



IASH Guest Lectures

The **IASH** is a research institute of the Philosophical-Historical Faculty of the University of Bern. It offers PhD students support and professional training and envisions an international orientation of academic research.

We cordially invite you to a public lecture by philosopher Dr Neil Gascoigne. All welcome.

Thursday, 30 May 2013, 18.15 – 19.45
University of Bern, UniS, Schanzeneckstrasse 1
Room A301

Tacit Knowledge; or: Do we Know more than we can Tell?

Dr Neil Gascoigne, University of London (response by Prof. Dr. Claus Beisbart)

We live in an age of explicit rules and guidelines; of aims and objectives; of benchmarks and performance indicators, standardized tests and league-tables. Systematization abounds in the criteria specifying good practice and the delivery of public services; in the charters that outline rights and responsibilities in both civic society and in society's microcosms. A university's once unspecified expectation that its students will attend lectures and prepare work is often now formalised in contracts, and in return students are informed of the explicit 'outcomes' of their 'learning activities'. Such reforms aim to replace a tacit or implicit understanding of practices with something explicit and codified. They are expressions of what Max Weber calls "intellectualisation": the sentiment that one can "in principle, master all things by calculation". In *The Craftsman* Richard Sennett identifies as longstanding this suspicion of merely implicitly understood standards, and emphasizes how a "Platonic" suspicion of 'embedded' knowledge expresses itself in the move to obviate dependence on the skilful judgements of individuals by formalising the knowledge and making explicit the rules that experts purportedly employ in making them. But the question this raises is the following: Can tacit or implicit forms of judgment or of understanding be 'cleansed' of subjective factors and rendered objective only insofar as they are codifiable in a principle or set of principles? Or is there a form of knowledge or judgement which is not codifiable (cannot be "put into words") but which is still genuinely answerable to features of the world? What seems to be required here is the concept of a form of knowing that is not as Weber would say "calculable", but which answers nevertheless to a genuine standard of correctness. Let's call this "tacit knowledge".

30 May / 1 June: International Workshop

Dr Neil Gascoigne will also join us for a workshop organized by Tanja Klankert (Graduate School at IASH) and Andreas Heise (GSL, University of Lucerne) with Prof. Dr. Markus Wild (University of Fribourg) who will chair the event:

Understanding Beyond the Linguistic Dogma – Metaphors, Embodiment and Performance as Non-Propositional Knowledge?

Everyone is welcome but please register with Tanja Klankert. E-mail: tanja.klankert@iash.unibe.ch

Further information is to be found on the IASH website, see News (Dr Neil Gascoigne) or Veranstaltungen (Programmangebot, towards the end of the page): www.iash.unibe.ch

Neil Gascoigne trained as an Engineer and retrained as a Kremlinologist before taking his MA (surrealism and psychoanalysis) and PhD (naturalism and transcendental philosophy) in the Department of History and Philosophy of Science at Cambridge University. His research interests are historical-conceptual in nature and include metaphilosophy, pragmatism and scepticism. His publications include the books *Scepticism* (2003), Richard Rorty: *Liberalism, Irony and the Ends of Philosophy* (2008) and (with Tim Thornton) *Tacit Knowledge* (2013). He is currently guest editor of an issue of the journal *Humanities* on the 'Legacy of Richard Rorty' and is working on a book on scepticism. He has been head of philosophy at Royal Holloway, University of London since 2008.

Claus Beisbart is Professor of Philosophy of Science at the University of Bern.

In cooperation with the **Graduate School of Humanities and Social Sciences GSL**

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