

Skepticism, Naturalism, and Therapy

Fall 2007 - Winter 2008

Our goal in this course is to investigate radical skepticism about the external world, primarily to compare and contrast various naturalist and therapeutic reactions to it. We'll largely side-step attempts to refute the skeptic and focus instead on naturalistic and therapeutic ways of reacting without refuting (though the boundary between these isn't always sharp). The hope is that this exercise will help differentiate various strains of naturalism and clarify their interrelations with a range of therapeutic approaches.

One central question will be the source of skeptical argumentation: does it spring directly from ordinary common sense (or science) or are other presuppositions involved? Of therapeutic views, we'll be asking: is the therapist's posture based on (perhaps hidden) theories? And finally: are naturalistic and therapeutic philosophies compatible?

The default requirement for those taking the course for a grade (other than S/U) is three short papers (750-1250 words) due at the beginning of class in the 4th week, 7th week, and 10th week. Each paper should isolate one localized point in the readings and offer some analysis and/or critique. Other options are open to negotiation.

I assume everyone has access to copies of:

J. L. Austin, *Sense and Sensibilia*

Janet Broughton, *Descartes's Method of Doubt*

Barry Stroud, *The Significance of Philosophical Skepticism*

Ludwig Wittgenstein, *On Certainty*

Copies of these other books will be available in Brian Rogers's office:

Keith DeRose and Ted A. Warfield, eds., *Skepticism: A Contemporary Reader*

Robert Fogelin, *Pyrrhonian Reflections on Knowledge and Jusification*

Sebastian Gardner, *Kant*

Penelope Maddy, *Second Philosophy*

Marie McGinn, *Wittgenstein*

Daniele Moyal-Sharrock and William Brenner, *Readings of Wittgenstein's On Certainty*

Walter Sinnott-Armstrong, ed., *Pyrrhonian Skepticism*

Barry Stroud, *Understanding Human Knowledge*

(For background, DeRose and Warfield's introduction includes a useful taxonomy of contemporary efforts to refute the skeptic.)

Copies of all other materials will be available for photocopying in a box outside my office (759 SST). Please come to the first meeting prepared to discuss the readings in Topic #1.

Topics:

1. Varieties of skepticism

Sextus Empiricus, *Outlines of Pyrrhonism*, Book I, §§i-xvi.

Descartes, *Meditations on First Philosophy*, first meditation.

Broughton, *Descartes's Method of Doubt*, introduction and chapter 2.

2. Descartes's method of doubt

Broughton, *Descartes's Method of Doubt*, chapters 1, 3, and 4.

Maddy, *Second Philosophy*, §I.1.

3. Neo-Cartesian skepticism

Stroud, *The Significance of Philosophical Scepticism*, chapter 1.

Austin, 'Other minds', especially pp. 44-71.

Stroud, *The Significance of Philosophical Scepticism*, chapter 2.

Williams, 'Epistemological realism and the basis of scepticism'.

Stroud, 'Epistemological reflection on knowledge of the external world'.

(Sosa, 'Philosophical scepticism and epistemic circularity'.)

Stroud, 'Scepticism, 'externalism', and the goal of epistemology'.

4. Skepticism and common sense

Williams, 'Descartes and the metaphysics of doubt'.
Broughton, chapter 5 and pp. 196-202.

Stroud, 'Understanding human knowledge in general'.

Maddy, *Second Philosophy*, §I.2.

van Fraassen, *The Scientific Image*, pp. 6-13, 70-83, 92-96.

(Worrall, 'Two cheers for naturalized philosophy of science'.)

Maddy, *Second Philosophy*, §IV.1.

5. Neo-Pyrrhonian skepticism

Fogelin, *Pyrrhonian Reflections on Knowledge and Justification*, introduction and chapters 5, 6 and 10.

(Striker, 'Historical reflections on classical pyrrhonism and neo-pyrrhonism'.)

Broughton, 'Cartesian skeptics'.

Stroud, 'Review of Fogelin's *Pyrrhonian Reflections on Knowledge and Justification*'.

Stroud, 'Contemporary pyrrhonism'.

6. Hume

Hume, *Treatise of Human Nature*, introduction and Book 1, part IV, especially §§I, II, IV and VII.

(*Enquiry Concerning Human Understanding*, §XII.)

Hume is sometimes characterized as having driven the empiricism of Locke and Berkeley to its skeptical conclusion. Hume's

naturalism was first highlighted in Norman Kemp Smith's 1941 *The Philosophy of David Hume* (cf. Stroud's tribute in his *Hume*, pp. x-xi). Ever since, a central puzzle of Hume interpretation has been how to reconcile Hume the naturalist with Hume the skeptic.

Stroud, *Hume*, chapter 1 and pp. 110-117, 219-224, 245-250.
Fogelin, *Hume's Skepticism*, introduction and chapters I, VI, and XI.

Garrett, 'A small tincture of pyrrhonism'.
Broughton, 'Hume's naturalism about cognitive norms'.
 'The inquiry in Hume's Treatise'.
(Greco, 'Reid's reply to the skeptic', pp. 134-141.)
(Broughton, 'What does the scientist of man observe?'.)
Maddy, *Second Philosophy*, §I.3.

7. Austin

Austin, *Sense and Sensibilia*, chapters I-IX (pp. 1-103).
Warnock, *J. L. Austin*, pp. 1-22.
Fischer, 'Austin on sense-data'.

--- End of Fall quarter - Beginning of Winter quarter ---

8. Moore

Moore, 'A defence of common sense'.
 'Proof of an external world'.
Stroud, *The Significance of Philosophical Skepticism*,
 chapter 3.

9. Kant

(Those new to Kant might pick up some background from Sebastian Gardner's *Kant*, particularly pp. 20-51, 88-89, 271-278.)

Kant, *Critique of Pure Reason*
 A and B Prefaces
 Refutation of Idealism (B274-279)
Gardner, *Kant*, pp. 179-196.
Bird, *The Revolutionary Kant*, 11.1, 11.2, (and 21.2).
Allison, *Kant's Transcendental Idealism*, pp. 285-303.

Stroud, *The Significance of Philosophical Skepticism*,
 chapter 4.
Maddy, *Second Philosophy*, §I.4.
 'Kant and the skeptic'.

10. Carnap

Carnap, 'Empiricism, semantics and ontology'.
 Ricketts, 'Languages and calculi'.
 Hillier, 'Analyticity and language engineering in Carnap's
Logical Syntax of Language'.
 (Hillier, 'Carnap's principle of tolerance deflated'.)
 Stroud, *The Significance of Philosophical Skepticism*,
 chapter 5.
 Maddy, *Second Philosophy*, §I.5.

11. Epistemology naturalized

Quine, 'Epistemology naturalized'.
Roots of Reference, §1.
 'The nature of natural knowledge', especially pp. 67-
 70.
 'Reply to Stroud'.
 Stroud, *The Significance of Philosophical Skepticism*,
 chapter 6.
 (Fogelin, 'Quine's limited naturalism'.)
 Maddy, *Second Philosophy*, §I.6.

12. Wittgenstein

Wittgenstein, *Tractatus Logico-Philosophicus*, 4.002-4.0031,
 4.1-4.116, 6.53-7.
Philosophical Investigations, §§89-133.
 (McGinn, *Wittgenstein*, chapter 1.)
 (Maddy, 'Wittgenstein's anti-philosophy of mathematics',
 pp. 55-65.)
 Stern, *Wittgenstein's Philosophical Investigations*,
 introduction and chapters 1 and 2.
 Rogers, 'Taking Wittgenstein seriously as a therapist'.
 Wittgenstein, *On Certainty*.
 McGinn, 'Responding to the skeptic: therapeutic vs.
 theoretical diagnosis', especially pp. 157-161.
 De Pierris, 'Philosophical skepticism in Wittgenstein's *On
 Certainty*'.
 Minar, 'Wittgenstein's response to the skeptic', especially
 pp. 261-271.
 Rogers, 'The dynamic structure of *On Certainty*'.

(Moyal-Sharrock and Brenner's anthology, in which Minar's paper
 appears, gives a helpful outline of non-therapeutic readings of
On Certainty.)

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