Research options available for topic A

Research topics a) and b) offered by every Doctoral Course involved in UNIPhD are frameworks within which every applicant has to present an original research project in collaboration with a Supervisor at the University of Padua.

Potential Supervisors at Unipd have proposed the following detailed research options, which are related to the research topic. They are offered as a guideline and should facilitate your contact with potential Supervisors. Supervisors’ e-mail is specified in every research option table. You are welcome to contact them directly.

Note that this research option list is not at all exhaustive and, within the topic you have chosen, you are free to propose a different research project.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Doctoral Course</th>
<th>PHILOSOPHY</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Macro-area</td>
<td>Humanities</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Department name</td>
<td>Department of Philosophy, Sociology, Education and Applied Psychology</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Research topic A**

The natural/artificial distinction

In the philosophical literature it is sometimes assumed that it is possible to divide the domain of concrete objects into natural and artificial ones. Such assumption strongly derives from our intuitions on material objects. These intuitions are well expressed in natural language and have, as an extension, the distinction between artifact kinds and natural kinds. The project aims to analyse artifact kinds and/or natural kinds from a metaphysical and/or a semantical point of view.

**Link to the UNIPhD Call (Academic Year 2022/2023)**

[https://www.unipd.it/en/uniphd](https://www.unipd.it/en/uniphd)

**Latest Update**

11.01.2022

**#Number of available Research Options**

2

*Scroll down to see all the Research Options*
# Research Option Description

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Doctoral Course</th>
<th>Philosophy</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Department name</td>
<td>Department of Philosophy, Sociology, Education and Applied Psychology (FISPPA)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Research topic A</td>
<td>The Natural/Artificial distinction</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Research option</td>
<td>On the Metaphysics of Natural Objects and Artifacts and of their Kinds</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
| Supervisor            | Supervisor: Massimiliano CARRARA, massimiliano.carrara@unipd.it  
                         Research Group: Marzia SOAVI; Gabriele TOMASI |
| Webpage               | Institutional webpage of the supervisor:  
                         A29BDFDC619  
                         Personal webpage of the supervisor:  
                         https://sites.google.com/fisppa.it/massimilianocarrara/ |
| Context of the research activity and objectives | The metaphysical claim that it is possible to divide the domain of concrete objects into natural and artificial ones is usually taken for granted while discussing natural and artificial kinds: there is a deep metaphysical divide between natural kinds, qua natural essences, and artifactual kinds. Specifically, in the metaphysical tradition it has been argued that (a) whereas the origin of an artifact originates in the intentions of an agent, a natural entity originates in from something like itself and (b) whereas an artifact needs an external cause both to move and to persist, a natural entity has in itself both the principle of movement and the principle of persistence. (a) and (b) are not without controversy. Aim of the project is to analyse the current metaphysical debate on the existence and nature of artifacts and natural entities and to develop an original proposal on the metaphysics of natural and artifactual kinds. The expected results are original insights in the areas covered by the research activity, the writing of a dissertation thesis and the submission (and possibly the publication) of articles in competent international reviews in the areas of philosophy and/or semantics. |
| Infrastructures       | Libraries of the Humanities hub (Philosophy, Literary Studies, Linguistics, Education and Performing Arts Studies, and others) |
| Skills and competencies for the development of the activity | The candidate should be proficient either in analytic metaphysics or in semantics. This competence should be clearly inferable from either the candidate’s study background and/or their published works. |
| Training offer        | Basics of Scientific Writings  
                         PhD Course teaching activities in Analytic Philosophy  
                         BoBoPa (Bologna/Boon/Padova) research group and seminars (https://bobopa.wordpress.com)  
                         Other seminars, workshops, and lectures proposed by the Philosophy Doctorate Course |
| Possible Secondments  | • Institut de philosophie - Université de Neuchâtel, Neuchâtel  
                         • Institute of Logic, Language, and Information (ILLC) – University of Amsterdam, Amsterdam  
                         • Istituto di Filosofia e USI - Università della Svizzera Italiana, Lugano  
                         • Université Côte d’Azur Nice - Laboratoire Bases, Corpus, Langage (BCL) - CNRS, Nice  
                         • Department of Philosophy - University of Vancouver, Vancouver |
- Department of Philosophy, Nanjing University, Nanjing
- Renmin University of China, Pecking
- Departent of Philosophy and Antropology, Universidade de Santiago de Compostela, Santiago de Compostela
- Department de philosophie - Université de Genève, Genève
# Research Option Description

**Doctoral Course**  
Philosophy

**Department name**  
Department of Philosophy, Sociology, Education and Applied Psychology (FISPPA)

**Research topic**  
A  The Natural/Artificial distinction

**Research option**  
Semantics of Natural and Artifactual Kind Terms

**Supervisor**  
Supervisor: Massimiliano CARRARA, massimiliano.carrara@unipd.it  
Research Group: Vittorio MORATO; Giuseppe Mario SPOLAORE; Cecilia POLETTI

**Context of the research activity and objectives**  
What kind of references (if any) do terms for artifacts, such as “chair,” “pencil,” “television,” and so on, have? Hilary Putnam controversially suggested that they are semantically on a par with natural kind terms, that is terms for substances and species, like “water,” “tiger,” “gold,” and so on. Such a suggestion gave rise to an ongoing debate between directly referential and descriptivist theorists. Typically, the dispute revolves around establishing whether artifactual kind terms are directly referential expressions. To this aim, it is common to thoroughly examine their inferential behaviour in various kinds of linguistic contexts. However, other semantic considerations might be relevant as well. The objectives of the research activity are to investigate semantic topics connected to the debate, and to explore semantic tools and notions that might be applied to the semantics of natural and artifactual kind terms. The topics relevant to the activity include (but are not exhausted by) the semantics of (hyper-)intensional contexts, lexical semantics, the semantics of general terms, the distinction between semantic and encyclopedic knowledge. The expected results are original insights in the areas covered by the research activity, the writing of a dissertation thesis and the submission (and possibly the publication) of articles in competent international reviews in the areas of philosophy and/or semantics.

**Webpage**  
Personal webpage of the supervisor: https://sites.google.com/fisppa.it/massimilianocarrara/

**Infrastructures**  
Libraries of the Humanities hub (Philosophy, Literary Studies, Linguistics, Education and Performing Arts Studies, and others)

**Skills and competencies for the development of the activity**  
The candidate should be proficient either in analytic metaphysics or (formal or lexical) semantics. This competence should be clearly inferrible from either the candidate’s study background and/or their published works.

**Training offer**  
Basics of Scientific Writings  
PhD Course teaching activities in Analytic Philosophy  
BoBoPa (Bologna/Boon/Padova) research group and seminars (https://bobopa.wordpress.com)  
Other seminars, workshops, and lectures proposed by the Philosophy Doctorate Course

**Possible Secondments**  
- Institut de philosophie - Université de Neuchâtel, Neuchâtel  
- Institute of Logic, Language, and Information (ILLC) – University of Amsterdam, Amsterdam  
- Istituto di Filosofia e USI - Università della Svizzera Italiana, Lugano
• Université Côte d’Azur Nice - Laboratoire Bases, Corpus, Langage (BCL) - CNRS, Nice
• Department of Philosophy - University of Vancouver, Vancouver
• Department of Philosophy, Nanjing University, Nanjing
• Renmin University of China, Pecking
• Departent of Philosophy and Antropology, Universidade de Santiago de Compostela, Santiago de Compostela
• Department de philosophie - Université de Genève, Genève
• Laboratoire Cognition, Langues, Langage, Ergonomie (CLLE), CNRS, Toulouse
• Institut für Philosophie, Universität Bonn, Bonn