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World renowned expert on sleep and consciousness presenting free public talk in BMO Auditorium

Visit by Dr. Giulio Tononi comes in advance of annual Brain Awareness Week activities

Have you ever wondered why consciousness fades with dreamless sleep, even though your brain remains active? Or, does consciousness always fade when patients become unresponsive after brain injury, during generalized seizures or under general anesthesia?

One of the world's foremost experts in sleep and consciousness, Dr. Giulio Tononi, is coming to the University of Lethbridge to present a public talk and an academic lecture on these topics and more.



“Dr. Tononi is a world leader in the field of consciousness studies, and his mathematical theory of consciousness is currently accepted as one of the most compelling explanations about consciousness,” says Dr. Majid Mohajerani, neuroscience professor and CAIP Chair in Brain Health and Dementia at the Canadian Centre for Behavioural Neuroscience. “His work on understanding how information propagates through the brain, and the role of sleep in synaptic remodelling and plasticity, is of great interest to many neuroscientists. These processes, which have been studied in humans, rodents and even fruit flies, have direct relevance to the work we do here at the U of L in understanding the function of sleep and its role in learning and memory formations. We’re thrilled he’s also able to offer a public talk and I urge everyone to take advantage of this opportunity. Having Dr. Tononi here is a rich opportunity to receive and share insights on using different scientific approaches and tools to learn more about the brain.”

Tononi received his medical degree from the University of Pisa, Italy, where he specialized in psychiatry. After serving as a medical officer in the army, he obtained a PhD in neuroscience as a fellow of the Scuola Superiore for his work on sleep regulation.

From 1990 to 2000, he was a member of The Neurosciences Institute, first in New York and then in San Diego. He is currently Professor of Psychiatry, Distinguished Professor in Consciousness Science, the David P. White Chair in Sleep Medicine at the University of Wisconsin–Madison, and the Director of the Wisconsin Institute for Sleep and Consciousness.

His free public talk, *Consciousness & Its Place in Nature*, takes place Monday, Mar. 2 at 6:30 p.m. in the U of L's BMO Auditorium, Science Commons Level 7.

Tononi will talk about his model of consciousness called Integrated Information Theory (IIT). IIT is a comprehensive theory of what consciousness is, what determines its quantity and quality, and how it emerges from causal structures such as neural networks. It examines why certain parts of the brain give rise to experience and others do not, why consciousness vanishes during slow wave sleep and seizures despite continuing neural activity, and how unconscious processes interact with conscious ones.

Tononi will then present the Harley Hotchkiss Memorial Lecture on Tuesday, Mar. 3 at 12:15 p.m. in SA8002. This academic lecture is titled *Consciousness: From Theory to Practice*.

Tononi's visit is in advance of Brain Awareness Week, Mar. 16-21, an annual opportunity for the community to come together and see what work is being done on some of today's biggest health-care challenges and how support of ongoing brain research activities can have a positive effect on the future health of our society.

To view online: <https://www.uleth.ca/unews/article/world-renowned-expert-sleep-and-consciousness-presenting-free-public-talk-bmo-auditorium>

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