

Philosophy, Post-Truth and Alternative Fact

Start date 9th February 2019**End date** 9th February 2019**Venue** Madingley Hall
Madingley
Cambridge**Tutor** Dr Alex Carter**Course code** 1819NDX020**Director of Academic Centres** Sarah Ormrod**For further information on this course, please contact** Head of Academic Centre Administration, Zara Kuckelhaus
zara.kuckelhaus@ice.cam.ac.uk or 01223 746204**To book** See: www.ice.cam.ac.uk or telephone 01223 746262

Tutor biography

Dr Alex Carter - Academic Director, Institute Teaching Officer in Philosophy

Alex was awarded his PhD in Philosophy by the University of Essex in 2015. Before this, Alex studied Philosophy & Ancient History at the University of Wales, Swansea and Philosophy at the University of Bristol. Alex has over five years of teaching experience in Ethics, History of Philosophy and Philosophy of Religion. He has worked at the Institute of Continuing Education since 2015 as Academic Director for Philosophy and as a Panel Tutor.

Alex's teaching method was developed at the University of Essex where the principle aim is to get students to feel the "pain of the problem", i.e. to make plain the very real ways in which philosophical problems affect our lives. Accordingly, Alex is most keen to offer his support to philosophical projects that, not only to inform contemporary debates, but actively affect change. Alex's ongoing research interests include the theology of Simone Weil and Ludwig Wittgenstein's ethical philosophy.

Course programme

09:30	Terrace bar open for pre-course tea/coffee
10:00 – 11:15	Philosophy, truth and untruth
11:15	Coffee
11:45 – 13:00	What is post-truth?
13:00	Lunch
14:00 – 15:15	Are we living in a post-satire era?
15:15	Tea
15:30 – 16:45	Responding to post-truth
16:45	Day-school ends

Course syllabus

Aims:

The course will introduce students to the fundamentals of philosophical argument and critical analysis. We will assess the philosophers' role in identifying what constitutes truth, the questionable status of "facts" and what, if anything, society can do to combat the ill-effects of post-truth.

Content:

The term 'post-truth' implies that there was a period, before this one, that was truthful. However plausible we find this, many of us are aware of post-truth as a phenomena. Arguably, philosophers have been slow in responding to the perceived dangers of post-truth; dangers which appear at least to threaten the very bedrock of philosophical enquiry, i.e. the pursuit and understanding of truth.

By looking back at philosophical theories concerning the nature of truth itself, we will come to better understand what preceded post-truth and what makes certain facts "alternative". In later sessions we will turn to questions of how social media and populist politics make use of alternative facts and how contemporary philosophers, and students of Philosophy, can respond.

Presentation of the course:

The Day School will be comprised of formal lectures incorporating interactive presentations and discussion sessions. Throughout each session, students will be invited to reflect, comment and pass judgement on the ideas introduced.

As a result of the course, within the constraints of the time available, students should be able to:

- Demonstrate greater understanding of the philosophical issues associated with Post-Truth and alternative facts;
- Appreciate changing attitudes towards facts, and truth generally;
- Provide reasons for thinking more positively about recent social and cultural developments, e.g. the increasing influence of social media.

Reading and resources list

Listed below are texts that might be of interest should you wish to supplement your learning on the course. Any essential reading is marked with an asterisk *

Author	Title	Publisher and date
Blackburn, Simon	Truth: a guide for the perplexed	Penguin, 2006
Grayling, A. C.	Democracy and its Crisis	Oneworld, 2017
Critchley, Simon	On Humour [see: Chapter 6 “The joke’s on all of us - humour as sensus communis”]	Routledge, 2011

Website addresses

<http://nautil.us/issue/30/identity/identity-is-an-inside-joke>

https://www.grayling.com/uk/en/insight/post_truth_politics_the_latest_fad_or_the_new_reality

Additional information

Venue

Details of how to find Madingley Hall can be found on our website:

<http://www.ice.cam.ac.uk/who-we-are/how-to-find-the-institute>

Refreshments

Tea and coffee and lunch will be provided. If you have any specific dietary requirements or allergies and have not already advised us, please inform our Admissions Team on ice.admissions@ice.cam.ac.uk or +44 (0)1223 746262.

Note Students of the Institute of Continuing Education are entitled to 20% discount on books published by Cambridge University Press (CUP) which are purchased at the Press bookshop, 1 Trinity Street, Cambridge (Mon-Sat 9am – 5:30pm, Sun 11am – 5pm). A letter or email confirming acceptance on to a current Institute course should be taken as evidence of enrolment.

Information correct as of: 21 January 2019