

Agency

Directors: Santiago Amaya (Uniandes), Manuel Vargas (UC San Diego)

Meetings: June 15 – July 3, 2020

Group sessions: Mondays, Wednesdays, and Fridays (5-7pm, Bogota time GMT-5)*

Discussion sessions: Tuesday, Thursdays, and Saturdays (12-2pm, Bogota time GMT-5)

Office hours: Mondays, Tuesdays, and Thursdays**

* With some exceptions **See below for specific times

Human beings sometimes act in ways that manifest their freedom and that make them accountable for what they do. This is made possible by the exercise a variety of capacities: for instance, the capacity to form and act on intentions, to deliberate, to exercise self-control, to plan for the future, and to move one's body in skillful ways. The topic of this seminar is agency (thus understood) and the capacities that make it possible.

Although there is general agreement about which capacities are centrally implicated in our agency, there is considerably less agreement as to how those capacities should be understood. There are also open questions regarding the variability of these capacities across different social environments and life circumstances. The purpose of the seminar is to chart these discussions and discover new avenues for progress. The exploration will be led by prominent figures in contemporary philosophy of action.

This is the second of three midyear seminars of the LATAM Free Will, Agency, and Responsibility project. The project is funded by the John Templeton Foundation with the support of Universidad de los Andes and University of California, San Diego.

Invited Instructors

Luca Ferrero (UC Riverside)

Michael Inzlicht (Toronto)

Al Mele (Florida State)

Jennifer Morton (UNC Chapel Hill)

Myrto Mylopoulos (Carleton)

Kevin Timpe (Calvin)

With a session on grants by Alex Arnold

(John Templeton Foundation)

Seminar guidelines

Participation in this seminar is a full-time commitment. Once the seminar begins there will be little time to get any other work done. So, you will need to ensure that your schedule is clear of any time-demanding responsibilities during the duration of the seminar.

All required readings and most of the optional ones should be done prior to June 15th. Again, and we can't emphasize this enough: it is extraordinarily difficult to catch up once sessions start, so you need to have done your homework in advance. Please complete the readings before the seminar starts.

Attendance at all seminar sessions is mandatory. You are expected to participate actively in our discussions. Your contributions ought to be respectful and constructive. Participation is not about scoring points, but in fostering everyone's intellectual development.

Our expectation is that you will *not* know everything, and indeed, this is part of the very reason for these seminars. To that end, voicing confusions, asking questions (even if these might seem unsophisticated or uninformed), and clarifying issues is *strongly* encouraged.

We expect all project participants to conduct themselves in a professional manner. Misconduct (including, but not restricted to abuse, harassment, and discrimination) will not be tolerated. The seminars will be governed by the Universidad de los Andes graduate student handbook and the MAAD protocol. Both are available online

Participation in the seminar is restricted to members of the project.

Seminar mechanics

Group sessions will take place on Mondays, Wednesdays, and Fridays. Instructors will lead the discussion, focusing on the required readings. The readings will be available in our Dropbox folder, which we will make available by email. For the seminar we will likely use Zoom. Our hope is that by the time the seminar starts everyone will be adequately equipped to participate in online academic meetings. If, for any reason you have problems in this regard, let us know as immediately.

Each group session will be followed by a *discussion session* on the next day (or on the immediately following Monday if the group session happens on a Friday). Discussion sections will be led by seminar participants, using a series of questions covering required and optional reading. On the first day of the seminar we will ask participants to volunteer to lead a discussion session. However, if you have any preferences, we encourage you to let us know before then (ideally: as soon as you think there is a session you might be willing to lead).

On specific days and times noted below instructors will have virtual *office hours*. Office hours serve several functions. They allow you to follow-up on issues that came up in class, to ask instructors questions about wider issues in the field or the profession, to discuss your own projects, and in general to have contact with the instructors out of the formal classroom environment. We strongly encourage you to take advantage of these opportunities.

In the second semester of the year, after the online portion of seminar is over, there will be two workshops in Bogotá: one on agency and control, the other on the social dimensions of agency. Due to unpredictable nature of public health conditions at this time, the dates for the workshop have not been determined. However, we're provisionally hoping to make them happen in mid-October and mid-November. As complements to the online portion,

throughout the year we aim to have several additional online meetings to follow up on topics and discussions of the seminar

Schedule & Readings

Seminar Kick-off (Santiago Amaya and Manuel Vargas)

June 15. 2pm-3.30pm, Bogotá time (GMT-5)

Actions and Intentions (Al Mele)

June 15. 5pm-8pm, Bogotá time (GMT-5).

We will begin our seminar with two general topics in the philosophy of action: action explanation and intentions. In the first part of the session, we will focus on causal theories of action explanation and resistance to them. Then, we will concentrate on the functional roles of intentions, and on the work of proximal intentions in particular.

Required readings:

- Davidson, D. (1963). Actions, reasons, and causes. *The Journal of Philosophy*, 60(23), 685-700.
- Mele, A. R. (2017). Actions, explanations, and causes (Chapter 3). In *Aspects of agency: Decisions, abilities, explanations, and free will* (pp. 27-61). New York: Oxford University Press.
- Bratman, M. (1984). Two faces of intention. *The Philosophical Review*, 93(3), 375-405.
- Mele, A. R. (2019). On snubbing proximal intentions. *Philosophical Studies*, 176(11), 2833-2853.

Optional:

- Davidson, D. (1970). How Is Weakness of the Will Possible? In *Essays on Actions and Events* (pp. 21-42). New York: Oxford University Press. (either the original 1970 article or a reprint).
- Mele, A. R. (forthcoming) Weakness of Will. in M. Vargas and J. Doris (Eds.), *Oxford Handbook of Moral Psychology*. New York: Oxford University Press.
- Mele, A. "Deciding: How Special Is it?" (draft)

Actions and Intentions discussion.

June 16. 12pm-2pm, Bogotá time (GMT-5)

Mele's office hours.

June 16. 4pm-6pm, Bogotá time (GMT-5)

Deliberation (Santiago Amaya)

June 17. 5pm-8pm, Bogotá time (GMT-5)

Not all intentional actions are preceded by deliberation (i.e. reasoning aimed at the formation of intentions). But having the ability to deliberate is sometimes key for the expression of agency. In this session, we address a series of questions regarding deliberation. In what respect is it an active form of reasoning? How is it different from unconsciousness or otherwise passive forms of intention acquisition? When and why is deliberating relevant for agency?

Required readings:

- Arpaly, N. & Schroeder, T. (2014). Deliberation (Chapter 1). How deliberation works (Chapter 2). In *In Praise of Desire* (pp. 19-42). New York: Oxford University Press.
- Broome, J. (2013). First order reasoning (Chapter 13). In *Rationality through Reasoning* (pp. 121-149). Wiley-Blackwell.

Further readings:

- Amaya, S. (manuscript) Out of Habit.
- Doris, J. (2015). Collaboration (Chapter 5). In *Talking to Ourselves. Reflection, Ignorance, and Agency* (pp. 103-126). New York: Oxford University Press.
- Mercier, H., Sperber, D. (2011) Why Do Humans Reason? Arguments for an Argumentative Theory. *Behavioral and Brain Sciences*, 34, 57-74.

Deliberation discussion.

June 18. 12pm-2pm Bogotá time (GMT-5)

Amaya's office hours.

June 18 4pm-6pm Bogotá time (GMT-5)

Self-Control (Michael Inzlicht)

June 19. 5pm-8pm, Bogotá time (GMT-5)

The primary goal of this class is to serve as a graduate-level introduction to psychological theory and research on self-regulation (dynamic process of determining desired end-point and then taking action to move toward it while monitoring progress along the way) and self-control (process of advancing one goal over a second goal when the two conflict).

Required readings:

- Inzlicht, M., Werner, K.M., Briskin, J.L., & Roberts, B.W. (in press). Integrating models of self-regulation. *Annual Review of Psychology*. Link: <https://psyarxiv.com/dpiye/>
- Moffitt, T. E., et al., (2011). A gradient of childhood self-control predicts health, wealth, and public safety. *Proceedings of the National Academy of Sciences*, 108(7), 2693-2698. Link: <https://bit.ly/2KpmyYw>
- Sripada, C. (in press). The Atoms of Self-Control. *Noûs*. Link: <https://bit.ly/350f1Jh>

Further readings:

- Inzlicht, M., & Friesse, M. (2019). The past, present, and future of ego depletion. *Social Psychology*, 50(5-6), 370-378. Link: <https://bit.ly/3cB0hDb>

Self-Control discussion.

June 20. 12pm-2pm, Bogotá time (GMT-5)

Inzlicht's office hours

June 22. 11am-1pm, Bogotá time (GMT-5)

Planning (Luca Ferrero)

June 22. 5pm-8pm, Bogotá time (GMT-5)

Among the distinctive features of human agency is its temporal structure: our agency is not simply goal-directed but also diachronically organized over extended periods of time in terms of plans. As Bratman has taught us, we are *planning* agents. In these sessions, we consider some of the most important philosophical issues about our planning agency: What kind of cross-temporal organization is distinctive of planning agency? What are the distinctive rational norms of this kind of agency? What role do intentions play in planning agency? How is planning agency related to the structure of our temporal identity? How is planning agency related to our distinctive forms of sociality?

Required readings:

- Bratman, M. (Forthcoming) Planning Agency. In L. Ferrero (Ed.), *Handbook in the Philosophy of Agency*. Routledge.
- Bratman, M. E. (2010). Agency, Time, and Sociality. *Proceedings and Addresses of the American Philosophical Association*, 84(2), 7–26. Reprinted in Bratman, M.E. (2018). "Planning, Time, and Self-Governance: Essays in Practical Rationality." New York: Oxford University Press.
- Bratman, M. (2000). Reflection, Planning, and Temporally Extended Agency. *The Philosophical Review*, 109(1), 35–61. Reprinted in Bratman (2007) *Structures of Agency* (Chapter 2). New York: Oxford University Press.

Further readings:

- Ferrero, L. (2017). Intending, Acting, and Doing. *Philosophical Explorations*, 20(2), 13–39.
- Tenenbaum, S. (2016). Reconsidering Intentions. *Noûs*, 52, 443–472.

Planning discussion

June 23. 12-2pm, Bogotá time (GMT-5)

Ferrero's office hours

June 23. 4-6pm, Bogotá time (GMT-5)

Skills (Myrto Mylopoulos)

June 24. 5pm-8pm, Bogotá time (GMT-5)

The puzzle of skilled action control is that of explaining how it is that skilled performances display robust intelligence and flexibility despite being largely governed by automatic motor control processes that are often characterized as brute, reflex-like, and paradigmatically unintelligent. Traditionally, approaches to solving this puzzle have been split into two camps: intellectualists, who hold that the intelligence of skill is primarily determined, and indeed exhausted by, an agent's cognitive states (e.g., propositional knowledge), and anti-intellectualists who deny this, and insist instead that it should be seen as unreflective and automatic. In this seminar, we will address this debate through the lens of three recent accounts of the psychological representations and mechanisms underpinning skilled action control, each of which emphasizes in different ways the rich interplay between cognitive and motor control processes, and a more nuanced understanding of each.

Required readings:

- Christensen, W., Sutton, J., & McIlwain, D. J. (2016). Cognition in Skilled Action: Meshed Control and the Varieties of Skill Experience. *Mind & Language*, 31(1), 37–66.
- Fridland, E. (2017). Skill and Motor Control: Intelligence All the Way Down. *Philosophical Studies*, 174(6), 1539-1560.
- Pavese, C. (2019). The Psychological Reality of Practical Representation. *Philosophical Psychology*, 32(5), 784-821.

Further readings:

- Mylopoulos, M. and Pacherie, E. (2017). Intentions and Motor Representations: The Interface Challenge. *Review of Philosophy and Psychology*, 8(2), 317–336.
- Papineau, D. (2013). In the zone. *Royal Institute of Philosophy Supplement*, 73, 175–196.
- Stanley, J., & Krakauer, J. W. (2013). Motor Skill Depends on Knowledge of Facts. *Frontiers in Human Neuroscience*, 7(503), 1–11.

Skills discussion

June 25. 12-2pm, Bogotá time (GMT-5)

Mylopoulos' office hours

June 25. 4-6pm, Bogotá time (GMT-5)

Poverty/Structural Aspects of Agency (Jennifer Morton)

June 26. 5pm-8pm, Bogotá time (GMT-5)

In recent years, philosophers in the analytic tradition have finally turned their attention to thinking about how race and gender play a role in epistemology, metaphysics, and moral psychology. Yet, little attention has been paid to class. Is this because there are no interesting differences in the desires, beliefs, and reasoning of those who are better off from those who live in deprivation and extreme scarcity? Or is it simply because it's not a topic that has been explored by philosophers? In this seminar, we will consider these questions by engaging with some recent work in psychology, economics, and social science alongside some philosophical readings that bear on this topic.

Required readings:

- Harman, G. (1999). Rationality. In *Reasoning, Meaning and Mind* (pp. 9-45). New York: Oxford University Press.
- Duflo, E. (2006). Poor but rational? In A. Vinayak., R. Bénabou & D. Mookherjee (Eds.), *Understanding poverty* (pp. 367-78). New York: Oxford University Press.
- Khader, S. (2011). Adaptive Preferences and Choice: Are Adaptive Preferences Autonomy Deficits? In *Adaptive Preferences and Women's Empowerment* (pp.74-108). New York: Oxford University Press.
- Morton, J. M. (2017). Reasoning under scarcity. *Australasian Journal of Philosophy*, 95(3), 543-559.

Further readings:

- Shah, A. K., Mullainathan, S., & Shafir, E. (2012). Some consequences of having too little. *Science*, 338(6107), 682-685.
- Appadurai, A. (2004). The capacity to aspire: Culture in the Terms of Recognition (Chapter 3). In R. Vijayendra & M. Walton (Eds), *Culture and public action* (pp. 59-84). Stanford University Press.
- Nussbaum, M. C. (2001). Symposium on Amartya Sen's philosophy: 5 Adaptive preferences and women's options. *Economics & Philosophy*, 17(1), 67-88.
- Medina, J. (2013). Active Ignorance, Epistemic Others, and Epistemic Friction. In *The epistemology of resistance: Gender and racial oppression, epistemic injustice, and the social imagination*. New York: Oxford University Press.
- Morton, J (forth.) Moral Psychology of Poverty? In M. Vargas & J. Doris (Eds.), *The Oxford Handbook of Moral Psychology*. New York: Oxford University Press.

Discussion Poverty/Structural aspects of agency.

June 27. 12-2pm, Bogotá time (GMT-5)

Morton's office hours

June 29. 4-6pm, Bogotá time (GMT-5)

Disability (Kevin Timpe)

June 29. 5pm-8pm, Bogotá time (GMT-5)

Most philosophical work on agency focuses on what we might call ‘typical’ or ‘clear-cut paradigm’ cases of agency, bracketing issues related to developmental psychology, mental illness, disability, etc. There is comparatively little discussion of what David Shoemaker calls ‘marginal agents’, though he argues that such cases have important implications for human agency. This module will focus on issues related to disabled agency, exploring (i) how different sorts of disabilities impact agency in different ways, (ii) reasons to think human agency is moral social or ecological than we often think, and (iii) connections between agency and other areas of philosophy, such as social epistemology, moral psychology, and ethics.

Required readings:

- Shoemaker, D. (2007). Moral Address, Moral Responsibility, and the Boundaries of the Moral Community. *Ethics*, 118(1), 70–108.
- Timpe, K. (2019). Moral Ecology, Disability, and Human Agency. *Res Philosophica*, 96(1), 17–41.
- Timpe, K. (forthcoming) Agency and Disability. In L. Ferrero (Ed.), *The Routledge Handbook of Agency*.

Further readings:

- Timpe, K. (forthcoming). Emotion, Executive Dysfunction, and Agency: Can Emotional Disability Impair an Agent’s Likelihood of Virtue? In S. Cleveland & A. Pelsner (Eds.), *Becoming Good: New Philosophical Essays in Aid of Virtue Formation*.
- Reynolds, J.M., & Timpe, K. (forthcoming). Disability and Knowing: On Social Epistemology’s Ableism Problem. In J. Lackey & A. McGlynn (Eds.), *The Oxford Handbook of Social Epistemology*.
- Stramondo, J. (2016). Why Bioethics Needs a Disability Moral Psychology. *Hastings Center Report*, 46, 22–30.

Disability discussion

June 30. 12-2pm, Bogotá time (GMT-5)

Timpe’s office hours

June 30. 4-6pm, Bogotá time (GMT-5)

Workshop on grant writing (Alex Arnold)

July 2. 6:30-8pm, Bogotá time (GMT-5)

[NOTE: DIFFERENT TIME]

Final meeting (Santiago Amaya and Manuel Vargas)

July 3. 5pm-8pm, Bogotá time (GMT-5)