

Introduction to Bullshit Theory



In a famous essay which quickly became a cult classic, retired analytical philosophy professor Harry Frankfurt suggests that our culture is ignorant of bullshit, though we are drowning in it.

The Eiffel tower would not stand up straight if builders accepted bullshit instead of real physics. Of course in our times, everyone resists the notion of “objective truth” when it comes to what we call philosophy, and equates it with ignorant peasants, terrorists, right wing fundamentalists or fanatics of one kind or another. Because we are so tired of holy wars, while we would never trust a tower built using bullshit physics, we are ok with all kinds of bs in other areas of life. Frankfurt believes this is harmful to our health. He suggests that we need a theory of bullshit for our own good.

Timetable:

Anytime during the two week break (suggested, dec. 27, 28, jan. 2, 3, 4.)

Required reading: Harry Frankfurt, *On Bullshit*

Recommended reading

MONDAY or day 1.	The Oxford English Dictionary, various entries
TUESDAY	Max Black: <i>The Prevalence of Humbug</i> .
WEDNESDAY	Ludwig Wittgenstein, text to be announced
THURSDAY	Ezra Pound, cantos to be announced
FRIDAY	Augustin <i>On Lies</i> (original title: <i>de Mendacio</i>)