

Racionalitat**2015/2016**

Codi: 42535

Crèdits: 6

Titulació	Tipus	Curs	Semestre
4313410 Reptes de la Filosofia Contemporània	OT	0	2

Professor de contacte

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Equip docent extern a la UAB

Oriol Ponsatí Murlà

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Utilització de llengües

Llengua vehicular majoritària: anglès (eng)

Prerequisites

- Good reading abilities in English language; participation in class discussion can be done both in Spanish and English.
- Interest in philosophical and scientific debates over rationality and/or reason
- Interest in the critical discussion of classical and current texts on the class topic
- Knowledge of basic logic is necessary; knowledge of theories of probability and rational decision is helpful.
- Willingness to prepare the class discussion of one of the readings (summary of one article/book chapter plus preparation of discussion questions and/or critical evaluation of the arguments contained)
- Readings are obligatory unless noted otherwise. Don't just read the course texts passively; work actively with them and come well-prepared to classes. Three questions are always central: What's the author's main claim? What is his argument for the claim? What should we think of the argument's form and premises? Especially for your own presentation of an article/book chapter, please use these questions as guidelines.

Objectius

Theories of rationality should ideally provide us with tools for a number of important tasks: We want to avoid irrationality, or aim at justifying our beliefs and decisions by certain standards. We want to be clear about whether the reasons for our beliefs and actions are valid or reasonable. Furthermore, we often have to communicate with others about our beliefs and decisions, such as in scientific, ethical, economic, or political contexts. All this requires conceptions or even theories of reason or rationality. Such theories are then highly important for epistemology, philosophy of science, ethics, political philosophy, and the philosophy of mind and action.

But what do we mean when we say that something, or someone, is rational (or irrational)? What are the normative standards of rationality? How should a theory of rationality be built? What are its presuppositions, its potentials and limits? What role does science play in it, and what is scientific rationality itself? In the answers to such questions, different thinkers have introduced a bewildering variety of distinctions - such as theoretical versus practical, instrumental versus non-instrumental, individual versus collective, formal versus

content-based, or optimizing versus "bounded" concepts of rationality. The course presents a selection of both classical and current debates in which such understandings of rationality or reason emerge, addressing both the history of the concepts as well as their significance at the intersection between philosophy and the sciences.

Competències

- Analitzar críticament i sintetitzar informació obtinguda d'un article o una monografia especialitzada, així com informació de qualitat distribuïda per Internet.
- Analitzar i interpretar temes i problemes de la recerca filosòfica contemporània actual fonamentats en la relació entre ètica, art i política.
- Buscar, seleccionar i gestionar informació de manera autònoma, tant en fonts estructurades (bases de dades, bibliografies, revistes especialitzades) com en informació distribuïda a la xarxa.
- Contribuir als debats de la recerca filosòfica actual fent aportacions significatives, crítiques, amb precisió conceptual i mestria argumentativa a través de l'exposició pública
- Relacionar els conceptes i els coneixements entre les diferents àrees de la recerca filosòfica actual en relació amb les dependències entre ciència i tecnologia i les implicacions ètiques i polítiques d'aquestes dependències.

Resultats d'aprenentatge

1. Analitzar críticament i sintetitzar informació obtinguda d'un article o una monografia especialitzada, així com informació de qualitat distribuïda per Internet.
2. Aplicar en una contribució escrita o oral heurística associada a les teories de la racionalitat que facilitin aquests processos comunicatius.
3. Buscar, seleccionar i gestionar informació de manera autònoma, tant en fonts estructurades (bases de dades, bibliografies, revistes especialitzades) com en informació distribuïda a la xarxa.
4. Explicar de quina manera una teoria de la racionalitat permet mostrar i justificar les relacions entre ètica, art i política.
5. Tenir coneixements de les principals teories contemporànies sobre la racionalitat, especialment de les implicacions socials, polítiques, ètiques i cognitives que tenen per al desenvolupament científic i tecnològic.

Continguts

Part 1. The Philosophy and Psychology of Epistemic Rationality

Prof. Dr. Thomas Sturm (ICREA & UAB)

"Epistemic rationality" refers to the idea that our knowledge-claims can be evaluated according to standards of reasoning. But which norms should guide our inferences? How are the norms related to the actual ways in which human beings reason? And how responsible do we have to be for our beliefs to be rational? Finally, can we answer these questions from the philosophical armchair, or by the methods and results of the empirical sciences? To answer such questions, we will look at a heated debate in philosophy and psychology over human rationality. This part of the course has three interrelated aims: First, it provides exercises in epistemic reasoning and fallacies; second, it is a philosophical study of a controversy in cognitive psychology; thirdly, it aims at an analysis of epistemological naturalism, its potentials and limits.

1. (March 29): Introduction: Rationality, reasoning and its pitfalls

Botterill, G. & Carruthers, P. (1999). *The philosophy of psychology* (pp. 105-130, "Reasoning and irrationality"). Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

Tversky, A. & Kahneman, D. (1974). Judgment under uncertainty: Heuristics and biases. *Science*, 185, 1124-1131.

2. (April 4): Two early philosophical reactions to "Heuristics and biases"

Cohen, L.J. (1981). Can human irrationality be experimentally demonstrated? *Behavioral and Brain Sciences*, 4, 317-331 (comments and responses, 331-59).

Stich, S. (1985). Could man be an irrational animal? Some notes on the epistemology of rationality. *Synthese*, 64, 115-135.

3. (April 5): The "rationality wars" in psychology

Gigerenzer, G. (1991). How to make cognitive illusions disappear: Beyond heuristics and biases. *European Review of Social Psychology*, 2, 83-115.

Kahneman, D. & Tversky, A. (1996). On the reality of cognitive illusions. *Psychological Review*, 103, 582-591.

Gigerenzer, G. (1996). On narrow norms and vague heuristics: A rebuttal to Kahneman and Tversky. *Psychological Review*, 103, 592-596.

4. (April 6): Philosophical reactions to the "rationality wars"

Samuels, R., Stich, S. & Bishop, M., 2002. Ending the rationality wars: How to make disputes about human rationality disappear. In: R. Elio (ed.), *Common Sense, Reasoning and Rationality*. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 236-268.

Goldman, A. (2008). Human rationality: Epistemological and psychological perspectives. In: A. Beckermann & Sven Walter (eds.), *Philosophie: Grundlagen und Anwendungen/Philosophy: Foundations and Applications* (pp. 230-247). Paderborn: Mentis.

Bishop, M. (2008). Reflections on a normative psychology. In: A. Beckermann & Sven Walter (eds.), *Philosophie: Grundlagen und Anwendungen/Philosophy: Foundations and Applications* (pp. 249-262). Paderborn: Mentis.

5. (April 7): Rationality and responsibility

Bishop, M. (2000). In praise of epistemic irresponsibility: How lazy and ignorant can you be? *Synthese*, 122, 179-208.

Hieronimi, P. (2008). Responsibility for believing. *Synthese*, 161, 357-373.

Part 2. Rationality and Utilitarianism

Dr. Ramon Alcoberro Pericay (Universitat de Girona)

Utilitarianism aims to be optimally rational and to be based on calculation but implies, at the same time, a certain relativism in ethics. This tension is especially important in the work of Mill, for whom the rules (both moral and economic) have a universal value, but their implementation is always dependent on consequentialist considerations which may vary from time to time. At the same time, Mill defended an antideterministic philosophy of freedom. In these two sessions we will consider the relationship between Mill's empiricist epistemology and the problems of epistemological pluralism. Is a pure, universalistic rationality compatible with an instrumental rationality of politics and ethics? Is Mill's freedom a rational concept or an expression of emotionalism? Under what conditions?

1. (April 21): The problem of knowledge in Mill

1.1 Phenomenalism and *self* in Mill's psychology. Introspective knowledge and experience.

1.2 Phenomenalism and common sense

1.3 Is it possible to place oneself in a position of axiological neutrality?

2. (May 19): Knowledge, truth and the utility criterion

2.1 Contingent knowledge and necessary knowledge: the role of context in the various versions of utilitarianism.

2.2 Pluralism of values and relativism in Bentham and Mill.

2.3 In what sense do we 'possess' the idea of freedom?

Readings:

John Stuart Mill, *The Collected Works of John Stuart Mill, Volume IX - An Examination of William Hamilton's Philosophy* [1865]. Accesible en : <http://oll.libertyfund.org/titles/240>

Ramon Alcoberro, *L'utilitarisme*. Barcelona: Universitat Oberta, 2007

Wendy Donner - Richard Fumerton, *Mill*. Blackwell, 209

John Skorupski, *The Cambridge Companion on Mill*. Cambridge UP. 1999.

(**Note:** Complete works of John Stuart Mill online: <http://oll.libertyfund.org/titles/165>)

Part 3. - NN

Dr. Oriol Ponsati (Universitat de Girona)

(Topics and literature will be presented in class)

Metodologia

El mòdul s'estructura en 10 sessions de 3 hores i mitja, organitzades en 2 blocs o assignatures, de 5 sessions cadascuna. Les sessions alternaran de manera regular la classe magistral i el seminari, on es llegiran i discutiran els textos fonamentals del curs. Els alumnes participaran de forma activa en les sessions. En les tutories, els professors supervisaran l'elaboració del treball de mòdul, que consisteix en un treball d'unes 10-15 pàgines on s'analitza algun dels aspectes treballats al llarg del mòdul.

The module is structured into 10 session of 3.5 hours each, organized into 2 blocks of 5 sessions each. The sessions alternate between lecturing and seminar discussion of basic course readings. In the tutorials, professors will supervise the preparation of a written paper of 10-15 pages related to some topic treated in the module.

Activitats formatives

Títol	Hores	ECTS	Resultats d'aprenentatge
Tipus: Dirigides			
Classes	37	1,48	1, 2, 4, 5
Tipus: Supervisades			
Supervisada	13	0,52	1, 2, 3, 4, 5
Tipus: Autònomes			
Estudi, lectures i obtenció d'informació	100	4	1, 2, 3, 4, 5

Avaluació

Please check the master's general guidelines.

Both class participation, quality of presentations and final written work (when applicable) in each segment of the module will contribute to your final mark.

Activitats d'avaluació

Títol	Pes	Hores	ECTS	Resultats d'aprenentatge
Elaboració treball escrit	50%	0	0	1, 2, 3, 4, 5
Presentació a classe	50%	0	0	1, 2, 3, 4, 5

Bibliografia

Alcoberro, R. (2007). *L'utilitarisme*. Barcelona: Universitat Oberta.

Bishop, M. (2000). In praise of epistemic irresponsibility: How lazy and ignorant can you be? *Synthese*, 122, 179-208.

Bishop, M. (2008). Reflections on a normative psychology. In: A. Beckermann & Sven Walter (eds.), *Philosophie: Grundlagen und Anwendungen/Philosophy: Foundations and Applications* (pp. 249-262). Paderborn: Mentis.

Bishop, M.A. & Trout, J.D. (2005). *Epistemology and the psychology of human judgment*. New York: Oxford University Press.

Botterill, G. & Carruthers, P. (1999). *The philosophy of psychology* (pp. 105-130, "Reasoning and irrationality"). Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

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Donner, W. & Fumerton, R. (2009). *Mill*. Oxford: Blackwell.

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Gigerenzer, G. (1996). On narrow norms and vague heuristics: A rebuttal to Kahneman and Tversky. *Psychological Review*, 103, 592-596.

Gigerenzer, G. (2008). Bounded and rational. In: A. Beckermann & Sven Walter (eds.), *Philosophie: Grundlagen und Anwendungen/Philosophy: Foundations and Applications* (pp. 203-228). Paderborn: Mentis.

Gigerenzer, G. & Sturm, T. (2012). How (far) can rationality be naturalized? *Synthese*, 187, 243-268.

Goldman, A. (2008). Human rationality: Epistemological and psychological perspectives. In: A. Beckermann & Sven Walter (eds.), *Philosophie: Grundlagen und Anwendungen/Philosophy: Foundations and Applications* (pp. 230-247). Paderborn: Mentis.

Grice, P. (1975). Logic and conversation. In: P. Cole & J. L. Morgan (eds.), *Syntax and semantics 3: Speech acts* (pp. 41-58). New York: Academic.

Hieronimi, P. (2008). Responsibility for believing. *Synthese*, 161, 357-373.

Kahneman, D. & Tversky, A. (1996). On the reality of cognitive illusions. *Psychological Review*, 103, 582-591.

Lopes, L. (1991). The rhetoric of irrationality. *Theory and Psychology*, 1, 65-82.

Mill, J.S. (1865). *The Collected Works of John Stuart Mill, Volume IX - An Examination of William Hamilton's Philosophy*. Accesible online: <http://oll.libertyfund.org/titles/240>

Nozick,R. (1993). *The nature of rationality*. Princeton, NJ: Princeton UP.

Samuels, R., Stich, S.& Bishop, M. (2002). Ending the rationality wars: How to make disputes about human rationality disappear. In: R. Elio (ed.), *Common Sense, reasoning and rationality*. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 236-268.

Skorupski, J. (1999). *The Cambridge Companion on Mill*. Cambridge: Cambridge UP.

Stich, S. (1985). Could man be an irrational animal? Some notes on the epistemology of rationality. *Synthese*, 64, 115-135.

Tversky, A. & Kahneman, D. (1974). Judgment under uncertainty: Heuristics and biases. *Science*, 185, 1124-1131.