Schedule of the workshop “Miks on ajalugu oluline: historiograafia ratsionaalsetest alustest” / “Why History Matters: The Rational Grounding of Historiography”

Monday 19 March 2018
Seminars
10.15-11.45 The Narrativist Insight (recap of PPH)
12.15-13.45 Rationality and the Problem of Historical Knowledge (Recap of PPH)

Lecture
16.15-17.45 Representationalism as a Paradigm and Knowing How

Abstract: Richard Rorty, Robert Brandom and others have suggested that representationalism in epistemology and the philosophy of language has been a dominant paradigm since the seventeenth century. Pragmatist philosophers specifically have tried to outline an alternative to it. Also in Postnarrativist Philosophy of Historiography I labelled my position as non-representationalist. In this lecture, I consider in some more detail, what it means to make this shift in historiography. My suggestion is that historiography is still taken as knowledge producing activity but that knowledge is defined as being knowledge how, and not knowledge that.

Tuesday 20 March 2018
Seminars
10.15-11.45 A visit to a museum

Lecture
16.15-17.45 Truth-making and Performativity

Abstract: Truth is an enigmatic concept. Despite this, it holds a special place in our culture. The idea of truth-making theories is a relatively recent attempt to explicate, why our claims and other potential truth-bearers are true. It is that something independent of our theories and us makes them true. In this lecture, I assess the idea of truth-making and use it to express, why truth-making and truth more generally is problematic in historiography. Regarding truth, my position had shifted towards deflationary theories of truth. A still better way to express this is to say that the role of truth-talk is to provide epistemic authority to what is claimed. The focus shifts therefore on the mechanisms that make our claims authoritative.

Wednesday March 21 2018
Seminars
10.15-11.45 Discussion: Normativity, Naturalism and Universalism
Lecture

16.15-17.45 Inferentialism and Conceptualism

Abstract: The main goal in this lecture is to understand Brandom’s inferentialism in more depth. A key idea of inferentialism is that implicit conceptual contents are made explicit by drawing inferences in a social-discursive situation. Conceptual contents entail and forbid some kinds of inferences, which is playing ‘the game of giving and asking for reasons’ in other words. Another Brandom’s presupposition is that our ordinary use of language is fundamentally normative. But where do our claims get their normative force? What is knowledge in the Brandomian inferentialist framework? These and many other related questions are studied in detail.

Thursday March 22 2018

Seminars
10.15-11.45 Acting it Out: The Social-Discursive Justification Applied (we choose a book and demonstrate how its’ thesis could be defended)
12.15-11.45 Any Hope for Epistemic Values? (Assessment and feedback from the seminar in the morning)

Lecture
16.15-17.45 Rational Grounding of Historiography

Abstract: A central question that has inspired my work is: What is historiography for? In other words, what is the fundamental rationale of researching and writing history? I argue that there is no non-inferential description and knowledge, and that the dichotomy between pure description (of facts or other matters of fact) and interpretation is false. Instead, the dichotomy should be between old (inferential) and new(er) (inferential) descriptions. Both old and new inferential descriptions rely on different presuppositions, or perhaps on the presuppositions of different times. That all description is inferential is important regarding the rationale of historiography. Historiography at its best is rational criticism, which ‘unmasks’ old descriptions and their presuppositions, and proposes new rationally warranted to replace them.

Workshop dinner for the participants