



Abteilung Philosophie

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NATURAL KIND TERMS

REFERENCE // RIGIDITY // ESSENCE

A Research Workshop
Bielefeld University, September 10-11, 2015

organized by **Christian Nimtz** (Bielefeld)
and **Jussi Haukioja** (Trondheim)

SPEAKERS

- **Corine Besson** – University of Sussex [web](#)
- **Alexander Bird** – University of Bristol [web](#)
- **Jussi Haukioja** – University of Trondheim [web](#)
- **Frank Jackson** – Australian National University, Canberra [web](#)
- **Joseph LaPorte** – Hope College, Holland, Michigan [web](#)
- **Genoveva Martí** – ICREA and University of Barcelona [web](#)
- **Christian Nimtz** – Bielefeld University [web](#)
- **Tuomas Tahko** – University of Helsinki [web](#)
- **Barbara Vetter** – Humboldt University, Berlin [web](#)

REGISTRATION Registration is mandatory, and the fee for participation is €10. We waive the fee for graduate and postdoctoral students. Be advised that space is fairly limited, so you will have to apply if you want to participate. Please apply by e-mail to: cnimtz@uni-bielefeld.de.

SCHEDULE AND INFORMATION Here is a preliminary [schedule](#) for the event.

WHAT THE WORKSHOP WILL BE ABOUT Natural kind terms are a key topic in the philosophy of language. Philosophers of language as a rule embrace the Kripkean claims that the likes of 'water', 'tiger' or 'gold' designate rigidly, that their reference is on the whole independent of what we know about their referents, and that theoretical identifications involving them as a rule are necessary if true. But there is no meta-semantic consensus on how these semantic properties come about. There also is no agreement on what we learn from the fact that "Gold is ⁷⁹AU" is necessary if true, or on how the natural kind expressions of the vernacular (think of 'gold') relate to their scientific counterparts (think of ⁷⁹AU).

Natural kind terms also are a key topic in the philosophy of science and in metaphysics. Natural kind terms play a prominent role on our scientific theories of the world, or so many philosophers of science agree. But there is no consensus as to the significance of this fact. Nor is there much agreement about the metaphysical implications of either the semantic peculiarities of natural kind terms, or their role in the sciences. Do the former commit us to natural kind essentialism? And does the latter establish that our scientific taxonomies strive to cut nature at its joints?

