

Higher Institute of Philosophy


FILO2240 **Advanced Studies in the Philosophy of Natural Sciences**

[30h] 4 credits

This course is taught in the 2nd semester

Teacher(s): Bernard Feltz, Michel Ghins
Language: French
Level: Second cycle

Aims

The aim of the course is to allow the students to deepen their understanding of specific, and current, questions in the philosophy of science by opening a dialogue with contemporary science. The students should sharpen their analytical and critical skills and should be able to defend a personal position taken with regards to the central issues in Contemporary philosophy of science.

Main themes

The topics discussed change from year to year: we alternate between discussing questions linked either to the philosophy of physics or to the philosophy of the life sciences.

Concerning the philosophy of physics, in previous years we have studied the following topics: the status of models in the sciences, theories of causalities, scientific realism, the constructive empiricism of van Fraassen. Concerning the philosophy of the life sciences, we have studied the following topics: reductionism, finality, time and self-organization, philosophy of neuroscience, conscience and intentionality, the question of qualia

Content and teaching methods

The topics of the cursus will be the contribution of philosophy of life sciences to philosophical anthropology. How can neurosciences contribute to the conception of human being as free being ?

This question will be analysed in relation with different points of view.

- The reductionist issue in the philosophy of science (E. Nagel, H. Wright, A. Rosenberg, S. Sarkar, W. Wimsatt...)
- The history of the concept of soul
- The concept of freedom in kantian tradition
- Neurosciences and the Mind Question (Dennet, Edelman, Damasio, Changeux, Th. Nagel, P. Churchland, W. Bechtel...)

Other information (prerequisite, evaluation (assessment methods), course materials recommended readings, ...)
Pre-requisites

An introductory Philosophy of Science course.

Assessment:

The exam bears on the material covered in class, preferably in the form of an essay composed by the student.

Supporting material:

A course outline and a bibliography will be distributed during the first class. Photocopies of the texts to be read will be distributed ahead of time.

Course Holder/Course Supervision:

By the lecturer.

Other credits in programs

ISLE3DA/IS	Diplôme d'études approfondies en philosophie et lettres (philosophie)	(4 credits)
ISP20	Licence à durée réduite en philosophie	(4 credits)
ISP21	Première licence en philosophie	(4 credits)
ISP22	Deuxième licence en philosophie	(4 credits)
ISPB9CE	Certificat universitaire en philosophie (approfondissement)	(4 credits)