PESGB London Branch
And
UCL Centre for Philosophy of Education

Research Seminar Programme
SPRING TERM 2020

All meetings run on Wednesdays from 5.30-7.15 pm, unless otherwise indicated. Sessions are followed by a drink and further discussion in the Students’ Union for those who wish to attend. All are welcome.

For enquiries: contact Alison Brady at alison.brady.14@ucl.ac.uk

15 January: Andrew Klevan (Oxford University) Room 804
Ordinary Language Film Studies
This paper will explain and advocate an approach to film study and pedagogy that is influenced by Ordinary Language Philosophy (generally known as OLP). Ordinary Language Philosophy is associated with the (later) views of Ludwig Wittgenstein, and with the work done by the philosophers of Oxford University between approximately 1945-1970. The paper will explain the history and facets of OLP and its difference from other philosophical, and film-philosophical, approaches. It will show OLP’s usefulness for film studies – and the study of the humanities more generally – especially with regard to its emphasis on philosophy as method, its understanding of meaning as use, its prioritising of description, and the importance of it not being theoretical, paradigmatic or thematic.
Andrew Klevan is Professor of Film Aesthetics at the University of Oxford. He is the author of Disclosure of the Everyday: Undramatic Achievement in Narrative Film (2000), Film Performance: From Achievement to Appreciation (2005), Barbara Stanwyck (2013), and the recently published Aesthetic Evaluation and Film (2018). He is co-editor of The Language and Style of Film Criticism (2011), and is on the editorial board of Movie: A Journal of Film Criticism.

22 January: Roger Marples Room 828
Moral Sensitivity: the central question of moral education
This paper offers a detailed analysis of the logical presuppositions of both rule-governed moral education favoured by Michael Hand, and generalized altruism favoured by John White: namely, the moral sensitivities required of moral personhood. Moral deliberation may safely dispense with moral rules and principles. Instead, prior to deciding what should/should not be done, accurate moral perception is a necessary prerequisite; requiring amongst other things, moral imagination, empathy and self-understanding. The relevance of this to moral education is rendered explicit.
Roger Marples completed a BA in Philosophy at Birkbeck College and a PhD at the Institute of Education, while teaching in primary, secondary, and
schools for children with emotional and behaviour problems. He became a Principal Lecturer at the University of Roehampton where he taught for 40 years. He has edited *The Aims of Education* (Routledge, 1999) and, with Judith Suissa and Carrie Winstanley, *Education, Philosophy and Well-Being: New Perspectives on the Work of John White* (Routledge, 2015). His latest publications are on “Parents’ Rights and Educational Provision” and “What’s Wrong with Private Schools”.

29 January: Jack Bicker (UCL Institute of Education) Room C3.12

*On Poetry After Auschwitz: critical theory and the case for creative education*

Theodor Adorno famously wrote that ‘to write poetry after Auschwitz is barbaric’. Often misread as judging cultural endeavours as irrelevant in the wake of mass genocide, Adorno was instead attempting to establish a new categorical imperative; namely, that in every aspect of our lives we should unremittingly ensure that the horrors of Auschwitz are never repeated. Following Adorno’s epistemology and social theory, I argue that the way we engage with creative works has a direct educational bearing on our more general capacity to imagine, engage, and perceive ourselves, the world, and others whose claims to dignity too often go unrecognised.

*Jack Bicker* currently works as a senior teaching fellow in philosophy and education studies at the UCL Institute of Education. Jack was previously a teaching associate in philosophy and creativity at the University of Cambridge, and has spent ten years leading education projects in both music and theatre performance, alongside work in publishing and media production. Philosophically, Jack is interested in tracing the relationship between German Idealism, C20th Critical Theory, and more contemporary philosophers and psychoanalysts working on questions of rationality, identity, liberation, creativity and political imagination.

5 February: Erin Plunkett (University of Hertfordshire) Clarke Hall

*Education on the verge of a nervous breakdown: Kierkegaard on becoming a self*

Kierkegaard wrote extensively about communication, especially the Socratic question of whether truth can be taught. His texts offer multiple figures and models of communication—including an erotic model that focuses on the educative potential of seduction and rejection and a specifically Christian model in which ‘offence’ plays a key role. Common to these is an effort to bring about new ways of seeing by promoting a breakdown in self-understanding, with the disorientation and anxiety the word suggests. This talk will explore how Kierkegaard’s textual methods relate to his understanding of self and the relevance of the ‘breakdown’ for teaching practice.

*Erin Plunkett* is a lecturer in Philosophy and Religious Studies at the University of Hertfordshire. She is the author of *A Philosophy of the Essay* and the editor of a forthcoming English translation of selected writings of Jan Patočka. Her current project explores the role of possibility in the writings of Kierkegaard and Patočka.
Shades of an uncivil education: teaching for political judgement in the wake of Brexit

Diagnosis of Brexit is available in terms now familiar (concern for sovereignty; nationalism and xenophobia; the new political/economic order “isn’t working for us”), while more ancient connections – of exodus, reckoning, and sacrifice – have been suggested recently by Kalypso Nicolaïdis (2019). The present discussion places some of the educational questions raised by Brexit in relation to Eric Santner’s reflections on sovereignty, authority, capital, and commodification. These locate a crisis in representation, in politics and in art - a conjunction that lays the way for an argument, following Stanley Cavell, regarding the nature and place of critical judgement in political education.

Paul Standish is Head of the Centre for Philosophy of Education at UCL Institute of Education. He held posts formerly at Sheffield and Dundee universities, and for over twenty years was a teacher in schools and colleges. He has authored or edited some twenty books, beginning with Beyond the Self: Wittgenstein, Heidegger, and the Limits of Language (1992, Ashgate) and including most recently Democracy and Education from Dewey to Cavell (2020, Wiley), co-authored with Naoko Saito. He was Editor (2001-2011) of the Journal of Philosophy of Education and is Chair of the Philosophy of Education Society of Great Britain.

On Pedagogical Scepticism

This paper raises questions of pedagogy and scepticism, both of which are matters of educational and philosophical significance, against the background of a reading of literary and philosophical themes from the European Enlightenment to modernity.


The Lessons of the Holocaust - a conceptual critique

The ‘Lessons of the Holocaust’ figure centrally in much discourse about the Holocaust in education and in public life and yet the notion of ‘learning lessons from the past’ is controversial for historians. This paper analyses the notion that there might be ‘lessons’ to learn from ‘the Holocaust’ and explores historiographic and philosophical arguments around the validity of this construct.

Arthur Chapman is Associate Professor in History in Education at UCL Institute of Education. He is interested in history pedagogy and didactics,
public history and historical consciousness and the methodology and philosophy of history.

4 March: Soyoung Lee (UCL Institute of Education) Room 828
Getting the grain: the teaching of two poems reconsidered
Teaching poetry presents problems of various kinds, and these can be illustrative of wider curricular and pedagogical challenges. This paper considers questions of knowledge and remembrance as these arise in two poems, placing these in relation to Lyotard’s conception of the immemorial: Lyotard is concerned with a kind of repression in dominant conceptions of knowing and thinking, and with the insulation from experience that this effects. What is at stake in reading the poems is not so much the seeking of essential meanings as a turning of attention to what cannot be fully grasped or contained.

Soyoung Lee is completing her doctoral thesis (Poetics of Alterity: Education, Art, Politics) at UCL Institute of Education. She has published “Thinking in Nearness: Seven Steps on the Way to a Heideggerian Approach to Education”, “Ethics is an Optics’: Ethical Practicality and the Exposure of Teaching” in the Journal of Philosophy of Education, and “From Heidegger to Translation and the Address of the Other” in Tetsugaku. She worked for eight years as a primary school teacher in South Korea and has lectured at Deagu National University of Education (2013-14, 2016) and at the University of Warsaw (2018).

11 March: Ian Munday (National University of Ireland, Galway) Room 604
Virtuosity and the Singular Voice in Education
What is the role of virtuosity in the study and practice of education? “Virtuosity”, associated with the singular voice, has come to be perceived as a vice. Reasons for this include a narrow understanding of inclusion and democracy, fetishisation of the “group” within research culture, and the mechanical perfectionism driving performativity. I show ways in which the singular voice (or performance) both resists the nihilism endemic in modern education and embodies educational values and virtues that demand recognition and affirmation. Yet there are dangers in unequivocal hospitality to virtuosity in education and reasons for being suspicious of the “virtuoso performance”.

Ian Munday is Senior Lecturer in Educational Philosophy in the School of Education at NUI Galway. His research addresses philosophical ideas in regard to their relevance to the details of educational practice, particularly those concerned with teaching and learning. His publications have focused on various approaches to performatives and performativities, demonstrating the significance of these ideas for education, as well as on themes of creativity and problem-solving. He is currently Convenor of Network 13 Philosophy of Education at the European Educational Research Association and Convenor of the Irish branch of the Philosophy of Education Society of Great Britain.
Studying in an age of proclaimed hopelessness: Towards a Neo-Copernican Turn in Education

Against the backdrop of the idea that education is possible only if we assume that there is no necessity in the way in which shape is given to our life in common (i.e. if we assume that there is hope), I address in my talk how we can appropriately deal with the seemingly hopeless situation we face in times of climate change. I propose that ‘studying’, as it is enacted in small-scale, local and bottom-up initiatives, responds to this predicament. Developing some ideas of Bruno Latour, I argue that this comes with a reconceptualization of history as a post-humanist geo-history.

Joris Vlieghe is an assistant professor of philosophy and theory of education at KU Leuven (Belgium). With Naomi Hodgson and Piotr Zamojski he recently published a Manifesto for a Post-critical Pedagogy (Punctum Books 2018) and with the last author Towards an Ontology of Teaching: Thing-centered pedagogy, affirmation and love for the world (Springer 2019). Next to this he has written on the impact of digital technologies on education and the future of the school. He is also interested in study/studying, and how study practices can offer an adequate answer to the issue of living well together on a damaged planet.