Report on Recent Research in Theoretical Philosophy at Stockholm University

Revised June 2014

The Department of Philosophy
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The department of philosophy is traditionally divided into practical philosophy and theoretical philosophy. Philosophy has been assigned the status of a leading area at Stockholm University; this applies to both areas of the subject. What follows here is a description of research pursued in theoretical philosophy.

About the department

Philosophy is one of the ‘profile’ areas selected by Stockholm University, i.e. selected as an area where the department has a leading position in the country and is strong internationally. The department has a very wide competence across the entire philosophical field, and a high international profile, with frequent publications in leading journals, guest lectures and conference participation abroad by department members, as well as regular guest lectures and conferences and workshops at home.

In a recent international report of the quality of research at the department the following overall assessment is given: “we find the quality of research and the level of activity of the Philosophy Department at Stockholm University outstanding, especially in terms of research output, conferences, colloquia, visits, visitors, and research collaboration […]. It is quite clear from the list of publications and the other material presented to us that the Philosophy Department in Stockholm has active research teams in several major areas of philosophy, whose work is internationally prominent (not only recognized), and in fact excellent by any national or international standards” (Report on the quality of research at the Philosophy Department, Stockholm University, November 2011).

The department has since continued to produce excellent research and to attract internationally prominent researchers, like professor Anandi Hattiangadi, who left Oxford in 2012 in order to join the department as a Pro Futura Scientia Fellow.
The group of researchers

Faculty (including emeriti)

Staffan Carlshamre (professor): Aesthetics, history of philosophy, philosophy of science of the humanities.
Kathrin Glüer (professor): Philosophy of language, Davidson, philosophy of mind, perception, epistemology, philosophy of action.
Gösta Grööroos (researcher and lecturer): Ancient philosophy, philosophy of action, moral psychology.
Anandi Hattiangadi (professor, Pro Futura Scientia Fellow): Philosophy of mind and language, epistemology, metaphysics.
Sören Häggqvist (associate professor): Epistemology, philosophy of language, philosophy of biology, metaphysics.
Mikael Janvid (associate professor): Epistemology.
Per-Erik Malmnäs (professor emeritus): Logic, probability, decision theory, history of philosophy.
Per Martin-Löf (professor emeritus, formerly at the mathematics department): logic, philosophy of language, philosophy of mathematics, history of philosophy.
Dugald Murdoch (professor emeritus): Philosophy of science, history of philosophy, epistemology.
Paul Needham (professor): Philosophy of science, modal logic, metaphysics.
Peter Pagin (professor): Philosophy of language, logic, philosophy of mathematics, philosophy of mind.
Mikael Pettersson (post-doc): Aesthetics, philosophy of art, philosophy of mind and metaphysics.
Dag Prawitz (professor emeritus): Logic, philosophy of language, philosophy of mathematics.
Dag Westerståhl (professor): Logic, philosophy of language, philosophy of mathematics.
Åsa Wikforss (professor): Philosophy of language, philosophy of mind, epistemology.
Jonas Åkerman (junior research fellow): Philosophy of language, philosophy of mind and language.

Associated researchers

Björn Brunnander: Philosophy of science.
Karl Karlander: Philosophy of rationality, epistemology, virtue ethics.
B. Ingemar B. Lindahl: Philosophy of Science.
Daniel Rönmedal: Philosophy of Logic.
PhD students

Sama Agahi: Philosophy of logic, metalogic, and non-classical logic. Dissertation topic: Self-sufficiency of logics and logicality.

Benny Andersson: Philosophy of language and epistemology. Dissertation topic: the relation between realism and epistemology in Kant, Quine and Dummett.

Moncef Bouhlel: Arabic medieval philosophy.


Anna Petronella Foulter: Phenomenology, feminist philosophy, dance theory. Dissertation topic: A study of Merleau-Ponty’s ideas on language and expression and their place in his philosophy, including the contrast between language and “silent” forms of expression and expression as a phenomenological task.


Eric Johannesson: Philosophy of logic and mathematics. Dissertation topic: philosophy of probability, including issues of pragmatic vs. epistemic rationality, evidence, conditionalization and Dutch book arguments, and how these issues bear on Elga’s sleeping beauty problem.


Sara Packalén: Philosophy of language, mind and linguistics. Dissertation topic: The relation between (descriptive) semantic theory and cognition, especially as it relates to the supposed explanatory role of semantic theories vis-à-vis speakers’ linguistic capacities.


Main research interests

Philosophy of language, philosophy of logic and mathematics

The department is particularly strong in this area. The central works in logic by Dag Prawitz and Per Martin-Löf are modern classics. Prawitz is presently writing a book together with Peter Schroeder-Heister (Tübingen) on general proof theory. Pagin and Westerståhl, partly in collaboration, are doing work on compositional semantics that is at the front line of the field (several handbook articles). Westerståhl is internationally renowned for his work on generalized quantifiers, and was appointed leading researcher by the Swedish Research Council (2005-2010). His book with Stanley Peters, Quantifiers in Language and Logic, OUP, 2006, 2008) is a standard reference in the field. Presently he is doing research on generalized quantifiers in language and logic, in particular possessive quantification (joint work with Stanley...
Peters), logical consequence and logical constants (joint work with Denis Bonnay), and “Saussurean compositionality” for grammars generating syntax-semantics pairs (Saussurean signs).

Pagin, and Glüer and Pagin, also have several contributions to the area of formal semantics. In particular, Glüer and Pagin have developed a framework for semantics—*switcher semantics*—that has been applied in possible world semantics, and that is currently gaining attention. They are currently preparing a book manuscript on this topic, under contract with Oxford University Press. In addition, Pagin works on semantic complexity, the semantics-pragmatics interface, assertion (with an entry in *Stanford Encyclopedia*), communication, pragmatic enrichments, semantics for non-extensional contexts, empty singular terms, and vagueness.

Hattiangadi, Glüer, Pagin, Prawitz, Häggqvist, Wikforss and Åkerman all work on various aspects of general meaning theory. Prawitz is currently working on a project within the theory of meaning concerning what gives an inference or a deduction its epistemic force. Hattiangadi, Glüer and Wikforss all work on the question of the normativity of linguistic meaning and mental content, and have several prestigious publications in the area, including articles in *Mind* and *Stanford Encyclopedia* (Wikforss and Glüer), and a monograph entitled *Oughts and Thoughts: Rule Following and the Normativity of Content* (Hattiangadi) published by Oxford University Press (2007). Glüer, Pagin, Häggqvist and Wikforss all work on the semantics of natural kind terms. Wikforss has published several articles on questions of internalism and externalism in semantics, including a survey article in *Philosophy Compass*. Häggqvist works on teleosemantics, with a recent survey article in *Philosophy Compass*. Glüer is an international authority on the philosophy of Davidson, with contributions to several encyclopedias and handbooks, including a monograph published by Oxford University Press (2012). Åkerman recently finalised a project entitled ‘Mental States and Utterance Content’ financed by the *Swedish Research Council*. He has several publications (recent and forthcoming) on vagueness, context sensitivity and indexicals, in journals like *Mind & Language*, *dialectica*, *Philosophical Quarterly*, and *Philosophy Compass*, and in a new anthology on the Sorites paradox to be published by Springer.

Hattiangadi is currently working on a new monograph provisionally entitled *The Fundamentality of Intentionality*, in which she will defend the view that the intentional and semantic properties of mental and linguistic representations – their meaning, content, truth or falsity – are fundamental and cannot be reductively explained in non-semantic terms.

Malmnäs does work on probability theory, the foundations of decision theory and the analysis of complex decision making. He is in charge of a program on decision, risk- and policy analysis.

**Epistemology, philosophy of mind and action**

Häggqvist works on modal epistemology, and is internationally known for his work on thought experiments. Glüer works on perception, where her position is gaining widespread attention, in particular because of her recent article in *Mind & Language*. Glüer and Wikforss also work on issues concerning the nature of belief and epistemic rationality. Wikforss is currently working on the epistemology of self-knowledge, and she has a contract with Oxford University Press for a book on knowledge of content and belief. Glüer and Wikforss has recently received funding from VR (the Swedish Research Council) for a five-year project
entitled “The Nature of Belief” (this is the first five year project in philosophy ever financed by VR).

Janvid has several international publications in epistemology, with a special focus on a priori justification, defeasibility, scepticism, epistemic value and understanding. He is currently working on an externalist account of defeaters.

Carlshamre is currently involved in a project supported by the Bank of Sweden Tercentenary Foundation, where he works on the semantics and epistemology of narratives.

Several people work on the philosophy of action. Glüer works on Davidson’s action theory. Grönroos, Murdoch and Quarfood all work (or have worked) within the project ‘Understanding Agency’, funded by the Bank of Sweden Tercentenary Foundation, which deals with questions concerning agency from a historical perspective. Murdoch is a member of the governing board of this research program.

Philosophy of science, metaphysics

Needham is internationally renowned for his work in philosophy of chemistry (with a collaborative recent entry in Stanford Encyclopedia). He has published both on the history of philosophy of science (including work on the Aristotelian and Stoic views about the nature of chemical substances, and work on Duhem’s philosophy of science), and on mereology and chemical substances (with a recent publication in Nous criticizing Kripkean micro-essentialism). He is presently working on issues concerned with the “same substance” relation underlying distinctions of chemical kinds, and the nature of chemical bonding and the bearing of philosophical doctrines of realism associated with ideas of preservation of reference through theory change on the notion of molecules. He also works on the general notion of reduction, and on metaphysical issues concerning space and time.

Dugald Murdoch’s book on Niels Bohr’s philosophy of Physics for Cambridge University Press is a leading text in its field, and has been highly praised in numerous reviews. Carlshamre works on philosophy of the humanities, and is currently writing a textbook on the topic.

History of philosophy, aesthetics

Dugald Murdoch has an international reputation in the history of philosophy, being joint translator of the philosophical works of Descartes for Cambridge University Press, and author of prestigious articles on Descartes and Hume in top-ranked journals such as The Philosophical Review, the Journal of Philosophy, and the Philosophical Quarterly, as well as contributions to leading encyclopaedias and compendia.

The department has several researchers working on ancient philosophy. Grönroos works on Plato’s and Aristotle’s conceptions of voluntary action, as well as on Aristotle’s stance on reason’s role in motivating actions. Grönroos has also written on Plato and works on the question of the role of pleasure in the virtuous life. Malmnäs is translating Aristotle’s Analytica Priora into Swedish.

Quarfood’s research is concerned with the interpretation of Kant’s philosophy, especially with regard to teleology, the antinomies and the role of Aristotelian logic in Kant’s thought.

Carlshamre writes on Hegel, and is currently working on a commentary on Hegel’s ‘Phenomenology of Spirit’. Svensson has worked on the philosophy of Wittgenstein, especially
on ‘On Certainty’. Wikforss and Glüer have also written on Wittgenstein, in particular on Wittgenstein’s ideas about meaning and rule-following. Foultier works on the philosophy of Merleau-Ponty and has translated Simone de Beauvoir’s philosophical essays into Swedish.

Pettersson has written about the phenomenology of photography; about the role of causality in photography; and about an often-neglected aspect of picture perception, namely how we apprehend occluded portions of depicted objects, and objects that lie outside the picture frame. He is presently working on issues concerned with pictures and our apprehension of them, in particular our apprehension of less canonical pictorial contents, including absences, empty space and psychological properties.

Carlshamre also works on aesthetics and is one the board of an interdisciplinary graduate school in aesthetics. Two of the graduate students belong to this school (Brück and Forsberg) doing work in philosophy of art, literature and music.

**Current and recently finalised projects**

In 2009, after Philosophy was selected as a profile area at Stockholm University, the department was given some extra funding. One result of this was that the department started a new center, CLLAM, the Centre for Logic Language and Mind. The purpose of CLLAM is to further research and international cooperation in the areas of Logic, Philosophy of Language, and Philosophy of Mind. One aim is that the Centre itself will be partner in international networks and participate in network projects within these research areas. The Centre will also organize conferences, support network activities for associated researchers and PhD students, and, if it has the resources, finance research in these areas. The Centre is a partner of PLM, Philosophy of Language and Mind, a philosophical network of centres, departments and institutes in Paris, Barcelona, London, St Andrews, Aberdeen, Budapest, Oslo and Amsterdam. Every two years PLM will organize a conference in the philosophy of language and philosophy mind area (where the first one is organized by Stockholm University, September 2011). Following an evaluation by the division board of the faculty of Humanities, CLLAM’s status as a recognized centre at Stockholm University was renewed in 2014.

In 2011 a group of researchers at the Centre (Häggqvist, Pagin and Wikforss) received an ESF grant for an international Collaborative Research Project (CRP), ‘Communication in Context’, within the Eurocores program Eurounderstanding. The CRP has research groups in Amsterdam, Lisbon, London, Osnabrück, Tartu, Trondheim, and Tuebingen. Wikforss is project leader for the whole CRP, and in 2012 Glüer and Åkerman were added to the project. Recently the final conference for the whole Eurounderstanding program was held in Lisbon, and in the final evaluation the project was given a very strong evaluation.

The Centre also participates in PETAF, (Perspectival Thoughts and Facts), a network project in the ITN program, under the Marie Curie program, within EU Framework 7, led by Sven Rosenkrantz, University of Barcelona. The project funds graduate students (at Stockholm, Ivan Kasa) and organizes regular workshops and conferences. Pagin, Glüer, Häggqvist, Westerståhl and Wikforss participate in the project and Pagin is a member of the supervisory board.

In addition, members at the department participate in a number of individual and collaborative projects, many of which involve international networks.
Individual projects

Kathrin Glüer:


“Switcher Semantics for Singular and General Terms”, financed by the *Swedish Research Council*, 2010-12.


Co-leader with Peter Pagin of the project “A Semantic Defense of the Classical Proposition”, funded by a Sabbatical Grant from Stockholm University (2014).

Gösta Grönroos:


Sören Häggqvist:

“Thought experiments, Intuitions, and Disagreement”, financed by the *Swedish Research Council*.

Peter Pagin:


Member of the supervisory board of PETA, an ITN project under the Marie Curie, FW7, EU project (2010-2013).

Member of the Steering Committee of EuroXPrag, an ESF project on experimental pragmatics (2009-2013).


Co-leader with Kathrin Glüer-Pagin of the project “A Semantic Defense of the Classical Proposition”, funded by a Sabbatical Grant from Stockholm University (2014).

Paul Needham:


Mikael Pettersson:

Marcel Quarfood:


Dag Westerståhl:

*Swedish Research Council* grant for leading researchers (2005-2010).

Åsa Wikforss:


Jonas Åkerman:

“Mental States and Utterance Content”, post-doc grant and project financed by the *Swedish Research Council* (2010-2013).

Participation in collaborative projects

Murdoch, Grönroos & Quarfood:

“Understanding Agency”, financed by *The Bank of Sweden Tercentenary Foundation*, directed by prof. emerita Lilli Alanen, Uppsala University.

Carlshamre:

“Time, Memory and Representation” ([http://histcon.se](http://histcon.se)), financed by *The Bank of Sweden Tercentenary Foundation*.

Foultier:

“From movement out of reflection in becoming: The dancer and the creative process”, led by professor Cecilia Roos, University of Dance and Circus, and funded by the Swedish Research Council.

Glüer & Pagin:


Glüer, Häggqvist, Janvid & Pagin:
Theories of the a priori: Critique and Alternative”, led by Fredrik Stjernberg, financed by the Swedish Research Council (2008-10).

Grönoos:
“Ethics in Antiquity: The Quest for the Good Life”, Centre for Advanced Study, Oslo.

Glüer, Häggqvist, Pagin, Wikforss & Åkerman:
“Communication in Context”, individual project in the collaborative research project CCCOM within ESF Eurocores program Eurounderstanding.

Janvid:
“Defeasibility and Discourse Dependence”, financed by Deutsche Forschungsgemeinschaft, at the University of Frankfurt am Main, led by professor Marcus Willaschek (2007-2010).

Pagin:
“Context, Content, and Compositionality”, ERC Advanced Grant led by Francois Recanati, EHESS and Institut Jean-Nicod, Paris.
EuroXPrag, member of steering committee, ESF network project, for promoting research in experimental pragmatics, led by Ira Noveck, CNRS-Université de Lyon.

Westerståhl:
Project Leader of LINT (Logic for Interaction), a CRP (Collaborative Research Project) within the ESF Eurocores program LogICCC. The CRP has research groups in Gothenburg, Aachen, Amsterdam, Tampere/Helsinki, Paris, and Oxford (2009–2012).

Glüer, Hattiangadi & Wikforss:
Members of ENN (European Normativity Network).

Wikforss:
Member of EIDYN (The Edinburgh Centre for Epistemology, Mind and Normativity).

Recent publications (since 2011)


______. “Intentionalism, Defeasibility, and Justification”. Forthcoming in Philosophical Studies (special issue on the epistemology of perception, ed. by J. Genone).

______. “Looks, Reasons, and Experiences”. Forthcoming in Does Experience have Content?, ed. by B.Brogaard, Oxford: OUP.


“Does perceptual experience have propositional content?” (Discussion with C. Gauker on Philosophy TV)


“The Normativity of Meaning”. Forthcoming in Philosophy Compass.

“The Normativity of Meaning and Mental Content”. Forthcoming in Internet Encyclopedia of Philosophy.


________. “Experimental Semantics: The Case of Natural Kind Terms”. Co-authored with Åsa Wikforss, forthcoming.


“One Substance or More?” Forthcoming in Philosophy of Chemistry: Growth of a New Discipline, eds. E. Scerri and L. McIntyre. Springer.


______. “Compositionality, Complexity, and Evolution”. In Proceedings from a Symposium on Language Acquisition and Language Evolution, ed. Francisco Lacerda. PERILUS. Stockholm University, Department of Linguistics (2013).
______. Philosophy of Language and Mind . Special issue of Synthese (Vol. 190, Issue 10, 2013), co-edited with Robert van Rooij and Jonas Åkerman.

______. “Is there a general notion of proof?” *Logic, Methodology and Philosophy of Science* (forthcoming).


