

BELIEF AND THE DOXASTIC FAMILY

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Meetings

Wednesdays 6 - 8.30 pm Adorjan Hall, 343 C

Fridays 9 – 11.30 am Adorjan Hall, 343 C

Course Description

The seminar will cover a territory at the frontier between the philosophy of mind and epistemology. A long tradition has tended to assimilate all cognitive propositional attitudes to *belief*, conceived as a disposition to act. But another tradition has emphasized that there are a variety of distinct belief-like attitudes, such as assent, judgment, supposition, doubt, presumptions, expectations or hopes, and indeed knowledge. The doxastic family is even wider: there are mental states which look like beliefs such as credences or degrees of belief, epistemic feelings (such as the feeling of knowing and epistemic emotions (such as surprise), delusions, biases, tacit beliefs. They are belief's "cousins". But should these cousins be allowed in the family? Are they quasi-beliefs or not beliefs at all? Comparing these to beliefs, and establishing a taxonomy of belief-attitudes will be our main task, but the exercise is not merely one of classification. It has to be backed by a theory of belief and of attitudes. Various criteria have to be taken into account, such as the passive or active nature of these states or their accessibility to consciousness, but the guiding idea will be that an attitude has to be considered as a belief if it subject to epistemic norms and if it aims at knowledge. Not all of the cousins pass the test.

Readings

Recommended readings will be made available as PDFs on the seminar website.

For each sessions there are two recommended readings (a and b) , and an optional (c) one. Ideally there should be a short presentation by a participant of one of the papers, to introduce the discussion.

Seminar Dates

September 26, 28

October 3, 5, 10, 12, 17, 19, 24, 26, 31

November: 2

December 20: Grades due.

PLAN

For each session, there are two recommended readings (a and b) and an optional one (c).

1. W 9.26 Belief and its cousins : the taxinomical problem

- a. Braithwaite, R.B. "The nature of Believing", *Proc. Ar. Society*, 33:129 - 146 (1932)
- b. Zimmerman A. 2007 "The nature of Belief", *Journal of consciousness Studies* 14 (11): 61-82.
- c. *Optional*: Engel, P. *to appear* "How to Cut the doxastic Cake: Newman and his contemporary followers on Belief and Assent"

Additional document

1.d. Engel, *Belief*, Oxford Bibliographies online 2010

<http://www.oxfordbibliographies.com/view/document/obo-9780195396577/obo-9780195396577-0012.xml>

2. F 9.28 Belief and its norms : the correct attitude hypothesis

- a. Engel, P. 2013 "In defense of Normativism about the Aim of Belief", In Chan T. ed. *The Aim of Belief*, Oxford University Press,
- b. Mc Hugh , C 2014, "Fitting Belief", *Proc. Ar. Society* , Vol. cxiv, Part I.
- c. *Optional*: Nolfi , K. 2015 "How to be a Normativist about Belief", *Pacific Philosophical Quarterly*, 96, 181-204

3. W. 10.3. Knowledge and Belief

- a. Nagel, J. 2013 "Knowledge as a Mental State", *Oxford Studies in Epistemology*, 4
- b. Smith M. 2017 "The Cost of treating Knowledge as a mental State", in Carter, A. Gordon, E. & Jarvis, B. ed *Knowledge first, approaches to epistemology and mind* Oxford

- a. *Optional* : Myers-Schultz, Schitzgebel 2013 "Knowing That P without Believing That P" *Nous* 47:2 ,371–384

4. F. 10.5 Credences

- a. Foley, R. 1993: “Degrees of Belief and the Lockean thesis” in *Working without a net*, Oxford University Press, and in Huber & Schmidt-Pietri and *Degrees of Belief*
- b. Frankish, K. “Partial Belief and flat out Belief”, in Huber F. & Schmidt-Petri, C (eds.), *Degrees of Belief*. Springer. pp. 75-93
- c. optional : Holton, R 2008, “Partial Belief and partial intention” , *Mind* 117, 27-58

5. 10.7. W. 10.10 Judgment

- a. Soteriou, M. 2005 “ Mental Action and the Epistemology of Mind”. *Nous* 39:1 83–105
- b. Mandelbaum, E. 2014 “Thinking is Believing”, *Inquiry*, 57:1, 55-96
- c. optional : Sosa, “Judgment and agency”, ch 3 of *Judgment and Agency*, Oxford 2015 , 65-88

6. W. 10.12 Doubt

- a. Larmore, C. 1984 “Descartes psychologistic theory of Assent” *History of Philosophy Quarterly*, Vol. 1, 1, 61-74
- b. Friedman, J. 2015 Why Suspend Judging? *Nous*, 51:2 , 1–25
- c. Optional: Mulligan K. 2013 “Acceptance Acceptance, Acknowledgment, Affirmation, Agreement, Assertion, Belief, Certainty, Conviction, Denial, Judgment, Refusal and Rejection”, in Textor, M. ed. *Judgment and truth in early analytic philosophy and phenomenology*, Palgrave McMillan

7. W 10. 17 Belief and Acceptance

- a. Cohen, L.J. 1989 “Acceptance and Belief”, *Mind* XCVIII(391), 367-389
- b. Bratman M. 1992 “Practical Reasoning and Acceptance in a Context”, *Mind*, 101,401, 1-16
- c. optional Engel P. 1998 “Believing Holding true and Accepting”, *Philosophical Explorations* 1 (2):140 – 151

8. F 10.19 Supposition and imagination

- a. Arcangeli, M. “Against cognitivism about supposition” , *Philosophia* (2014) 42:607–624
- b. Langland-Hassan, P. 2015 “Imaginative attitudes” *Philosophy and Phenomenological Research*, XC, 3, May 2015

Optional: Sinhababu, N. 2013 “Distinguishing belief and imagination”. *Pacific Philosophical Quarterly*, 94, 152–165.

9. F. 10.24 Belief in and Trust

- a. H.H. Price 1965 “Belief “in” and Belief “that”, *Religious Studies* 1, 1, 5-27
- b. Holton, R. 1994 “Deciding to trust, coming to Believe”, *Australasian Journal of Philosophy* 72 .63-76

- b. Optional : Mc Myler, “Trusting a person” in *Testimony, Trust, Authority*, Oxford, Oxford University Press

10. W.10.26 Epistemic feelings and epistemic emotions

- a. Gendler, T. 2008 “Alief and Belief“, *Journal of Philosophy* 105 (10):634-663
- b. Dokic, J. 2012 “Seeds of Knowledge” M. Beran, J. Brandl, J. Perner & J. Proust (eds.), *The Foundations of Metacognition*, Oxford University Press, 302--321.
- C. Morton, A. 2014, “Surprise” in S. Roeser and C. Todd, eds. *Emotion and Value*, Oxford

11. W.10.31 Tacit beliefs, biases and delusions

- a. Audi , R. 1994“Dispositional Belief and dispositions to believe” *Noûs*, 28, 4: 419-434
- b. Bayne, T and Pacherie E. 2005, “In Defence of the Doxastic Conception of Delusions”, *Mind & Language*, 20 2, pp. 163–188
- c. optional: Bayne, T. and Hattiangadi , A. 2013 , “ Belief and its strange Bedfellows”, in Nottelman, N ed. *Belief: New Essays*, Palgrave

12. F. Nov 2. A Taxonomy of attitudes

- a. R.J. Thomson 2016 “Believe It or Not: On Multiplying Classes of Belief-like states” , *Studia Philosophica estonica* , 9.1, 79-110
- b. Nolfi, K. 2015 “Which mental states are rationally evaluable?” *Philosophical Issues*, 25
- c. Optional : P. Engel 2018 “The Doxastic Zoo”, in A.Coliva, S.Moruzzi, P.Leonardi eds, *Essays in honor of Eva Picardi*, Palgrave, MacMillan , 297-316

Work for the course

Paper presentations (a summary of a paper chosen from the readings) b) a twenty-pages research paper. The research paper may, but need not be based on the readings. Students are also expected to participate in seminar discussions.