

Seminar IRH-ICUB

Consciousness and Cognition: An Interdisciplinary Approach

<https://irhunibuc.wordpress.com/2016/04/05/new-seminar-consciousness-in-philosophy-and-neuroscience/>

convenor Dr. Diana Stanciu

<https://irhunibuc.wordpress.com/associated-members/>

Date: Tuesday, 21 March 2017, 15h

Place: IRH-ICUB (1 D. Brandza Str.), conference room

Dr. Tamara Caraus

Visiting Professor at the University of Bucharest, Advanced Studies Research Institute (ICUB) – Social Sciences Division

Tamara Caraus is a Visiting Professor at the University of Bucharest, Advanced Studies Research Institute – Social Sciences Division. Her current area of research includes political theory of cosmopolitanism, migration, global resistance, and agonistic/radical democracy. Tamara Caraus has undertaken research projects in political philosophy at the University of Rijeka, Croatia; the Institut für die Wissenschaften vom Menschen, Vienna, Austria; the University of Uppsala, Sweden; the University of Groningen, The Netherlands; Oxford University, UK; Palacky University of Olomouc, Czech Republic and others, and was the Principal Investigator within the research project *Critical Foundations of Contemporary Cosmopolitanism* (2011-2014) at the New Europe College, Bucharest. She contributed with articles to various academic journals and edited volumes, published *tzara mea* (2001), *Ethical Perspectives on the Postmodern Rewriting* (2003), *Traps of Identity* (2011), and edited *Cosmopolitanism and the Legacy of Dissent* (Routledge, 2014, with Camil Parvu), *Re-Grounding Cosmopolitanism: Towards a Post-Foundational Cosmopolitanism* (Routledge, 2015, with Elena Paris); *Cosmopolitanism Without Foundations* (Zeta Books, 2015, with Dan Lazea); *Cosmopolitanism and Global Protests: Special Issue of the Journal Globalisations* (with Camil Parvu, Taylor & Francis, 2016).

Neuropolitics: A Critique

In recent decades political theory/political sciences tried to incorporate neurobiological concepts and techniques of research and from this confluence emerged the subfield called neuropolitics. Utilizing developments in the cognitive neurosciences, neuropolitics attempt to shed new light on political attitudes, identities and decision-behaviours. Neuropolitical research laboratories use a range of experimental approaches, including fMRI brain scanning, survey experiments, behavioural games, face-emotion coding, eye-tracking, as well as big data analysis, to explore the mind–brain–action nexus in political context. However, the premise of this presentation is that neuropolitics, as political theory, should be treated with a healthy dose of skepticism, and confronted with a series of questions: How does neuropolitics account for the fact that human beings are embedded in historico-political contexts? Is it not diverting attention from historically specific structures of power and focusing on the science of brain reproducing these very structures? On the other hand, if neuropolitics succeed in explaining differences across ethnic, racial, and gender groups, will not the explanation legitimize these differences and existing inequalities, and even reinforce inequalities? How does neuropolitics explain the political

change? What are the normative and policy implications of neuropolitics? If there are no such implications, then what is the relevance of this approach? On the other hand, if neuropolitics has policy implications, can neuropolitics scholars assure that the uses of their findings, based on the alleged bedrock features of the human brain, will not have side-effects such as reinforcing the relations of power, discrimination, inequality or manipulation? By addressing these and other questions, the presentation will try to map the limits (and, sometimes, the dangers) of neuropolitics.