

Theme 2: Silencing, Speaking up & Free Speech

Thursday, 28 January 2021

13:55-14:00	Welcome
14:00-15:00	Bianca Cepollaro: Remedies to discriminatory contents: on and offline counterspeech <i>10 min break</i>
15:10-16:10	Alessandra Tanesini: Anger as a speech act and its illocutionary disablement <i>10 min break</i>
16:20-17:20	Elisabeth Camp: Just Kidding: Sarcasm, Jokes and Willful Deniability in Speech (10:20 am EST) <i>10 min break</i>
17:30-18:30	Sanford Goldberg: How Silence Sometimes "Speaks" (10:30 am CST) <i>10 min break</i>
18:40-19:40	
19:40-20:40	Optional round-table discussion

Friday, 29 January 2021

13:55-14:00	Welcome
14:00-15:00	Rae Langton: TBA (1 pm GMT) <i>10 min break</i>
15:10-16:10	Robert Simpson: Heckling, Free Speech, and Free Association (2:10 pm GMT) <i>10 min break</i>
16:20-17:20	Mihaela Popa-Wyatt: On Resistance and Social Change <i>10 min break</i>
17:30-18:30	Ishani Maitra: TBA (11:30 am EST) <i>10 min break</i>
18:40-19:40	Saray Ayala-López: Contestation and Resistance (9:40 am PST)
19:40-20:40	Optional round-table discussion

ABSTRACTS: DAY 1

Remedies to discriminatory contents: on and offline counterspeech

BIANCA CEPOLLARO (Università degli Studi di Milano)

2:00 pm CET

In this talk I address the question as to how to prevent discriminatory contents from slipping into the common ground (Lewis 1979), if that is possible. In particular, I focus on the notion of blocking (Langton 2018) and compare different strategies to respond to pejorative speech. I present a qualitative study conducted on Facebook and Twitter on how social network users respond to the use of pejoratives online. My claim is that social network users perform to some extent the job of articulating and rejecting the implicit evaluative content conveyed by pejoratives in order to prevent them from entering into the common ground. However, I shall highlight a few problems having to do with (i) asynchrony, (ii) identity of the user, (iii) isolation, (iv) strategies and effectiveness.

Langton, Rae (2018), Blocking as Counter-Speech, in *Bad words*, edited by David Sosa, 144-164. Oxford: Oxford University Press.

Lewis, David (1979), Scorekeeping in a language game, *Journal of philosophical logic*, 8(1), 339-359.

Anger as a speech act and its illocutionary disablement

ALESSANDRA TANESINI (Cardiff University)

3:10 pm CET — 2:10 pm GMT

TBA

Just Kidding: Sarcasm, Jokes and Willful Deniability in Speech

ELISABETH CAMP (Rutgers University)

4:20 pm CET — 10:20 am EST

In political discourse and personal conversations, speakers often turn to jokes and other forms of indirect speech as a way to preserve 'plausible deniability' about what they meant. Interlocutors typically let them get away with such evasions, even when the speaker's intended meaning is palpably obvious to all parties. I distinguish several species of willfully manipulative speech; diagnose some common factors that help explain their rhetorical effectiveness; and suggest some ways in which resistant audiences can fight back.

How Silence Sometimes "Speaks"

SANFORD GOLDBERG (Northwestern University)

5:30 pm CET — 10:30 am CST

In this paper I appeal to Gricean assumptions to explain why in many situations one's silence is taken to signal one's assent. The argument I offer compares favorably to a superficially similar argument offered by Philip Pettit, who (in Pettit 1994) had argued that in free speech regimes silence means assent. My claim, by contrast, focuses not on the silent person herself but on the audience who observes her. I argue that under certain widely-obtaining conditions, audience members are entitled to regard one's silence as indicating one's assent – whether or not one

meant as much. I spell this out in terms of an account of a conversational permission audiences have to make the silence-to-assent inference; because this permission rests on assumptions about e.g. the cooperativity of conversations, it is defeasible.

Pettit, P. 1994: "Enfranchising Silence: An Argument for Freedom of Speech." In T. Campbell and W. Sadurski, eds., *Freedom of Communication* (Aldershot: Dartmouth), pp. 45-55.

ABSTRACTS: DAY 2

TBA

RAE LANGTON (University of Cambridge)

2:00 pm CET — 1:00 pm GMT

TBA

Heckling, Free Speech, and Free Association

ROBERT SIMPSON (University College London)

3:10 pm CET — 2:10 pm GMT

People sometimes use speech to interfere with other people's speech, as in the case of a heckler sabotaging a lecture with constant verbal interjections. Some people see such interferences as infringing upon free speech. Against this view we argue, with Jeremy Waldron, that where competing speakers in a public forum both have a real interest in speaking there, free speech principles shouldn't give priority to the 'official' speaker. Indeed, given the underlying aims of those principles, the heckler's speech may sometimes deserve priority. However, this analysis gives rise to a significant worry, because there are cases in which heckling clearly seems to infringe upon civil liberties, in a way that seems to justify its suppression. We argue that this is because heckling and the like can infringe upon people's associative liberties. We offer a way of theorizing and approaching policy-making for 'contested speech situations' in light of this, with a focus on contested speech in universities.

On Resistance and Social Change

MIHAELA POPA-WYATT (ZAS Berlin)

4:20 pm CET

TBA

TBA

ISHANI MAITRA (University of Michigan)

5:30 pm CET — 11:30 am EST

TBA

Contestation and Resistance

SARAY AYALA-LÓPEZ (California State University Sacramento)

6:40 pm CET — 9:40 am PST

What does it take to contest social, and in particular linguistic and conceptual, practices (e.g. the meaning of certain words, the use and nature of certain concepts)? I explore this question

starting with a distinction between contestation and resistance.

6:40 pm CET — 12:40 am EST