



Third 2022/2023 Groningen PPE Colloquium

Wednesday, March 8, 2023, 15.15-17.00
Faculty of Philosophy, Room Omega
(followed by drinks)

Michael E. Bratman (Stanford)

Shared and Institutional Agency

Abstract: In this talk I discuss some main ideas in my 2022 book, *Shared and Institutional Agency: Toward a Planning Theory of Human Practical Organization*. Our human lives involve remarkable forms of practical organization: diachronic organization of individual activity; small-scale organization of shared action; and the organization of institutions. A theory of human action should help us understand these multiple forms of human practical organization and their inter-relations. A key is our capacity for planning agency. Drawing on earlier work on the roles of planning agency in the cross-temporal and small-scale social organization of our agency, I focus on the role of our planning agency within our organized institutions. I draw on ideas, inspired by H.L.A. Hart, that our organized institutions are rule-guided, and that to understand this we need a theory of social rules. I draw on the planning theory of shared intention to understand social rules. I understand an organized institution as involving authority-according social rules of procedure in a way that makes room for pluralistic divergence. This leads to a model of institutional intention and—drawing on ideas from Harry Frankfurt—institutional intentional agency. The account charts a path between views of, among others, Kirk Ludwig, Phillip Pettit, and Scott Shapiro. It sees our capacity for planning agency as a core capacity that underlies not only string quartets and informal social rules but also, thereby, the rule-guided structure of organized institutions. And it supports adjustments in views of mind, intention and agency that are built into Donald Davidson’s fieldshaping work.

Bio: Michael Bratman is Professor of Philosophy and U.G. and Abbie Birch Durfee Professor in the School of Humanities and Sciences at Stanford University. His main research interests are in the philosophy of action, where this includes issues about social agency and about practical rationality. His book publications are *Intention, Plans, and Practical Reason* (1987); *Faces of Intention: Selected Essays on Intention and Agency* (1999); *Structures of Agency: Essays* (2007); *Shared Agency: A Planning Theory of Acting Together* (2014); *Planning, Time, and Self-Governance: Essays in Practical Rationality* (2018); and *Shared and Institutional Agency* (2022). He received the American Philosophical Association’s Philip L. Quinn Prize "in recognition of service to philosophy and philosophers, broadly construed" in 2014 and the Lebowitz Prize for philosophical achievement and contribution in 2019.