

EMU UCiP 2014

Saturday, March 08, 2014

8:30 a.m. – 9:15 a.m.

(A)

Gabi Van Wassenhonova (Eastern Michigan University)

Physician Assisted Death: A Plea for Empathy

Abstract:

For my essay, I will explain how variables such as health care, end-of-life care, medical conditions, the Hippocratic Oath and requirements and specifications for eligibility make it important to legalize physician assisted death. I will also explain why I believe, quite simply, that it is only morally right to extend this empathetic gesture to those who are suffering and in need.

9:15 a.m. – 10:00 a.m.

(A)

Alexis Liston (Gustavus Adolphus College)

Fortunately, We May Not Have Time

Abstract:

Our perceptions and beliefs about reality do not always reflect the true nature of reality. Conceptions of time are an example of this. Are hours or years inherently real and do they pass by? Nagarjuna and Dogen help us to understand that time does not exist inherently, but is a set of relations among phenomena, and that our being is in unity with time. This understanding contributes to living mindfully and compassionately, offering insight into the connectedness of all things. This view of time is supported by discoveries in physics and physical definitions of time. It also raises questions in psychology, especially concerning memory. We find that our usual conceptions of time can be useful at a conventional level, but we should understand that ultimately and fundamentally, time is empty.

10:20 a.m. – 11:05 a.m.

(A)

Louise Matsakis (William Paterson University)

Aristotle's Intellectual Virtues: An Overview & Analysis

Abstract:

The purpose of this paper is to highlight the importance of the intellectual virtues Aristotle outlines in his *Nicomachean Ethics*, which help to build his argument that knowledge and ethics are ultimately related. This paper gives a brief overview of each of the five intellectual virtues discussed in Book 6 of *Ethics*. Through understanding the roles that each intellectual virtue play in the obtaining of knowledge, it is clear that without them, it would be impossible to be good. Furthermore, the more one masters the intellectual virtues, the better they can be. This is proven by examining exactly what kind of knowledge each virtue provides, and then briefly summarizing its connection to ethics.

10:20 a.m. – 11:05 a.m.

(B)

Amy Sharma (Kent State University)

Thesis, Antithesis, and Finally, Synthesis: A New Era of Collective Understanding

Abstract:

I'm here today to help explain how the Hegelian Dialectic can be found throughout nature in infinitely various aspects. I will then explain how we are now entering the final stage within the Dialectic, as well as the implications this has for the progression of our being, including the evolution of our subconscious sensory perception. Branching off of this, I will touch on the pertinence of dream symbolism on waking life coincidences. I will also briefly explain how the theory of relativity is vital to this understanding, and how modern society interferes with it. Finally, I will conclude with explaining how the Golden Ratio is tied to the Dialectical Pattern.

11:05 a.m. – 11:50 a.m. (A)	<p>Daniel Pallies (Union College)</p> <p><i>Anger and Hatred in Aristotle's Rhetoric</i></p> <p><u>Abstract:</u></p> <p>In Aristotle's <i>Rhetoric</i>, we are told that emotions are painful or pleasurable dispositions, but we are also told explicitly that hatred is not necessarily either painful or pleasurable. In the following paper, I attempt to explain this contradiction by arguing that Aristotle's project in writing the <i>Rhetoric</i> is not to provide an expose on emotions. Instead, he provides the reader with an assortment of knowledge relevant to the art of persuasion. I begin by examining some commentators who have argued that it is possible to arrive at a looser definition of emotion, as well as other commentators who claim that hatred is in fact painful or pleasurable. I reject both of these views, and then go on to provide evidence for the claim that the <i>Rhetoric</i> is not a true treatise on the emotions. I conclude by examining and addressing a few possible objections to my view.</p>
11:05 a.m. – 11:50 a.m. (B)	<p>Michael Schersten (Eastern Michigan University)</p> <p><i>Leibniz and the Unstuck Self</i></p> <p><u>Abstract:</u></p> <p>In this paper I will investigate Leibniz's metaphysics of time and his concept of the self through an analysis of Kurt Vonnegut's novel <i>Slaughterhouse Five</i>. The novel centers on Billy Pilgrim who, midway through his life, becomes unstuck in time and perceives his experiences achronologically. While considering Leibniz's metaphysics with regard to Billy's experience can be enlightening, we will see that Vonnegut and Leibniz suffer fatal incompatibilities on personal identity and the metaphysics of time.</p>
1:05 p.m. – 1:50 p.m. (A)	<p>Eric Arbour (Eastern Michigan University)</p> <p><i>Junk Food Advertisements, An Injustice</i></p> <p><u>Abstract:</u></p> <p>Junk food advertisements instill cravings in the viewer, which is an ethical infringement as it is the responsibility of the producer to satisfy demand in consumers, not create it. Additionally, junk food advertisements suppress consumer autonomy by over-representing particular products and presenting biased information regarding those products. It then follows that any advertisements for junk food must present the product in a way that objectively represents the product in an unbiased manner while presenting this information in an environment that allows for all products to be equally represented. Regulations that would require these types of advertisements would not be an infringement on free speech but would be working to preserve free speech by ensuring equal representation of information.</p>
1:05 p.m. – 1:50 p.m. (B)	<p>Ernie Enriquez (DePaul University)</p> <p><i>An Essay on Consciousness Paralysis: The Origin, Experience, and Meaning of Daydreaming</i></p> <p><u>Abstract:</u></p> <p>This paper looks at daydreaming in an existentialist and phenomenologist view. The paper uses Maurice Merleau-Ponty and John-Paul Sartre's conclusions as a basic framework in order to draw conclusions as to the meaning of day dreaming. As the paper delves deep into day dreaming being a primal affirmation of existence, it looks at its process of pre-day dreaming, the day dream experience which will be coined as "consciousness paralysis" and post-day dreaming. This paper only begins and inquiry of what daydreaming can offer and its importance.</p>

1:50 p.m. – 2:35 p.m.
(A)

Christine Dickason (University of Mississippi)

America's Schools: Separate and Unequal

Abstract:

This paper explores how various philosophers contribute to the discussion of the racial integration of public schools. I assert that racial integration is a moral necessity, and the government should create policy to ensure the successful integration of our public schools. To support this claim, I will first expand upon the context of the issue. I will then address libertarians, who would counter my thesis with a focus on the freedom of individuals. I will use utilitarian ideas to demonstrate that racially diverse public schools maximize the good in society; however, utilitarianism fails to explain what I believe is the crux of the problem. Therefore, I will draw on theories of democracy, the individual, and justice in the writings of Dewey, Kant, and Rawls, in addition to Aristotelian conceptions of flourishing and civic virtue, to address the components of racial segregation that disrespect the inherent worth of human beings.

1:50 p.m. – 2:35 p.m.
(B)

Kevin Flynn (Grand Valley State University)

The Quest for an Illustrious Life: Foucault's Aesthetics of Existence

Abstract:

I will tackle two questions surrounding Foucault's aesthetics of existence. One: does Foucault's work on power allow for a conception of agency rich enough for this aesthetics to be possible? Two: what sorts of prescriptions could one give for, and what sort of evaluations could one perform on, another's actions, taking into account Foucault's advocacy for practices of transgression and criticism? I will also supply a pair of criteria by which one can evaluate transgressive actions.

2:55 p.m. – 3:40 p.m.
(A)

Mark Taylor (Taylor University)

Modal Skepticism and the Problem of Evil

Abstract:

The epistemic framework offered by modal skepticism has immediately relevant implications for the argument from evil. The argument from evil relies fundamentally on modal logic, reasoning from possibility and necessity. Those who would use this problem as a weapon against theism may not be aware of the radical worlds they invoke with their reasoning, but they appeal to these potentialities nonetheless. If modal skepticism holds true, access to these worlds is cut off and the argument from the existence of evil fails.

2:55 p.m. – 3:40 p.m.
(B)

Joseph McClure (University of Michigan)

Depersonalization Disorder: Skillful Coping and Evolutionary Considerations

Abstract:

In this paper, I propose a model of depersonalization disorder that centers on the account of skillful coping and expert-level intuition given by Dreyfus in his critique of purely rule-based models of cognition. I first give an overview of the phenomenon and pathology of depersonalization, and propose an evolutionary explanation for depersonalization disorder that places it firmly within the theoretical framework provided by the theory of embodied cognition. Then, I discuss Dreyfus's account of human expertise in the context of research in traditional, rule-based artificial intelligence. Finally, I present my conceptualization of depersonalization disorder as the pathological regression of individual's normally expert-level skill in coping with the environment.

3:40 p.m. – 4:25 p.m.
(A)

Rhishav Choudhury (College of Wooster)

On Free Will: Shifting from a Compatibilist Approach

Abstract:

The purpose of this paper is two-fold: the first part will focus on the reconciliation of free will with causation, which will be dealt with through the argument for compatibilism given by Daniel Dennett. The second part will concentrate on the viability of such a compatibilist position, and will be touched upon via Sam Harris' argument of the illusory nature of free will. Ultimately, I will contend that

despite the seemingly attractive nature of a compatibilist approach of free will, that free will is, in fact, an illusion.

3:40 p.m. – 4:25 p.m.
(B)

Andrew Rogers (Kansas State University)

Did Darwin Bury Paley? Response to Elliott Sober on the Organismic Design

Abstract:

In *The Design Argument* (2004), Elliot Sober makes two objections to the Organismic Design Argument as originally articulated by William Paley. Sober argues that Darwin's theory of evolution is a good alternative to God in the quest to explain the appearance of design in nature. He also argues that God is not a good explanation of design in nature unless one can provide independent evidence that God would be likely to desire to create the specific designs that we observe. I will defend the organismic design argument against these objections. I will argue that the standard of independent evidence is only a problem for theists who are committed to the "Skeptical theism" response to the problem of evil (PoE). I will also argue that the laws of biology do not predict the appearance of design and that evolution is, therefore, irrelevant to Paley's original argument.

4:45 p.m. – 5:30 p.m.
(A)

Tyler Adkins (Grand Valley State University)

Effort-Responsibility: A Reply to Robert Kane's Theory of Freedom

Abstract:

In this essay I first discuss Robert Kane's libertarian theory of freedom and responsibility and explain how it is supposed to handle the luck objection to libertarianism. Second, I argue that, although Kane's theory avoids the luck objection, it still fails to give a proper account of moral responsibility for the so called 'free' actions involved in his theory. Then, I outline the ways in which Kane might respond to this objection, using parts of his own view. To close, I demonstrate that these ways of response fail to handle my objection.

4:45 p.m. – 5:30 p.m.
(B)

Michelle Goldberg (Union College)

How Sponges and Larval Worms Confuse Aristotle

Abstract:

Among the many puzzles in *De Anima* is the relationship between phantasia and desire (epithumia). Aristotle appears to have an inconsistent triad. Hendrik Lorenz and Giles Pearson both attempt to answer this puzzle. I will argue in support of Giles Pearson's claim that phantasia is necessary for desire. Pearson claims because phantasia alone is not officially clarified by Aristotle until his later treatises, and debates around phantasia alone still exist, so its role in desire may be more critical than Aristotle's earlier claims. In order to argue my case I will use Aristotle's *De Anima*, as well as excerpts from his *Parts of Animals*.

Sunday, March 09, 2014

10:00 a.m. – 10:45 a.m.

Spencer Fontein (Union College)

The Sunflower, Should Simon Wiesenthal Forgive?

Abstract:

This paper discusses whether Simon Wiesenthal should have forgiven a Nazi soldier, Kurt, who burned down a house full of Jewish families while he was in the SS.. In this paper I argue that forgiving someone is a way of holding them accountable for their actions. Furthermore, I claim that we should forgive those who show they are capable of moral change. Therefore Simon should have forgiven Kurt. Forgiving Kurt holds him accountable for his actions because it recognizes him as a moral agent who acted freely.

- 10:45 a.m. – 11:30 a.m. Dwight Adams (Weber State University)
Justified Suspicion of Ontology-Speak: A Carnapian Analysis of Carnap
Abstract:
This paper attempts to dissolve Rudolf Carnap's argument for the meaninglessness of ontology found in "Empiricism, Semantics, and Ontology" while showing that Carnap's argument nevertheless contributed to ontological discourse. After posing Carnap's argument as itself a linguistic framework of the same type his theory describes, two questions are asked about it: Is it true, and is it useful? After providing answers to these questions, it is asserted that Carnap's argument contributes to our overall understanding of ontological discourse and serves as a warning to those who incautiously ascribe ontological significance to strictly linguistic artifacts.
- 11:30 a.m. – 12:15 p.m. Michael Pratt (Grand Valley State University)
Defending Downward Causation Only to Bring it Back Down
Abstract:
The so-called bottom-up threat to free will assumes a bottom-up metaphysics in which human persons—and consequently, human actions—supervene on what their constituent atoms do or are like. In *Objects and Persons*, Trenton Merricks argues that a human person having the capacity for downward (mental-physical) causation is both necessary and sufficient for that person to have a choice about what her atoms do or are like, and moreover, that downward causation blocks the bottom-up threat to free will. In "Can Downward Causation Save Free Will?" Justin Capes argues that Merricks's response to the bottom-up threat is unsuccessful. In this paper, I will (i) explain the bottom-up threat and Merricks's response to it, (ii) explain Capes's criticisms of Merricks's response, (iii) argue that Capes's criticisms are unsuccessful in rebutting Merricks's response, and (iv) suggest an alternative way to object to Merricks's response.
- 1:15 p.m. – 2:00 p.m. Alex Hoffman (Huntington University)
Knowledge, Language, and Nonexistent Entities
Abstract:
In this paper I apply the necessary conditions for knowledge to three different theories within the philosophy of language and argue that only one of the three stands up to a problem of knowledge involving nonexistent entities. To each of the three theories, I test whether the theory can make sense of a person knowing a proposition such as "Sherlock Holmes is a detective," which includes a nonexistent entity as the subject. By doing this I show a relationship between the philosophy of language and epistemology, and I show how holding to a theory in one may force one to claim that a theory in the other is false.
- 2:00 p.m. – 2:45 p.m. William Reynolds (University of Mississippi)
A Healthy Balance
Abstract:
J.S. Mill only supports government coercion to prevent harm to others. His harm principle is generally construed to define harm as individual private acts, such as murder, robbery, and rape. The example of the New York City attempt to regulate the size of soft drinks sold is used to illustrate a case of a "public harm", which is not directly mentioned by Mill. Soft drink consumption may not directly affect others, but it can cause public harms by increasing healthcare costs. An outright ban may be an excess of government and no action may be negligent. Limiting advertisements of large soft drinks may address a public harm while protecting individual freedom, which is key to Libertarianism. This manner of addressing public harms and preserving individual freedom may be used in other public policy issues.

