

Programme

Winter Semester (lecture period): 12 October 2026 – 13 February 2027

Human Abilities Centre, Schönhauser Allee 10-11, 10119 Berlin

List admin: Sebastian Großmann human-abilities@hu-berlin.de

Colloquium

Open to all people on the colloquium list, paper (pre-read)

humanabilities_colloquium@lists.hu-berlin.de

Tuesdays from 02:15 to 03:45 PM, Room 4.17, tea/coffee afterwards

17 November	Colin Chamberlain
08 December	Jeffrey McDonough
19 January	Marco Fasoli
09 February	Elanor Taylor

Talks

Open to all people on the colloquium list

26 October	Julia Staffel (University of Colorado Boulder): “Open-Mindedness or Willful Ignorance? The Perils of Assigning Act Probabilities” 02:15–03:45 PM, Room 4.17
30 November	Lynda Gaudemard (Aix Marseille Université) 02:15–03:45 PM, Room 4.17

Reading Groups

Open to all members of the group

1 Imperfect Agency: Suárez to Leibniz/Kant

Organised by Colin Chamberlain and Leonardo Moauro

Every other Tuesday from 10:15 AM to 11:45 AM (CET), Room 4.17

Starting on 20 October 2026

humanabilities_readinggroup1@lists.hu-berlin.de

This reading group focuses on questions surrounding the limits of our agential capacities (e.g., the influence of value judgments on the will and whether faulty action results from limits of understanding; what kind(s) of causality such relations of influence involve, and how these are related to issues of normativity; the question of intellectual determinism; and whether divine agency should offer the paradigm case of human agency, or whether the two are entirely different).

2 The Ability to Imagine

Organised by Diana Craciun and Esben Rasmussen

Every other Tuesday from 10:15 AM to 11:45 AM (CET), Room 4.17

Starting on 27 October 2026

humanabilities_readinggroup2@lists.hu-berlin.de

Is the imagination a skill? How does it relate to other cognitive capacities, such as sense perception and intellection? When, and for what purpose, do we need it, and is it a skill that can be trained? What is at stake if we do train it and become better imaginers? These are some of the questions we would like to explore in this reading group, which combines contemporary and historical perspectives. While the imagination has often been portrayed as the faculty of error and illusion *per excellence*, we shall approach it from a more constructive point of view – asking whether it can be an intellectual virtue, such that we may have a duty to cultivate it, whether it has assertoric force, whether there are particular limitations on the use of imagination and, finally, whether imagination must be constrained by reality to be epistemically potent.

3 Abilities, Trying and Effort

Organised by Nathaniel Baron-Schmitt, Sanja Dembić and Lea Hugo

Every other Thursday from 02:15 PM to 03:45 PM (CET), Room 4.17

Starting on 29 October 2026

humanabilities_readinggroup3@lists.hu-berlin.de

This reading group explores the nature of trying and effort and their relationship to intentional action and our abilities to act. Are trying and effort essential components of agency? How does trying relate to intentions and actions? What is the relation between “trying hard” and exerting effort? We will discuss recent work in the philosophy of action and philosophy of law that addresses these and related questions.

4 Human Abilities and AI Technologies

Organised by Marco Fasoli and Beate Krickel

Every other Thursday from 02:15 PM to 03:45 PM (CET), Room 4.17

Starting on 3 December 2026

humanabilities_readinggroup4@lists.hu-berlin.de

This reading group aims to explore and discuss key papers addressing a central question: *How do AI technologies impact human cognitive abilities?* Do these technologies enhance or diminish our capabilities, or is there a better way to frame the problem? We will pay particular attention to cognitive shifts and examine the topic through the lens of the Extended Mind Thesis.

Workshops

Open to all people on the colloquium list

Representing the Unconditioned

Organised by Tobias Rosefeldt and Mario Schärli

19–20 October 2026 (Mon/Tue)

Humboldt-Universität zu Berlin

To register or for further details, please contact Myriam Stihl: myriam.stihl@hu-berlin.de

Spinoza and Imaginative Ideas

Organised by Leonardo Moauro, Domenica Romagni and Oliver Toth

24–25 October 2026 (Sat/Sun)

Human Abilities Centre, Room 4.17

To register or for further details, please contact Leonardo Moauro:

leonardo.moauro@hu-berlin.de

On Inference as an Ability: Epistemology and Normativity of Reasoning

Organised by Marcos Silva

16–18 March 2027 (Tue/Wed/Thu)

Human Abilities Centre, Room 4.17

To register or for further details, please contact Marcos Silva: marcossilvarj@gmail.com