**PROGRAMME AND LECTURERS**

- **A. SGOFIO**, University of Parma, Parma, IT
- **N. MONTANO**, University of Milano, Milano, IT
- **S. MOTTA**, Universidade de Sao Paulo, Sao Paulo, BR
- **A. BARTOLOMUCCI**, University of Minnesota, Minneapolis, MN, US
- **J. THAYER**, University of California, Irvine, CA, US
- **S. SPIJKER**, Vvye Universiteit Amsterdam, Amsterdam, NL
- **S. DE BOER**, University of Groningen, Groningen, NL
- **S. REBER**, University Hospital Ulm, Ulm, DE
- **A. BARTOLOMUCCI**, University of Minnesota, Minneapolis, MN, US
- **N. MONTANO**, University of Milano, Milano, IT
- **S. GARFINKEL**, Sussex University, Brighton, UK
- **E. SHERWIN**, University College of Cork, Cork, IE
- **A. BARTOLOMUCCI**, University of Minnesota, Minneapolis, MN, US
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- **S. DE BOER**, University of Groningen, Groningen, NL
- **A. TROISI**, University of Rome Tor Vergata, Roma, IT
- **A. WALTHER**, TU Dresden, Dresden, DE
- **C. OTTAVIANI**, University La Sapienza, Roma, IT
- **E. SHERWIN**, University College of Cork, Cork, IE
- **A. BARTOLOMUCCI**, University of Minnesota, Minneapolis, MN, US
- **S. SPIJKER**, Vvye Universiteit Amsterdam, Amsterdam, NL

**PURPOSE OF THE COURSE**

There is a renewed biomedical interest in the role of social factors in mediating human disease risk. Although evolution has shaped social structures for optimal survival by favoring cooperative exchanges, social interactions are often the main source of invidious stress, which negatively impacts physical and mental health of certain individuals. Social stressors ranging from social isolation to social instability and social subordination recruit a highly conserved (neuro)biological machinery principally positioned to effectively deal with these adverse social life situations. Yet, disruptions in the fine-tuned molecular (neuro)biological machinery can lead to pathological stress responses. What goes awry in the body and brain when the response to social stress stops being a healthy reaction and starts to become a chronic illness? Why do similar social life histories make one person sick but leave another unaffected? And how can we leverage an ever-increasing understanding of the brain and behavior to design new ways to alleviate the suffering of people affected by stress-related diseases? These are long-standing questions that continue to occupy the interest of both clinical and preclinical scientists in a wide variety of disciplines. The main purpose of this Course is to provide an opportunity to learn about the most recent findings, discuss these current developments, and meet and interact with internationally distinguished researchers and scientists in this important research field.

**APPLICATIONS**

Persons wishing to attend the Course should apply writing to Professor Andrea Sgoifo, University of Parma, Parma, Italy

E-mail: andrea.sgoifo@unipr.it

**PLEASE NOTE**

Participants are expected to arrive in Erice on May 6, no later than 5 p.m.

**POETIC TOUCH**

According to legend, Erice, son of Venus and Neptune, founded a small town on top of a mountain (750 metres above sea level) more than three thousand years ago. The founder of modern history — i.e. the recording of events in a methodic and chronological sequence as they really happened without reference to mythical causes — the great Thucydides (~500 B.C.), writing about events connected with the conquest of Troy (1183 B.C.) said: "After the fall of Troy some Trojans on their exodus from the Achaei arrived in Sicily by boat and as they settled near the border with the Sicilians all together they were named Elmi: their towns were Segesta and Erice." This inspired Virgil to describe the arrival of the Trojan royal family of Anchise, by his son Enca, on the coast below Erice. Homer (~1000 B.C.), Theocritus (~300 B.C.), Polybios (~200 B.C.), Virgilio (~20 B.C.), Horace (~20 B.C.), and others have celebrated this magnificent spot in Sicily in their poems. During seven centuries (XIII-XIX) the town of Erice was under the leadership of a local oligarchy, whose wisdom assumed a long period of cultural development and economic prosperity which in turn gave rise to the many churches, monasteries and private palaces which you see today. In Erice you can admire the Castle of Venus, the Cyclopaean Walls (~800 B.C.) and the Gothic Cathedral (~1300 A.D.). Erice is at present a mixture of ancient and medieval architecture. Other masterpieces of ancient civilization are to be found in the neighborhood: at Motya (Phoenician), Segesta (Elymian), and Selinunte (Greek). On the Aegadian Islands — the theatre of the decisive naval battle of the first Punic War (264-241 B.C.) — suggestive neolithic and paleolithic vestiges are still visible: the grottoes of Favignana, the carvings and murals of Levanzo.

Splendid beaches are to be found at San Vito Lo Capo, Scopello, and Comino, and a wild and rocky coast around Monte Cofano: all at less than one hour's drive from Erice.

More information about the other activities of the "ETTORE MAJORANA" FOUNDATION AND CENTRE FOR SCIENTIFIC CULTURE can be found on the WWW at the following address: https://www.ecsm.info.it

**44th Course: SOCIAL STRESS: PSYCHOLOGICAL AND PSYCHOSOMATIC IMPLICATIONS**

**ERICE-SICILY: 6 – 11 MAY 2019**

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