

Natural language allows us to refer both to particular objects – like the sun, the number 7, my coat, etc. – and to many objects at once – like the stars in our galaxy, the set of natural numbers, and the property of being red. This course will investigate the logic, metaphysics, and epistemology of these various notions that allow us to collect together many objects at once. Its central questions are:

What notions of collection are there?

What principles govern these notions? In particular, what comprehension principles do they obey, and how do they behave in modal contexts?

What is their underlying metaphysics? In particular, are the relevant collections objects? And if not, what exactly are they? Under what conditions do they exist? Are they concrete or abstract? How do they relate to other kinds of collection? What are their identity conditions? In other words, when are collections of the relevant kind identical?

How can we come know about them? What counts as evidence for their fundamental principles?

What applications do they have in logic, philosophy, and semantics? How sensitive are these applications to the above questions? In other words, what principles do they need to obey in order to have the desired applications?