

The Philosophy of Wilfrid Sellars

Winter 2004

*** Syllabus ***

Instructors:

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Texts

All of the following textbooks have been ordered through the Seminary Co-op. The first four are required texts for the course:

1. Wilfrid Sellars, Science and Metaphysics: Variations on Kantian Themes
2. Wilfrid Sellars, Science, Perception and Reality (below, SPR)
3. Wilfrid Sellars, Empiricism and the Philosophy of Mind (with a study guide by Robert Brandom)
4. Willem deVries and Timm Triplett, Knowledge, Mind and the Given

5. C. I. Lewis, Mind and the World Order
6. Wilfrid Sellars, The Metaphysics of Epistemology
7. Wilfrid Sellars, Naturalism and Ontology
8. Wilfrid Sellars, Philosophical Perspectives: History of Philosophy
9. Wilfrid Sellars, Philosophical Perspectives: Metaphysics and Epistemology (below, PPME)
10. Wilfrid Sellars, Pure Pragmatics and Possible Worlds (below, PPPW)
11. Wilfrid Sellars, Kant and Pre-Kantian Themes: Lectures by Wilfrid Sellars, edited by Pedro Amaral
12. Wilfrid Sellars, Kant's Transcendental Metaphysics: Sellars' Cassirer Lectures, Notes and Other Essays, edited by Jeffrey Sicha (below, KTM)

5-12 above are recommended texts; students may want to buy one or more of these depending on their interests.

Most but not all of the readings assigned for the course are in one of the twelve texts above. Other readings will be made available through electronic reserve, or through the library's electronic resources (e.g. JSTOR), as will also any readings that are contained in texts 5-12.

The Sellars website at www.ditext.com/sellars/ is worth a visit and has links to various texts both by and about Sellars that are available in electronic form.

If you ever encounter any problem obtaining an assigned reading for the course, you should immediately contact both instructors by e-mail and let them know about the problem.

Structure of the course

Announcements: There is a chalk website for this course (chalk.uchicago.edu). Announcements (modifications to the syllabus, etc) will periodically be posted there. Students are expected to keep abreast of these.

Format: Mixed lecture and discussion.

Work of the course: All students are expected to attend class regularly, be conversant with the required readings, and participate in discussion. All students taking the course for credit will write a term paper at the end of the quarter (around 20-30 pages).

Schedule of topics and readings

Week 1 (Monday, January 5): Organizational meeting

Week 2 (Monday, January 12): Background – Introducing “the Given”

Required reading:

1. Russell, The Problems of Philosophy, chapters 1, 2, 4 and 5 (online at <http://www.ditext.com/russell/russell.html>)
2. Schlick, “The Foundations of Knowledge” (e-reserve)
3. Schlick, “The Nature of Knowledge” (e-reserve)
4. C.I. Lewis, Mind and the World Order, chapters 1 and 2 (e-reserve)
5. C.I. Lewis, “Reply to Firth” (e-reserve)

Recommended reading:

C.I. Lewis, Mind and the World Order, chapter 3 (e-reserve)

Week 3 (Monday, January 19): Introducing “the Myth of the Given”

Required reading:

1. Sellars, “Realism and the New Way of Words,” sections 1-2. (e-reserve; in PPPW)
2. Rorty, “Introduction” to the Harvard edition of “Empiricism and the Philosophy of Mind”
3. Sellars, “Empiricism and the Philosophy of Mind,” I, II (§§1-9)

After you read the assigned sections of “Empiricism and the Philosophy of Mind,” also read the following:

Brandom, “Study Guide”, Parts I, II
deVries and Triplett, “Preface: A Guide for the Perplexed,” “Introduction,” chapters 1 and 2.

Important Note: From here through week 9, the relevant sections of Brandom’s “Study Guide” and of deVries and Triplett can be taken as required reading each week without explicit mention on the syllabus.

Recommended Reading:

Sellars, “Objects of Knowledge”, *The Metaphysics of Epistemology*, Lecture 1 (e-reserve)

Week 4 (Monday, January 26): Appearances

Required reading:

1. Sellars, “Empiricism and the Philosophy of Mind,” III, IV (§§10-23)
2. Brandom, “The Centrality of Sellars’ Two-Ply Account of Observation to the Arguments of ‘Empiricism and the Philosophy of Mind’,” in Tales of the Mighty Dead. (e-reserve)
3. McDowell, “Transcendental Empiricism” (e-reserve)

Recommended reading:

1. Rorty, Philosophy and the Mirror of Nature, chapter 4, sections 1-3, pp. 165-192. (e-reserve)
2. McDowell, Mind and World, Afterword, Part I (e-reserve)

Week 5 (Monday, February 2): Impressions and Ideas

Required reading:

1. Sellars, "Empiricism and the Philosophy of Mind," V, VI (§§24-29)
2. Sellars, "Berkeley and Descartes: Reflections on the New Way of Ideas," in *Studies in Perception: Interpretations in the History of Philosophy and Science*, edited by Peter K. Machamer and Robert G. Turnbull (Columbus: Ohio State University Press, 1977). (e-reserve)
3. Sellars, *Kant and Pre-Kantian Themes*, chapter 6, sections 1-12 (pp.33-6); chapter 11, sections 45-7 (p.84) (e-reserve)

Recommended reading:

1. Sellars, *Kant and Pre-Kantian Themes*, chapter on Locke, pp. 215-226 (e-reserve)
2. Sellars, "The Lever of Archimedes," (Foundations for a Metaphysics of Pure Process, Lecture 1), *The Monist* 64 (1981): 3-36. (e-reserve)

Week 6 (Monday, February 9): Meaning

Required reading:

1. Sellars, "Empiricism and the Philosophy of Mind," VII (§§30-31)
2. Sellars, "Naming and Saying" (in SPR)
3. Sellars, "Meaning as Functional Classification," *Synthese* 27 (1974): 417-37 (e-reserve).

Recommended reading:

1. Carnap, The Logical Syntax of Language, §§72-75 (e-reserve)
2. Sellars, "Being and Being Known" (in SPR)
3. Sellars, "Truth as Correspondence" (in SPR)
4. McDowell, "Sellars' Thomism" (e-reserve)

Week 7 (Monday, February 16): Knowledge and foundations

Required reading:

1. Sellars, "Empiricism and the Philosophy of Mind," VIII (§§32-38)
2. Otto Neurath, "Protocol Sentences" (e-reserve)

Recommended reading:

1. Sellars, "Givenness and Explanatory Coherence," *The Journal of Philosophy* 70 (1973: 612-624) (JSTOR)
Brandom, Making It Explicit, chapter 4, sections I-III. (e-reserve)
Michael Williams, "Knowledge, Reasons and Causes: Sellars and Skepticism" (e-reserve)

Week 8 (Monday, February 23): Scientific and manifest images

Required reading:

1. Sellars, "Empiricism and the Philosophy of Mind," IX-XIV (§§39-55)
2. Sellars, "Some Reflections on Language-Games" (in SPR)
3. Sellars, "Philosophy and the Scientific Image of Man" (in SPR)

Recommended reading:

1. Sellars, "Inference and Meaning," *Mind* 62 (1953): 313-38. (In PPPW.) (JSTOR)
2. Brandom, Making It Explicit, chapter 2. (E-reserve)
3. McDowell, "Brandom's Inferentialism" (e-reserve)
4. Ryle, The Concept of Mind, chapters V, X. (e-reserve)

Week 9 (Monday, March 1): Private episodes

Required reading:

1. Sellars, "Empiricism and the Philosophy of Mind," XV-XVI (§§56-63)
2. Sellars, "Phenomenalism" (in SPR)
3. Sellars and Chisholm, "Intentionality and the Mental," in *Minnesota Studies in The Philosophy of Science*, Vol. II, edited by Herbert Feigl, Michael Scriven, and Grover Maxwell (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1957): 507-39. (the Sellars-Chisholm correspondence; e-reserve)

Recommended reading:

1. Sellars, "Language as Thought and as Communication," *Philosophy and Phenomenological Research* 29 (1969): 506-27. (JSTOR)

Week 10 (Monday, March 8): Sellars' later Kantianism

Required reading:

1. Sellars, Science and Metaphysics, chapter 1
2. Sellars, "The Role of the Imagination in Kant's Theory of Experience," in *Categories: A Colloquium*, edited by Henry W. Johnstone, Jr. (Pennsylvania State University, 1978): 231-45. (E-reserve) (in KTM) Also online at <http://www.ditext.com/sellars/ikte.html>.

Recommended reading:

1. Sellars, "Kant's Transcendental Idealism," in *Collections of Philosophy* 6 (1976), pp. 165-181 (E-reserve) (in KTM) Also online at <http://www.ditext.com/sellars/kti.html>.
2. Sellars, "Some Remarks on Kant's Theory of Experience," *The Journal of Philosophy* 64 (1967): 633-47 (in KTM) (JSTOR)
3. Sellars, *Kant and Pre-Kantian Themes*, chapters 7, 11 & 12 9 (E-reserve)
4. Sellars, "...this I or he or it (the thing) which thinks..." *Proceedings of the American Philosophical Association* 44 (1972): 5-31. (E-reserve) (in KTM)

Week 11 (Monday, March 15): McDowell on later Sellars

Required reading:

1. McDowell, "Having the World in View: Sellars, Kant, and Intentionality," *The Journal of Philosophy* 95, 9, September 1998. (E-reserve)
2. McDowell: "Autonomous Subjectivity and External Constraint" (e-reserve)

Recommended reading:

1. McDowell, "Hegel's Radicalization of Kant" (e-reserve)

Appendix 1: Selected works of Sellars not explicitly listed on the syllabus but of related interest

(A complete bibliography is available at www.ditext.com/sellars/)

1. "Abstract Entities," *Review of Metaphysics* 16 (1963): 627-71 (in PPME).
2. "The Adverbial Theory of the Objects of Sensation," *Metaphilosophy* 6, (1975): 144-60.
3. "Behaviorism, Language and Meaning," *Pacific Philosophical Quarterly* 61 (1980): 3-30.
4. "Counterfactuals, Dispositions, and the Causal Modalities," in *Minnesota Studies in The Philosophy of Science*, Vol. II, edited by Herbert Feigl, Michael Scriven, and Grover Maxwell (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1957): 225-308.
5. "Concepts as Involving Laws and Inconceivable without Them," *Philosophy of Science* 15 (1948): 287-315. (In PPPW)
6. "Empiricism and Abstract Entities," in *The Philosophy of Rudolf Carnap* (The Library of Living Philosophers) edited by Paul Schilpp (La Salle, Illinois: Open Court, 1963): 431-68.
7. Foundations for a Metaphysics of Pure Process, Lectures 2 and 3, *The Monist* 64 (1981): 37-90.
8. "Grammar and Existence: A Preface to Ontology". (in SPR)
9. "On the Introduction of Abstract Entities," in *Forms of Representation*, Proceedings of the 1972 Philosophy Colloquium of the University of Western Ontario, edited by B. Freed, A. Marras and P. Maynard (Amsterdam, Holland: North Holland, 1975): 47-74.
10. "The Identity Approach to the Mind-Body Problem," *Review of Metaphysics* 18 (1965): 430-51. (In PPME)
11. "The Language of Theories" (in SPR)
12. "Mental Events," *Philosophical Studies* 39 (1981): 325-45.
13. "More on Givenness and Explanatory Coherence," in *Justification and Knowledge*, edited by George Pappas (Dordrecht, Holland: D. Reidel, 1979): 169-182.
14. "Meditations Leibnitziennes," *American Philosophical Quarterly* 2 (1965): 105-118.
15. "Metaphysics and the Concept of a Person," in *The Logical Way of Doing Things*, edited by Karel Lambert (New Haven: Yale University Press (1969): 219-52. (in KTM)
16. Naturalism and Ontology (Reseda, California: Ridgeview Publishing Co., 1980).
17. "Ontology and the Philosophy of Mind in Russell," in *Bertrand Russell's Philosophy*, edited by George Nakhnikian (New York: Barnes and Noble, 1974): 57-100.
18. "Particulars" (in SPR)
19. "The Structure of Knowledge: (1) Perception; (2) Minds; (3) Epistemic Principles," in *Action, Knowledge and Reality: Studies in Honor of Wilfrid*

- Sellars*, edited by Hector-Neri Castañeda (Indianapolis: Bobbs-Merrill, 1975): 295-347.
20. “Science, Sense-Impressions, and *Sensa*: A Reply to Cornman,” *Review of Metaphysics* 25 (1971): 391-447.
 21. “Is There a Synthetic A Priori?” (in *SPR*)
 22. “Towards a Theory of Predication,” in *How Things Are*, edited by James Bogen and James McGuire (Dordrecht, Holland: D. Reidel, 1983): 281-318.

Appendix 2: Some selected secondary literature on Sellars (and Sellars-influenced work) not listed on the syllabus

(A much more complete bibliography can be found at www.ditext.com/sellars/.)

(1) Good overviews:

1. Bernstein, Richard: “Sellars’ Vision of Man-in-the-Universe I,” *Review of Metaphysics* 20 (1966), 113-143.
2. _____: “Sellars’ Vision of Man-in-the-Universe II,” *Review of Metaphysics* 20 (1966), 290-316.
3. Rosenberg, Jay: “The Place of Color in the Scheme of Things: A Roadmap to Sellars’ Carus Lectures,” *Monist* 65 (1983), 315-335.
4. _____: “Wilfrid Sellars’ Philosophy of Mind,” in Floistad, G., ed., *Contemporary Philosophy: A New Survey* (The Hague: Nijhoff, 1983), 417-439.

(2) Critical discussions:

1. Alston, William: “What’s Wrong with Immediate Knowledge?” *Synthese* 55 (1983), 73-96.
2. _____: “Sellars and the Myth of the Given,” *Philosophy and Phenomenological Research* 65 (2002), 69-86
3. Bonevac, Daniel, “Sellars vs. the Given,” *Philosophy and Phenomenological Research* 64 (2002) 1-30.
4. Clark, Romane: “Sensibility and Understanding: The Given of Wilfrid Sellars,” *Monist* 65 (1983), 350-364.
5. Cornman, James W: “Sellars, Scientific Realism, and *Sensa*,” *Review of Metaphysics* 23 (1970): 417-451.
6. _____: “Theoretical Phenomenalism,” *Noûs* 7 (1973): 120-138.
7. Dennett, Daniel: “Wondering Where the Yellow Went,” *Monist* 64 (1981), 102-108.
8. Fales, Evan: *A Defense of the Given* (Rowman & Littlefield, 1996).

9. Firth, Roderick: "Reply to Lectures by Wilfrid Sellars," Monist 64 (1981): 91-101.
10. Jackson, Frank: "On the Adverbial Analysis of Visual Experience," Metaphilosophy 6 (1975): 127-35.
11. Lehrer, Keith, and David Stern: "The 'Denouement' of 'Empiricism and the Philosophy of Mind'," History of Philosophy Quarterly 17 (2000), 201-216.
12. McDowell, John: "The Constitutive Ideal of Rationality: Davidson and Sellars," Critica 30 (1998), 29-48.
13. van Fraassen, Bas: "The Manifest Image and the Scientific Image," in D. Aerts (ed.), Einstein Meets Magritte: The White Book -- An Interdisciplinary Reflection (Dordrecht: Kluwer, 1999), 29-52. Also at <http://webware.princeton.edu/vanfraas/mss/manifest.htm>

(3) Sympathetic interpretations:

1. Garfield, Jay: "The Myth of Jones and the Mirror of Nature: Reflections on Introspection," Philosophy and Phenomenological Research 50 (1989), 1-26.
2. Kukla, Rebecca: "Myth, Memory and Misrecognition in Sellars' 'Empiricism and the Philosophy of Mind'," Philosophical Studies 101 (2000), 161-211.
3. MacBeth, Danielle, "Pragmatism and the Philosophy of Language," Philosophy and Phenomenological Research 55 (1995): 501-23.
4. _____: "Empirical Knowledge: Kantian Themes and Sellarsian Variations," Philosophical Studies 101 (2000), 113-142.
5. Natsoulas, Thomas: "Sellars, Sense Impressions, and Perceptual Takings," Journal of Mind and Behavior 23 (2002), 293-316.
6. _____: "A Rediscovery of Presence," Journal of Mind and Behavior 20 (1999).
7. Rosenberg, Jay: "Linguistic Roles and Proper Names," in The Philosophy of Wilfrid Sellars: Queries and Extensions, edited by J. Pitt (D. Reidel Publishing Co., 1978): 189-216.
8. Tye, Michael: "The Adverbial Theory: A Defense of Sellars against Jackson," Metaphilosophy 6 (1975): 136-143.

(4) Works influenced by Sellars:

1. Brandom, Robert: "Inference, Expression, and Induction," Philosophical Studies 54 (1988): 257-285.
2. _____: "Knowledge and the Social Articulation of the Space of Reasons," Philosophy and Phenomenological Research 55 (1995): 895-908.
3. Gauker, Christopher: Thinking out Loud: An Essay on the Relation Between Thought and Language (Princeton University Press, 1994).
4. Lance, Mark: "The Word made Flesh: Towards a Neo-Sellarsian View of Concepts, Analysis, and Understanding," Acta Analytica 15 (2000), 117-135.
5. Lance, Mark, and O'Leary-Hawthorne, John: The Grammar of Meaning: Normativity and Semantic Discourse (Cambridge University Press, 1997).

6. McDowell, John: "Knowledge and the Internal," Philosophy and Phenomenological Research 55 (1995): 877-93.
7. _____: "Knowledge and the Internal Revisited," Philosophy and Phenomenological Research
8. Rorty, Richard: "Representation, Social Practice, and Truth," Philosophical Studies 54 (1988), 215-228.
9. _____: "Perception vs. Inner Sense: A Problem about Direct Awareness," Philosophical Studies 101 (2000), 143-160.
10. Rosenberg, Jay: Linguistic Representation (Dordrecht: D. Reidel Publishing Co., 1974).
11. _____: One World and Our Knowledge of It (Dordrecht: D. Reidel Publishing Co., 1980).
12. _____: The Thinking Self (Philadelphia: Temple University Press, 1986).
13. Williams, Michael: Groundless Belief: An Essay on the Possibility of Epistemology (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1999).