

Achille C. Varzi

Day/Time and Location: W 6:10–8:00pm, 716 Philosophy Hall

Office Hours: R 1:00–3:00 pm, 713 Philosophy Hall

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Brief Description

Reference to events—things that *happen* or *occur*, such as Brutus’s stabbing of Caesar or Alf’s falling in love with Beth—is a pervasive feature of human thought and language. Moreover, the event concept plays a dominant role in the formulation and analysis of a wide variety of philosophical issues, such as causation, the mind-body problem, or the nature of time. The aim of this seminar is to set up the main coordinates for an understanding of this concept and for a critical assessment of its philosophical implications and applications.

Topics to be discussed include: arguments pro or against the inclusion of events in one’s ontology; the role of events in the logical and semantic analysis of natural language; their metaphysical status; their identity and individuation criteria; the distinction and classification of various types of events and event-like entities (such as processes and states, and perhaps facts); their interaction with other sorts of entities, such as objects; their role in the philosophy of action and causation; their role in the philosophy of space and time.

Requirements

The course will be run as a seminar. Requirements for E-credit: active participation, a short seminar presentation, and a final paper. Requirement for R-credit: active participation and a short seminar presentation.

Readings

Recommended books: D. Davidson, *Essays on Actions and Events*, 1980 and J. Bennett, *Events and their Names*, Hackett 1988. Other readings will be made available in electronic form. An extensive annotated bibliography on the early literature on the topic can be found in R. Casati and A. C. Varzi, *Fifty Years of Events*, 1997, a copy of which will be made available in electronic form.