

Western Arts & Humanities

THE LATEST NEWS AND PUBLICATIONS OF THE
DEPARTMENT OF PHILOSOPHY



IN THIS ISSUE

RECENT PUBLICATIONS & FORTHCOMING PUBLICATIONS OF 2017

PAPERS PRESENTED AT CONFERENCES

2015-16 CHAIR'S ESSAY PRIZE WINNER: FRANCESCO LUCIA

UPCOMING EVENTS IN THE DEPARTMENT

University Student Council releases their 2015-16 Teaching Honour Roll

The University Students' Council (USC) presented the 2015-16 Teaching Honour Roll awarded to Western's best instructors, recognizing their exceptional efforts and contributions. In order to receive honour roll standing, an instructor must receive a cumulative average of 6.3 or higher out of 7.0 for the first 14 questions on the UWO Instructor & Course Evaluations. Evaluations are completed by students for every course taught at Western and its affiliate colleges.

The following instructors in the Department of Philosophy received this distinction for their teaching **Andrew Botterell, Lorne Falkenstein, Dennis Klimchuk, Angela Mendelovici, Rodney Parker, Ryan Robb, Anthony Skelton, Christopher Smeenk, Jackie Sullivan, and John Thorp**. Read the full list [here](#).

Recent Publications

Botterell, Andrew. "Why Gametes are not Like Enriched Uranium" *Bioethics* 30.9 (2016): 741-750.

Abstract: According to Rivka Weinberg, gametes are like enriched uranium: both are hazardous materials. Exposing human beings to enriched uranium can result in radioactivity and decreased life expectancy, while exposing sperm and ova to each other can result in the creation of needy innocent persons with full moral status. Weinberg argues that when we engage in activities that put our gametes at risk of joining with others and growing into persons, we assume the costs of that risky activity. She calls this the Hazmat Theory of parental responsibility. The theory is novel and important, and has far-reaching consequences for the ethics of procreation, parenting, and population, implying among other things that the only way to avoid acquiring parental responsibilities may be to "abstain from sexual intercourse or surgically interfere with our gamete-release system." For these reasons the theory merits careful scrutiny. In this article I criticize the theory's account of how parental responsibility is acquired and its treatment of the standard of care expected of gamete possessors, and argue that it fails to properly account for a distinction between procreative costs and parental responsibility. Even if gametes are hazardous, it does not follow that parental responsibility in Weinberg's sense is acquired whenever one brings new persons into existence. **To read the full article, please click here.**

Botterell, Andrew and Jason Neyers, "Tate & Lyle: Pure Economic Loss and the Modern Tort of Public Nuisance" *Alberta Law Review* 53:4 (2016): 1031-1050.

Abstract: Professor Lewis Klar criticizes the Canadian approach to the tort of public nuisance for being illogical and incoherent. The authors agree with Klar's assessment of the current state of public nuisance law, but argue that insights drawn from the House of Lords decision in *Tate & Lyle Industries Ltd. v. Greater London Council* offer a way forward. By conceptualizing the tort of public nuisance as a cause of action that protects subjects from a suffering actual loss that is consequential on the violation of their passage and fishing rights over public property, *Tate & Lyle* offers a coherent and restrained formulation of the tort of public nuisance. This article examines the *Tate & Lyle* approach to public nuisance and applies it to two infamous Canadian public nuisance cases. It concludes that the coherent, logical approach to public nuisance articulated by the House of Lords in *Tate & Lyle* should be readopted by Canadian courts. **To read the full article, please click here.**

2015-16 Chair's Annual Essay Prize Winner

Congratulations to Francesco Lucia, winner of the Chair's Annual Essay Prize for 2015-16 for his essay "On the Alleged Inconsistency of Weak Epistemic Egoism". The paper was written for Jackie Sullivan's PHILOSOPHY 3501G: Epistemology.



Hoffmaster, Barry, and Cliff Hooker. "The Nature of Moral Compromise: Principles, Values, and Reason," *Social Theory and Practice* 43. 1 (2017): 55-78.

Abstract: Compromise is a pervasive fact of life. It occurs when obligations conflict and repudiating one obligation entirely to satisfy another entirely is unacceptable—for example, when a single parent cannot both raise a child satisfactorily and earn the income that living together demands. Compromise is unsettling, but properly negotiating difficult circumstances develops moral and emotional maturity. Yet compromise has no place in moral philosophy, where it is logically anathematized and deemed to violate integrity. This paper defends compromise with more expansive accounts of reason and integrity that comport with our finite moral agency and infuse our moral lives. **To read the full article, please click the here.**

Dyck, Corey W. "Spontaneity before the Critical Turn: Crusius, the Pre-Critical Kant, and Tetens on the Spontaneity of the Mind." *Journal of the History of Philosophy* 54.4 (2016): 625-48.

Abstract: The introduction of a spontaneity proper to the understanding in the *Kritik der reinen Vernunft* is often thought to be one of the central innovations of Kant's Critical philosophy. Yet a number of thinkers within the eighteenth-century German tradition in the time before the *KrV* had already developed a robust conception of the spontaneity of the mind. In this paper, I consider three influential accounts of the spontaneity of the mind—those of Crusius, the pre-Critical Kant, and Tetens— which, while distinct, nonetheless relate to and explicitly draw upon one another in important ways, forming the interconnected and, thus far, largely overlooked pre-Critical context for Kant's discussion of the spontaneity of the understanding. **To read the full article, please click the here.**

Dyck, Corey W. "Materialism in the Mainstream of Early German Philosophy." *British Journal for the History of Philosophy* 24.5 (2016): 897-916.

Abstract: Discussions of the reception of materialist thought in Germany in the first half of the eighteenth century tend to focus, naturally enough, upon the homegrown freethinkers who advanced the cause of Lucretius, Hobbes, and Spinoza in clandestine publications and frequently courted the ire of the state for doing so. If the philosophers belonging to the mainstream of German intellectual life in that period are accorded a place in the story, it is only insofar as they actively set themselves against the materialist threat and, in the course of working to undermine it, actually only succeeded in inadvertently drawing more popular attention to it. By contrast, in this paper I will show that it was not just insofar as the thinkers of the early eighteenth century played the role of the diligent critic and unwittingly propagated the views of their opponents that materialism can be said to have penetrated into the very mainstream of the German Enlightenment. Rather, as I will argue, there was a striking degree of uptake of instinctively materialist claims even among its most vociferous mainstream critics, and that this is the case for thinkers in both the Wolffian and the Thomasian traditions. **To read the full article, please click the here.**

Forthcoming Publications

Dyck, Corey W. *Kant and his German Contemporaries*, Corey Dyck & Falk Wunderlich eds. (forthcoming 2017, Cambridge University Press)

Dyck, Corey W. "Power, Harmony, and Freedom: Debating Causation in 18th Century Germany" in *Oxford Handbook of 18th Century German Philosophy*, eds. F. Beiser and B. Look (forthcoming 2017, Oxford UP)

Dyck, Corey W. "Between Wolffianism and Pietism: Baumgarten's Rational Psychology," in *Baumgarten and Kant*, eds. C. Fugate & J. Hymers (forthcoming 2017, Oxford UP)

Dyck, Corey W. "The Priority of Judging: Kant on Wolff's General Logic," for a special issue of *Estudos Kantianos* (forthcoming 2017)

Jennifer Epp and **Samantha Brennan's** chapter, "Sexuality and Childhood" is forthcoming in *The Routledge Handbook of the Philosophy of Childhood and Children* – February 8, 2018, by Gideon Calder (Editor), Jurgen De Wispelaere (Editor), Anca Gheaus (Editor)

Presented Papers

Samantha Brennan presented her paper, "The Politicization of Fat and the Fat Child," at the Eastern Division meeting of the APA, in Baltimore, January 6, 2017.

On November 10th, **Samantha Brennan** presented a talk to the Philosophy Department at Ryerson University, "Ethics and Our Early Years: Making Decisions for Children as if Childhood Really Mattered," and participated in a graduate seminar on her work on feminist defenses of rights talk. She also presented "Childhood Matters" on November 18th to the Philosophy Department at McMaster University. **Watch the talk here.**

Samantha Brennan presented her paper, "The Politicization of Fat and the Fat Child," at the Eastern Division meeting of the APA, in Baltimore, January 6, 2017.

Samantha Brennan presented a paper, "Prisons, Ethics, and Family Justice," at the conference Against Incarceration held at the University of New Orleans, September 29-30. She also presented "The Ethics of Incarceration as seen Through the Lens of Family Justice".

Samantha Brennan presented the keynote address at the Atlantic Region Philosophical Association conference at Acadia University, October 21-22. Her talk was called "Ethics and our early years: Making decisions for children as if childhood really mattered." **Cameron Fenton** also presented at ARPA, "A Special Goods Theory of Filial Obligation."

Samantha Brennan is a Visiting Fellow at the University of Toronto Ethics Centre January 2017-September 2017, **For more information about The Centre of Ethics click here.**

John Thorp read a paper called 'Soft God, Hard God' to an international conference on *The Idea of God* held at Memorial University of Newfoundland in late November.

Descartes famously wanted God to be the author and creator, not only of the world, but also of the 'eternal truths' – the laws of mathematics and logic – and so to be above them, not bound by them. It looks like this idea, however, might reduce theism to incoherence; virtually all theologians and philosophers have rejected it, proposing a soft version of divine omnipotence: omnipotence is not the power to do everything, but only the power to do everything that can be done.

This paper brings the resources of evolutionary psychology and of paraconsistent logic into this old debate and asks whether and at what price Descartes' idea of 'hard' omnipotence might be resuscitated.

Upcoming Events

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| <p>MAP Workshop: "Testimony and Deference" Thursday, February 9, 2017 2:30- 4:00PM STVH 1145</p> | <p>Guest speakers: Carla Fehr (Waterloo Philosophy) Heidi Grasswick (Middlebury Philosophy) Jenn Epp (Western Philosophy) Katie Stockdale (Cornell Philosophy)</p> |
| <p>The Social Impact of Medicalizing Psychiatry Friday, February 17, 2017 9:30AM - 5:00PM Dr. David S.H. Chu International Student Centre</p> | <p>Guest speakers: Branka Agic (University of Toronto) Kelly Anderson (Western University) James R. Brown (University of Toronto) Serife Tekin (Daemen College, University of Pittsburgh)</p> |

Abstracts and a conference program are forthcoming. Registration for this workshop will be available from January 23 – February 11, 2017.

For more information please [click here](#).

Psychiatry is increasingly being influenced by research in neuroscience and mainstream medicine. There is a push to reform psychiatry's diagnostic categories to reflect increasing knowledge about the brain structures and neural mechanisms associated with psychopathology. Pharmaceutical treatments are quickly replacing talk therapies. Getting funding for psychiatric research increasingly requires a focus on cellular and molecular mechanisms rather than social or environmental risk factors. These changes have surely helped some patients, but the increasing medicalization of mental illness may also have negative effects on already marginalized and stigmatized people. This workshop will examine the social impact on such groups of the push to medicalize psychiatry, and will seek solutions at the level of health and science policy.

FRIDAY, JANUARY 20

SANDRA LAPOINTE

(MCMASTER UNIVERSITY)

**WHY THE HISTORY OF
PSYCHOLOGY SHOULD
MATTER TO
PHILOSOPHERS**

LA NOISETTE LUNCHEON

1:00- 2:00

PRESENTATION IN STVH 1145

2:00- 3:20

COFFEE & QUESTIONS

3:30- 4:30



FRIDAY, MARCH 24

PATRICIA MARINO

(University of Waterloo)

Economic Explanation
Ambiguity & Its Normative
Implications

LA NOISETTE LUNCHEON

1:00 - 2:00

PRESENTATION IN STVH 1145

2:00 - 3:20

COFFEE & QUESTIONS

3:30 - 4:30

