

Programa oficial de postgrau en Comunicació lingüística i mediació multilingüe  
Universitat Pompeu Fabra

**Conferència inaugural del curs de postgrau**

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**25 de setembre, a les 12:30h**  
**Auditori, Edifici Rambla, Universitat Pompeu Fabra**  
Rambla 30-32, Barcelona

**Beliefs, Values and Action**

This talk is a response to two related problems, one epistemic and the other pragmatic. The epistemic problem is that of the fragmentation of academic knowledge and inquiry, arising from conflicts in the norms (and practices) of admissible assumptions, admissible grounds, admissible reasoning, and appropriate criteria of evaluation, as well as purposes and their priorities. These conflicts often impede the integration of knowledge and informed opinions across academic pursuits such as physical vs. cultural anthropology, positivistic vs. interpretive sociology, and generative linguistics vs. sociolinguistics. The pragmatic problem is that of the *socio-religious conflicts* between human groups, arising at least partly from conflicts of values, as well as from either religious or secular faith, or ideological commitments.

In search for solutions to both these problems, I have been pursuing a research program and an educational project. The research program seeks to develop an epistemological infrastructure for academic inquiry that helps us understand the construction, justification and critical evaluation of beliefs (knowledge, opinions, and faith), values, and action. Its goal is to provide an integrated understanding of the grounds, assumptions, reasoning, and criteria of evaluation across varied academic terrains.

Based on the results of the research program, the educational project seeks to (i) develop a curriculum and to help students develop the capacity to engage in inquiry and critical thinking in the mathematical, scientific, and aesthetic domains, and (ii) extend these modes of intellectual functioning to the domains of moral values and religious faith. In the talk, I will outline and illustrate these two pursuits, and make a plea to collectively

- (a) develop an integrated model of academic knowledge and inquiry that functions as an infrastructure for multi-disciplinary research, to connect academic pursuits that are currently difficult to integrate, and
- (b) use that structure to extend the mindset and habits of mind associated with academic inquiry to questions of moral value and religious faith in the context of secondary and tertiary education.

Activitat finançada pel programa de mobilitat de professorat del Ministerio de Educación y Ciencia (2008).