

Faculty of Philosophy
James Martin Advanced Research Seminar Programme (TT09)

Venue: James Martin 21st Century School, Seminar Room 1, Old Indian Institute, Broad Street

Date: 7th Week ~ Wednesday 10 June, 3.00 – 5.00 pm

Speaker: Dr Davinia Talbot (Institute for Ethics, History and Philosophy of Medicine, University of Münster)

Title: “None of my business’. Why physicians are wrong in abstaining from (neuro-)enhancement matters”

Abstract:

The emergence of safe and effective medication and technical devices in medicine has stimulated a debate on the ethical admissibility and desirability of an improvement of normal human functioning, especially with medical means. The modification of cognition and emotion in particular (so-called neuroenhancement) has been a hotspot in the discussion and various aspects from fairness to authenticity have been taken into account. Even though physicians as the gatekeepers to these medical means are in a crucial position, they seem reluctant to openly administer neuro-enhancement. An important question is whether the often-cited ‘medical ethos’ or the adherence to ‘the proper goals of medicine’ rightfully prevent doctors from engaging in neuroenhancement.

Examining the validity and applicability of ethical reservations that seem to exist for doctors engaging in enhancement matters, I want to show that most of these reservations go astray.