IUSS Philosophy Seminars
L&PIC – Linguistics and Philosophy IUSS Center

Epistemology & Mathematics Series

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IUSS, Sala Del Camino, Palazzo Broletto
14.00-16.00 CET

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The free logic of abstraction

In this talk, first I argue that the abstractionist proof for the existence of abstract objects requires Negative Free Logic (NFL), in which all atomic sentences containing empty terms are false. Second, I examine an unexplored version of Positive Free Logic (PFL) in which some atomic sentences containing empty terms are true, some of the remaining sentences are false, and some others are neither true nor false. This version of PFL is ontologically potent, but only for those abstraction principles in which the abstraction relation is not reflexive. Third, by reversing the standard order of the explanation of truth in terms of reference, I provide a novel motivation for NFL in the context of abstractionism. Fourth, I show that those critics of the abstractionist programme who argue for the existentially arrogant character of abstraction principles either presuppose PFL or an unjustifiably strong version of NFL.