



## Department of Philosophy Colloquium

**James Conant and Matthias  
Haase (University of Chicago)**



10/17/2025



3 pm - 5 pm



HIB 55

### "Acknowledging Each Other"

In their joint presentation "Acknowledging Each Other", James Conant (Chicago) and Matthias Haase (Chicago) will argue that the fundamental case of the second person relation between persons partakes of a logically distinctive form. In the recent literature, skepticism about other minds is often treated on analogy with skepticism about knowledge of the external world. In this paper Conant and Haase argue that this is mistaken: knowledge of other minds differs from knowledge of external objects not merely in content, but also in form. This formal difference is due to the former kind of knowledge involving a relation between persons. The fundamental form of this relation exhibits logical features not present in knowledge of a mere thing, including mutual acknowledgement and reciprocal address. The latter two features are particularly emphasized in the work of Stanley Cavell. Following his lead, Conant and Haase seek to elucidate several deep asymmetries between skepticism about the external world and skepticism about other minds. Not least of these is that the latter, unlike the former, can be lived—and hence is a form of skepticism partaking of an irreducibly existential aspect.

**If you have any questions, please contact [philos@uci.edu](mailto:philos@uci.edu)**

### BIO

**James Conant** is Chester D. Tripp Professor of Humanities, Professor of Philosophy, and Professor in the College at the University of Chicago. He has served as co-director of the Forschungskolleg Analytic German Idealism in Leipzig since 2012. He is also the director of the Center for German Philosophy at the University of Chicago.

**Matthias Haase** is an Associate Professor of Philosophy. His research is focused on foundational topics at the intersection of ethics and philosophy of mind. A central historical interest is the tradition of German Idealism, especially the aspects that are tied to Aristotle. He has also written on Wittgenstein and Frege.