Social Epistemology and Group Agency -- Syllabus 2015/16

Course ID: 700295
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Overview
This course deals with collective aspects of knowledge, belief, agency, and decision-making. We shall explore three questions:
- Can groups be unified rational agents over and above their individual members?
- Under what conditions can we know that a group is a genuine agent?
- Under what conditions should groups be held morally responsible for their actions?

One book will guide us in our exploration:


You are expected to have a copy of this book.

For each class, you are expected to read the compulsory readings and to prepare for discussion.

Exam and grade regulations:
30% Assignment 1 (max. 1000 words excluding references, deadline: 16 October)
30% Assignment 2 (max. 2000 words excluding references, deadline: 27 November)
30% Sit-in final exam
10% Class preparation, and presentation

The two assignments are to be handed in via email. Detailed instructions will be given during the course.

Classes and Readings

Class 1
Date: 1 September
Introduction to the learning goals and practicalities of the course.
No reading

Class 2
Date: 8 September
Topic: Why collective mentality?
Compulsory reading:

Suggested readings:

Class 3
Date: 15 September
Topic: How should we understand collective mentality?

Compulsory readings:
- L&P, Chapter 1

Suggested readings:

**Class 4**
Date: 22 September
Topic: How can we get a collective mental state from individual ones?

Compulsory readings:
- L&P, Chapter 2.1

Suggested readings:

**Class 5**
Date: 29 September
Topic: How can we get a collective mental state from individual ones?

Compulsory readings:
- L&P, Chapter 2.2-2.3.
  [Note This paper is part of the *Episteme* Symposium on Group Agency. If you have time, check out the other contributions, and List & Pettit’s replies]

Suggested readings:

**Class 6**
Date: 6 October
Topic: The structure of collective minds.

Compulsory reading:
- L&P, Chapter 3.

Suggested readings:

**Class 7**
Date: 13 October
Topics: Collective belief
Compulsory reading:
- L&P, Chapter 4.

Suggested reading:

**Class 8**
Date: 20 October
Topic: Collective incentives and rationality
Compulsory reading:
- L&P, Chapter 5.

Suggested readings:

**Class 9**
Date: 3 November
Topic: Presentation of your own essay.

**Class 10**
Date: 10 November
Topic: Collective control
Compulsory reading:

Suggested readings:

**Class 11**
Date: 17 November
Topic: When are collective agents responsible?
Compulsory readings:

Suggested readings:

**Class 12**
Date: 24 November
Topic: Collective agents as persons?
Compulsory reading:
- L&P, Chapter 8.
Suggested readings:

**Class 13**
Date: 1 December
Topic: Identifying with a group
Compulsory readings:
Suggested readings:

**Class 14**
Date 8 December
Wrap up and final discussion