

Call for Papers

Conference: “Rule-following: Between Nature and Culture”

October 12-15, 2023

The conference will be held *in person* in Hradec Králové, Czechia

The topic and aim of the conference:

Human activities are subject to many types of *rules* that structure human societies. Broadly speaking, rules are “in force” in a society or group when its members tend to promote some ways of doing things as desirable or appropriate and tend to repress other ways as harmful or inappropriate. The ability to establish and *follow rules* in this general sense allows humans to maintain complex practices and institutions, including linguistic, economic, moral, legal and political institutions. In other words, it underlies unique forms of cooperation, social organization and culture that characterize the human form of life. This is a feature of human life that is studied by philosophers, cognitive scientists, psychologists, and sociologists. But as the philosophers who investigate the nature of rule-following indicate, rules and rule-following are far from transparent.

As a result, both philosophers and scientists are interested in the phenomenon of rules and rule-following. Because the phenomenon is complex and difficult to analyze, different focuses and approaches have been taken. Some theories have focused on quite abstract, often conceptual issues concerning the nature and constitution of rules, even raising the issue of how rule-following is so much as possible. Other theorists have systematically studied specific aspects of the phenomenon, including evolutionary, ethological, sociological, cultural and psychological ones.

Despite the thematic interconnection of these inquiries, their impact outside of their original domains of investigation has long been limited. But times change, and there is nowadays a growing recognition that our understanding the phenomenon of rule-following (its nature, precursors, evolution, cognitive basis, development, etc.) requires not only the division, but also the integration of our theoretical work: one that combines conceptual analysis with theory building, modelling and empirical research. The aim of this conference is to provide the platform for such analysis and synthesis, allowing researchers from different theoretical traditions to share and discuss their ideas in an interdisciplinary spirit.

We especially invite and welcome contributions on the following topical issues:

- How do philosophical theories of rule-following fare in the light of empirical research?
- What are rules and how are they constituted?
- What kind of behavioral and cognitive abilities are involved in, or required for, rule-following?
- How do human beings develop into normative creatures?
- What is the role and influence of rule-governed practices on the human form of life, both at the collective and at the individual level?
- What kind of evolutionary considerations may shed light on the emergence and resilience of rule-governed practices and institutions, and the corresponding abilities or motivations?
- Can non-human animals (particularly primates) establish and follow rules of sorts, so that we may learn from their case something about the origin and nature of our own capacities?

REQUIREMENTS:

Please send us an abstract (300-500 words, prepared for blind review) of a paper suitable for a 30-minute presentation (with an additional 15 minutes discussion) to:

rules.nature.culture@gmail.com

Deadline for abstracts: May 26, 2023

Notification of acceptance: July 26, 2023

Keynote Speakers:

Philip Pettit
Kristin Andrews
Dorit Bar-On
Jonathan Birch

Special online guest: Michael Tomasselo

Conference Fee:

Participants - 70 EUR
Visitors - 35 EUR

CONFERENCE WEBSITE: <http://expro.peregrin.cz/conf2.html>

Program committee:

Jaroslav Peregrin (University of Hradec Králové and Czech Academy of Sciences)

Ladislav Koreň (University of Hradec Králové)

Mark Risjord (Emory University)

Ulf Hlobil (Concordia University)

Matěj Drobňák (Radboud University Nijmegen, University of Hradec Králové)

Stefanie Dach (University of West Bohemia)

Organization committee: Vojtěch Zachník, Petr Matějčíček, Zuzana Sixtová

Contact:

Vojtěch Zachník

zachnvo1@uhk.cz

Petr Matějčíček

petr.matejicek.1@uhk.cz

This conference is organized by the Department of Philosophy and Social Sciences, Faculty of Philosophy, University of Hradec Králové, as part of the project:

Inferentialism Naturalized: Norms, Meanings and Reasons in the Natural World

Information about the project can be found at: <http://expro.peregrin.cz/>