

Reading Group on Theories of Matter
~ Summer Semester 2019 ~

**Structures of Materiality:
Roger Bacon and the Conundrum of Prime Matter**

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How does alteration happen? How can processes of alteration be supposed between entities which are not in contact? And what is that thing we call ‘matter’? The reading group will engage with theories of causation elaborated by one of the most original and curious medieval thinkers: Roger Bacon (ca. 1214-1292). The group will read Bacon’s *On the Multiplication of Species (De multiplicatione specierum)*, a fascinating work in which Bacon discussed his theory of causal irradiation of essential contents by (almost) every corporeal and incorporeal being. In an intriguing intertwining of ontology, psychology and epistemology, Bacon’s doctrine of the multiplication of species attempts at providing a unitary theory mostly grounded on the interaction among physical entities. One pivotal aspect, though, appears to be crucially problematic on this regard: the exceptionality of prime matter. Examination and discussion of the theoretical implications of Bacon’s theory of matter and materiality will display both originality and ingenuity of Bacon’s attempt at establishing a positive ground in which natural processes can lay.

The reading group will be in English. The reading session will be regularly followed by a talk/lecture given by international guests. Due to unforeseen academic reasons, the reading group will not meet regularly. An updated version of the meeting calendar is available online. For any inquiry or question, students are encouraged to contact Dr Nicola Polloni.

Updated programme available at: <https://potestas-essendi.com/reading-groups/structures-of-materiality/>

ARTICULATION OF THE READING GROUP

The reading group will meet periodically on Friday at 11am, sine tempore. Throughout the semester, special lectures and talks from invited guests will take place after the reading group session, usually at 2.30pm. Schedule will be updated regularly in this webpage.

NB: Due to major academic reasons, the reading group will not follow a regular calendar! Further changes may be adopted in agreement with the participants.

MEETINGS CALENDAR

Friday, 12 April 2019, Room 231

11am: Introduction to Roger Bacon’s ontology and epistemology.

Friday, 26 April 2019, Room 231

11 am: Reading of *De multiplicatione specierum*, pt. 1

2.30pm: Lecture by LYDIA SCHUMACHER (King’s College London)

Friday, 3 May 2019, Room 231

11 am: Reading of *De multiplicatione specierum*, pt. 1

2.30pm: Lecture by YAEL KEDAR (Tel Hai College)

Friday, 10 May 2019, Room 231

11am: Reading of *De multiplicatione specierum*, pt. 1

2.30pm: Lecture by DAVID CORY (University of Notre Dame)

Friday, 17 May 2019, Room 231

11am: Reading of *De multiplicatione specierum*, pt. 1

2.30pm: TBC

Tuesday, 11 June 2019, Room 231

11pm: Reading of *De multiplicatione specierum*, pt. 1

2.30pm: Lecture by GIOULI KOROBILI (Humboldt Universität zu Berlin)

Friday, 14 June 2019, Room 231

11am: Reading of *De multiplicatione specierum*, pt. 2

2.30pm: Lecture by MEAGAN ALLEN (Indiana University Bloomington)

Friday, 21 June 2019, Room 231

11am: Reading of *De multiplicatione specierum*, pt. 2

2.30pm: Lecture by MATTIA CIPRIANI (Freie Universität Berlin)

Friday, 5 July 2019, Room 231

11am: Reading of *De multiplicatione specierum*, pt. 2

2.30pm: Lecture by KONSTANTINOS STEFOU (Ionian University)

Friday, 12 July 2019, Room 231

11am: Final remarks on Roger Bacon's theories of matter and species.

2.30pm: Lecture by NICOLA POLLONI (Humboldt Universität zu Berlin)

EDITIONS OF TEXTS

Roger Bacon, *De multiplicatione specierum*, ed. Lindberg, *Roger Bacon's Philosophy of Nature*, Oxford 1983. Additional material will be provided during the reading group.

A selected and updated bibliography on Roger Bacon can be found online at:

<https://rogeriusbacon.com/bibliography/studies/>

VENUE

Institut für Philosophie, Humboldt Universität zu Berlin, Invalidenstrasse 110, Room 231.