

I. Introduction to Process Philosophy

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20 h, biweekly, seminar for PhD students

Course Description:

For the past 100 years process philosophy has pursued the effort to supplant the old idea of substance in metaphysics and replace it with the idea of relation. The idea of relation is not new, of course, but treating it as metaphysically primary is a fairly recent development. When one holds that *things* are constituted by *relations*, as opposed to holding that relations are properties or qualities of things, every other question in metaphysics and epistemology changes. Why the shift? In a word, "time." The development of science over the past three hundred years has been bringing increasingly to the fore the question of the basic nature of time, and has shown that substance metaphysics is ill suited to answer the questions. Process philosophers claim that relations are basic to all existence because these philosophers see *time* as a relation, and indeed, *the* relation all other relations depend upon for their intelligibility and their very existence. Such a fundamental contention cannot be defended directly, since it is, operatively, a first principle. As with any first principle, its truth can be demonstrated only in our being able to point to its ineradicable primacy in the constitution of *every* phenomenon. In this seminar the primacy of relations in metaphysics is an hypothesis, not a proven truth. We will explore what implications the hypothesis has for other standard questions in philosophy and theology, and we will attempt to assess whether the hypothesis offers better hope for a defensible philosophical worldview than its main Western competitor, i.e., substance metaphysics. Among the main questions we will repeatedly address are:

- (1) What is time?
- (2) What is relation?
- (3) What is experience?
- (4) What is the structure and content of existence?
- (5) What roles do logic, mathematics and other formal ways of thinking play in creating human knowledge?
- (6) What is a person?

(7) What is "God" or the "god-function" in philosophy (e.g., the whole)?

Objectives:

By the end of the course students should be able to offer several persuasive answers to all of the questions above from the perspectives of several philosophers, and should have constructive and critical ideas of their own about these questions. They will be able to assess the answers given by Whitehead, Hartshorne and others, seeing both their strengths and weaknesses. Students will also possess a very general historical understanding of the history of the concept of time in Western philosophy, and will have devoted more detailed effort to at least two views (one historical and one more contemporary).

Readings

Primary:

Bergson, Henri. *Creative Evolution*, trans. A. Mitchell (New York: Henry Holt & Co., 1911).

Bergson, Henri. *Matter and Memory*, trans. N.M. Paul and W.S. Palmer (New York: Macmillan, 1911).

Browning, Douglas and Myers, William T. *Philosophers of Process*, 2nd ed. (New York: Fordham University Press, 1998).

Peirce, Charles Sanders. *The Essential Peirce*, 2 vols., eds. N. Houser and C. Kloesel (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1998).

Royce, Josiah. *Basic Writings*, 2 vols., ed. J.J. McDermott (New York: Fordham University Press, 2003).

Whitehead, Alfred North. *Process and Reality*, corrected ed. By D.R. Griffin and D. Sherburne (New York: Free Press, 1978 [1929]).

Whitehead, Alfred North. *Religion in the Making*, Intro. By Judith A. Jones, Glossary by R.E. Auxier (New York: Fordham University press, 1996).

From the Instructor's Writings:

Books (selections to be assigned):

Auxier, Randall. *Hartshorne and Brightman on God, Process and Persons: The Correspondence, 1922-1945*, with

Mark Y.A. Davies (Nashville: Vanderbilt University Press, 2001). The book contains the correspondence along with an edited transcript of my interview with Hartshorne for KOCU TV in Dec. of 1993 (in which Brightman and the relevant issues are discussed), a reprint of articles and reviews by Brightman and Hartshorne, an essay by Davies and two by me. 186 pp.

----- . *The Quantum of Explanation: Whitehead's Radical Empiricism*, with Gary L. Herstein. (New York, London: Routledge, 2017).

----- . *Time, Will and Purpose: Living Ideas from the Philosophy of Josiah Royce* (Chicago, IL: Open Court, 2013), 430 pp.

----- . *Hartshorne and Brightman on God, Process and Persons: The Correspondence, 1922-1945*, with Mark Y.A. Davies (Nashville: Vanderbilt University Press, 2001). The book contains the correspondence along with an edited transcript of my interview with Hartshorne for KOCU TV in Dec. of 1993 (in which Brightman and the relevant issues are discussed), a reprint of articles and reviews by Brightman and Hartshorne, an essay by Davies and two by me. 186 pp.

----- . "God, Process and Persons: Charles Hartshorne and Personalism," *Process Studies*, 27:3-4 (1998), 175-201.

----- . "Bowne on Time, Evolution and History," *Journal of Speculative Philosophy*, 12:3 (1998), 181-203.

----- . "Why 100 Years is Forever: Hartshorne on Immortality," *Personalist Forum*, 14:2 (fall 1998), 109-140; in the special issue dedicated to Hartshorne's Centennial Celebration at the University of Texas; Guest Editor, William T. Myers.

----- . "Influence as Confluence: Bergson and Whitehead," *Process Studies*, in the special focus section on "Bergson and Whitehead," 28:3-4 (Fall/Winter 1999), 267; 301-338; 339-345.
<https://www.religion-online.org/article/influence-as-confluence-bergon-and-whitehead/>

----- . "The Death of Darwinism and the Limits of Evolution," in *Philo*, 9:2 (fall-winter 2006), 193-220.

----- . "In Vino Veritas," in *Southwest Philosophy Review*, 30:1 (January 2014), 39-66.

----- . "Image and Act: Bergson's Ontology and Aesthetics," in *Sztuka i Filozofia / Art and Philosophy*, Issue 45 (2014), 64-81.

[http://bazhum.muzhp.pl/media//files/Sztuka i Filozofia/Sztuka i Filozofia-r2014-t45/Sztuka i Filozofia-r2014-t45-s64-81/Sztuka i Filozofia-r2014-t45-s64-81.pdf](http://bazhum.muzhp.pl/media//files/Sztuka_i_Filozofia/Sztuka_i_Filozofia-r2014-t45/Sztuka_i_Filozofia-r2014-t45-s64-81/Sztuka_i_Filozofia-r2014-t45-s64-81.pdf)

----- . "Ernst Cassirer and Susanne Langer," in *A Handbook of Whiteheadian Process Thought*, vol. 2, eds. Michel Weber and Will Desmond (Frankfurt: Ontos Verlag, 2008), 552-570.

----- . "Evolutionary Time, and the Creation of the Space of Life," in *Space, Time, and the Limits of Human Understanding*, eds. Shyam Wuppuluri and Giancarlo Ghirardi (Berlin: Springer Verlag, 2016), ch. 31, 381-400.

----- . "Music, Time, and the Egress of Possibility," in *American Aesthetics: Theory and Practice*, eds. Walter B. Gulick and Gary Slater (Albany, NY: SUNY Press, 2020), pp. 177-210.

----- . "From Presentational Symbol to Dynamic Form: Dance, Ritual, and Image," in *The Bloomsbury Handbook of Dance and Philosophy*, eds. Rebecca Farinas and Julie Van Camp (London: Bloomsbury, 2021), pp. 97-119.

----- . "Coordinate Analysis" (in German) in *Alfred North Whitehead: Leben—Werk—Wirkung*, eds. Aljosche Berve, Dennis Soelch, trans. Aljosche Berve (Stuttgart: J.B. Metzler Verlag), forthcoming.

Plus various unpublished writings.

Video

"On Whitehead, Process Philosophy, and Music," Prof. Christof Wolff, filmmaker, at the Munich School of Philosophy (*Hochschule für Philosophie München*), recorded March 2017, released March, 2020.

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Dt97TcYeztY>