

News item. Retrieved from <http://www.commens.org/news/item/nordic-pragmatism-network-workshop-pluralism>, 25.01.2026.

**Category:** Academic Meeting

**Title:** Nordic Pragmatism Network Workshop: Pluralism

**Description:** Originally a term for art in ontology, pluralism has become to mean an approach to cultural, ethnic and religious diversity. The philosophers and sociologists of the pragmatist tradition, beginning with William James and John Dewey, advanced forms of cultural pluralism, prefiguring the much debated multiculturalism of today. The notion was also adopted by the central figures of the liberal tradition in political philosophy, such as Isaiah Berlin and John Rawls, as well as their opponents from different directions.

In contemporary debates in ethics and political philosophy, pluralism is used to refer (among other uses) both to the fact that different groups and individuals within any given contemporary Western society have somewhat differing ethical views or moral attitudes, and to a stance which prescribes an accepting or approving attitude towards ethical views that differ from one's own (at least within some limits to be specified). This latter, normative version of pluralism may be reflected in the state's policies towards groups with differing ethical views, as in political pluralism, or, alternatively, it may allude to a stance adopted by an individual towards the (conflicting) views of others.

The aim of this workshop is to clarify our understanding of this normative concept of pluralism, its merits and potential issues:

- What has pluralism meant in different contexts, especially to philosophers of the pragmatist tradition, but also to political liberals and their contenders?
- What form(s) of pluralism is/are defensible against conceptual charges (of e.g. relativism) and sufficiently informed by our understanding of contemporary society?
- How could these forms of pluralism be reflected in educational theory and practice, especially in citizenship education?
- What is religious pluralism in distinction to political/ethical pluralism, or can such a distinction be made?

## Venue

The workshop is organized by the GROW research project (University of Eastern Finland), the Academy of Finland Centre of Excellence, "Reasons and Religious Recognition" (University of Helsinki), and the Nordic Pragmatism Network. The workshop takes place at the Faculty room (tiedekuntasali) of the Faculty of Theology, University of Helsinki, address Vuorikatu 3, floor 5B.

**Organizing committee:**

Henrik Rydenfelt (University of Eastern Finland)

Sami Pihlström (University of Helsinki)

Katariina Holma (University of Eastern Finland)

The workshop is open for all, but the organizers kindly ask for a registration by email in advance (info(at)nordprag.org).

**Programme**

The invited speakers are: Chiara Ambrosio (UCL), Antje Gimmler (Aalborg), David Hildebrand (Denver), Brendan Hogan (NYU), Leszek Koczanowicz (Wroclaw/HCAS), Sami Pihlström (Helsinki), Katariina Holma (UEF), Mats Bergman (Helsinki), Heikki J. Koskinen (Helsinki) Anniina Leiviskä (Helsinki) and Henrik Rydenfelt (UEF).

**Place:** Faculty room, Faculty of Theology, University of Helsinki - Vuorikatu 3, floor 5B

**Link:** Event page

**Keywords:** Pluralism, Nordic Pragmatism Network