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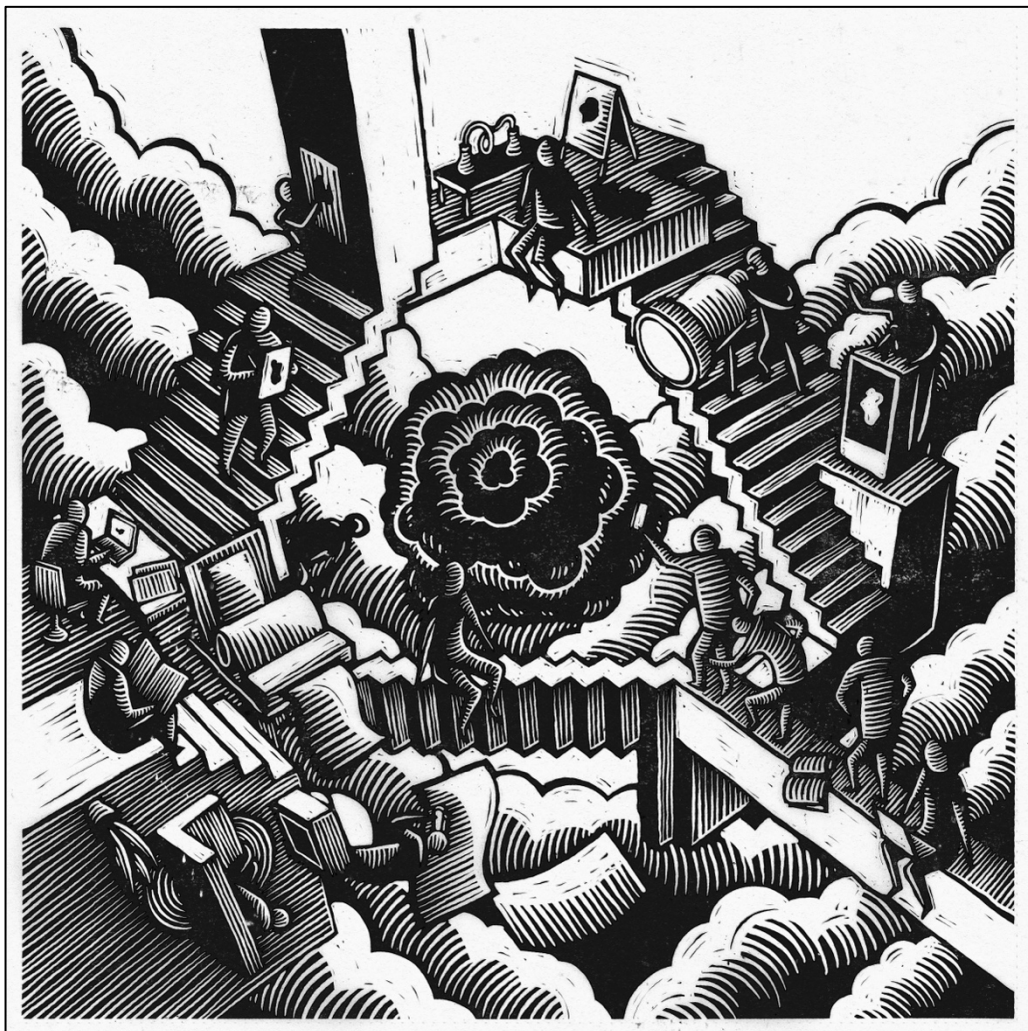
Research School of
Behavioural and Cognitive Neurosciences
presents

Nothing But The Truth

Conference Programme
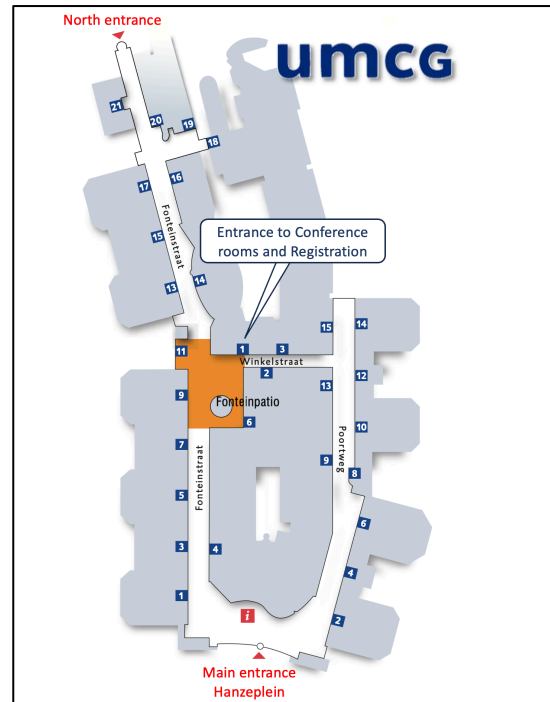
December 7th and 8th, 2023

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1. Overview of Locations

Nothing But The Truth takes place at the University Medical Centre Groningen (UMCG). It can be accessed easily from the centre of Groningen and is in close distance from the central train station.

Registration will take place at the Fonteinpatio, inside the UMCG. All plenary talks will be held in the Blauwe zaal, which can be accessed via the Fonteinpatio. Workshop locations (marked on the programme, alongside each workshop title) can be accessed from the Blauwe zaal.

The UMCG is situated to the east of the Groningen city centre.

It can be accessed on foot, bicycle, or bus (with bus stops on both the Hanzeplein and Oostersingel sides).

The Fonteinpatio, where registration, coffee breaks, and lunch breaks will take place, is situated in the middle of the UMCG.

Access to the Fonteinpatio is possible either via the Main Entrance on the Hanzeplein, or the North Entrance, by the Oostersingel.

The Blauwe zaal, where all plenary talks take place, is accessible via the Fonteinpatio.

The locations of the workshops are near the Blauwe zaal.

2. Programme at a glance

Thursday, December 7th

Registration will be open from 8:30 until 9:00 at the Fonteinpatio

Plenary Session 1 (9:00 – 10:45) *Blauwe zaal*	
9:00	Welcome
9:15 – 9:45	Inkeri Koskinen: Unifying the Notion of Objectivity
9:45 – 10:15	Stephan Lewandowsky: Demagoguery, Technology, and Cognition: Addressing the Threats to Democracy
10:15– 10:45	Questions and Discussion

10:45 – 11:15	*Coffee Break*

Workshop Session 1 (11:15 – 12:30)

Jan-Willem Mantel & Mariëtte Oosterwegel **Thanks for the good question!** *Lokaal 17*	Jan van Boeckel **Communicating and drawing with empathic regard** *W2.260*	Mohammad Gharesifard & Niels Alberts **How to foster citizen science at UG/UMCG?** *Ronde zaal*	Gloria Araiza **Debunking unrealistic robotics expectations** *Lokaal 18*	Don van Ravenzwaaij **Two worked examples of making data open while respecting participants' privacy** *Lokaal 16*

12:30 – 13:30	*Lunch break*

Workshop Session 2 (13:30 – 14:45)

Jan van Boeckel **Communicating and drawing with empathic regard** *W2.270*	Welmoed Bekius & Marlon de Jong **How identifiable is your data?** *Ronde zaal*	George Marshall **Communicating climate change: Psychological challenges and practical guidance** *Lokaal 16*	Gloria Araiza **Debunking unrealistic robotics expectations** *Lokaal 18*

14:45 – 15:15	*Coffee Break*

Plenary Session 2 (15:15 – 17:00) *Blauwe zaal*	
15:15 – 15:45	Anne Ruth Mackor: Science in Times of Fake News
15:45 – 16:15	Marion Koopmans: Science in the public eye: The origin of SARS-COV-2
16:15– 16:45	Questions and Discussion
16:45– 17:00	Closing

Friday, December 8th

Plenary Session 3 (9:00 – 10:45) *Blauwe zaal*

9:00 – 9:15	Welcome
9:15 – 9:45	Mikkel Gerken: Scientific Recommendations
9:15 – 9:45	Karen Douglas: The Psychology of Conspiracy Theories
10:15– 10:45	Questions and Discussion

10:45 – 11:15	*Coffee Break*

Workshop Session 3 (11:15 – 12:30)

Julian Rengers & Jenifer Villahermosa **Pitch? Perfect! Communication Skills for an Engaging Academic Presentation** *W2.260*	Leah Henderson **Trust and skepticism about science** *Lokaal 17*	Lisa Herzog **Building trust in science through science communication** *Lokaal 16*	Jan-Willem Mantel & Mariëtte Oosterwegel **Thanks for the good question!** *Lokaal 18*	Valeria Cernei **Fostering Epistemic Justice in Academia** *Ronde zaal*

12:30 – 13:30	*Lunch break*

Workshop Session 4 (13:30 – 14:45)

Julian Rengers & Jenifer Villahermosa **Pitch? Perfect! Communication Skills for an Engaging Academic Presentation** *W2.260/W2.270*	Job de Grefte **At the foundations of science** *Lokaal 17*	Agustin De Julio Ena Vojvodic **Science in policy and politics: determining possibilities** *Ronde zaal*	Martin Majernik **Exploring Psychedelic-Inspired Medicines and Digital Diagnostics for Mental Health Disorders** *Lokaal 16*	Vladimir Macko **Navigating the Deluge: Transforming Scientific Publishing and Knowledge Organization in the Digital Age** *Lokaal 18*

14:45 – 15:15	*Coffee Break*

Plenary Session 4 (15:15 – 17:00) *Blauwe zaal*

15:15 – 15:45	Sarahanne Field: A Reflection on the Science Reform Movement
15:45 – 16:15	George Marshall: The Shifting Margins of Climate Truth
16:15– 16:45	Questions and Discussion
16:45– 17:00	Closing

3. Plenary Talks – Abstracts

Inkeri Koskinen

Title: Unifying the Notion of Objectivity

Abstract: Several philosophers of science have recently attempted to bring some unity to the notion of objectivity. Others have argued that it cannot be unified. Both types of attempts typically start from the observation that there seem to be several distinct meanings of objectivity, and continue either by arguing that these meanings have more in common than has yet been recognised, or by giving an analysis of the ineliminable conceptual heterogeneity. I will compare and contrast these arguments, focusing on the aims of the different accounts. Finally, I defend my view of what a satisfactory account of objectivity should offer.

Stephan Lewandowsky

Title: Demagoguery, Technology, and Cognition: Addressing the Threats to Democracy

Abstract: Democracy is in retreat or under pressure worldwide. Even in countries with strong democracies, polarization can be increasingly toxic, and the public sphere is awash in misinformation and conspiracy theories. Many commentators have blamed social media and the lack of platform governance for these concerning trends, whereas others have celebrated the Internet as a tool for liberation, with each of those positions being buttressed by supporting evidence. One way to resolve this paradox is by identifying some of the pressure points that arise between the architecture of human cognition and the online information landscape, and how these pressure points can be used by populist demagogues to undermine democracy. I survey some of those pressure points, focusing on the attention economy and the algorithms that curate our news feeds, and I show how they allow politicians to replace evidence-based discourse with often emotive belief-speaking that is less sensitive to evidence and accountability. I discuss a spectrum of possible solutions.

Anne Ruth Mackor

Title: Science in Times of Fake News

Abstract: Trust in science is under pressure and even actively undermined. The latter happens especially on social media, which often operate in a way that is at odds with the ideal-typical mode of judgment and decision-making in science: quick, without factchecking, biased, emotional, anonymous. Social media is also the domain of troll armies and bots that deliberately flood social media with garbage: fake news and hate speech. In my talk I will analyze this development and discuss the question how scientists might deal with conspiracy thinkers, 'alternative facts' and 'truth'.

Marion Koopmans

Title: Science in the public eye: The origin of SARS-COV-2

Abstract: The first sign of the problem that would turn out to evolve into the COVID19 pandemic was a message on social media, shared by a financial journal in Wuhan, China. It mentioned an alert from the local public health service about an unusual cluster of cases of pneumonia, in people that seemed to have visited a certain market. Ten days later, the cause of this cluster was identified, again information shared through social media. The city and province of Wuhan launched a massive outbreak response, and managed to contain the outbreak locally, although by then the virus had spread globally resulting in the COVID19 pandemic. Although the origin of the virus initially was considered most likely zoonotic, in line with a history of emerging disease outbreaks resulting from spillovers, the possibility of a laboratory origin was mentioned as early as February, through US political sources. Almost 4 years later, the question of the origin remains inconclusive, although animal origin still is considered most likely by a majority of emerging disease researchers. But how does one find definitive proof? What does it take to proof the virus was NOT of laboratory origin? I will review the studies done to date, the arguments that have lead to labelling the zoonotic origin as most likely, and discuss outstanding questions.

Mikkel Gerken

Title: Scientific Recommendations

Abstract: Much research and public debate about the role of science in society concerns factual science communication from scientific experts to laypersons. In contrast, scientific recommendations have not received as much attention. This is perhaps understandable as scientific recommendations are overtly normative and, therefore, raise a number of thorny questions. Whereas it may be seen as irrational for laypersons to reject factual science communication about how things are, it seems more reasonable to question scientific recommendations about what we should do. After all, scientists are not politically legitimate decision-makers and questions about what to do are normative ones. Moreover, it is unclear how scientists may provide evidence for such normative claims. So, it is natural to see scientists as a group who should "stay in their lane" and only offer factual science communication. Yet, scientific recommendations are an indispensable part of the decision-procedures of societies that pursue the ideals of liberal democracy. For example, scientific recommendations are often formally solicited from science-policy hybrid groups. So, as a society, we face the conundrum that we need scientific recommendations although they appear to be politically illegitimate in many cases. The talk will draw on philosophy of science to address this conundrum.

Karen Douglas

Title: The Psychology of Conspiracy Theories

Abstract: Conspiracy theories are abundant in social and political discourse and have serious consequences for individuals, groups and societies. However, psychological scientists have only started paying them close attention in the past 20 years. In this talk, I will underscore the importance of conspiracy theories as a topic of research in psychology. I will overview the literature on the psychology of conspiracy theories, using examples from my own research. I will showcase what psychologists know about why people believe in conspiracy theories, what their consequences are, and why people share them.

Sarahanne Field

Title: Changing Truth with a Changing Narrative, or not? A Reflection on the Science Reform Movement

Abstract: The science reform movement holds much promise, and in the past decade it has been gathering momentum as more people join the effort to improve scientific practice, inference, and dissemination. As this 'reform' narrative develops, a new perspective on truth in science is being cultivated. This raises important issues, however, about what priorities and needs this new truth reflects. So far, we see special focus on quantitative methods and tools, which raises the question of what work is being done to improve diversity and inclusion in the movement? For instance, will the science reform movement seek to change systemic issues of sexism and racism, or are these shortcomings translated into the movement from the traditional scientific community that the movement emerges from without critical engagement from reformers? This talk aims to raise some important points for reform activists to consider, surrounding whose voices are heard in the reform movement, and how without critical engagement the reform movement risks failing in its attempt to change how the scientific system pursues 'truth'.

George Marshall

Title: The Shifting Margins of Climate Truth

Abstract: Climate scientists still argue that a lack of concern about climate change is due to a lack of information, and that once people understand the evidence, they will support climate action. George Marshall will argue that in reality people make sense of climate change though competing narratives that define the boundaries of what is, or is not, socially acceptable to acknowledge and believe- indeed, he suggests, this assumption of rational decision making is itself a socially constructed belief. Outlining the processes by which these narratives are formed, he suggests that the greatest challenge in coming years will be defending collaborative action against the more compelling narratives of blame, distraction and disavowal.

4. Workshop Descriptions and Overview

W1: Fostering Epistemic Justice in Academia
Name: Valeria Cernei

Abstract: Epistemic injustice is the discrimination of individuals in their capacity as knowers, and addressing it requires recognizing the systemic biases and power imbalances that influence knowledge production, dissemination, and evaluation. This workshop aims to familiarize participants with epistemic justice and its manifestations in academia and equip them with the knowledge and tools necessary to create a more epistemically just academic environment.

W2: Science in Policy and Politics: Determining Possibilities
Name: Agustin De Julio & Ena Vojvodic

Abstract: In two parts, this workshop will reflect on the different roles science can take on when interacting with society. Part 1 will survey these roles in the case of gas extraction in Groningen, and in Part 2 workshop participants will be encouraged to inhabit these roles, arguing different points about current issues such as energy transition, war in Europe, and pandemic.

W3: Two Worked Examples of Making Data Open while Respecting Participants' Privacy
Name: Don van Ravenzwaaij

Abstract: Data sharing offers clear merits to science as it leads to less redundancy, more efficiency, and more transparency, yet this may be in tension with data privacy guidelines and regulations. This workshop provides two worked examples of how to share your data while also adhering to privacy considerations.

W4: Exploring Psychedelic-Inspired Medicines and Digital Diagnostics for Mental Health Disorders
Name: Martin Majernik

Abstract: This talk delves into the vital intersection of truth in science and effective communication, focusing specifically on the transformative potential of psychedelic medicine in the treatment of mental disorders. Topics include the therapeutic potential of psychedelic compounds to the use of advanced digital tools in diagnosing and monitoring mental health conditions, and their implications for patient care and our general understanding of altered states of consciousness.

W5: Building Trust in Science Through Science Communication

Name: Lisa Herzog

Abstract: This interactive workshop provides an introduction to the philosophical and scientific discussion about trust in science and some of the challenges and pitfalls that scientists can encounter when they try to bring their "truths" to citizens who claim to have very different "truths." Based on these theoretical reflections about the role of scientists in society, it offers, secondly, the opportunity to learn some basic principles of science communication and to try out some "best practices" by applying them to one's own research.

W6: At the Foundations of Science

Name: Job de Grefte

Abstract: We should be careful that we are not taking scientific methodology for granted. Just because something has worked in the past, does not mean it will continue to work in the future. In this interactive workshop, we will try to explicate and scrutinize some of the most fundamental assumptions of our own disciplines to identify the strong and weak spots in the foundations of science.

W7: How Identifiable is your Data?

Name: Welmoed Bekius & Marlon de Jong

Abstract: As a researcher, you are responsible for protecting the privacy of your data subjects. For this reason, the principle of data minimisation (GDPR art. 5(1c)) should be leading in the design of your research project. This workshop will outline how to implement important data minimisation practices.

W8: Thanks for the Good Question!

Name: Jan-Willem Mantel & Mariëtte Oosterwegel

Abstract: But can you help your audience in coming up with such questions? In the workshop we'll review three ways in which you possibly can. We'll experiment with two of these ways, and we'll also discuss what you could do, in certain contexts, to elicit good rather than insinuating questions.

W9: How to Foster Citizen Science at UG/UMCG?

Name: Mohammad Gharesifard & Niels Alberts

Abstract: Recognition of citizen science as an approach to support EU Policies, financial support by national organizations such as NWO, establishment of initiatives like the Network of citizen science practitioners in the Netherlands (CS-NL), and the recent establishment of the European Citizen Science Academy are just a few examples of efforts at the EU and national levels to further advance the field of citizen science. The aim of this workshop is to explore the possibilities to advance citizen science across the UG/UMCG.

W10: Pitch? Perfect! Communication Skills for an Engaging Academic Presentation

Name: Julian Rengers & Jenifer Villahermosa

Abstract: In today's era characterized by an overwhelming surge of 'alternative facts' and 'fake news,' the effective presentation of research findings has become increasingly crucial for scholars aiming to connect with diverse audiences. Outfitted with newfound skills and techniques, participants will leave this workshop better equipped to confidently and convincingly present their research, making a lasting impact on diverse audiences and advancing the exchange of knowledge beyond academic boundaries.

W11: Navigating the Deluge: Transforming Scientific Publishing and Knowledge Organization in the Digital Age

Name: Vladimir Macko

Abstract: This workshop highlights the exponential growth of research output, which has led to an overwhelming burden on researchers, institutions, and knowledge seekers alike. Join us on a journey through the challenges and opportunities at the crossroads of science, technology, and information dissemination, and discover how the adoption of digital solutions can usher in a new era of scientific discovery, making research more efficient, transparent, and impactful.

W12: Trust and skepticism about science

Name: Leah Henderson

Abstract: What makes people trust science and scientists? And what makes them skeptical? Why is it the case that skepticism about science is often accompanied by conspiracy theorising? This workshop will present empirical work on the factors that influence trust in science, the origins of science skepticism and conspiracy theorising. This will be combined with philosophical reflections on what makes for more robust public trust in science.

W13: Debunking Unrealistic Robotics Expectations

Name: Gloria Araiza

Abstract: Movies, media, and pop culture have fostered unrealistic expectations about the capabilities and limitations of robots. These misconceptions not only influence public perception but also impact funding, policy decisions, and the direction of research and development in robotics. Join us to discuss together how to bridge the gap between fiction and reality in the world of robotics.

W14: Communicating and Drawing with Empathic Regard

Name: Jan van Boeckel

Abstract: This workshop is, at its core, a basic exercise in how we communicate and how we receive 'truth', in how we calibrate in-between, with consideration, to best meet the needs of the person on the receiving end. One person describes, the other draws. The describer makes an effort to convey to the other what the natural form is in its essence. For the drawer, key is to attend carefully to what is shared and being able to indicate when and how more precise assistance might be needed.

W15: Communicating Climate Change: Psychological Challenges and Practical Guidance

Name: George Marshall

Abstract: Drawing on the international evidence base and 25 years of field work we will explore why people resist accepting the reality of the crisis and a practical framework for engaging all audiences, including governments, the general public, and family.