PHILOSOPHY SUMMER SCHOOL IN CHINA
2017 SESSION: PHILOSOPHICAL ANTHROPOLOGY
Renmin University
24 July – 11 August

Group 1:
Prof. Michael Beaney (Humboldt University Berlin & King's College London), Director:
WITTGENSTEIN'S PHILOSOPHICAL ANTHROPOLOGY
Prof. Sharon Macdonald (Humboldt University Berlin):
EVANS-PRITCHARD'S ANTHROPOLOGY
Group 2:
Dr Alix Cohen (University of Edinburgh): (WEEK 1)
KANT'S PHILOSOPHICAL ANTHROPOLOGY
Prof. Michael Forster (University of Bonn and University of Chicago): (WEEK 2&3)
PHILOSOPHY AND ANTHROPOLOGY
Group 3:
Dr Manuel Dries (The Open University, UK):
NIETZSCHE'S PHILOSOPHICAL ANTHROPOLOGY
Group 4:
Prof. Guido Kreis (University of Aarhus):
CASSIRER'S PHILOSOPHICAL ANTHROPOLOGY

COURSE DESCRIPTIONS

WITTGENSTEIN'S PHILOSOPHICAL ANTHROPOLOGY

Michael Beaney (Humboldt University Berlin & King's College London)

Wittgenstein's philosophy has sometimes been described as taking an 'anthropological turn' in the 1930s, as he sought to free himself from some of the ideas of his earlier *Tractatus*. We will explore this turn on this course, looking at such topics as rule-following, language-games, aspect-perception, and the relationship between human activity, language and thought.

COURSE READING: A course pack will be provided.

EVANS-PRITCHARD'S ANTHROPOLOGY

Sharon Macdonald (Humboldt University Berlin)

Social anthropologist Evans-Pritchard's work was important in questioning ideas about 'primitive mentality' and the operation of reasoning in everyday practice. Based on first-hand ethnographic fieldwork among the Azande people of East Africa, Evans-Pritchard looked closely at their witchcraft and divination practices to investigate Azande modes of inference and ideas about causality. This was the basis of an understanding of rationality that was significant not only in revising assumptions about the cognitive abilities of peoples who at

that time were sometimes deemed 'primitive' but also in raising wider questions about the nature of rationality and human reasoning in practice.

COURSE TEXT: A course pack will be provided, including passages from E. E. Evans-Pritchard's *Witchcraft, Oracles and Magic among the Azande* (1937) and some of the secondary literature.

KANT'S PHILOSOPHICAL ANTHROPOLOGY

Alix Cohen (University of Edinburgh)

Interest in Kant's works on anthropology is very recent, at least in the Anglo-American tradition. This interest has been motivated by the hope that these neglected aspects of Kant's works would help us understand, flesh out or vindicate his critical philosophy. This course offers an overview of Kant's philosophical anthropology by focusing on (1) its place in the Kantian system, (2) its method and its pragmatic intent, and (3) its relationship to Kant's ethics.

COURSE READING: A course pack will be provided.

PHILOSOPHY AND ANTHROPOLOGY

Michael Forster (University of Bonn and University of Chicago)

This course will explore the philosophical origins and foundations of the discipline of cultural (or social) anthropology. We will begin by looking at a revolution in the philosophy of language, hermeneutics, translation theory, and linguistics that took place during the second half of the eighteenth century with the German philosopher Herder. We will then look more specifically at the ways in which against this background he developed the main lines of the future discipline of anthropology. Next, we will consider a significant intermediate step towards the new discipline: the 'Völkerpsychologie' that Lazarus, Steinthal, and Wundt developed on the basis of the aforementioned Herderian roots in the second half of the nineteenth century. Finally, we will discuss with an eye to this whole background exemplary works by the founders of the two main traditions of anthropology in the twentieth century: Boas (the founder of anthropology in the USA) and Malinowski (the founder of anthropology in Great Britain).

COURSE READING: A course pack will be provided.

NIETZSCHE'S PHILOSOPHICAL ANTHROPOLOGY IN *ON THE GENEALOGY OF MORALITY*

Manuel Dries (The Open University, and St Hilda's College, Oxford, UK)

Nietzsche carries out his critique of morality over the course of several works, among them *Human, All Too Human* (1878–80), *Daybreak* (1881) and *Beyond Good and Evil* (1886). However, it is in the shorter book entitled *On the Genealogy of Morality* (1886) that Nietzsche publishes his most sustained attack on morality. He claims, and this is the bold main thesis of the *Genealogy*, that 'morality' is an historical invention by a certain type of person or group, the 'slaves', who thereby asserted their power over another type or group, the 'masters' or 'nobles'. Our deeply-held and widely shared values such as compassion and

equality are neither God-given nor are they the result of disinterested reasoning about what is right and wrong. Rather, Nietzsche argues, morality is a natural, human phenomenon. It has a history, a very human, an 'all-too-human' history, steeped in oppression, suffering, hatred, ressentiment, and revenge. And it was only through establishing systems of values that suited their own interests that the initially powerless asserted themselves over those who were initially strong, noble, and powerful.

The principal goal of this course is to understand the ways he argues for this bold main thesis in the three essays of the *Genealogy*. We will confine ourselves to five main topics. In sessions 1 and 2 we will look at the target and scope of Nietzsche's critique of morality. What exactly is the morality that Nietzsche targets? What is his new conception of human agents and agency? In sessions 3 and 4 we will look at his method, genealogy, and study the *Genealogy*'s 'Preface'. In which sense is it possible to use some form of history to criticize values? In sessions 5 and 6 we will look at contrasting interpretations of Nietzsche's concept of the "slave revolt" in the first essay of the *Genealogy*. How could the slave revolt have been caused by the psychological state of "resentment"? In sessions 7 and 8 we will examine one of the central themes of the *Genealogy*'s second essay. How should we read Nietzsche's account of the emergence of 'bad conscience' from a creditor-debtor relationship? How did 'bad conscience' turn into a 'guilty conscience'? The final two sessions will focus on different interpretations of the third essay's main theme, the "ascetic ideal". What exactly is the role of the figure of the priest? And in which sense is the ascetic ideal related to a "will to truth"? For each session students will be asked to read selected sections from the *Genealogy*, as well as one or two articles from leading scholars in the field.

COURSE READING: A course pack will be provided.

CASSIRER'S PHILOSOPHICAL ANTHROPOLOGY

Guido Kreis (Aarhus University)

Ernst Cassirer has developed one of the most fascinating modern versions of philosophical anthropology. His central claim is that man is an '*animal symbolicum*': a being that essentially engages in various activities of symbolisation. For instance, human beings invent and use *language* as a 'symbolic' medium to communicate with each other and to refer to their commonly shared reality. At the same time, language is a social medium and institution which introduces individual human beings into a community of speakers and discussants. The idea of the normative dimension of language, as manifested in the mandatory rules of grammar and discourse, is crucial here. In addition to language, human beings engage in various other 'symbolic forms' such as *religion*, *art*, *science*, *technology*, etc. For Cassirer, these symbolic forms open up the different spheres of human *culture*. One of Cassirer's main ideas is that, on the one hand, our physical and biological nature is intimately connected to, and indeed thoroughly integrated into, human culture; on the other hand, however, the symbolising cultural activities of human beings cannot possibly be reduced to our physical and biological nature in any naturalistic manner. As a consequence, Cassirer's reconstruction of the system of symbolic forms terminates in an account of human freedom through human culture. Finally, and perhaps most importantly, Cassirer's cultural anthropology, with its broad range of topics, allows for rich applications in various fields of comparative philosophy.

COURSE TEXT: The course will be devoted to a close reading of Cassirer's *Essay on Man: An Introduction to a Philosophy of Human Culture* (Yale University Press, 1944/1972). From time to time, we will refer to some of the key chapters of Cassirer's *Philosophy of Symbolic Forms*, too.