**Syllabus *Language and Ontology***

Friederike Moltmann

University of Padua

Spring 2016

**Prerequisites**

necessary: basic logic, introduction to philosophy

desired: introduction to metaphysics, introduction to philosophy of language

**Office hour**

by appointment: fmoltmann@univ-paris1.fr

**Examination**

paper of about 15 pp.

**General description**

Ontology concerns itself with what categories of entities there are, what characterizes them and how they relate to each other. There is a close connection between language and ontology. In particular, singular terms in natural language appear to stand for objects and the predicates applicable to them appear to reflect the characteristic properties of those objects. An important philosophical project thus is to ‘uncover’ the ontology reflected in natural language. This course will pursue a range of topics within such a particularly strict ‘descriptive metaphysics, making use of methods of contemporary linguistic semantics.

**Website for the course**

<http://friederike-moltmann.com/news/graduate-course-language-and-ontology-march-june-2016-padua/>

**Schedule**

**March**

Week 1:

**The project of ontology, the notion of an object, and the notion of existence**

March 3: Descriptive and revisionary metaphysics and criteria for objecthood in the context of natural language

March 4: Existence and natural language: notion of existence in philosophy and the expression of existence in natural language

**Readings**

<http://plato.stanford.edu/entries/existence/>

<http://www.friederike-moltmann.com/pdf/The%20semantics%20of%20existence.pdf>

Week 2:

**The semantics of events**

March 9: Entities and situations as contextual parameters of evaluation

March 10: Events as implicit arguments: The Davidsonian semantics of events

March 11: Events and situations as truthmakers

**Readings**

<http://plato.stanford.edu/entries/situations-semantics/>

<http://plato.stanford.edu/entries/events/>

[http://www.friederikemoltmann.com/pdf/EVENTS,%20TROPES,%20AND%20TRUTHMAKING.pdf](http://www.friederikemoltmann.com/pdf/EVENTS%2C%20TROPES%2C%20AND%20TRUTHMAKING.pdf)

Weeks 3, 4: Break

**April**

Week 1:

**Definite descriptions**

April 6: Definite Descriptions 1

April 7: Definite Descriptions 2

April 8: Descriptions and plural reference

**Readings**

<http://plato.stanford.edu/entries/descriptions/>

Week 2:

**Expressions of parthood in natural language**

April 13: Plural reference and reference to a plurality: the point of view of natural language

April 14: *Partly, completely, individual* and *whole*

April 15: The multidimensional part structure of events

**Readings**

<http://www.friederike-moltmann.com/pdf/Part%20Structures%20in%20Situations.pdf>

<http://friederike-moltmann.com/uploads/plural-reference-paper-2015.doc>

Week 3:

**Tropes in the semantics of natural language**

April 20: The philosophical tradition regarding the notion of a trope

April 21: Explicit reference to tropes in natural language

April 22: Implicit reference to tropes in natural language

**Readings**

<http://plato.stanford.edu/entries/tropes/>

<http://www.friederike-moltmann.com/pdf/Degree%20structure%20as%20trope%20structure.pdf>

<http://www.friederike-moltmann.com/pdf/nous_844_Moltmann_REV.pdf>

Week 4:

**Reference to properties in the semantics of natural language**

April 27: Tropes and Attitudinal Objects

April 28: Properties and kinds of tropes: singular terms

April 29: Properties and kinds of tropes: nominalizing quantifiers

**Readings**

[**http://www.friederikemoltmann.com/pdf/Properties%20and%20Kinds%20of%20Tropes.pdf**](http://www.friederikemoltmann.com/pdf/Properties%20and%20Kinds%20of%20Tropes.pdf)

[**http://www.friederike-moltmann.com/pdf/Nominalizing%20Quantifiers.pdf**](http://www.friederike-moltmann.com/pdf/Nominalizing%20Quantifiers.pdf)

**May**

Week 1: **Propositions**

May 4 (long session!): The Standard Notion of a Propositions and its Problem

**Readings**

<http://plato.stanford.edu/entries/propositions/>

<http://www.friederike-moltmann.com/pdf/Propositional%20Attitudes%20without%20Propositions.pdf>

Week 2:

**Propositional attitudes and attitudinal objects**

May 11, 12: Attitudinal objects and Twardowski’s distinction between actions and products

May 13, 18: The semantics of verbs and saying and quotation

**Readings**

<http://friederike-moltmann.com/uploads/Propositions_Attitudinal_Objects_and_the.pdf>

Week 3:

**Modals and modal objects**

May 19: Modal objects and modal sentences

May 20: Summary

**Readings**

<http://plato.stanford.edu/entries/logic-modal/>

[http://friederike-moltmann.com/uploads/action-product-2015-publ(1).doc](http://friederike-moltmann.com/uploads/action-product-2015-publ%281%29.doc)

Week 4:

**Student Presentations**