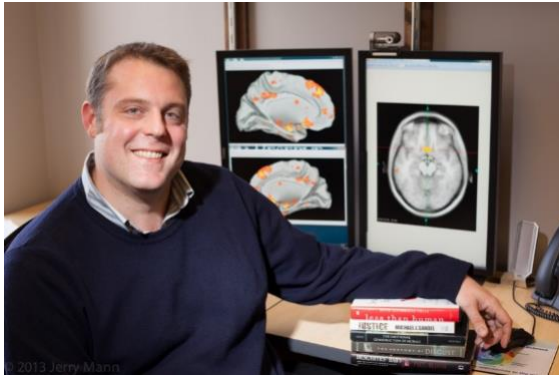


# What can neuroscience do for philosophy?

**4pm Thurs May 6<sup>th</sup> 2021** Zoom Meeting ID: 919 0958 0172 Passcode: 141277

<https://cwru.zoom.us/j/91909580172?pwd=MUpYMDVkJZnpEM2tOYXNrN3U3cVkyUT09>



The seminar will explore work-in-progress by Tony Jack, Associate Professor of Philosophy. Tony is currently working on a book, “The mind’s essential tension,” based on his 20 years of experience doing cutting-edge neuroscience research. The book integrates neuroscience with work in psychology and philosophy in a way that has potential to inform how we think about and do philosophy.

*Following an initial presentation, the seminar will focus on discussing implications for philosophy. Consider how you might answer one or more of the following questions:*

## **Big questions in Analytic philosophy**

1. Can science solve the problem of **consciousness**? If so, why hasn’t there been better progress? If not, why does human experience evade scientific description?
2. Is a scientific (i.e. determinism/quantum randomness) world view consistent with the notions of **free will** and moral responsibility that we seem to rely upon to act in the world?
3. What should a theory of ethical action look like: **deontological** or **consequentialist**? How should we respond to apparent conflicts between these distinct approaches to ethics?
4. How important is **coherence**? Might our ways of understanding the world be incommensurable? If there are inconsistencies and/or gaps in human understanding, how should philosophy respond?
5. Is **akrasia** possible i.e. can you believe action A is better than B while doing B instead of A?

## **Analytic vs Continental Philosophy**

*Philosopher Simon Critchley claims Analytic philosophy tends to scientism (and thus shallowness about the human condition), whereas Continental philosophy tends to obscurantism (i.e. incomprehensible).*

6. Does Critchley’s caricature ring true? Would you sketch the **two traditions** in a different way?
7. Is Analytic philosophy guilty of **scientism**? If so, what examples do you find most compelling? If not, do you think there are any limits to science?
8. Is Continental philosophy guilty of **obscurantism**? If so, why do you think this is a consistent feature of so many continental schools? If not, please come prepared to provide an accessible explanation of phenomenology, existentialism and deconstructionism ;)
9. Do you agree with Dewey that all philosophy is (or should be) philosophy of education? What are the limits of ‘book’ learning? Should philosophy put more emphasis on **experiential learning**?