Prof. Dr. Gloria Origgi

Biography

Gloria Origgi is a philosopher and a social scientist based at the Institut Nicod (ENS-EHESS-PSL) in Paris. She earned a Habilitation in Philosophy and the Social Sciences at the Ecole des Hautes Etudes en Sciences Sociales (EHESS) in 2013. In her research, she seeks to understand the impact of social relations and institutions on both cognitive processes and the organisation of knowledge. She has worked extensively on the topics of trust, reputation, and the evaluation of knowledge and science. She serves as a member of two advisory boards at the European Commission in Brussels (Future and Emerging Technologies and Gender) whose aim is to design the new Research Framework Programme after Horizon2020.

She has taught in France, Italy, Brazil, and is regularly invited to speak at numerous institutions in the United States and England. In 2005 and 2013, she was Visiting Fellow at the Italian Academy for Advanced Studies at Columbia University in New York City. Her latest book is: Reputation: What It is and Why it Matters (Princeton University Press, 2017). She also works on the epistemology of gender and its applications in social cognition.

In 2016, she started a project called the Dictionary of Social Passions (PUF), which gathers input from more than 200 colleagues from French universities and international institutions to shed light on the role of passions in human motivation. Since 2016, she has participated in a new joint EHESS-Columbia University project on the Epistemologies of the South. She is also involved in research on epistemic democracy. Her research has been covered by many newspapers and media outlets, including The Financial Times, The Guardian, Le Monde, the BBC, and France Culture.

Visiting Professor for Gender Studies at Bielefeld University

With the establishment of the interdisciplinary Visiting Professor for Gender Studies, Bielefeld University, together with its faculties and institutes, is strengthening gender-specific content in research and teaching. This professorship aims at embedding and further expanding gender-related knowledge in the individual disciplines and in research and teaching in general.

The Visiting Professor thereby advances the goals of structurally strengthening gender research and stimulating interdisciplinary exchange at Bielefeld University. To these ends, the Interdisciplinary Center for Gender Research (IZG) and the Master’s degree programme in Gender Studies have already been successfully implemented. The Professorship is also integrated into the Rektorat’s strategic plan to strengthen equal opportunity as well as gender and diversity issues within Bielefeld University.

In Summer term 2017, Prof. Dr. Gloria Origgi will hold the Visiting Professor at the Cluster of Excellence Cognitive Interaction Technology (CITEC) contributing her expertise into the field of gender and cognitive interaction technology. During her stay at CITEC she will give talks and hold also a seminar for master and PhD students.

More information is available online at:
www.uni-bielefeld.de/gender/gendergastprofessur.html
In 1950, pioneering English computer scientist and mathematician Alan Turing proposed an Imitation Game in which a man and a computer compete in pretending to be a woman. The Imitation Game asks a computer to not only imitate a thinking human, but a specific gender of thinking human. The initial setting of the Imitation Game was the following: There are two individuals pretending to be a woman, one is a man and the other is a woman. There is also an interrogator (whose gender is unimportant) who tries to guess who the woman is. Turing then asks: “What if we replace the man by a machine in this game”? The gendered dimension of the Imitation Game has been evoked in many discussions of gender theory (cf. J. Genova 1994). Yet, surprisingly, the gendered dimension of the test itself has not been exploited to write “scripts” that could fool an interrogator about the gender of the participants. How should such a script be conceived? If we stick to Turing’s idea of testing only the “cognitive” features of the subjects and leave out the physical aspects, what could be an adequate script for the Gendered Imitation Game? Examples of scripts will be given and discussed.

**TALK 2: THE STRENGTH OF WEAK STEREOTYPES: IMPLICIT BIASES AND OTHER IRRESISTIBLE HEURISTICS**

Date: Tuesday, 20 June 2017  
Time: 16:15–18:00  
Location: Bielefeld University, X-Eo–205

What exactly is a stereotype? Is it always negative to use stereotypes in order to parse information about the world around us? The world is overloaded with potentially relevant information, and stereotypes can be a “real-time saver” – frugal heuristics that allow us to ignore part of this information. But when do stereotypes go wrong? Inferring from the following sentence “The pilot of the plane has been replaced” that the pilot was a man, this is not a “bad” stereotype per se. Instead, a heuristic based on knowledge of the base rate distribution of women and men is employed in aviation. Thus, when is a gender stereotype a “bad” one? Today, there is extensive literature on heuristics – biases in our cognition – from the fields of psychology and philosophy, and this may help us to better understand when a bias is morally or socially objectionable or harms the advancement of research. In this talk, Prof. Origgi will critically review this literature and provide a critical reading of the notion of “implicit biases” and how this concept applies to gender studies.

**BLOCK SEMINAR: THE SOCIAL COGNITION OF GENDER: GENDER AND POWER RELATIONS**

Date: several time slots from 12.–23. June 2017

**Open to master students and PhD researchers**

It is an acknowledged fact in the social sciences that gender is a “substantial, socially elaborated edifice constructed on a modest biological foundation” (Ridgeway, 2011, p. 8). But this doesn’t explain its persistence as a way of categorising social relations despite societal changes that have affected the participation of women in both the workforce and public life in many societies. If gender is mainly a social construction, it is unlike other more ephemeral and transient constructions. Why is gender such a robust variable in our experience of the social world? In this course, Prof. Origgi will present a new relational epistemological framework to tackle the gender variable according to which gender is a relational variable that influences our interactions and orients our inferences of the social world. She will test this framework in light of recent research in cognitive science, with a focus on cognitive development.

Although the development of the social cognition of gender categories benefits from important experimental and theoretical accounts in contemporary cognitive science, the question of power relations has not received the attention that it deserves: power relations are at the core of the gender system in many respects.

Professor Origgi will review the conceptual and empirical research on how people develop representations of power asymmetries in gender relations. At the empirical level, she will present research that allows for sensitivity to the subtle cognitive and emotional mechanisms involved, while also respecting inter-individual, gender-related and inter-cultural variability. This course aims to contribute to a more fine-tuned understanding of the mechanisms through which the way gender/power relations are used and reproduced.

For more information see www.cit-ec.de/en/gender-diversity

**References:**

