Not a day goes by without any of us using a metaphor or making an analogy between two things. Not only do analogies and metaphors populate our everyday mental and linguistic lives, but they are also ubiquitous in science, philosophy, law, politics, economics, history, art, architecture, and even mathematics. This omnipresence of analogies and metaphors has brought scholarly attention to their function and meaning, the study of which is now decisively interdisciplinary, including important contributions from philosophy, linguistics, cognitive science, and art theory.

This seminar approaches analogies and metaphors from an epistemological perspective. The use of analogies will be understood as a form of reasoning and metaphors as tools for thinking. Some of the questions we will address are: Is there a difference between the epistemic import of analogies and metaphors, and if so, how do they differ? What relations do analogies and metaphors have with reasoning and thinking more generally? Can we develop a theory of the meaning of metaphors? Are metaphors merely ornamental and evocative, or can they also participate in human understanding? What is the difference between good and bad analogies, and how can their epistemic import be assessed and warranted? Are analogies and metaphors specifically conceptual and/or linguistic, or can we also speak of material analogies and metaphors?

For our investigation, we will exploit the rich and varied set of analogies and metaphors that science offers us. Doing so does not dismiss the importance of analogies and metaphors in other domains of thinking and arguing, but rather it will allow us to take advantage of the large body of epistemic relations and desiderata that science offers us, such as clear similarity-assessment functions, causal models, explanatory format, and so on.

Assignments

**Participation to seminar (20%)**: Each week, the student is expected to have read the mandatory texts and participate in the discussion. The student will present one mandatory reading of her/his choice on the week to which the reading is assigned and introduce one of the complementary readings of that week. The presentation should not last more than 20 minutes and should be accompanied by a PowerPoint presentation (with one or two slides dedicated to one of the complementary readings of the week).

**Essay (80%)**: The student will produce an essay (approximately 2500 words) related to the subjects and problems discussed in class. The student should consult me about the paper’s topic, and submit an abstract (around 250 words) before week 11.
Calendar and readings

Week 1 (9th January) – THE UBIQUITY OF ANALOGIES AND METAPHORS

- Introduction to the seminar

Complementary readings:


PART I – METAPHORICAL THINKING

Week 2 (16th January) – METAPHOR AND MEANING

Mandatory readings


Complementary readings:


Week 3 (23rd January) – THE INTERACTIONIST THEORY OF METAPHOR

Mandatory readings


Complementary readings:

**Week 4 (30th January) – THE CONDUIT METAPHOR**

**Mandatory readings**


**Complementary readings:**

- To be determined

**Week 5 (6th February) – METAPHOR AND EMBODIMENT**

**Mandatory readings**

  - Chapters 12-14, 18, 21-22

**Complementary readings:**

  - Chapters 23-24
  - Chapters 26-27

**PART II – ANALOGICAL REASONING**

**Week 6 (13th February) – ANALOGY AND SIMILARITY**

**Mandatory readings**

  - Pages 97-100

**Complementary readings:**

  - Chapter 11 (pp. 485-511)
Week 7 (20th February) – ANALOGY AND STRUCTURE
Mandatory readings


Complementary readings:


Week 8 (27th February) – DISANALOGIES, MISANALOGIES, AND MULTIPLE ANALOGIES
Mandatory readings


Complementary readings:


PART III – ANALOGIES AND METAPHORS IN THE SCIENCES

Week 9 (6th March) – NATURAL SELECTION AS AN ANALOGY
Mandatory readings

  - Chapter 1 ‘Variation under Domestication’ (pp. 7-43)
Complementary readings:


**Week 10 (13\textsuperscript{th} March) – NATURAL SELECTION AS A METAPHOR**

Mandatory readings

  - Chapter 1 ‘Variation under Domestication’ (pp. 7-43)

Complementary readings:


**Week 11 (20\textsuperscript{th} March) – THE METAPHORICAL FOUNDATIONS OF SCIENTIFIC RESEARCH PROGRAMS**

Mandatory readings

  - Introduction to Part II
  - Chapter 4 (pp. 113-147)

Complementary readings:

  - Chapter 1 Gene and Organism (pp. 3-38)
Week 12 (27th March) – The Science Wars and the Legitimacy of Interdisciplinary Metaphors

Mandatory readings

  - Introduction and Chapter 7

Complementary readings:


All mandatory and complementary texts will be made available on the e-learning site or on hold at the university’s library.

Additional readings


