

Invitation from

Professor Simon Gaskell, Principal

To the Inaugural Lecture

Truth and the Historian

Quentin Skinner

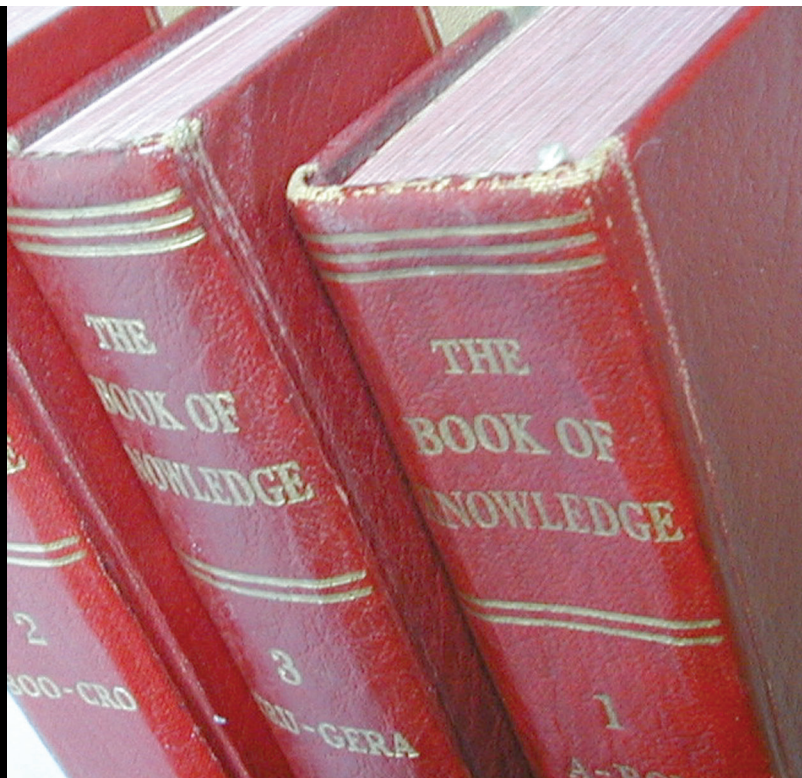
Barber Beaumont Professor of the Humanities

Wednesday 2 June 2010 at 6.30pm

Mason Lecture Theatre
Francis Bancroft Building
Queen Mary, University of London
Mile End Road
London E1 4NS

A reception will follow the lecture.

RSVP on attached card by Friday 28 May 2010.



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Please complete, detach and return the form below. Alternatively, contact the Events Office via email: events@qmul.ac.uk

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Truth and the Historian

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To be an intellectual historian is to be interested in recovering the patterns of belief that prevailed in past societies. When we study such unfamiliar systems of thought, we come upon many claims that strike us as true, but many others that appear obviously false. What role should be played in our explanations of such beliefs by our assessment of their truth or falsity? The lecture first examines a number of answers that have been offered to this conundrum, arguing that they inescapably raise the spectre of relativism. This leads to a further question with which the closing section of the lecture is concerned. Are historians professionally committed to accepting a relativistic account of moral and factual knowledge?

Quentin Skinner joined Queen Mary in 2008, having previously been at the Institute for Advanced Study at Princeton (1974-79) and at the University of Cambridge, where he was successively Professor of Political Science (1979-96) and Regius Professor of Modern History (1996-2008). He is a Fellow of many academic societies, including the British Academy, the American Academy, the Academia Europaea and the Accademia dei Lincei, and has been the recipient of honorary degrees from Athens, Chicago, Harvard, Helsinki, Oxford and other major Universities. His scholarship, which is available in twenty-five languages, has won him numerous prizes, including the Isaiah Berlin Prize of the Political Studies Association, the Lippincott Prize and the David Easton Award of the American Political Science Association, in addition to the Wolfson Prize for History in 1979 and a Balzan Prize in 2006. He is the author or co-author of more than twenty books on modern political theory and intellectual history.

Map: www.qmul.ac.uk/about/campus/mileend/index.html