

## Block Reading Seminar in Experimental Philosophy of Law: Intentionality, Causation, and Criminal Responsibility

Summer Term 2019

Instructors:

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Experimental philosophy is a recent interdisciplinary movement making use of empirical data to address philosophical questions. While experimental philosophers have examined many questions in different domains of philosophy such as epistemology, philosophy of language, philosophy of religion and moral philosophy, the application of this unique methodology to legal philosophy and legal theory has been very rare so far. During this seminar we aim to fill this void by addressing one potential way of applying experimental philosophy methods and findings to legal theory. Namely, we will focus on the practical question of how recent empirical findings in experimental philosophy and moral psychology can inform traditional problems and debates in the theory of criminal law.

In particular, we will discuss current research on factors involved in people's judgments of intentional action, causation, and responsibility (blame and punishment) in close relationship to how these concepts have been traditionally understood in the criminal law. For instance, some of the recent findings in experimental philosophy show that people are more likely to evaluate actions as intentional if they result in morally bad side-effects, and they are more keen to perceive actions as causal if they are preceded by norm violations. Are the folk concepts of intentional action and causation similar or different than their legal counterparts? What are the implications of potential discrepancies between lay people's moral intuitions and the views of the legal system?

During our seminar we aim to address these questions. We will read experimental papers reporting different effects in moral psychology, discuss explanations of these effects in terms of underlying cognitive processes and mechanisms, and consider potential implications of these research findings for the legal system.

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

All course materials will be provided on Moodle.

*Requirements:*

There are no requirements to take this course. Some basic knowledge of criminal law is welcome.

*Schedule:*

Introductory session with general information about the seminar: **Monday, April 1, 10:00, GD 2/354**

The course will be held as a 4-day block seminar:

1<sup>st</sup> block, sessions 1-2: Monday, April 15, 14:00 -17:15, GD 1/107

2<sup>nd</sup> block, sessions 3-5: Monday, May 13, 12:30-17:30, GD 1/107

3<sup>rd</sup> block, sessions 6-9: Monday, June 3, 11:30-18:00, GD 1/107

4<sup>th</sup> block, sessions 10-12: Monday, June 24, 12:30-17:30, GD 1/107

Note that all starting times are sine tempore.

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

*Assignment:*

(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.

*Available certificates and credit points:*

*Law students:*

Grundlagenschein gem. § 39 Abs. 3 Nr. 2 SPO,

Promotionsschein gem. § 4 Abs. 2 PromO

Fremdsprachenschein gem. § 7 Abs. 1 Nr. 3 JAG

*Students of philosophy and other disciplines:*

Master Students: 6 ECTS

Bachelor Students: 4 ECTS

*Registration:*

To sign up for the course, please contact the chair's secretariat (GD 2/371, Tel. 0234-3229640, email: [ls-magen@rub.de](mailto:ls-magen@rub.de)) or attend the first introductory session.