



HF936-D – TÓPICOS ESPECIAIS DE HISTÓRIA DA FILOSOFIA CONTEMPORÂNEA III

**PROF. MARCO ANTONIO CARON RUFFINO
PROFA. FREDRIQUE JANSSEN-LAURET**

2º SEMESTRE/2014

As aulas serão ministradas em inglês.

COURSE PROPOSAL: LOGICAL FORM AND ONTOLOGY

Format: 8 2-hour meetings, Semester 2. 1.5h lecture, 30mins roundtable discussion focusing on the course notes.

Description: According to Quine's quantificational criterion of commitment, our best theory of the world incurs commitments to the entities it makes claims about: refers to, explicitly asserts there are, or entails the existence of. All these amount to quantification in classical first-order logic without individual constants, the only properly logical language and the canonical language for scientific theories. Existence claims, reference and implicit existential assumptions share a deep logical structure of the form $\exists xFx$. In this course we will explore how compatible Quine's account really is with alternative epistemologies that differ from his own global holism, such as foundationalism and foundherentism, and alternative accounts of logicity, such as those that admit extensions of classical logic like second-order logic and modal logic. We will address objections to the Quinean account based on the works of Meinong (non-existent objects), Carnap (deationism), Barcan Marcus (name-based commitment and substitutional quantification), Haack (foundherentism and quantification), Boolos (plural quantification), Williamson (second-order modal logic as the canonical language) and Janssen-Lauret (first-personal ontological commitment).

Week 1: 'To be is to be the value of a variable': Quine's criterion of ontological commitment. We familiarise ourselves with Quine's conception of ontology and what it is to be acknowledged as an object, and how this fits in with his overall system and holist epistemology.

Reading: Quine's 'On What There Is' (1948) and 'Quantification and Existence' (1969) plus course notes.

Week 2: The canonical language of regimentation: Is Quine right to think that only classical bivalent first-order logic without individual constants is logic? We investigate his criteria of logicity and their relation to ontology, identity and epistemology.

Reading: Quine's 'Word and Object' (1960) chapter 5 and parts of his 'Philosophy of Logic' (1970), plus course notes.

Week 3: Against Quine's one true logic: Meinongianism and Carnapianism. We consider how Quine might defend himself against the Meinongian attack on his univocal conception of existence (the objection that there are non-existent objects) and Carnap's idea that there is no one true logic in which to ask and answer existence questions.

Reading: Carnap's 'Empiricism, Semantics and Ontology' (1951) and some of T. Parsons' 'Nonexistent Objects' (1980) plus course notes.



Week 4: Name-based ontological commitment: Ruth Barcan Marcus. We react on Barcan Marcus' conception of ontology, a mirror image of Quine's: for her, directly referential tags are the only ontologically committing expressions: 'to be is to be the referent of a tag'. Where Quine explains away names in terms of quantifiers, Barcan Marcus paraphrases away ontologically committing quantifiers using names using her substitutional interpretation of the quantifiers.

Reading: Barcan Marcus' "Nominalism and the Substitutional Quantifier" (1978) and Susan Haack's *Deviant Logic* (1974) chapter 7, plus course notes.

Week 5: First-personal ontological commitment. Quine's strictly third-personal methodology entails that he cannot countenance any objects whose existence we know by direct methods, such as acquaintance and introspection, not even where such methods further the aims of science. Introspection yields first-personal beliefs about the subject's own current mental states, usually by immediate privileged access. But the science of psychology now uses methods that are introspective in that sense.

Reading: Course notes.

Week 6: Higher-order ontological commitment: What about proposed canonical languages that extend first-order logic? Some argue the language of regimentation should be higher-order, but there is widespread discord concerning the interpretation of higher-order variables: there is the plural interpretation, various substitutional interpretations, as well as the standard set-theoretic one. Which of these, if any, can lay claim to logicality? Are we committed to the values of second-order variables?

Reading: Boolos' "To Be is to Be a Value of a Variable (or to Be Some Values of Some Variables)" and parts of Shapiro's *Foundations Without Foundationalism* plus course notes.

Week 7: Modal ontological commitment. We try to work out whether we can fit modal contexts into the language of regimentation and raise the question whether we are ever ontologically committed to the values of variables that occur in modal contexts. We also query whether such modal ontological commitment implies a further commitment to possible worlds, as Lewis and Williamson think, or just to actual individuals, who might have been different, as Barcan Marcus thinks.

Reading: Barcan Marcus' "A Backward Look at Quine's Animadversions on Modalities" (1990), Lewis' "Counterpart Theory and Quantified Modal Logic", part of Williamson's "Modal Logic as Metaphysics", plus course notes.

Week 8: The role of criteria of identity. Quine holds two posits to be the same posit iff they satisfy all and only the same open formulae of the theory. That is problematic for higher-order posits, if they are themselves the values of the predicates, and for directly referential committing expressions, which, unlike posits, need not be introduced into the theory with the help of any descriptive vocabulary. Should we go third-order? Appeal to Barcanian extensionalising principles?

Reading: Barcan Marcus' "Extensionality" (1960), and "Modalities and Intensional Languages" (1960), plus course notes.