3rd Annual Philosophy Graduate Conference
University of Connecticut
Oak 112
5 November 2016

All are invited to the University of Connecticut's Philosophy Graduate Conference. This year, our junior keynote is Casey Johnson (UConn), and our senior keynote is Ted Sider (Rutgers). Lunch is provided.

Graduate speakers

10am-11am: Giorgio Sbardolini (OSU), "Two-Dimensional Paradox"

Abstract: It seems natural to think that for any proposition p, it's possible that p is the object of an attitude Q. However, one way of understanding this assumption in a two-dimensional framework has consequences that are inconsistent with a principle that appears to be intuitively justified on the basis of Stalnaker's influential analysis of assertion (Stalnaker, 1978), and of extensive later work in two-dimensional semantics (Chalmers, 2005; Jackson, 2004). Solutions to this problem appear to require a careful reevaluation of the role of two-dimensionalism in our analysis of speech and thought.

11:10am-12:10pm: David Thorstad (Harvard), "Permissivism Without Tears"

Abstract: This paper gives a new construal of epistemic Permissivism. While Permissivism itself is intuitively plausible, all current formulations are committed to forms of epistemic relativism or subjective Bayesianism. These commitments narrow Permissivism's appeal and threaten to rule out Intrapersonal Permissivism from the start. I advocate Permissivism Lite as a solution to these difficulties. This formulation captures the intuitions underlying Permissivism as a challenge to dominant assumptions about the nature of evidential support. In so doing, Permissivism Lite avoids commitment to relativism or subjective Bayesianism, and is fully compatible with Intrapersonal Permissivism. Further, this move positions Permissivism as a precise alternative to imprecise credal accounts of imprecise evidence.

1pm-2pm: Matthias Jenny (MIT), "Computability Theory as a Modal Science"

Abstract: I argue that computability theory is a modal science. Due to the modal suffix '-ability' in 'computability,' this claim may seem obvious. But there are two strategies of resisting it, both of which I discuss. First, it may be argued that since the mathematical development of computability theory doesn't invoke any modal notions, computability theory itself is an amodal discipline. In response, I argue that the Turing machines invoked in the mathematical development are merely models of computation, and since models are distinct from the theories that are developed with the help of them, the modal nature computability theory isn't threatened by the amodal mathematics. Second, it may be argued that computability theory can be understood as asking about the existence of algorithms, which is an amodal question. In response, I argue that the amodal notion of an algorithm is doomed to forever remain a pretheoretical notion and therefore doesn't make for a good candidate to replace the modal notion of computability.

Keynotes

2:10pm-3:40pm: Casey Johnson (UConn), "Just Say 'No': Obligations to Voice Disagreement"

Abstract: It is uncontroversial that we sometimes have moral obligations to voice our disagreements, as when the stakes are high and a wrong course of action will be pursued. But might we sometimes also have epistemic obligations to voice disagreements? In this paper, I will argue that we sometimes do. In other words, sometimes, to be behaving as we ought, qua epistemic agents, we must not only disagree with an interlocutor who has voiced some content we take to be false, but must also testify to this disagreement. This is surprising given that norms on testimony are generally taken to be permissive, and epistemic obligations are usually taken to be negative. In this paper I will discuss some occasions in which epistemic obligations to testify may arise, and I will attempt to investigate the nature of these obligations. I'll briefly discuss the relationship between epistemic and moral norms. I'll offer an account of what it takes to discharge epistemic obligations to testify. Finally, I'll look at some accounts of epistemic obligation that might explain these obligations.

4pm-6pm: Ted Sider (Rutgers), "Asymmetric Personal Identity."

Abstract: Personal identity can hold asymmetrically: even if I will not be a later person, the later person may have been me. What makes this possible is that the relations that are criterial of personal identity - such as memory and anticipation - are asymmetric and "count in favor of personal identity from one side only". Asymmetric personal identity can be accommodated by temporal counterpart theory but not by Lewisian overlapping aggregates of person stages. The question of uncertainty in cases of personal fission (and in Everettian quantum mechanics) will also be briefly discussed