

# Department of Philosophy

## Guest Lecture Series

# Representational Unmoored

March 7, 2025 ♦ 3:30 PM ♦ Dickens Hall 207

According to *intentionalism*, phenomenal character is exhausted by representational content. According to *representationalism*, phenomenal character is constituted by the content of a representational mechanism. Representationalism is standardly presented as a species of intentionalism. I argue that the representationalist should reject this taxonomy.

Intentionalism is motivated by *the transparency intuition*, the observation that when we attempt to attend to qualities of “experience itself,” we succeed only in attending to features of apparent objects. Unlike many critics of transparency, I do not challenge the claim that perceptual experience is transparent. Instead, I argue that a function of attention competes with intentionalism as an explanation for transparency, undermining standard arguments for intentionalism.

But the success of representationalism is not beholden to that of intentionalism. These views target distinct aspects of our conscious lives and are motivated by distinct considerations. Unmoored from intentionalism, representationalism’s prospects improve.

*Kim Soland is an Assistant Professor of Philosophy at  
Kansas University*