

Pre-Conference Workshop on Critical Realism

Objective: The purpose of this workshop is to provide a basic introduction to the various phases of critical realism – first wave, dialectical, and meta-reality – to those new to it or who otherwise desire a refresher. For people new to IACR meetings, it is also an opportunity to go into the conference with some new friends. The pre-conference can be attended both face-to-face or online and postgraduate students can register to present their work in progress within an informal roundtable format (no power points) with mentors at each table to provide feedback.

Monday, July 29

8:30 Reception

9:00 Session 1 Overview with Johnny Go (Presented online)

In this session we will be discussing the main themes introduced in A Realist Theory of Science (RTS) which remain fundamental to critical realism. We will begin by noting regularity theories of causal laws and the attempted avoidance of ontology as the orthodoxy against which RTS is positioned. Then we will consider Bhaskar's conception of the transcendental method as the way in which critical realist ontology is justified. Here we will discuss the similarities and differences between Kant's and Bhaskar's respective conceptions of transcendental arguments and some common objections to the latter. Finally, we will discuss the 'transcendental analysis of experimental activity' as the initial basis for critical realism's ontology of tendencies and the way this relates to the distinctions between: the transitive and intransitive dimensions; the domains of the empirical, the actual, and the real; epistemic relativism, ontological realism, and judgmental rationalism.

10:30 Tea Break

11:00 Session 2 First Wave CR with Doug Porpora (In-person)

In this session, we will review how critical realism (CR) has typically been applied to the social sciences. We will begin with the positivist, hermeneutic, and post-structuralist approaches and how CR differs. That topic will take us through CR's "holy trinity" (ontological realism; epistemic relativism; and judgmental rationality); the *transitive* and *intransitive* dimensions of analysis; and truth and relativism. Next, we will talk about the distinctions between structure, culture, and agency and the *morphogenetic/morphostatic* (M/M) model and CR's stand on methodological pluralism.

12:30 Lunch (including optional online lunch room)

14:00 Roundtable Presentations of Student Work

16:00 Closing

Tuesday, July 30

8:30 Reception

9:00 Session 3 Dialectical Critical Realism (Priscilla Alderson Online)

This session is on Dialectical Critical Realism (DCR) as a development of the dialectical tradition, and as a development of critical realism. DCR is understood as: a way of understanding human being in an historical world; a theory of ethics; and as metacritique of philosophy. The four stages of DCR (the first moment of real ontology (1M); the second edge of negativity/ absence (2E); the third level of totality (3L); and the fourth dimension of moral practice (4D)) are outlined. Specific topics include: Absence and human being; four planar being; alethia and morality; ethics and society; metacritique of philosophy from the Greeks to the present, and the role of ontological monovalence (a purely positive worldview).

10:30 Tea Break

11:00 Session 4 MetaReality (Onur Ozmen in-person)

In this session on metaReality we will begin with a brief overview of the development of critical realism up to metaReality. We will also consider identity and self; transcendental identification, self-realisation and freedom; the axial revolution and modernity; comparative religion and spirituality; how to unfold the enfolded (creativity, learning and education); unconditional love, peace and conflict resolution; ‘unthinking’ and the limits of thought, spontaneous right action and re-enchanting reality. Finally, we will discuss “being being”.

12:30 Lunch

14:00 Developing Critical Realist Empirical Research with Catherine Hastings (In-person)

This session will show how critical realism may be used in empirical social scientific research. It will illustrate the importance of an explicit alignment between the researchers’ assumptions about reality and knowledge on the one hand and their research methodology, and how critical realism’s conceptual toolbox can inform and improve one’s research project.

15:30 Roundtable Presentations of Student Work

17:00 Closing Reception