The Sociology of Associations
Prof. Dr. Joost van Loon
Tuesdays, 4.00 – 5.30 pm
Kap-010

Summary of the course:
The Sociology of Associations has gained a stunning increase in popularity over the last 30 years, mainly due to the work of people associated with “Actor Network Theory” (ANT) but also – and this is perhaps less well known – because of a persistent interest amongst philosophers and cultural theorists in the work of the French philosopher Gilles Deleuze (partly together with Felix Guattari). In this course, however, we will focus mainly on ANT in conjunction with what is widely considered to be its sociological predecessor: Gabriel de Tarde’s Monadology. The central idea shared between Tarde and ANT is the strong emphasis on the “singular parts” as being more complex than the abstractions we take to be “encompassing”. That is to say, rather than assuming that the “social whole” or “social reality” or “society” needs to be understood first, before we can understand individual actions, this perspective resists all tendencies to presuppose the existence of “social forces” as explanations of particular actions and are only able to work with the empirical events of that which is being experienced.

Key Readings: