

# GENERIC GENERALIZATIONS



Meaning and Social Practices

*Un atelier de la Chaire de recherche du Canada en épistémologie pratique  
Workshop organized by the Canada Research Chair in Applied Epistemology*

Université de Sherbrooke  
Sherbrooke (QC), Local / room A4-166

**16-17 MARS 2018 / MARCH 16-17, 2018**

## **CONFÉRENCIÈRE ET CONFÉRENCIER INVITÉS / KEYNOTE SPEAKERS**

Marjorie Rhodes (NYU)

Bernhard Nickel (Harvard)

### **ORGANISATEURS / ORGANIZERS**

François Claveau (UdeS) et Jordan Girard (UQAM)

Generic sentences are generalizations about the members of a category or a kind. In English, they take the form of sentences such as *ravens are black*, *a raven is black*, *the raven is black*, and *gold is yellow*. Since they do not explicitly carry information about how many members of the category actually possess the property, uncovering their hidden quantifier first seemed to be the way to identify their meaning. As this inquiry went on, it became clear that the most common quantifiers were not enough and that we needed a subtler account, either relying on a new quantifier or doing away with classical set-theoretic semantics altogether. At first, the primary question was *what do generics mean?* But it seems like it has now become *how do they mean?*

A better understanding of generics is more than of purely intellectual interest. Generics regulate in various ways our social interactions. For instance, they are means to express prejudices and stereotypes. In so doing, they can reproduce injustices. But generics are also means to convey important lessons from adult to child or from expert to layperson, lessons which might be for the greater good. Since using generics is not necessarily socially detrimental, an open question is: *How can we evaluate the diverse roles played by generics in society?*

This workshop aims to address these two types of questions about generics – their *meaning* and their *social dimension*.

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## HORAIRE / SCHEDULE

Vendredi / Friday 16th

Heure / Time	Conférencier.e / Speaker	Titre de la présentation / Talk Title
09:00 – 9:15	<i>Introduction / Introductory Remarks</i>	
09:15 – 10:15	<b>Keynote</b> — Marjorie Rhodes (NYU)	<i>How differences become different kinds</i>
10:15 – 11:15	Martina Rosola (State U of Genova)	<i>Implicit Essentialization In Generics</i>
11:15 – 11:30	<i>Pause café / Coffee Break</i>	
11:30 – 12:30	Mirela Fus (St-Andrews & Oslo)	<i>Conceptual Engineering of Pernicious and Beneficial Generic Language</i>
12:30 – 13:45	<i>Diner / Lunch Break</i>	
13:45 – 14:45	Patrick O'Donnell (John Hopkins)	<i>Racialized Terms and Inherent Genericity</i>
14:45 – 15:00	<i>Pause café / Coffee Break</i>	
15:00 – 16:00	Ravi Thakral (St-Andrews)	<i>Moral Principles as Generics</i>
18:30	Souper au / Dinner at L'Gros Luxe	146 Rue Wellington Sud, Sherbrooke

Samedi / Saturday 17th

Heure / Time	Conférencier.e / Speaker	Titre de la présentation / Talk Title
09:00 – 10:00	<b>Keynote</b> — Bernhard Nickel (Harvard)	<i>The Division of Ideological Labor</i>
10:00 – 11:00	F. Claveau (UdeS) & J. Girard (UQAM)	<i>Generic Generalizations in Science</i>
11:00 – 11:15	<i>Pause café / Coffee Break</i>	
11:15 – 12:15	Federico Cella (Vita-Salute San Raffaele)	<i>Quantitative Generics</i>
12:15 – 13:30	<i>Diner / Lunch Break</i>	
13:30 – 14:30	Henry Schiller (U of Texas at Austin)	<i>Justifying Generalizations</i>
14:30 – 14:45	<i>Pause café / Coffee Break</i>	
14:45 – 15:45	Rachel Sterken (U of Oslo)	<i>Generics and Amplification</i>