



UNIVERSITÀ DELLA
CALABRIA

DIPARTIMENTO
DI SCIENZE POLITICHE
E SOCIALI

The body as a technical tool

First Inter-Doctoral Conference of the University of Calabria

(May-June 2024)

Call for abstracts

The profound technological transformations evident in 21st-century societies manifest their impact on the lives of individual citizens and within the intricate system of power governing democracies. This system involves actors who are also bodies in relation to their environment.

Over the preceding four decades, societal discourse has extensively contemplated the body, elevating it to a central concern from various perspectives. This reflection commenced with the reexamination of the concept and its numerous reinterpretations, facilitated by contemporary intellectual speculation on the potentials of digital reality and artificial intelligence. Even prior to these developments, bodies were entwined with actors—political, social, scientific, and media—in relation to the environment and in intercommunication.

From this standpoint, digitization, the endorsement of the networked society, and their permeation into actual society necessitate a reevaluation of the very notion of the body and the role that it, as “the first and most natural instrument of man” (Mauss 1936, p. 392), may play in contemporary society. In a society where techniques proliferate, ushering in new “[...] ways in which men, in different societies, make use, conforming to tradition, of their bodies” (ibid., p. 384), this extends from basic biological “body techniques” (e.g., resting, eating, drinking, reproducing) to movement-based techniques (walking, swimming, running, dancing) and performance-based techniques, wherein the body is employed to accomplish specific objectives (e.g., speaking).

The technique of the body can assume novel and varied meanings, measured against the art of training the human organism to conform to fashions or customs or achieve specific performances (Spain 2000).

What tools and techniques currently guide the human body in society? Is there still a necessity to adhere to tradition (in terms of gestures, rituals, and customs of movement in space) that signifies belonging to humankind? Are we at a juncture of rupture between the social and the biological, or is

this a period of technical reform, presenting an opportunity to conceive new approaches to body education? To what political, scientific, or economic ends does this lead?

The call is extended to doctoral and postdoctoral students at the University of Calabria from all disciplines who wish to propose a specific interpretation of the body as a technical tool relative to their research interests or ongoing projects. They are encouraged to explore, from diverse perspectives, the questions articulated in the abstract.

Contributions aligning with the following research directions (to be regarded as illustrative and not exhaustive) will be particularly appreciated:

- The body as a technical tool in AI development
- Body techniques in biological growth
- The body-mind unit in psychology
- The body as an entity perceivable through the senses
- Engineering applied to body mechanics
- The body in gender studies
- The body as a political, social, and conflict instrument
- The body and the market
- The human body between property and self-determination
- Techniques of the body in the service of the arts and entertainment

Abstracts and Deadline

Submissions due by **March 15, 2024**.

Abstracts should include the title of the paper, author(s) name(s), affiliation, text of up to 1700 characters (about 250 words), three keywords, and indication of disciplinary area of affiliation.

Email address for abstract submission: **convegnointerdottorale2024@unical.it**

Acceptance notices will be sent by **April 15, 2024**.

Submission of papers (maximum 25000 characters, including bibliography) or presentations must be made by **May 15, 2024**.

Participants will be informed of the final date of the Conference (scheduled for late May to June) in a subsequent communication.

It is planned to publish a collection with contributions selected for the Conference by the Department of Political and Social Sciences.

Scientific coordinators: Felice Cimatti, Francesco Raniolo, Aurelia Zucaro.