

Centro Luís Krus – Lifelong Learning

Faculty of Social and Human Sciences (FCSH), NOVA University of Lisbon

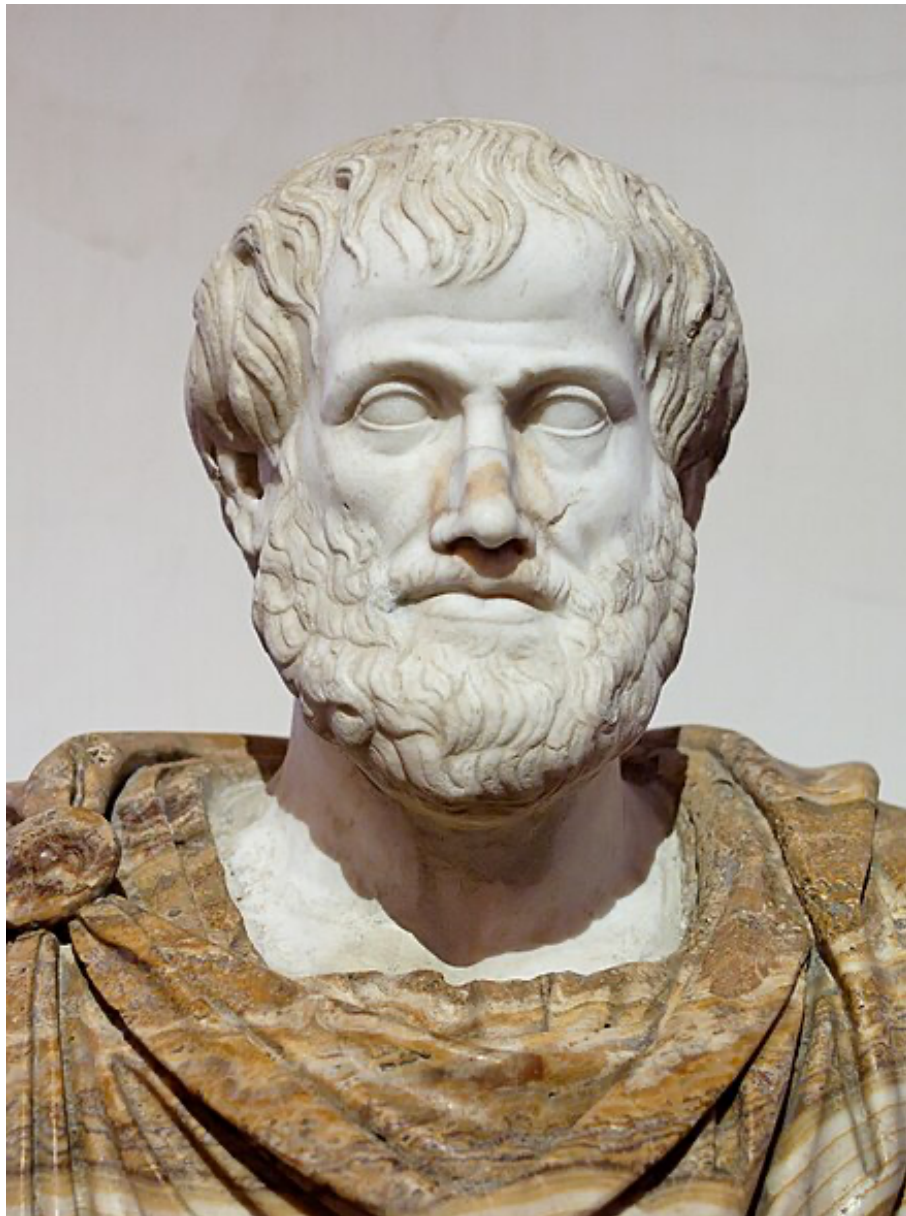
Philosophy, Science and the Question of Reality

New Year Courses

Dr Fabio Tononi

e-learning

16 January–15 February 2023, 12 classes, 25 hours



Objectives

This course explores the concepts of philosophy, science, and reality by analysing some of the most important philosophical and scientific texts in history. Students will develop adequate critical and analytical skills by focusing on the essence and tasks of philosophy and science, and the possible dialogue between the two. Furthermore, students will learn to orient themselves in thinking by addressing the following questions: What does it mean to think? What does the job of the scientist entail? Students will explore these and other questions by focusing on philosophers and scientists such as Plato, Aristotle, René Descartes, Immanuel Kant, Martin Heidegger, Thomas Kuhn, Bruno Latour, Karen Barad, Stephen Hawking, and Slavoj Žižek.

Programme

Since the emergence of Greek philosophy, the relationship between philosophy and science has varied considerably. For example, the idea of science in Scholasticism differs from that which took shape at the time of Galileo Galilei, or in the period of the atomic physics of Niels Bohr and Werner Karl Heisenberg. Martin Heidegger devoted significant attention to the essence of philosophy and science. In a series of texts, Heidegger argues that philosophy is *thinking*, whereas science is *knowledge*. Today, various scholars suggest that philosophy has been replaced by science, whereas others see no real difference between the two. By focusing on philosophical and scientific texts, this course addresses a series of questions, including: (i) What is philosophy?; (ii) What is science? (iii) How is reality defined today?; (iv) Does the current multidisciplinary approach – such as the dialogue between philosophy and science in experimental metaphysics – challenge Heidegger's idea of the difference between philosophy and science?; (v) What is the task of philosophy in an age in which science seems to triumph?; and (vi) What are the social consequences of scientific hegemony?

In particular, the course is structured as follows:

CLASS ONE

(16 January, 10–13 PM)

- **Introduction to the Course**
- **Plato's Cave**

>Plato, *Republic*, edited and translated by Christopher Emlyn-Jones and William Preddy, 2 vols (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 2013), II, book VII.

CLASS TWO

(17 January, 10–12 PM)

- **Aristotle and the Notion of Metaphysics**

>Selected parts from Aristotle, *Metaphysics*, translated by Hugh Tredennick, 2 vols (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1933–1935).

CLASS THREE

(18 January, 10–12 PM)

- **René Descartes**

>René Descartes, *Discourse on the Method*, in *The Philosophical Writings of Descartes*, translated by John Cottingham, Robert Stoothoff and Dugald Murdoch, 2 vols (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1984–1985), I, pp. 111–151.

>Selected parts from Friedrich Nietzsche, *Ecce Homo: How to Become What you Are*, in Friedrich Nietzsche, *The Anti-Christ, Ecce Homo, Twilight of the Idols, and Other Writings*, edited by Aaron Ridley and Judith Norman, translated by Judith Norman (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2005), pp. 69–151.

CLASS FOUR

(23 January, 10–12 PM)

- **Immanuel Kant and the Notion of Reason**

>Immanuel Kant, *What Does It Mean to Orient Oneself in Thinking?*, in Immanuel Kant, *Religion And Rational Theology*, translated and edited by Allen W. Wood and George di Giovanni (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1996), pp. 1-18.

>Selected parts from Georg Wilhelm Friedrich Hegel, *Lectures on the History of Philosophy. Volume 1 Greek Philosophy to Plato*, translated by E.S. Haldane (Lincoln, NE: University of Nebraska Press, 1995), pp. 1–100.

>Selected parts from Robert Brandom, *Reason in Philosophy* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 2009).

CLASS FIVE

(24 January, 10–12 PM)

- **Martin Heidegger**

>Selected parts from Martin Heidegger, *What is Called Thinking?*, translated by Fred D. Wieck and J. Glenn Gray (New York; Evanston; London: Harper & Row, 1968).

CLASS SIX

(25 January, 10–12 PM)

- **Martin Heidegger**

>Selected parts from Martin Heidegger, *What is Philosophy?*, translated by Jean T. Wilde and William Kluback (Lanham, MD; Oxford: Rowman & Littlefield, 2003).

CLASS SEVEN

(30 January, 10–12 PM)

- **Martin Heidegger**

>Martin Heidegger, *Modern Science, Metaphysics, and Mathematics*, in Martin Heidegger, *Basic Writings: From Being and Time (1927) to The Task of Thinking (1964)*, edited by David Farrell Krell (London; New York: Routledge Classics, 2011), pp. 183–212.

CLASS EIGHT

(1 February, 10–12 PM)

- **Thomas Kuhn**

>Selected parts from Thomas Kuhn, *The Structure of Scientific Revolutions* (Chicago; London: University of Chicago Press, 2012).

CLASS NINE

(6 February, 10–12 PM)

- **The Construction of Scientific Facts**

>Selected parts from Bruno Latour and Steve Woolgar, *Laboratory Life: The Construction of Scientific Facts* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1986).

CLASS TEN

(8 February, 10–12 PM)

- **Metaphysics, Ethics and Quantum Physics**

>Selected parts from Karen Barad, *Meeting the Universe Halfway: Quantum Physics and the Entanglement of Matter and Meaning* (Durham; London: Duke University Press, 2007).

>Selected parts from Aristotle, *Nicomachean Ethics*, translated by H. Rackham (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1926).

>Selected parts from Bernard Williams, *Ethics and the Limits of Philosophy* (London; New York: Routledge Classics, 2011).

>Selected parts from Günther Anders, ‘On Promethean Shame’, in *Prometheanism: Technology, Digital Culture and Human Obsolescence*, translated and edited by Christopher Müller (London; New York: Rowman & Littlefield International, 2016), pp. 29–95.

>Selected parts from Werner Heisenberg, *Physics and Philosophy: The Revolution in Modern Science* (London: Penguin Classics, 2000).

>Selected parts from Carlo Rovelli, *Reality Is Not What It Seems: The Journey to Quantum Gravity*, translated by Simon Carnell and Erica Segre (London: Penguin Books, 2017).

CLASS ELEVEN

(13 February, 10–12 PM)

- **Is Philosophy Over?**

>Selected parts from Nicholas Fearn, *Philosophy: The Latest Answers to the Oldest Questions* (London: Atlantic Books, 2005).

>Selected parts from Stephen Hawking and Leonard Mlodinow, *The Grand Design* (New York: Bantam Books, 2010).

CLASS TWELVE

(15 February, 10–12 PM)

- **Slavoj Žižek**

>Slavoj Žižek, 'Philosophy, Science, Capitalism and Truth', *Philosophical Investigations*, 15: 35 (2021), pp. 36–52.

Bibliography

1. Baumgarten, Alexander, *Metaphysics: A Critical Translation with Kant's Elucidations*, translated and edited by Courtney D. Fugate and John Hymers (London; New York: Bloomsbury Publishing, 2013).
2. Descartes, René, *Discourse on the Method*, in *The Philosophical Writings of Descartes*, translated by John Cottingham, Robert Stoothoff and Dugald Murdoch, 2 vols (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1984–1985), I, pp. 111–151.
3. Heidegger, Martin, *Introduction to Metaphysics*, translated by Gregory Fried and Richard Polt (New Haven; London: Yale University Press, 2014).
4. Polkinghorne, John, *Quantum Theory: A Very Short Introduction* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2002).
5. Westerhoff, Jan, *Reality: A Very Short Introduction* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2011).

Requirements

The course and readings will be entirely in English; therefore an intermediate knowledge of the English language is required.

Assessment

At the end of the course, the students will be assessed on a short essay in English (max. 2,000 words, footnotes included and bibliography excluded) on a topic relevant to the course and previously agreed with the course instructor.

Instructor

Fabio Tononi is a Post-Doctoral Research Fellow at the Centre for the Humanities (CHAM) in the Faculty of Social and Human Sciences (FCHS) of NOVA University of Lisbon. He teaches philosophy at the Centro Luís Krus – Lifelong Learning in the Faculty of Social and Human Sciences (FCSH) of NOVA University of Lisbon. He is the editor-in-chief of the *Edgar Wind Journal*, and a steering committee member of the Centre for the Study of Cultural Memory at the Institute of Modern Languages Research, which is part of the University of London's School of Advanced Study. His research interests include the essence and tasks of philosophy and science, the writings of Aby Warburg and Edgar Wind, the relationship between art and cognitive neuroscience, the interconnection between art and ideology, and postmodernism. In 2020, Tononi convened the Aby Warburg Reading Group and Seminar at the Italian Cultural Institute of London. In 2021, Tononi received a Ph.D. from the Warburg Institute in the School of Advanced Study of the University of London. He held an internship at Villa I Tatti, the Harvard University Center for Italian Renaissance Studies in Florence. During his career, he has participated in over 30 conferences and seminars in highly competitive and international venues. His publications include *Edgar Wind: Art and Embodiment*, ed. by Jaynie Anderson, Bernardino Branca and Fabio Tononi, Oxford, Peter Lang (forthcoming).