



ERASMUS+ INCOMING STUDENTS COURSE CATALOGUE

Department of Philosophy

General information		
Course instructor	Neven Smokrović, Ph.D.	
Name of the course	Consciousness and Naturalization	
Study programme	Undergraduate study programme in Philosophy	
Status of the course	Elective	
Year of study	1 st , 2 nd and 3 rd	
ECTS credits and manner of instruction	ECTS credits	3
	Number of class hours (Lectures + Exercises + Seminars)	30+0+0

1. COURSE DESCRIPTION

1.1. Course objectives

In the last few decades, naturalistic approaches to the study of mind offered some answers to a number of mysteries surrounding the nature and the functioning of the human mind. Some of these mysteries are related to the question of human motivation, the freedom of the will, the relationship between reason and emotion, and the existence of the biological basis of mind functioning. This course aims to give an overview of some of the answers to these mysteries taking into account the recent findings (both conceptual and empirical) on the principles underlying the evolution and functioning of the human mind. More concretely, the aim of this course is to familiarize students with philosophical perspectives on biological approaches that seek to provide answers to some of the aforementioned mysteries of the mind.

1.2. Course enrolment requirements and entry competences required for the course

No prerequisites.

1.3. Expected course learning outcomes

Students will be able to:

- explain the difference between psychological and evolutionary altruism
- describe the models of human behaviour which are based on the theory of utility maximization and the theory of inclusive fitness maximization
- explain the similarities and differences between the approaches explaining the biological foundations of

mental abilities: sociobiology, behavioural ecology and evolutionary psychology

- analyse the theories and hypotheses about the function of human cognitive abilities - mind as a reduction of complexity, massive modularity hypothesis, and the existence of non-modular cognitive systems
- explain some of the most important findings in neuroscience that are relevant to the discussion pertaining to the neurobiological foundations of rationality and conscious experience
- critically evaluate the implications of neuroscientific studies for the perception of people as autonomous beings with free will

1.4. Course content

1. Human motivation: evolutionary foundations

- What motivates human behaviour? Altruism or egoism?
- Evolutionary explanations of altruism

- Altruistic behaviour: kin and group selection

2. Evolution and the models of human action

- The foundations of the evolutionary game theory
- Action as the utility maximization
- Action as inclusive fitness maximization

3. Evolution and the human mind

- Sociobiology, human behavioural ecology, and evolutionary psychology
- Adaptation and adaptationism
- The emergency of linguistic and mental content and the models of signaling games
- Mind as the ability to reduce complexity
- Mind and the massive modularity hypothesis

4. Neuroscience and the freedom of the will

- neuroscientific approaches to the study on moral responsibility and the freedom of the will
- did neuroscience deny the existence of free will?

1.5. Manner of instruction

- ✓ Lectures
- ✓ Individual assignments
- ✓ Mentorship