

Phil 232
Spring 2019
G. Sher
Class: Th 4-7
Office Hour: Th 2:30-3:30

Truth as a Human Value

Truth is commonly treated in the current philosophical literature as a predicate, as an operator, or as a property of thoughts, utterances, sentences, etc. In this seminar we will explore the possibility that truth is first and foremost a human value. We arrive at this view from several directions: from the moral and political directions (living in an era of “post truth”), from the role and use of truth in the pursuit of knowledge (scientific, mathematical, logical, etc.), from problems arising with respect to truth, such as the pessimistic meta-induction or the problem of abstraction/idealization and truth, and from current controversies in philosophy, for example, deflationism vs. substantivism with respect to truth. We will explore the ramifications of this view for the correspondence theory of truth and for realism more generally, for relativism concerning human values and the value of truth in particular, for the place of freedom and choice in adopting/adhering-to the value of truth, and more. The readings will reflect these concerns.

Although the seminar is listed under epistemology, its topic can be explored from multiple perspectives, leading to papers in a variety of areas. As such it can be used to satisfy various field requirements.

Requirements:

1. Philosophy Graduate Students: Short presentation and Seminar Paper (Due during Exam Week).
2. Others: Seminar Paper (Due during Exam Week).

Assigned Readings: Internet, Gila’s Web Page, UCSD Library Reserves (On Line or Hard Copies), and/or Philosophy Library.

Schedule of Classes

Th 4/4/19 Introduction to Seminar: Presentation by Gila followed by Class Discussion.
[No Readings].

Class starts at 4:30
(due to Special University Service that Ends at 4:00).

Th 4/11/19 Truth Primer: Correspondence, Coherence, Pragmatist Conceptions
of Truth. Skepticism about Truth. Tarski’s Theory of Truth

Readings:

1. "Truth". M. Glanzberg (2018). *Stanford Encyclopedia of Philosophy*.
2. "Basic Principles of Truth". G. Sher (2016). *Epistemic Friction*, Sections 8.1-2.
3. "What Is Tarski's Theory of Truth?" G. Sher (1999).

Additional Readings:

4. "Truth". B. Dowden & N. Swartz. *Internet Encyclopedia of Philosophy*.
5. "The Concept of Truth in Formalized Languages". A. Tarski (1933).
6. "The Semantic Conception of Truth and the Foundations of Semantics" A. Tarski (1944).
7. "Tarski's Theory of Truth". H. Field (1972).

Th 4/18/19 No Class. (Pacific APA Meeting, Vancouver.) Make Up Class – April 26, 4-7, Seminar room

Th 4/25/19 Truth: Deflationism vs. Substantivism about Truth. Truth and Normativity.

Readings:

1. *Truth*. P. Horwich (1990/98), Preface, Chs 1-3.
2. "A Substantivist Theory of Truth". G. Sher (2016). *Epistemic Friction*, Ch 7.
3. "Is Truth a Norm?". P. Engel (2001).
4. "Is Truth a Normative Concept?" P. Horwich (2018).

F 4/26/19 Human Values: Factuality, Normativity, and Humanity.

Readings:

1. "Facts and Values". P. Railton (1986).
2. "The Normative Question". C. Korsgaard (1996).
3. "The Dependence of Value on Humanity". C. Korsgaard (2003).
4. "Morality and the Distinctiveness of Human Action". C. Korsgaard (2006).

Th 5/2/19 Human Values: Biology, Freedom, and Choice

Readings:

1. "Human Values in Relation to Evolution". H.J. Muller (1958)
2. "Introduction: Rationality and Freedom". A. Sen (2002).
3. "Freedom: The First Condition of Action". *Being & Nothingness*. J.P. Sartre (1943). Part IV, Ch. 1, Section I.

- Th 5/9/19 Truth as a Human Value: The Source of Truth as a Human Value.
- Reading:
- Truth & Truthfulness*, Chs. 1-3. - B. Williams, 2002.
- Th 5/16/19 No Class. (SEP Meeting, Toronto.) Make Up Class - May 24, 4-7, Seminar room
- Th 5/23/19 Truth as a Human Value: Truth in the Moral and Political Spheres.
- Readings:
1. "Metaethics". G. Sayre-McCord (2012). *Stanford Encyclopedia of Philosophy*, Internet.
 2. "Subject-Ive and Objective". P. Railton (1995).
 3. "Truth and Politics". H. Arendt (1954).
 4. "Between Post-Truth and Epistemocracy: Positioning a Democratic Politics". J-C. Monod (2017)
- F 5/24/19 Truth as a Human Value : Truth in the Sciences.
- Readings:
1. "Scientific Objectivity". J. Reiss & J. Sprenger (2014). *Stanford Encyclopedia of Philosophy*.
 2. "Realism and Scientific Progress". P. Kitcher (1993). *The Advancement of Science*, Ch. 5.
 3. "Truth and Scientific Change". G. Sher (2017)
- Th 5/30/19 Truth as a Human Value: Can we Lose the Value of Truth?
- Readings:
1. *1984*. G. Orwell (1949), Passages.
 2. *Merchants of Doubt*. N. Oreskes & E.M. Conway (2010). Passages.
- Class starts at 4:30
(due to Special University Service that Ends at 4:00 PM).
- Th 6/6/19 Conclusion