

Department of Philosophy

Guest Lecture Series

Directional Analysis and Conceptual Engineering

April 4, 2025 ♦ 3:30 PM ♦ Dickens Hall 207

Directional analysis, a system originally made precise by Susan Stebbing, was proposed to help us think more clearly about the things we take to be true. Conceptual engineering, arguably originally developed by Rudolf Carnap, is proposed to help us be more accurate in our use of concepts. Both systems of analysis are powerful in their own right, but a comparison of them will help us see that there are two distinct options: either directional analysis just is a type of conceptual engineering, or it serves as a motivational method which can something call for conceptual engineering. It hinges on the normative status of directional analysis.

Teresa Kouri Kissel associate professor of philosophy at Old Dominion University in Norfolk, VA. I received my PhD in 2016 from The Ohio State University. My primary interests are in philosophy of logic, mathematics and language, with a focus on the relationship between the meanings of the connectives in formal and natural languages. I am also interested in the work of Susan Stebbing, a contemporary of Russell, Moore and Wittgenstein who wrote on logic and critical thinking, and in mathematical structuralism. I just finished an NEH Fellowship to complete a book on Stebbing's notion of common sense. She also serves as a co-director for the Institute for Ethics and Public Affairs, the director of the Philosophy and Religious Studies Ambassador Program, and faculty in ODU's School of Cybersecurity and School of Data Science.