



CENTRE FOR THE STUDY OF  
MEDICINE AND THE BODY  
IN THE RENAISSANCE



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**STUDIO FIRMANO**  
PER LA STORIA DELL'ARTE MEDICA E DELLA SCIENZA

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EVENTS

# A NATURAL HISTORY OF THE SOUL

**26**  
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12.00 Noon EDT

GALENIC THEMES IN EARLY MODERN PHILOSOPHY

FABRIZIO BIGOTTI • Julius-Maximilians-Universität Würzburg

In this lecture, Fabrizio Bigotti explores the Renaissance rediscovery of Galen's anatomy and how it impacted the making of early modern philosophy. Most notably, he attributes Galen's influence to the fortune of two main texts, the *Quod animi mores* and *De Placitis Hippocratis et Platonis* in which the Greek physician discusses the relation between body and soul, mental faculties, the elemental composition of matter, and the passions of the soul. The anthropological vision laid out in these texts was sufficient to

shift the attention of early modern physicians and philosophers from the Medieval 'narrative of the body', whereby the body is seen as a text, to the organic substratum which could be cut in pieces on the anatomy table and rendered as an image. Galen himself was no longer perceived as a pious upholder of natural theology but as a materialist who denied the immortality of the soul. By challenging a traditional account that

described Renaissance Galenism only in terms of decline and fall, Fabrizio Bigotti will argue for a new assessment of Galen's legacy and the way it was innovated by his followers as well as by his critics. Among these many innovations, the notion of 'ingenuity' (*ingenium*) deserves particular attention. Hidden within this corporeal, inherent and heritable inclination, two major themes that side disquietingly with the development of modern subjectivity can be identified: the 'corporeality of the body', and the common destiny of humans and animals.