

Reading Seminar (060 124)  
in the Philosophy of the Social Sciences and Legal Philosophy:  
**Naturalistic Explanations of Social and Legal Normativity**

Instructors:

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Norms stand out in the empirical world in that they seem to be constituted by a property that other empirical phenomena lack: normativity. It is, however, far from obvious what kind of entities norms are and how they relate to the social world. Most fundamental perhaps is the disagreement between—as one might call them—normativists and naturalists about norms. For naturalists, norms and normativity are phenomena of the causal world like any other social facts, whereas for normativists genuine normativity belong to a distinctly non-causal realm of reasons. In this dispute, naturalistic approaches are often criticized for being overly reductionist and unable to account for the mental and social complexities of normative practices. But to judge on the merits of such criticisms, a basic knowledge of naturalistic accounts of normativity is required.

The aim of the seminar is to provide an introduction and overview of such accounts. It will explore the grounds, forms, and varieties of naturalistic approaches to normativity with an emphasis on social and legal norms. The focuses will be on theories currently under debate, drawing on different social scientific and philosophical paradigms like cognitive science, evolutionary psychology, institutional economics, game theory, speech-act theory, planning theory and critical realism.

The seminar will be held in English. It is open to students of law, philosophy and other disciplines.

Law students: Grundlagenschein and Fremdsprachenschein

Philosophy and other disciplines: Master Students: 6 ECTS, Bachelor Students: 4 ECTS

All course materials will be provided on Moodle.

Assignments: (1) short comments on the reading assignments of at least eight of the twelve sessions, to be handed in ex-ante, OR (2) paper due after the seminar, both about 3.000 and 5.000 words in total.

The course will be held as a 3-day blockseminar on Mai 29th, Mai 30th, and June 1st, 13:30–20:00, at Ruhr-Universität, Law Faculty, BS 3/02 (Blue Square)

See [www.rub.de/clbc](http://www.rub.de/clbc) for the seminar program.