

# PHILOSOPHY MEETS COGNITIVE SCIENCE



Stiftung  
Mercator



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Research Group

Organization and contact: Prof. Dr. Markus Werning.

Website: [www.rub.de/phil-lang](http://www.rub.de/phil-lang).

Venue: Thursday, 15 November 2012, 16-18, room GA 04/187.

All interested students, scientists, and scholars are cordially invited to the following talk of the research colloquium:

## Steffen Steinert, MA

(LMU München)

## The Philosophy and Neuroscience of Humor

*A neurophilosopher walks into a bar ... ouch!*

Everybody loves a good joke. Humor is important and one of the most important aspects of life – whether people laugh about stories with unexpected but hilarious outcomes, jokes or the misfortune of others (the so-called *Schadenfreude*).

Despite the undeniable importance of humor, it tends to be sidelined by *philosophers*. A *thorough* philosophical examination of the phenomenon is still in its infancy. However, other sciences have made considerable progress on this topic. It has been shown that humor helps to cope with negative stimuli, reduces stress and anxiety; a sense of humor may even raise the individuals social status and facilitate pair bonding. Recently, scientists started to identify the neural correlates of laughter and humor appreciation. Neuroscientists investigated the neural dynamics of joke appreciation and amusement. Nevertheless, *philosophical* attempts so far ignored neuroscientific work. Therefore, it is about time that philosophy starts to take humor seriously and *integrates* neuroscientific research and philosophical theorizing.

The talk will introduce the current mainstream theories of humor, such as Incongruity Theories, Cognitive and Linguistic-Semantic Theories. Neuroscientific results and Cognitive research on Humor will be reviewed. Possible implications for a neurophilosophy of humor are presented.