

Fall - Term 1, 2018-19
Philos 762 – Topics in Metaphysics
Social Ontology

Instructor: Megan Stotts

Description:

Social ontology is the study of the nature and structure of the social world. It includes, for instance, work on the nature of social conventions, social norms, social institutions, collective attitudes, and social groups. With particular attention to social institutions and social groups, we will read and discuss two recent books in the field: Raimo Tuomela's *Social Ontology* (2013) and Brian Epstein's *The Ant Trap* (2015). As we'll see, Tuomela gives a key role to humans' collective intentionality in his metaphysics of social reality, whereas Epstein argues that social ontology ought to be less anthropocentric. Social ontology also has connections to and implications for many other subfields, such as normative social philosophy, action theory, philosophy of social science, philosophy of language, and philosophy of law, and we will explore some of those connections as we proceed.

Texts:

1. *Social Ontology: Collective Intentionality and Group Agents*, by Raimo Tuomela. ISBN: 9780190612382
2. *The Ant Trap: Rebuilding the Foundations of the Social Sciences*, by Brian Epstein. ISBN: 9780199381104

Evaluation:

Participation in seminar discussion: 10%
10 reading responses (1-2 double-spaced pages each): 35%
Term paper: 55%

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