

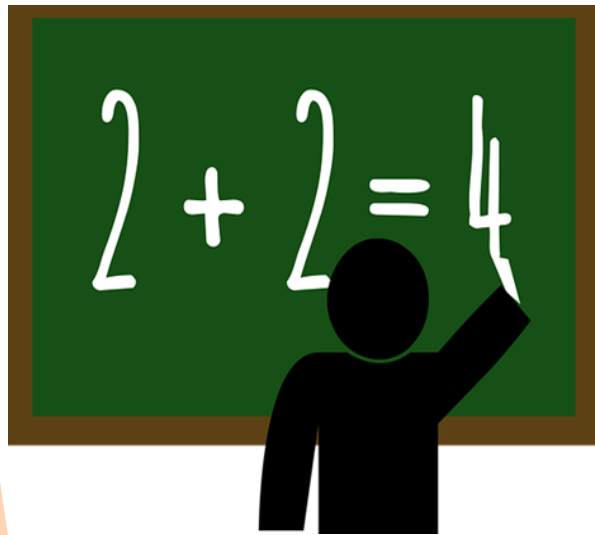
Department of Philosophy  
Colloquium Series

**Friday, October 2<sup>nd</sup>, 2020**

**3:00 p.m.**

**Via Zoom**

**Everyone is welcome**



**Mathematical Meaning and Doing:  
Saying, Proving and Unwinding**

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It seems an uncontroversial fact that mathematics is one of the most crucial components of our knowledge. For example, science as we know it today would not be possible without the development of mathematics. However, despite the ubiquity of mathematics, we still rightly ask “what is mathematics?” and “what does ‘ $2 + 2 = 4$ ’ mean?”.

W.V.O. Quine thought that we only have two interesting answers to these questions: a) Mathematics is a language about abstract objects, such as the 2 or the 4; or b) Mathematics is a language about possible structures. In relation to this, I will argue that there is a different answer to Quine’s false dichotomy. I take Wittgenstein’s radical constructivism to argue that mathematics is neither about abstract objects nor possible structures. It is just symbols and rules! Mathematical propositions cannot be true or false, for they are not about anything!

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