

Patrizia Bonaventura and Per Aage Brandt present
a Workshop organized in collaboration with
the Laboratory of Applied Research in Cognitive Semiotics,
and the Center for Cognition and Culture

Philosophy and Cognition

a discussion with

Prof. Mario De Caro, University of Rome, “Roma Tre”
(http://ase.tufts.edu/philosophy/people/de_caro.shtml)

about

Freedom and Responsibility: Mystery, Illusion or What?

April 11, 1:00 – 3:00

The Mind-Brain Problem Today: the Naturalization of the Soul

April 18, 3:00 – 5:00

Dimensions of Consciousness: Problems and Perspectives

April 25, 1:00 - 3:00

All sessions will be held in Crawford 610, Crawford Hall

See program description and suggested readings here below

What are human beings?

Common-sense vs. scientific perspective.

Human beings can be conceived in two deeply different and seemingly conflicting ways. On the one hand, they can be viewed as *persons* – that is, beings endowed with a special, private point of view on what goes on in their own minds, who often act rationally by exercising their free will and are morally responsible for what they thereby do. This is the *common-sense (or objective) perspective*. On the other hand, humans can be seen as mere material *bodies*, which obey the same natural laws that rule over all the other physical entities. In the latter perspective there seems to be no place for consciousness, freedom and responsibility. This is the *scientific (or objective) perspective*. One of the greatest difficulties in the history of human thought – one that is strikingly evident today – concerns the possibility of whether these two perspectives can be reconciled, and in case how and up to which point. In these three talks we will discuss this “reconciliation problem” from three different vantage points, respectively connected with the issue of free will, the mind-body problem and the question of consciousness.

Introductory reading: http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Philosophy_of_mind

Lecture 1

April 11, 1pm

Freedom and Responsibility. Mystery, Illusion or What?

Suggested reading: G. Strawson “Free will”

<http://www.rep.routledge.com/article/V014>

Lecture 2

April 18 - 3pm

The Mind-Brain Problem Today: the Naturalization of the Soul

Suggested reading: J. Fodor, “The Mind-Body Problem”

<http://philosophy.ucsd.edu/faculty/rarneson/Courses/fodorphil1.pdf>

Lecture 3

April 25 - 1pm

Dimensions of Consciousness. Problems and Perspectives

Related readings: 'Consciousness and Semiosis' Cognitive Semiotics, n. 1

J. Searle, "The Problem of Consciousness"

<http://users.ecs.soton.ac.uk/harnad/Papers/Py104/searle.prob.html>