

CARLETON UNIVERSITY

DEPARTMENT OF PHILOSOPHY



FALL 2025 *Colloquium*

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A Theory of Sense-Data

I develop and defend a sense-datum theory of perception. My theory follows the spirit of classic sense-datum theories: I argue that what it is to have a perceptual experience is to be acquainted with some sense-data, where sense-data are private particulars that have all the properties they appear to have, that are common to both perception and hallucination, that constitute the phenomenal characters of perceptual experiences, and that are analogous to pictures inside one's head. But my theory also diverges from conventional sense-datum theories in some key respects: on my view, (1) sense-data are neural states presented first-personally, (2) the sensational qualities of sense-data differ in kind from the sensible qualities of external objects, and (3) sense-data are the vehicles in virtue of which we perceive, rather than the objects that we perceive. I argue that this package of claims is appropriately labeled 'sense-datum theory', and that the resultant view ought to be a live contender in contemporary philosophy of perception.

FRIDAY, OCTOBER 31

1:30 P.M. EST

RB 3110