

Colloqui della Classe di Scienze

Anno Accademico 2017/2018

Sala Stemmi | Palazzo della Carovana
Scuola Normale Superiore
Piazza dei Cavalieri, 7 - PISA

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ore 15.00

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Consciousness: from theory to bedside

ABSTRACT:

We normally assess another individual's level of consciousness based on her/his ability to interact with the surrounding environment. However, we know that conscious experience can be entirely generated within the brain in the absence of any interaction with the external world; this happens almost every night while we dream. For this reason, consciousness may go undetected in brain-injured patients who are unable to communicate. A recently formulated theory suggests that consciousness depends on a physical system's ability to integrate information. Today, theory-driven empirical measures allow to detect the presence of consciousness also in the brain of patients who are fully disconnected from the external world. Will theories and measures help us, one day, to understand how the jelly matter of the brain can generate the universe we dream of?

