4.40pm. All welcome.

Early Medicine and Natural Philosophy

The theme of this term's seminars is '**Disease in History**'.

Organised by Andrew Cunningham and Sachiko Kusakawa.

- 20 January **Samuel K. Cohn (University of Glasgow)**
Notions of disease and the Black Death
- 3 February **Peregrine Horden (Royal Holloway, University of London)**
The case for biological realism
- 17 February **Jon Arrizabalaga (CSIC, Barcelona)**
Grmek and the longue durée in the history of epidemics
- 2 March **Andrew Cunningham (HPS, Cambridge)**
Death in Venice (and in Bologna, but especially in Padua) in the early eighteenth century: reading Morgagni on causes of death

History of Modern Medicine and Biology

Organised by Nick Hopwood.

- 27 January **Andrew Mendelsohn (Imperial College, London)**
Medicine militant and its origins in late nineteenth-century Europe
- 10 February **Aryn Martin (Cornell University and HPS, Cambridge)**
Can't any-body count? Counting as an epistemological topic in the history of human chromosomes
- 24 February **Ayesha Nathoo (HPS, Cambridge)**
Hospital–media relations in the first British heart transplant (May 1968)
- 9 March **Lutz Sauerteig (University of Durham)**
Sex education literature, 1950s–1970s: the making of 'Geschlecht'

Latin Therapy Group

The Latin Therapy Group meets on **Fridays at 4pm in Seminar Room 1** in order to practise the art of translation, improve our Latin grammar, and determine who deserves the most sympathy on account of the difficulty of their sources – all in a mutually supportive environment! Well-known (usually classical) texts of relevance to the history of science are studied, as well as texts on which members of the group are working. All are welcome to attend.

For more information, and to be added to the mailing list, please contact the organisers, Adam Mosley and Katie Eagleton.

Psychoanalysis and the Humanities

Seminars are held fortnightly on **Wednesdays at 5pm**. The seminars on 21 January and 3 March will be held in Seminar Room 2; the others in Seminar Room 1. Tea is available from 4.40pm. All welcome.

Organised by Mary Jacobus.

21 January **Andrea Sabbadini (British Psychoanalytic Society)**

The merging of temporalities in Bernardo Bertolucci's short film *Histoire d'Eaux* (2002)

4 February **Trudi Tate (Clare Hall, Cambridge)**

The listening watch: Australian memories of the Viet Nam war

18 February **Catherine Belsey (University of Cardiff)**

Psychoanalysis and early modern culture: Lacan with Augustine and Montaigne

3 March **John Fletcher (University of Warwick)**

Primal scenes, screen memories, originary fantasies: Freud's psychical scenography

Psy Studies

History of Psychiatry, Psychology, Psychoanalysis and Allied Sciences

Seminars are held fortnightly on **Wednesdays at 5pm in Seminar Room 1**. Tea is available from 4.40pm. All welcome.

Organised by John Forrester and Deborah Thom.

28 January **Darian Leader (Psychoanalyst, London)**

The voice as a psychoanalytic object

11 February **James Mills (Department of History, Strathclyde University)**

Psychiatry, colonialism and the community: the modern psychiatric hospital in south Asia, 1857 to 1947

25 February **Rhodri Hayward (Wellcome Trust Centre for History of Medicine, London)**

The idea of influence in general practice: from Clever Hans to Michael Balint

10 March **Martin Edwards (Wellcome Trust Centre for History of Medicine, London)**

Control and the therapeutic trial

Cabinet of Natural History

Seminars are held on **Mondays at 1pm in Seminar Room 1**. You are welcome to bring your lunch. Organised by Emma Spary.

- 19 January **Daniela Bleichmar (Princeton University)**
Seeing nature across the Atlantic in the eighteenth century
- 26 January **Rebecca Stott (Anglia Polytechnic University and HPS, Cambridge)**
The first bones of time: natural history in early Victorian poetry
- 2 February **Sarah Davis (independent scholar)**
Darwin, Tegetmeier and the bees
- 9 February **Paul White (HPS, Cambridge)**
Acquired character: the material of the 'self-made man'
- 16 February **Michael Bravo (Scott Polar Research Institute, Cambridge)**
The right whale for enlightenment? Reflections on whaling, improvement and the national interest in the long eighteenth century
- 23 February **Jens Lachmund (University of Maastricht)**
Knowing the urban wasteland: nature conservation in the city of Berlin
- 1 March **Fredrik Jonsson (University of Chicago)**
'Britain will become a world': the sciences of internal colonization in the Scottish Enlightenment
- 8 March **Nick Hopwood (HPS, Cambridge)**
Images of evolution and charges of fraud: Haeckel's embryos in Bismarck's Germany

Epistemology Reading Group

We will be reading *Kantian Humility: Our Ignorance of Things in Themselves* (OUP, 1998; paperback 2001). Two copies are on reserve in the Whipple Library. Each meeting of the group will focus on one part of the book, with a member of the group offering a preliminary evaluation, followed by a general discussion.

Meetings will take place on **Thursdays at 2pm in Seminar Room 1** and are open to all. Organised by Peter Lipton.

- 15 January 'An Old Problem' and 'Three Kantian Theses'
- 22 January 'Substance and Phenomenal Substance'
- 29 January 'Leibniz and Kant'
- 5 February 'Kant's Rejection of Reducibility'
- 12 February 'Fitting the Pieces Together'
- 19 February 'A Comparison with Locke'
- 26 February 'Kant's "Primary" Qualities'
- 4 March 'The Observable and the Supersensible' and 'Realism or Idealism?'

Reading Kant

This term we shall be reading the Transcendental Logic, Introduction and Division I, Book I: ‘Analytic of Concepts’, from the *Critique of Pure Reason*. The meetings will be held on **Tuesdays at 11am in the Whipple Museum Reserve Gallery**. Organised by Marina Frasca-Spada and Steve John.

- 20 January Marina Frasca-Spada will introduce the discussion of the Introduction: Idea of a Transcendental Logic, and the first two sections of the Transcendental Logic: The Transcendental Analytic; The Analytic of Concepts (A50/B74–A66–B91) [In the translation by P. Guyer and A. W. Wood, CUP 1998, pp. 193–203]
- 27 January The Analytic of Concepts, First Chapter: On the Clue to the Discovery of all Pure Concepts of the Understanding (A66/B91–A83/B109, B109–116) [pp. 204–218]
- 3 February Second Chapter, First Section (A84/B116–A95–B129) [pp.219–226]
- 10 February Second Chapter, Second Section, version A (A95–A114) [pp. 226–236]
- 17 February Second Chapter, Third Section, version A (A115–A130) [pp. 236–244]
- 24 February Second Chapter, Second Section, version B, §15–23 (B129–149) [pp.245–256]
- 2 March Second Chapter, Second Section, version B, §24–27 (B150–169) [pp.256–266]

Wittgenstein Reading Group

‘Wittgenstein and Epistemological Scepticism’

This term we will be reading Wittgenstein’s *On Certainty* and surrounding material. Meetings will take place fortnightly on **Fridays at 2-4pm in the Whipple Museum Reserve Gallery**. The material for the first meeting is on reserve in the Whipple Library. Participation is open to PhD and MPhil students in the Department of History and Philosophy of Science and the Faculty of Philosophy.

For further information contact Martin Kusch.

- 23 January G.E. Moore, ‘A Defence of Common Sense’, and ‘Proof of an External World’, both in G.E. Moore, *Philosophical Papers*, London, Allen and Unwin, 1959; and in G.E. Moore, *Selected Writings*, London, Routledge, 1993.
- 6 February L. Wittgenstein, *On Certainty*, Oxford, Blackwell, 1969, ##1-346
- 20 February L. Wittgenstein, *On Certainty*, ##347-676
- 5 March C. Wright, ‘(Anti-)sceptics Simple and Subtle: G.E. Moore and John McDowell’, *Philosophy and Phenomenological Research* 65: 330-48, September 2002; and C. Wright, ‘Wittgensteinian Certainties’, forthcoming in D. McManus (ed.), *Wittgenstein and Scepticism*, Routledge, London, 2004 (August).
www.nyu.edu/gsas/dept/philo/faculty/wright/papers/Wittgensteinian_Certainties.pdf

History of Science Workshop

The History of Science Workshop is a seminar group devoted to peer discussion of work in progress on the history and historiography of science, for example PhD chapters, dissertations, articles intended for publication, or conference papers. The seminar aims to provide an informal arena for the exchange of ideas among students of the history of science in HPS and elsewhere.

We meet on **alternate Wednesdays at 1pm in Seminar Room 1**. Papers are circulated by e-mail before each meeting, and a copy is left in Box File 30 in the Whipple Library. Please contact Katherine Angel if you are interested in giving a paper (new PhD students and MPhils welcome) or adding your name to the e-mail list.

- 21 January **Thomas Brandstetter (Internationales Forschungszentrum Kulturwissenschaften, Vienna)**
Dismantling the state apparatus – the ‘Machine de Marly’ in Revolutionary France
- 4 February **Koen Vermeir (Catholic University, Leuven and HPS, Cambridge)**
Title to be confirmed
- 18 February **Sarah Dry (HPS, Cambridge)**
Accounting for railway accidents: the self-inspecting system in Britain, 1850-1875
- 3 March **Anna Maerker (Science and Technology Studies, Cornell)**
Anatomical models in Florence and Vienna around 1800

Philosophy Workshop

The PW is a fortnightly peer group seminar devoted to the discussion of on-going work by researchers in philosophy. Short papers will normally be circulated by e-mail one week in advance of each meeting, where the author will give a brief synopsis. The aim of the seminar is to provide a forum for informal, constructive interaction amongst those currently engaged in philosophical research.

Meetings take place **every other Wednesday at 1pm in Seminar Room 1**, and are open to all researchers. For more information, or to add your name to the list of e-mail recipients, contact Mark Sprevak.

- 28 January **Christina McLeish (HPS, Cambridge)**
Counterfactuals and contemporaneity
- 11 February **Torben Rees (HPS, Cambridge)**
Physicalism and phenomenal consciousness
- 25 February **Axel Gelfert (HPS, Cambridge)**
There’s something about testimony
- 10 March **Matteo Mameli (King’s College, Cambridge)**
Biological inheritance

EPACTS

The Early Physics, Astronomy, Cosmology and Technology Seminar meets at **6pm on alternate Wednesdays, in M4 New Court, Trinity College.**

This term meetings will take the form of a *conversazione*. The overall theme of the term is instruments and machines, and participants are invited to bring with them a picture, anecdote or book relating to the topic of each meeting for presentation and discussion. All are welcome to attend.

Organised by Adam Mosley.

21 January *Instruments and their Uses:*

instruments and machines shown or described in use, the meanings of ‘use’ as applied to instruments and machines, the uses of studying objects and machines

4 February *Paper Objects:*

instruments of paper/parchment, instrument and machine illustrations, texts about instruments or machines that no longer exist

18 February *Problem Cases:*

fakes and forgeries, instruments and machines that don’t work, altered instruments, making sense of instrument instructions

3 March *Owners, Collections and Groups:*

instrument collections, studying groups of instruments/books, instrument-makers’ workshops, studying owners

Philosophy of Language Reading Group

We will be continuing to read essays from the Blackwell *Companion to the Philosophy of Language* (Blackwell, 1997) edited by Bob Hale and Crispin Wright. The book is available in paperback in the Philosophy section at Heffers, and a copy has been placed on reserve in the Whipple Library. Each meeting of the group will focus on one essay, with a member of the group offering an informal presentation, followed by a general discussion.

Meetings will take place on **Mondays at 1pm in Seminar Room 2**. All are welcome, and please feel free to bring your lunch. Organised by Mark Sprevak and Christina McLeish.

19 January David Wiggins, ‘Meaning and Truth Conditions’

26 January Mark Richard, ‘Propositional Attitudes’

2 February Bob Hale, ‘Realism and its Oppositions’

9 February Bob Hale, ‘Modality’

16 February Graeme Forbes, ‘Essentialism’

23 February Jason Stanley, ‘Names and Rigid Designation’

1 March John Perry, ‘Indexicals and Demonstratives’

8 March Harold Noonan, ‘Relative Identity’

Science and Literature Reading Group

We begin our reading in science and drama with four plays on themes in the life sciences. Meetings are held fortnightly on **Wednesdays, in the upstairs seminar room in Darwin College at 8pm**. Everybody welcome.

Organised by Kate Price.

21 January *Three Hours Before Marriage*, by John Gay (1717), plus selected chapters from *Memoirs of the extraordinary life, works, and discoveries of Martinus Scriblerus* (Intro, I, II, III, VII, XIV, XV)

This crocodile of a satire gives doctors, collectors of curiosities, playwrights, critics and even alligators a run for their money. Selections from the *Memoirs* give a context for the play and its satirical aims.

Play available at Literature Online (via UL electronic resources) or in the UL (9720.b.445). *Memoirs* in the UL (727.c.95.5 or 1992.9.1238) and English Faculty (E 44 POP).

4 February *An Enemy of the People*, by Henrik Ibsen (1882)

Dr Stockmann's position as medical officer to the Baths at a town in Norway is jeopardised when he discovers that the water is polluted. The local newspaper office is central to the ensuing compromises between scientific truth and political interests. UL (9000.d.3707) English (SC 74 IBS) and in print from Oxford World's Classics.

18 February *After Darwin*, by Timberlake Wertenbaker (1998)

UL (1998.8.5909) English (E84 WER) and in print from Faber.

Actors Tom and Ian play Charles Darwin and Robert FitzRoy, interlacing scenes aboard *The Beagle* in 1831 with their lives in 1998. Features the shipping forecast as a seduction technique.

3 March *An Experiment with an Air Pump*, by Shelagh Stephenson (1998)

UL (2000.8.281) and in print from Methuen.

Inspired by Joseph Wright's painting of the same name, the play's events unfold in the household of a radical scientist in 1799 and in the same house 200 years later, when bones are discovered in the basement as a geneticist is offered a well-paid but controversial job.

Medieval Science and Philosophy Reading Group

The Medieval Science and Philosophy Reading Group will continue to meet on **Wednesdays from 1pm to 2pm at L1 Great Court, Trinity College**. This term we shall be discussing parts of Maimonides's *Guide of the Perplexed*.

Please contact John Marenbon for further details.