

# 2018 Minnesota Philosophical Society Conference

Saturday October 13, 8AM – 5 PM, Rochester Community and Technical College, Rochester, MN

A schedule of talks can be found below. A full, updated program (with abstracts) is available at <https://goo.gl/ZDbn1M>

The 2018 Minnesota Philosophical Society Conference and Undergraduate Conference will take place Sat. Oct 13 from 8 AM until 5 PM on the campus of Rochester Community and Technical College<sup>1</sup>.

Please contact [Brendan.Shea@rctc.edu](mailto:Brendan.Shea@rctc.edu) if you have any questions.

**There will be a \$10 fee for all non-undergraduate attendees, payable by cash or check. Please make out checks to “Minnesota Philosophical Society.” If you would like to join us for lunch (see below), a donation of \$5 is suggested.**

## Checking in and Finding Your Way Around RCTC



When you arrive at the conference, you can check in at the campus Atrium (the main entrance to RCTC), and join us for breakfast in Memorial Hall 223.

A map of RCTC can be found in the following pages. A more detailed map of campus is here: <https://secure.rctc.edu/apps/maps/>. You can find a map of RCTC's Main Campus Building (where all talks will take place) here: <https://secure.rctc.edu/apps/maps/main-building/index.html>.

## Lunch (11:30-12:20, MH 223)

We will be having a light lunch catered from the HyVee Deli. A donation of \$5 is suggested. Nearby off-campus dining options (within a 5 to 10 minute drive) for a quick lunch include.

- Brava Restaurant and Café (Ethiopian) - 1217 Marion Rd SE #500
- Chipotle - 1201 S Broadway #60
- El Carambas (Mexican) - 1503 12th St SE
- Nupa (Greek) - 412 Crossroads Dr
- Zadeo's Pizza - 1021 15th Ave SE

## Keynote Address (3:30 to 5, MH 223)

**Carl Elliott (University of Minnesota-Twin Cities), “Lonesome Whistle: Exposing Wrongdoing in Medical Research”** The keynote will take place from 3:30 to 5 PM in Memorial Hall 223. It is open to the public.

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<sup>1</sup> “RCTC is a member of the Minnesota State Colleges and Universities system, a University Center Rochester Partner, and an equal opportunity employer/educator

# Conference Schedule

8 AM-12:30 PM

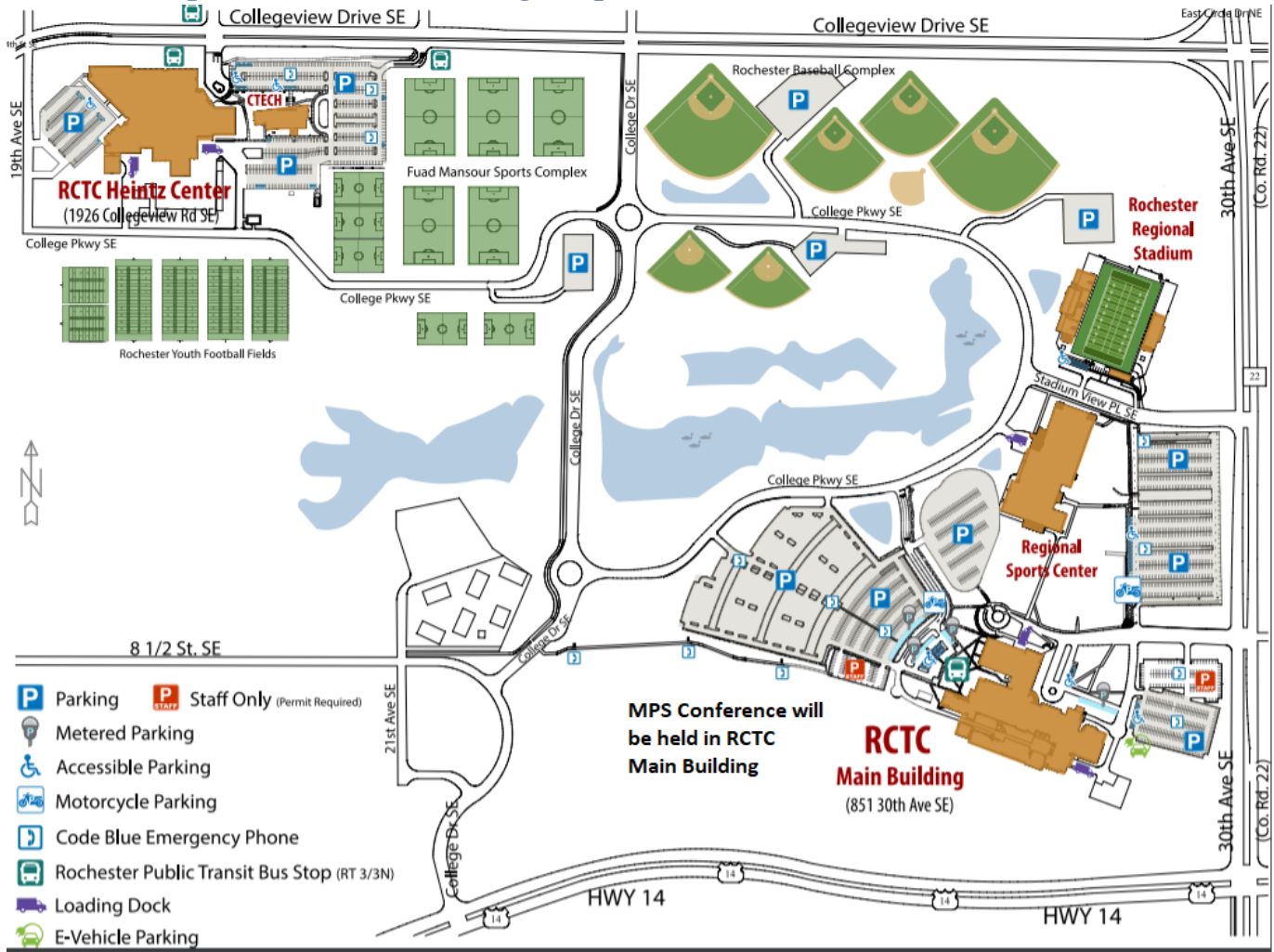
	CF 202	CF 206	HS 128	HS 131	HS 136	MH 209	MH 211
<b>8-8:30</b>	Coffee and snacks in MH 223						
<b>8:30-9:20</b>	<p>“Just what must we be tracking for our moral judgments to be true?: Prospects for moral realism”</p> <p>David Lambie (SUNY-Oswego)</p> <p>Mod: Brian Mondy</p>	<p>“Scotist Hylomorphism in Support of the Total Brain Death Criterion”</p> <p>Tyler Wittenmyer (Franciscan University of Steubenville)</p> <p>Mod: Christopher Bobier</p>	<p>“An Ontological Argument Against Agnosticism”</p> <p>Phil Kallberg</p> <p>Mod: Kristin Seemuth Whaley</p>	<p>“The Temporal Neutrality Thesis and Its Problem”</p> <p>Dong-yong Choi (University of Kansas)</p> <p><b>Mod: TBD</b></p>	<p>“Pharmaceutical Advertising and the Subtle Subversion of Patient Autonomy”</p> <p>Casey Rentmeester (Bellin College)</p> <p>Mod: Jeff Johnson</p>	<p>“What Would Wittgenstein Say About Charlie Sheen”</p> <p>Trevor Winger (UM-Duluth, U)</p> <p>Mod: Daniel Scotton</p>	<p>“What Hangs on Personhood?”</p> <p>Hrishikesh Joshi (Univ. Michigan)</p> <p>Mod: Patrick Clipsham</p>
<b>9:30-10:20</b>	OPEN	<p>“Basic Income and Human Dignity”</p> <p>Gavallan Christensen (St. Cloud, U)</p> <p>Mod: Megan Skaff</p>	<p>“Descartes, Augustine and Sankara: Their Cogito Arguments Compared”</p> <p>Richard Berg (Lakehead)</p> <p>Mod: Sikander Gilani</p>	<p>“Material Problems for Immaterialism”</p> <p>Kristin Seemuth Whaley (Graceland University)</p> <p>Mod: Jason Ford</p>	<p>“Mass Shootings and the Concept of Evil”</p> <p>Danny Medoff (Univ. of Northern Colorado, U)</p> <p>Mod: Ziv Ben-Shahar</p>	<p>“Nominalization and Interpretation”</p> <p>Jason DeWitt (UW-Milwaukee)</p> <p>Mod: Landon D. C. Elkind</p>	<p>“Teaching in the Time of Trump”</p> <p>Monica Janzen and Kristen Doneen (Anoka Ramsey)</p> <p>Mod: Jean Keller</p>
<b>10:30-11:20</b>	<p>“Defending Actualism: Open-Mindedness and Closed-Mindedness Reconceived”</p> <p>Eric Kraemer (UW-La Crosse)</p> <p>Mod: Stephen I. Wagner</p>	<p>“Assertions and their Function”</p> <p>Nick Tebben (Towson)</p> <p>Mod: Anthony Nguyen</p>	<p>“An Alternate Possibility for the Compatibility of Divine Foreknowledge and Free Will”</p> <p>Alex Cavender (St. Olaf College, U)</p> <p>Mod: Jacob Passman-Smith</p>	<p>“Infinetism and the Non-Inferential Knowledge Objection”</p> <p>Brian Pollex (UT-Austin)</p> <p><b>Mod: TBD</b></p>	<p>“Nietzsche and Lange: A Rhetorical Question on the Physiology of the Thing-in-Itself”</p> <p>William A. B. Parkhurst (Univ. South Florida)</p> <p>Mod: Casey Rentmeester</p>	<p>“The Upside-Down Gorilla: Inattentional Blindness and the Periphery of Attention”</p> <p>Jason Ford (UM-Duluth)</p> <p>Moderator: Tim O’Neill</p>	<p>“Equally Concealed: Heidegger's Metaphysics in Dark Souls”</p> <p>Daniel Scotton (Hamline, U)</p> <p>Mod: Matthew Koopman</p>
<b>11:30-12:20</b>	A light lunch will be provided in MH 223. A donation of \$5 is suggested. Off-campus dining options are provided above.						

12:30 PM – 5 PM

	CF 202	CF 206	HS 128	HS 131	HS 136	MH 209	MH 211
12:30-1:20	<p>“Catharsis and Contemplation: The Connection Between Aristotle's Poetics and Book X of the Nicomachean Ethics”</p> <p>Bjorn Flanagan (Univ. South Dakota, U)</p> <p>Mod: Alex Cavendar</p>	<p>“A Case Study in Formalizing Contingent A Priori Claims”</p> <p>Landon D. C. Elkind (Iowa)</p> <p>Mod: Aaron Kostko</p>	<p>“Inspired by Nature: Poetic Inspiration and the Daimonion in Plato's Phaedrus”</p> <p>Julian Rome (Memphis)</p> <p><b>Mod: TBD</b></p>	<p>“The Question <i>Quid Juris</i> and the Ideas of the Understanding”</p> <p>Ian McKeachie (Princeton)</p> <p>Mod: Tyler Wittenmyer</p>	<p>“Ignorance and Misconceptions: Understanding Homelessness Through a New Lens”</p> <p>Ahna Neil (St. Catherine University, U)</p> <p>Mod: Gavallan Christensen</p>	<p>“What does decision theory have to do with wanting?”</p> <p>Milo Phillips-Brown (MIT)</p> <p>Mod: Brendan Shea</p> <p><b>In Atrium 102 (ITV Conference Room)</b></p>	<p>“Identification and the Self”</p> <p>Sikander Gilani (UT-Austin)</p> <p>Mod: Nick Tebben</p>
1:30-2:20	<p>“Moral Realism and Semantic Accounts of Moral Vagueness”</p> <p>Ali Abasnezhad (LMU Munich)</p> <p>Mod: David Lambie</p>	<p>“The Role of Truth”</p> <p>Jerry Kapus (UW-Stout)</p> <p><b>Mod: TBD</b></p>	<p>“Descartes on Our Intuitive Knowledge of God”</p> <p>Stephen I. Wagner (College of St. Benedict/St. John's University)</p> <p>Mod: Ian McKeachie</p>	<p>“Plato and Freedom of Speech: Censorship protecting Truth”</p> <p>Seth Gerberding (Univ. South Dakota, U)</p> <p>Mod: Danny Medoff</p>	<p>“Desiring and Aiming for Goodness”</p> <p>Mary E Lenzi (UW-Platteville)</p> <p><b>Mod: TBA</b></p>	<p>“Distinctness as Possible difference”</p> <p>Zach Thornton (UNC - Chapel Hill)</p> <p>Mod: Jonathan Stute</p>	<p>“Blacks are Subhuman’: An Analysis of Intrinsically Racist Beliefs”</p> <p>Albert G. Urquidez (Gustavus Adolphus)</p> <p>Mod: Ashley Dressel</p>
2:30-3:20	<p>“Aquinas, Passion, and Deliberation”</p> <p>Christopher Bobier (St. Mary's)</p> <p>Mod: Richard Berg</p>	<p>OPEN</p>	<p>“Accounting for the Unity of the Human Person in St. Thomas Aquinas and Renes Descartes”</p> <p>Jonathan Stute (Holy Apostles)</p> <p>Mod: Phil Kallberg</p>	<p>“The Radical Account of Bare Plural Generics”</p> <p>Anthony Nguyen (USC)</p> <p>Mod: Jerry Kapus</p>	<p>“A Presentist Response to Special Relativity”</p> <p>Stephanie Van Fossen (Macalester, U)</p> <p>Mod: Trevor Winger</p>	<p>“Uncertainty and the Paradox of Suspense”</p> <p>Matthew Koopman (UM-Morris, U)</p> <p>Mod: Michaela Crouch</p>	<p>“Parenting and the Virtues”</p> <p>Jean Keller (College of St. Benedict/St. John's University)</p> <p>Mod: Mary E Lenzi</p>
3:30-5:00	KEYNOTE ADDRESS in MH 223: Carl Elliott, “Lonesome Whistle: Exposing Wrongdoing in Medical Research” (UM-Twin Cities)						
5-5:30	Minnesota Philosophical Society Business Meeting						

KEY: CF = Coffman Hall; HS = Health Science Building; MH = Memorial Hall; U = MPS Undergrad

# RCTC Campus and Main Building Map



MPS Conference will be held in RCTC Main Building

**RCTC Main Building**  
(851 30th Ave SE)

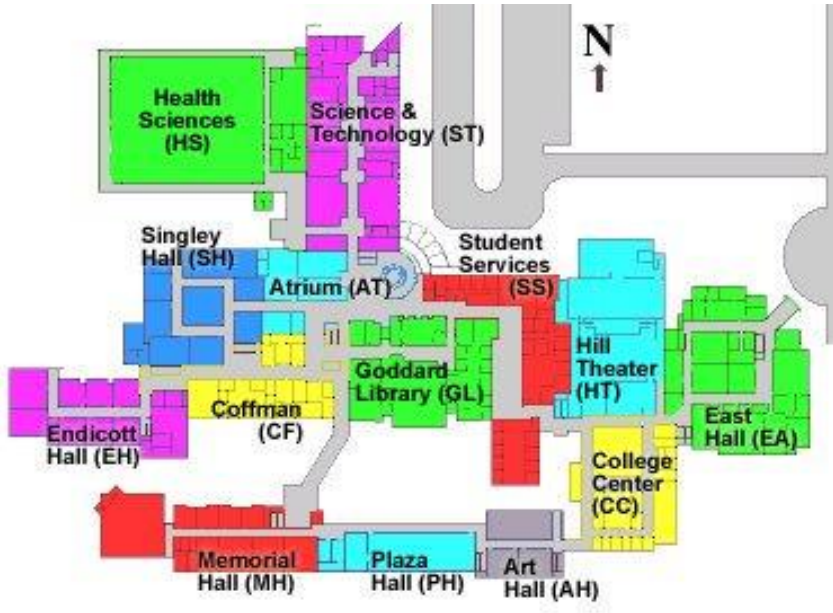


Figure 1 RCTC Main Building.

## Detailed Schedule

### 8-8:20: Registration and Welcome

Registration is in the Atrium entrance. Coffee and snacks are in MH 223.

### 8:30-9:20: Main Program

**CF 202.** David Lambie (SUNY-Oswego), “Just what must we be tracking for our moral judgments to be true?: Prospects for moral realism”, Mod: Brian Mondy

Sharon Street has argued that moral realists must hold that a tracking relationship exists between moral facts and our (true) moral judgments, but that the implausibility of such a position forces them to antirealism and the more plausible adaptive link account (ALA). The ALA says that we have a tendency to make the moral judgments we do because similar tendencies were selected for in our ancestors.<sup>[1]</sup> I argue that this creates a false dichotomy. The adaptiveness of moral judgments need not rule out moral realism and a tracking account of moral judgment need not entail moral realism. I explore the prospects for giving a tracking account and argue that such an account most plausibly leads to a sentimentalist moral pluralism like that of David Hume or Jonathan Haidt. I end with a brief discussion about the possibility of extending such an account to moral realism.

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<sup>[1]</sup> Street 2006.

**CF 206.** Tyler Wittenmyer (Franciscan University of Steubenville), “Scotist Hylomorphism in Support of the Total Brain Death Criterion”, Mod: Christopher Bobier

Empirical evidence has led to the questioning of the brain death criterion for death. This is because a brain dead patient's body remains integrated, it can still grow and age. Catholic philosophers have based arguments for and against the brain death criterion on Thomist principles of hylomorphism. Given such principles the arguments against the brain death criterion appear stronger. John Duns Scotus provides an alternate set of principles. Scotus' hylomorphism, unlike Thomas', can both defend the brain death criterion and adequately describe the facts of the body of the totally brain dead patient

**HS 128.** Phil Kallberg, “An Ontological Argument Against Agnosticism”, Mod: Kristin Seemuth Whaley

I argue that the modal ontological argument (MOA) can be used to formulate an argument against agnosticism. The MOA argues that God's possibility entails his existence and from this it can be argued that God either must exist (theism) or he must be incoherent and impossible (strong atheism). Thus agnosticism is eliminated as a tenable position with

respect to God's existence. Either God must exist or he is impossible. This may have been the point of Anselm's original ontological argument, but as Anselm did not conceive of the possibility that God might be incoherent, he ended up formulating his argument poorly. Now an agnostic could still appeal to his own epistemic position. He might argue that while there are only two options available he is unable to choose between them. The distinction between what is ontologically and what he knows about epistemically seems to allow this. But this appeal has diminishing returns. The more the agnostic learns and knows, the more capable he should be of deciding between the two options. So the only way to continually maintain this epistemic objection is to purposefully remain in ignorance.

**HS 131.** Dong-yong Choi (University of Kansas), “The Temporal Neutrality Thesis and Its Problem”, Mod: TBD

The Temporal Neutrality Thesis of prudence claims that an agent's welfare at all times has the same importance. The thesis has been widely accepted in the literature. For instance, David Brink, Tom Dougherty, Preston Greene, and Meghan Sullivan endorse the thesis. However, Derek Parfit suggests a case that shows a problem with the thesis. Suppose a patient either went through a painful surgery for ten hours or will receive the same treatment for an hour, and he does not remember whether he received the operation. I think it is prudentially permissible for the patient to prefer the past surgery, and this fact about his preference shows that an agent's past welfare is not as important as her future welfare. In this paper, I will introduce a reply that an advocate of the Temporal Neutrality Thesis might suggest to refute my objection. And then I will show that the reply is not successful.

**HS 136.** Casey Rentmeester (Bellin College), “Pharmaceutical Advertising and the Subtle Subversion of Patient Autonomy”, Mod: Jeff Johnson

Direct-to-consumer advertising (DTCA) of pharmaceuticals is ubiquitous in the United States. Beyond its effect on consumer behavior, DTCA changes the relationship between individuals and physicians. Using concepts from various thinkers from the Continental tradition, with a particular emphasis on the work of Michel Foucault, the author analyzes the power relations involved in DTCA and ultimately argues that DTCA subtly undermines the contemporary paradigm of patient autonomy while simultaneously depending upon it by treating health consumers as “dividuals,” that is, as porous entities to be manipulated. Essentially, DTCA is a matter of exploiting persons' ignorance of medicine or their vulnerability due to illness.

**MH 211.** Hrishikesh Joshi (Univ. Michigan), “What Hangs on Personhood?”, Mod: Patrick Clipsham  
Rochester Community and Technical College



Would a binary afterlife – one which involved only Heaven and Hell – be just? Theodore Sider argues: no. For, any possible criterion of determining where people go will involve treating very similar (possible) individuals very differently. Here, I argue that this point has deep and underappreciated implications for moral philosophy. The argument proceeds by analogy: many ethical theories make a sharp and practically significant distinction between persons and non-persons. Yet, just like in the binary afterlife, this involves treating very similar individuals very differently. I propose two ways out. The first is to deny that such theories are strictly speaking true, but to claim that it is practically best if people adopt them. The second is to modify such theories so as to allow for continuous variation in the scope and strength of the moral obligations arising from personhood.

8:30-9:20: MPS Undergrad

**MH 209.** Trevor Winger (UM-Duluth), “What Would Wittgenstein Say About Charlie Sheen” Mod: Daniel Scotton

9:30-10:20: Main Program

**CF 202. CANCELLED.** Justin Ivory (UM-Twin Cities), “On Bernard Williams and William James: A Shared Critique of Moral Systems”, Mod: Joseph Swenson

Bernard Williams and William James were both concerned about moral systems that prescribe obligations that, if taken seriously, unjustifiably dominate our practical deliberations. For both, the domination is unjustified because the range of considerations that should be able to enter into our practical deliberations ought to be broader than certain traditional moral systems allow. This paper is devoted to drawing out this similarity, first by explaining how Williams and James conceive of obligation, then by showing how they think those conceptions of obligation are utilized by the moral systems that they disfavor. This paper also aims to demonstrate how James’ moral thought resonates with a major figure in ethics, a result that provides some compelling reasons to revisit Jamesian ideas and consider their potential contributions to contemporary philosophical discussions of ethics.

**HS 128.** Richard Berg (Lakehead), Descartes, Augustine and Sankara: Their Cogito Arguments Compared”, Mod: Sikander Gilani

Although the cogito argument (most famously, “I think therefore I am,” in Descartes’ 1637 Discourse on Method part 4, first paragraph) tends to be uniquely and exclusively identified with Descartes as having been the one who originally composed it by way of giving the philosophical project a completely fresh start at the beginning of European modernity, in fact he is neither the inventor of this type of argument nor its only proponent. Neither is this kind of argument uniquely modern or even unique to the European

culture in which Descartes produced his versions of it. Not only did Augustine compose such arguments a good thirteen centuries before Descartes at the very beginning of the European medieval period, but Shankara did the same in the completely independent philosophical culture of India, as near as we can determine, in the early eighth century CE.

Being mindful of these historic truths, my purpose in comparing the cogito arguments of Descartes, Augustine and Sankara in what follows is not only to gain the clarity and insight into them that comparison brings, and not only to reassess their soundness in this new light, but ultimately to illuminate the cultural-intellectual circumstances that produce this kind of argument in the first place.

**HS 131.** Kristin Seemuth Whaley (Graceland University), “Material Problems for Immaterialism”, Mod: Jason Ford

Puzzles in the metaphysics of material objects, such as the problem of the many, pose threats to material object ontologies. If persons are material objects, then the problem of the many also threatens personal ontologies. In response, it has been suggested that this threat can be avoided by endorsing a personal ontology according to which persons are not material but immaterial. In this paper, I assess this suggestion by showing that some immaterialist personal ontologies do nonetheless give rise to challenges with origins in the problem of the many. I further argue that although they may be poised to solve the problem of the many, they require making further revisionary ontological concessions.

**MH 209.** Jason DeWitt (UW-Milwaukee), “Nominalization and Interpretation”, Mod: Landon D. C. Elkind

In the paper “Is It Possible to Nominalize Quantum Mechanics,” Otávio Bueno develops criteria for any successful nominalization of a scientific theory. One of these criteria comes in two parts, one of which I will call the interpretation criterion. In this paper, I will claim that the interpretation criterion proves to be problematic, as it is too under-specified within Bueno’s paper, and once specified in the most reasonable and charitable way, it asks nominalists to accomplish an impossible task.

I first explicate the background for understanding Bueno’s goal in establishing these two criteria for nominalization programs, and then describe the two criteria themselves. Next, I offer specifications of the interpretation criterion, showing why some specifications are either too weak or too strong. Then, I use the semantic and syntactic views of scientific theories to demonstrate how, even under the most reasonable and charitable specification of the interpretation criterion, it renders nominalization impossible.

**MH 211.** Monica Janzen and Kristen Doneen (Anoka Ramsey), “Teaching in the Time of Trump”

Philosophers have a long tradition of challenging political ideas or leaders. Yet how do we as philosophy teachers respond to challenging political times? One goal of philosophers as teachers is to create welcoming and inclusive classrooms where every viewpoint can be expressed and discussed. As teachers, philosophers are expected to be neutral regarding political debates within the classroom. However, in our current political milieu, we see challenges to notions of truth, varied ideas about what “facts” are, questions about whether plagiarism is acceptable, a failure to distinguish between harassment and free speech, an inability to discuss diverse beliefs using arguments, and more. In this discussion, we will first share some concrete classroom activities and strategies we have developed for tackling some of these issues within our own classes. These practical ideas help set guidelines for students within an academic classroom yet still aim to promote engagement and include all students. We will then invite other philosophy teachers to share strategies or ideas that they have developed in their own classrooms. We will engage with participants’ thoughts, questions, and experiences throughout.

9:30-10:20: [MPS Undergrad](#)

**CF 206.** Gavallan Christensen (St. Cloud), “Basic Income and Human Dignity”, Mod: Megan Skaff

**HS 136.** Danny Medoff (Univ. of Northern Colorado), “Mass Shootings and the Concept of Evil”, Mod: Ziv Ben-Shahar

10:30-11:20: [Main Program](#)

**CF 202.** Eric Kraemer (UW-La Crosse), “Defending Actualism: Open-Mindedness and Closed-Mindedness Reconceived” ,Mod: Stephen I. Wagner

In this paper I examine the account of open-and closed-mindedness put forward by Heather Battaly. Building on previous work, Battaly presents a coherent and well-argued theory of open-mindedness as, typically, an intellectual virtue and closed-mindedness as, typically, an intellectual vice. In this discussion I do the following. After presenting crucial aspects of Battaly’s account of open- and closed-mindedness, I discuss some basic assumptions upon which it is based. While noting the impressive advantages of Battaly’s account, I argue that Battaly’s account ignores two important distinctions with respect to mindedness. Using these distinctions, I propose alternative account of mindedness, a view I call “Actualism” (in opposition to Battaly’s account, which I call “Proceduralism”.) I attempt to show how advantages for Battaly’s proceduralist account can be incorporated by actualism. I conclude by examining when closed-mindedness can be an epistemic virtue and argue that the actualist alternative can accommodate these cases as well.

**CF 206.** Nick Tebben (Towson), “Assertions and their Function”, Mod: Anthony Nguyen

Assertions function to distribute information from those who occupy relatively strong epistemic positions to those who occupy relatively weak ones. They can play this role if they are governed by two norms. One norm speakers can make use of to determine which propositions to assert. The other hearers can make use of to determine which assertions to accept, and which to criticize or correct. I argue that the former norm requires that speakers follow contextually proper epistemic procedures, and the latter is a truth norm.

**HS 131.** Brian Pollex (UT-Austin), “Infinitism and the Non-Inferential Knowledge Objection”, **Mod: TBA**

Contemporary interest in Infinitism is largely due to the work of Peter Klein, who has put forward a version of Infinitism as a set of claims about the structure of epistemic justification. Although something like the view Klein discusses is mentioned in passing in Aristotle and Sextus Empiricus, Klein’s version is much more sophisticated. Infinitism relies on an unorthodox account of justification, warrant emergence, a kind of contextualism, and an account of what it is for a reason to be available to an agent. Unsurprisingly, Klein’s work has met objections on several grounds. The purpose of this paper is to evaluate and respond to Carl Ginet’s objection that infinitism fails to account for non-inferential knowledge.

In section one I will sketch Klein’s infinitism, emphasizing those aspects of the view that will form the basis of my response to Ginet. Section two will analyze two putative examples of non-inferential knowledge by Ginet and offer several infinitist responses. I conclude that Ginet’s objection fails. More importantly, Ginet’s objection reflects a misunderstanding of Klein’s view that seems to me widespread and worth dispelling. In the course of this paper I hope to show that Klein’s Infinitism, although a theory of knowledge, bears a striking resemblance to some recent theories of epistemic understanding, and is perhaps best understood as an attempt to illuminate epistemic value.

**HS 136.** William A. B. Parkhurst (Univ. South Florida), “Nietzsche and Lange: A Rhetorical Question on the Physiology of the Thing-in-Itself”, Mod: Casey Rentmeester

Nietzsche’s last line of *Beyond Good and Evil* [BGE] 15 is an indefinite rhetorical question that leaves one in aporia between idealism, crude materialism and neo-kantianism. It casts doubt on the neo-kantian view, particularly Lange’s, that phenomenal experience necessarily points beyond itself to things-in-themselves.

**MH 209.** Jason Ford (UM-Duluth), “The Upside-Down Gorilla: Inattentional Blindness and the Periphery of Attention”, Mod: TBD

I examine how changing various features of Simons and Chabris's Gorilla experiment impact the rates at which subjects report seeing the person in the gorilla suit. The results I found provide strong evidence that Dennett, Blackmore and Schwitzgebel are wrong in the lessons that they derive from the original “Gorilla Thump” experiment. They take inattentional blindness to support their view that we could be wrong about any feature of our conscious experience. What inattentional blindness actually shows the existence of a periphery of attention, which is conscious, and validates first-person phenomenology, rather than undermining it.

10:30-11:20: MPS Undergrad

**HS 128.** Alex Cavender (St. Olaf College), “An Alternate Possibility for the Compatibility of Divine Foreknowledge and Free Will”, Mod: TBD

**MH 211.** Daniel Scotton (Hamline), “Equally Concealed: Heidegger's Metaphysics in Dark Souls”, Mod: Matthew Koopman

11:30-12:20: Lunch in MH 223

12:30-1:20: Main Program

**CF 206.** Landon D. C. Elkind (Iowa), “Case Study in Formalizing Contingent A Priori Claims”, Mod: TBD

Some authors have offered examples of claims that are alleged to be contingent and a priori justifiable (Kripke, 1980; Williamson, 1986; Hawthorne, 2002; Turri, 2011). If so, this would have the interesting consequence of upending the traditional epistemological classification that weds the source of justification to the modal status of the claim, on which all and only a priori justifiable claims are necessary, and all and only a posteriori justifiable claims are contingent. I focus here on the circumstance that all the examples given by these authors have been formulated in natural language. I give various formalizations of one alleged example of a contingent a priori justifiable claim. I then argue that, on any formalization of the example in a modal logic, it is either not contingent or not a priori justifiable. I conclude that modal-logical tools should be used in advancing alleged examples of contingent, a priori justifiable claims.

**HS 128.** Julian Rome (Memphis), “Inspired by Nature: Poetic Inspiration and the Daimonion in Plato's *Phaedrus*”, Mod: Jean Keller

That Plato has Socrates taking divine inspiration seriously has been greatly debated. What has not been considered in these debates is the role that nature plays in some of these instances of divine inspiration. Yet, in the *Phaedrus*, nature is shown to be an important

element of divine inspiration. This paper argues that we should take nature's role seriously in Socrates' inspiration in the *Phaedrus*, both because an understanding of divine inspiration can explain Socrates' seemingly inconsistent views about nature, and because the element of nature as it relates to inspiration will be important in interpreting his two conflicting speeches.

**HS 131.** Ian McKeachie (Princeton), “The Question Quid Juris and the Ideas of the Understanding”, Mod: Tyler Wittenmyer

Salomon Maimon was one of the great critics of Kant's metaphysics. In his *Essay on Transcendental Philosophy*, Maimon reexamines the question quid juris from the *Critique of Pure Reason*, which has to do with the necessary connection between the a priori and the a posteriori. He argues that Kant has failed to answer this question, and he proposes his own solution, the “ideas of the understanding”. Maimon follows Kant's example in dividing the form of experience (a priori concepts) from the matter of experience (intuition); however, he further subdivides these and claims that form and matter each have their own respective formal and material components. The ideas of the understanding are proposed as the material component of formal concepts, and are meant to bridge the gap between concepts and intuition as an answer to Kant's question quid juris.

**AT 102 (ITV Room).** Milo Phillips-Brown (MIT), “What does decision theory have to do with wanting?”, Mod: Brendan Shea

Decision theory and folk psychology both purport to represent our doxastic (belief-like) and bouletic (desire- and preference-like) states. Yet they do so with different vocabularies. If these vocabularies can't be reconciled, we'd have a dubious dualism: two separate systems, based in the same phenomenon, somehow running in our heads at once. Of particular interest are two key terms of folk psychology that decision theory omits: believing and wanting. Much recent attention has been given to whether we can give, in terms of the decision-theoretic notion of credence, necessary and sufficient conditions for when you're truly said to believe (the Lockean Thesis is the claim that we can). My question is the parallel one with wanting: I give, in terms of a central decision-theoretic notion—expected value—necessary and sufficient conditions for when you're truly said to want.

**MH 211.** Sikander Gilani (UT-Austin), “Identification and the Self”, Mod: Nick Tebben

In the contemporary Anglophone literature, ‘self-consciousness’ normally encompasses the distinct phenomena of self-awareness, identification (sense of self), and other aspects of subjectivity, such as first-person perspective and the ability to intelligibly engage in self-talk. Such a concept of self-consciousness is



somewhat unnatural, making it more difficult to make the relevant conceptual distinctions when needed, and even setting the stage for equivocation. For example, the academic philosophical conversation on thought insertion sometimes overstates the philosophical puzzle raised by thought insertion, and in my view this is in part due to the failure to properly recognize the reality of identification, and to distinguish it from self-awareness and other aspects of subjectivity (e.g. Billon, 2013; Graham & Stephens, 2000).

Self-awareness, or reflexive awareness, is the awareness of phenomena within one's experience. One form of this – introspection – is what the Naiyāyikas<sup>1</sup> call *anuvyavasāya*, which they class as a form of perception (*pratyakṣa*). In Sanskrit Buddhist philosophy the term *svasaṃvedana* (self-cognition) is employed to refer to self-awareness (Williams, 1998), and has been held by many to be essential to consciousness (e.g. Strawson, 2017, p. 144; Śāntarakṣita (Williams, 1998)). In thought insertion cases the subject's self-awareness has the 'inserted' thoughts as its objects, which is what allows them to report the presence of the thoughts. The faculty of self-awareness, therefore, appears to be working correctly in such cases...

#### 12:30-1:20: MPS Undergrad

**CF 202.** Bjorn Flanagan (Univ. South Dakota, U), “Catharsis and Contemplation: The Connection Between Aristotle's Poetics and Book X of the Nicomachean Ethics”, Mod: Alex Cavendar

**HS 136.** Ahna Neil (St. Catherine University), “Ignorance and Misconceptions: Understanding Homelessness Through a New Lens”, Mod: Gavallan Christensen

#### 1:30-2:20: Main Program

**CF 202.** Ali Abasnezhad (LMU Munich), “Moral Realism and Semantic Accounts of Moral Vagueness”, Mod: David Lambie

One would think that the standard explanations of vagueness, such as semantic and epistemic explanations, should also be applicable to moral vagueness. On the other hand, it may seem that whether the standard solutions to vagueness could be applied to moral vagueness depends on one's view of morality. Nonetheless, the main proponents of the standard views of vagueness are realist, so at least moral realists should not have any problem with the standard explanations to moral vagueness, one would think. In this paper, I aim to defend this thought by rejecting the main argument against consistency moral realism and semantic account of moral vagueness presented by Miriam Schoenfield. I mainly focus on consistency of the semantic explanation of moral vagueness with moral realism and argue that both shifty and rigid semantic accounts of vagueness can successfully explain the vagueness of moral terms without committing to ontic vagueness. In particular, I argue that neither the shifty semantic account fails to

make sense of moral deliberation, nor the rigid view ultimately leads to ontic vagueness.

**CF 206.** Jerry Kapus (UW-Stout), “The Role of Truth”, Mod: TBD

What is truth? This is a natural question to ask and to aim at answering in developing a theory of truth. However, there is another question that should motivate and be the starting point for developing a theory of truth: why do we need truth? Of course, these two questions are interconnected, but initial answers to the first question typically rest on competing intuitions about truth that shape the interpretations of how truth functions in the context of other philosophical problems and that can result in question begging standoffs. To avoid the standoff between competing intuitions about truth, I suggest that we start our theorizing about truth by looking at the types of philosophical problems in which truth has played a role and getting clear on this role. In this paper, I motivate this approach to truth by examining one particular debate between alethic pluralism and deflationism and briefly analyzing the role of truth in the debate over realism.

**HS 128.** Stephen I Wagner (College of St. Benedict/St. John's University), “Descartes on Our Intuitive Knowledge of God”, Mod: Ian McKeachie

The question of whether Descartes believes we can attain intuitive knowledge of God “in this life” is significant for understanding his epistemology, his notion of clear and distinct perception, and his project of validating reason in the *Meditations*. The central text in which Descartes discusses this issue is his letter to Silhon in 1648. Commentators have agreed that Descartes is denying that we can attain intuitive knowledge of God before death. But a careful reading of the letter shows that Descartes intends just the opposite. I argue that we must distinguish two senses of “this life” in Descartes' comments—Silhon's life of the mind-body union and the life of the *Meditations* thinker. This distinction shows that the concluding experience of Meditation III should be understood as intuitive knowledge of God, and this kind of knowledge, as Descartes defines it in his letter, should be identified with clear and distinct perception.

**HS 136.** Mary E Lenzi (UW-Platteville), “Desiring and Aiming for Goodness”, Mod: Justin Ivory

Not only classical creative philosophers, namely, Plato, but also philosopher and prizewinning novelist Iris Murdoch (d. 1999) maintain that humans generally desire and aim for the good. If we adopt their view, then, creative, productive artists, scientists, and technologists likewise envision and seek to find and implement goodness through their labors, albeit differently in their methods and productive output.

They investigate, discover, and construct ways, tools, and resources to actualize their visions and hypotheticals in the world. If all goes as expected, their expertise and eventual success institute a better life, environment, and world benefiting themselves and others.

For this presentation, first I examine certain insights from Plato's dialogues to understand why he viewed the creative, productive arts, crafts, and sciences as morally unworthy and harmful. Then I explore Murdoch's insights and resolution. Instead of banning artists from the ideal moral political society, she offers substantive similarities between Plato's philosophy and her own as professional Oxford philosopher and novelist. She purports to show not only how Plato can be understood for the present age, but also offers her own useful perspectives on the role of the creative arts, sciences, and technology in living an authentically good life.

**MH 209.** Zach Thornton (UNC - Chapel Hill), "Distinctness as Possible difference", Mod: Jonathan Stute

It seems possible that there is a world that contains indiscernibles – entities that are distinct but qualitative duplicates. But if indiscernibles are possible, then the standard account of distinctness, which states that there are no entities that are qualitative duplicates, is incorrect. In this paper, I will give a new argument for the possibility of indiscernibles based on the standard metaphysical interpretation of counterfactuals. I will then give an account of distinctness that I call Distinctness as Possible Difference, which distinguishes entities by both actual, and merely possible differences. Finally, I argue that Distinctness as possible difference should be preferred over the standard account because it can explain how indiscernibles are distinct despite being qualitative duplicates using merely possible difference.

**MH 211.** Albert G. Urquidez (Gustavus Adolphus), "Blacks are Subhuman?: An Analysis of Intrinsically Racist Beliefs", Mod: Ashley Dressel

This paper analyzes beliefs that are morally objectionable and racist by virtue of their content alone. That is, it explains why intrinsically racist beliefs like "Blacks are subhuman" and "Mexicans are rapists" are always wrong and racist. Essential to my analysis is the notion of racial dehumanization. Intrinsically racist beliefs wrong by virtue of dehumanizing the racial other. This is a kind of expressive harm, the idea being that beliefs (like symbols and practices) are constituted by representational content, which, when it racially dehumanizes, consists, in part, in negative racial valuation which is communicated whenever the belief is given expression, say, in language. This analysis opens the door to a new way of understanding racism hitherto unexplored by philosophers of racism. As

such, the account of racism-as-racial-dehumanization contrasts with volitional and ideological-injustice approaches to theorizing racism. I argue that these alternatives fail to account for the expressive harms of intrinsically racist beliefs.

1:30-2:20: MPS Undergrad

**HS 131.** Seth Gerberding (Univ. South Dakota), "Plato and Freedom of Speech: Censorship protecting Truth", Mod: Danny Medoff

2:30-3:20: Main Program

**CF 202.** Christopher Bobier (St. Mary's), "Aquinas, Passion, and Deliberation", Mod: Richard Berg

What role do the passions play in practical deliberation and action? When examining Aquinas's views on the matter, scholars are divided. Some think the passions have no positive role to play in deliberation, while others disagree. The aim of this paper is to argue that Aquinas's position is more nuanced. Specifically, I argue that passions like hope and fear may positively contribute to the *act* of deliberation but not the object. Aquinas is not being inconsistent or ambiguous in claiming both that passions may help (the act of) deliberation and always hinder (the object of) deliberation. Contrary to some scholars, Aquinas is not confused or ambiguous on this matter.

**CF 206. CANCELLED.** Shane Drefcinski (UW-Platteville), "For the Most Part' Generalizations and the Practical Syllogism", Mod: John van Ingen

The scholarship that explores the connections between Aristotelian ethics and theoretical science offers many insights, in particular concerning generalizations that hold only for the most part (*hōs epi to polu*). However, in the first section of this paper I argue that the focus on theoretical science as a model for the science of ethics has some important limitations. In particular, some ethical generalizations depict ideals that, although grounded in and perfective of our human nature, are only rarely realized. These generalizations are about invariant relations that hold only for the most part, but for a reason unlike any *hōs epi to polu* generalizations in natural science.

In the second section of the paper, I discuss the role of *hōs epi to polu* generalizations in the practical syllogism. I argue that Aristotle's accounts of *sunesis* (understanding), *gnōmē* (judgment), practical perception, and moral virtue explain how the person with practical wisdom (*ho phronimos*) is able to recognize that the ethical generalization in the major premise applies to the specific case under deliberation, even though it is true only for the most part. For the *phronimos*, worries about the demonstrability of generalizations in ethics are secondary. What matters most is that the invariant relations between the terms in the practical syllogism apply *in this case* and support *doing this action*. This

practical focus compensates for the lack of strict universality and necessity in *bōs epī to polu* generalizations in ethics

**HS 128.** Jonathan Stute (Holy Apostles), “Accounting for the Unity of the Human Person in St. Thomas Aquinas and Renes Descartes”, Mod: Phil Kallberg

Some questions in philosophy never grow old, and one of these questions is the nature of the human person and the relationship between body and soul. While most contemporary debate occurs between some form of Cartesian Dualism or some form of materialism, in this paper I compare the teaching of St. Thomas Aquinas and Renes Descartes on the unity of the human person. I begin by giving an overview of Descartes’ position, and answering criticisms from his contemporaries. I also show that the typical “ghost in a machine” characterization is a misrepresentation of Descartes’ view. After this, I provide a explanation of St. Thomas’ teaching which argues that the ultimate principle of intrinsic human unity is *esse* or the act of existence, which is consistent with the Existentialist school of Thomism and is rarely given attention. My explanation allows St. Thomas to avoid the criticisms usually leveled against Descartes. In the end, I demonstrate that Descartes’ position leads to a violation of the law of non-contradiction and is therefore rendered absurd, thus showing St. Thomas’ doctrine to be the superior account of the unity of the human person.

**HS 131.** Anthony Nguyen (USC), “The Radical Account of Bare Plural Generics”, Mod: Jerry Kapus

We frequently utter bare plural generics in order to make various claims about kinds. This hodgepodge of uses presents the philosopher of language with an intimidating theoretical task: How are we to develop a unified semantic theory that can account for all of the variety in apparently literal utterances of bare plurals?

I systematically organize this phenomenon, which I call ‘the variety data’. But organizing the data is not enough. How are we to develop a unified semantics for bare plurals

In answer, I develop a novel account of bare plurals, which I call ‘the radical account’, that can explain the variety data without positing any covert quantifiers. This is a very appealing feature of the view. Standard accounts of bare plurals posit a mysterious covert quantifier, “GEN”, that is never pronounced in any natural language. On the radical view, bare plurals are semantically incomplete, failing to express propositions.

**MH 211.** Jean Keller (College of St. Benedict/St. John’s University), “Parenting and the Virtues”, Mod: TBD

Despite Aristotle’s admonition that the virtuous person must be raised from “infancy on” to take pleasure and

pain in the appropriate things, philosophers have written little about virtues within the family. This project addresses this lacuna in the literature. As a sustained effortful task in which parents are deeply invested, parenting provides a near-ideal setting for examining cultivation of the virtues.

By drawing on Sara Ruddick’s maternal goals, and through a reading of parenting memoirs, a taxonomy of parental goals, virtues, and supportive dispositions is developed.

2:30-3:20: MPS Undergrad

**HS 136.** Stephanie Van Fossen (Macalester), “A Presentist Response to Special Relativity”, Mod: Trevor Winger

**MH 209.** Matthew Koopman (UM-Morris), “Uncertainty and the Paradox of Suspense”, Mod: Michaela Crouch

Keynote Address (3:30 to 5)

**Carl Elliott (University of Minnesota-Twin Cities), “Lonesome Whistle: Exposing Wrongdoing in Medical Research”**

The keynote will take place from 3:30 to 5 PM in Memorial Hall 223. It is open to the public.