



30th Vienna Circle Lecture

Flavia Padovani

Flavia Padovani is associate professor of philosophy and member of the Center for Science, Technology, and Society at Drexel University (Philadelphia). Her research addresses issues in both history of philosophy of science, and general philosophy of science, especially focusing on the interplay between science and philosophy in the early twentieth century and how this interplay has influenced the birth and the destiny of philosophy of science to the present day.

She has published several articles and book chapters, and co-edited various volumes in history and philosophy of science broadly construed. She is currently co-editing the first *Handbook of the History and Philosophy of Science* with *Ádám T. Tuboly* (Routledge, 2024).

Abstract

Recent literature in philosophy of science has seen a revived interest in constitutive principles, that is, the idea that some principles play a foundational, constitutive role within the scientific framework in which they operate. Although there are several interpretations of these principles, their common trait is that they are contingent and yet they must be assumed as preconditions of certain epistemic activities or empirical statements. On a view that is attracting increasing attention, the way science represents phenomena is the result of a dynamic process of constitution, in which these principles not only frame the relevant target features within the space of available possibilities but are also subject to and shaped by constraints provided by experience. In this talk, I will focus on two main interpretative strands of this philosophical debate and make sense of the contingency and constraint emerging from these interpretations. I will conclude my talk with some reflections on this revival, in terms of historical epistemology.

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Constitutive Principles in Science: Between Contingency and Constraint

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Alte Kapelle
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