

Approaches to Parts and Wholes in Semantics

Advanced Course

ESLLI 2025 Summer School

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Course Outline

Session 1:

Ontological and Semantic Issues about Part-Whole Structure

Linguistic intuitions and part-whole structure

Three views of part-whole structure:

- Extensional mereology
- Mereotopology and hylomorphism
- The priority of the whole

Session 2:

Extensional mereology: motivations, applications, and problems

Reading:

Link, G. (1983): 'The Logical Analysis of Plurals and Mass Nouns'. In R. Baeuerle et al. (eds.):

Semantics from Different Points of View. Springer, Berlin, 302-323.

Varzi, A. (2016): 'Mereology'. *Stanford Encyclopedia of Philosophy*. online

Cotnoir, A. and A. Varzi (2021): *Mereology*, Oxford UP, Oxford.

Moltmann, F. (2016): '[Plural Reference and Reference to a Plurality. Linguistic Facts and Semantic Analyses](#)'. In M. Carrara / A. Arapinis / F. Moltmann (eds.): *Unity and Plurality.*

Logic, Philosophy, and Semantics. Oxford University Press, Oxford, 2016, pp. 93-120.

Session 3:

The notion of an integrated whole and mereotopology, and the mass-count distinction

Reading:

Grimm, S. (2018): 'Grammatical Number and the Scale of Individuation'. *Language*

F. Moltmann (1998): '[Part Structures, Integrity and the Mass-Count Distinction](#)'. *Synthese* 116, 1998, 75-111

F. Moltmann: On the ontology and semantics of the mass-count distinction
'On the Semantics and Ontology of the Mass-Count Distinction'. In *Philosophy Compass* 20(3), March 2025; [link](#),

Session 4:

The view of the priority of the whole 1

Reading:

Carrara, M. And G. Landau (2025): 'Mereomodal Partialhood and Fractional Counting'.
Philosophical Studies, online first

Bennet, K. (2013): 'Having a part twice over'. *Australasian Journal of Philosophy* 91.1,
83 - 103

Liebeman, D. (2025): 'Partialhood'. In K. Bennett and D. Zimmermann (eds.): *Oxford Studies in Metaphysics*. Vol. 14, 131-175, Oxford University Press, Oxford.

<http://doi.org/10.30687/Jolma/2723-9640/2024/02/003>

J. Schaeffer (2010): 'Monism: The Priority of the Whole'. *Philosophical Review* 119.1.,
31-75.

Session 5:

The view of the priority of the whole 2

Reading:

F. Moltmann 'On the Ontology and Semantics of Absence', *The Journal for the Philosophy of Language, Mind, and the Arts* JOLMA 5.2., 2024

P. Ardisson, F. Dikmen, K. Mueller, F. Moltmann (2025): '[The Role of Plans for Qua Events and their Effects on Part Structure](#)'. *Proceedings of Formal Ontology in Information Systems* (FOIS) 15, IOS Press, Amsterdam.