Programme

Welcome address
Michele Bugliesi
Rector
Ca’ Foscari University of Venice

Flavio Gregori
Vice-provost for Cultural Activities and Relations
Ca’ Foscari University of Venice

Introduction
Giuliana Giusti
Professor of Linguistics
Ca’ Foscari University of Venice

Ca’ Foscari Public Lecture

Virginia Valian
Distinguished Professor of Psychology
at Hunter College - CUNY
Visiting Scholar at Ca’ Foscari University of Venice

Gender inequity: what is it, why does it continue, what can we do about it?

Discussion and closing remarks

Registration is required.
For information: eventi@unive.it
Virginia Valian is Distinguished Professor of Psychology at Hunter College - CUNY and is a member of the doctoral faculties of Psychology, Linguistics, and Speech-Language-Hearing Sciences at the CUNY Graduate Center in New York City. She is currently a visiting scholar at Ca’ Foscari.

Dr Valian works in two areas. She conducts research on young children’s acquisition of syntax and on the relation between bilingualism and higher cognitive processes in adults. She is also the co-founder and director of Hunter’s Gender Equity Project, where she performs research on the reasons behind women’s slow advancement in the professions and proposes remedies for individuals and institutions. Is she the author of Why So Slow? The Advancement of Women (MIT Press), co-author, with Abigail Stewart, of An Inclusive Academy: Achieving Diversity and Excellence (MIT Press), and co-author of articles examining gender differences in colloquium speakers in universities, gender differences in awards by professional societies, and reactions to male and female presidential candidates. Dr Valian consults with institutions and organizations to improve gender equity in hiring, promotion, and recognition.

Abstract:

Women and men have different trajectories in academia - and in the professions more generally. In general, men advance faster than women. I use two interlocking concepts to explain the gender differences - gender schemas and the accumulation of advantage. Gender schemas are a type of cognitive schema; schemas are mental constructs that help us move through the world efficiently. In the case of gender, our schemas are often correct but also lead to errors in how we evaluate people’s professional competence. In brief, both men and women are likely to overrate men and underrate women. Often, the differences are small and subtle, such as ignoring a woman at a meeting. That is where the notion of the accumulation of advantage comes in. Success develops through accumulating small successes, such as examples of acknowledgment and recognition. They build in each other and compound over time, like interest on an investment. To create a fair society, we need policies and norms that will allow us to judge everyone impartially: I will discuss some examples. To create academic excellence, we need an environment that recognizes and respects merit, whether it speaks with a loud or soft voice.