

# PHILOSOPHY COLLOQUIUM

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**"Bolzano & German Philosophy (Before Hegel and other  
Intellectual Disasters)"**

**Friday, October 24, 2008**

Paper: 3:30 P.M.; Learning Center, Room 184

Refreshments: 5:30 P.M.; Ashe Building, Room 735

## **Abstract**

That Bolzano is one of Kant's most crucial opponents is, oddly enough, a relatively new pronouncement. One reason for Bolzano's prolonged omission by historians may have been the difficulty to determine where, exactly, is Bolzano's place within the history of German-speaking philosophy. In what follows, I argue that Bolzano follows a trend that was relatively popular at the time and which was originally initiated by Kant's "metalogical" concern in the first *Critique*, that is, questions relating to the possibility of logic, concerning the nature of concepts, the subdisciplines belonging to epistemology and their relation, their purpose, etc.... These questions were at the source of many more or less recondite investigations for instance by Kiesewetter, Krug, Jäsche and Mass who in return all substantially informed Bolzano's work (Bolzano discusses these authors more than any others - including Kant! - in his opus magnum, the *Wissenschaftslehre*). Yet, while they shared the same goals - to propose a new logic based on important distinctions originally introduced by Kant such as concept/intuition, a priori/a posteriori, analytic/synthetic, etc... - Bolzano was the only one to propose a fundamentally new and compelling logic. I will give examples and explain what made it possible for him to succeed where his contemporaries otherwise failed.

Dr. LaPointe has been teaching philosophy at Kansas State University since 2005. A Commonwealth alumna, she completed her PhD in 2000 at the University of Leeds (UK). She specializes in the history of 19th and 20th century analytical philosophy in Europe. Her publications include: *Qu'est-ce que l'analyse?* (Paris, Vrin, 2008); *Bolzano contre Kant. Le nouvel Anti-Kant* (Paris, Vrin, 2006); *Bernard Bolzano : philosophie de la logique et théorie de la connaissance*, (Special issue. *Philosophique* 30/1) and a number of articles and book chapters. She is the founding journal manager of the *Baltic International Yearbook of Cognition, Logic and Communication* and a member of the Center for Cognitive Sciences and Semantics of the University of Latvia in Riga. Among other things, she is currently working on a book on Bernard Bolzano's philosophy commissioned for Palgrave-Macmillan's new series in the History of Analytical Philosophy.



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