Princeton University
Department of Philosophy
Class Day Reception
Class of 2019

Monday, June 3, 2019
2:30PM
Class of 1879 Hall Courtyard
Opening Statement

John Burgess
John N. Woodhull Professor of Philosophy
Princeton University
Departmental Representative

Announcement of Honors

Presentation of Prizes

Tomb Prize
Dickinson Prize
John Martyn Warbeke 1903 Prize in Aesthetics
John Martyn Warbeke 1903 Prize in Metaphysics and Epistemology
Class of 1869 Prize in Ethics
Alexander Guthrie McCosh Prize

Presentation of Books

Refreshments
Catherine Jane Amour
Homin Ban
Ryan Christian Born
James Hudson Brown-Kinsella
Duncan Michael Carson
Miranda Dorothy Goodman Christ
Charles Edward Cohen
Hudson Howard Cooke
Adedipupo A. Dina
Clark William Doyle
Preston Evers
Max Feldman
Syed Asad Zafar Haider
Iskandar Tarabai Haykel
Elizabeth Nicole Jobson
Sydney Alexandra Jordan
Hassan Ahmed Khan
Simeon Elijah Lane
Brighid FitzGibbon Leach
Jasmine Samantha Lin
Mengqian Liu
Alice Tupper Maiden
John Robert Marshall
William Joseph Nolan
Sinan Adil Özbay
Ryan Richard Ozminkowski
Gabriel Blackwood Parlin
Katelyn Elizabeth Petersen
Emerson West Salovaara
Daniel Judah Schwartz
Daniel Owen Shepard
Delaney Dawson Thull
Ryan Bao Vinh
Sebastian Pendleton Witherspoon
Esin Yunusoglu
Kevin Austin Zhang
Maya Berry Hyo Won von Ziegesar
Chair
Gideon A. Rosen

Departmental Representative
John P. Burgess
Desmond Hogan (Acting, Fall 2018)

Director of Graduate Studies
Hendrik Lorenz

Professor
John P. Burgess
Adam Newman Elga
Daniel Garber
Hans Halvorson
Elizabeth Harman, also University Center for Human Values
Mark Johnston
Thomas P. Kelly
Sarah-Jane Leslie
Hendrik Lorenz
Benjamin C. A. Morison
Alexander Nehamas, also Comparative Literature
Gideon A. Rosen
Michael A. Smith

Associate Professor
Desmond Hogan
Boris C. Kment
Sarah McGrath

Assistant Professor
Johann D. Frick, also University Center for Human Values
Grace E. Helton
Harvey Lederman
Lecturer
Daniel Berntson
Victoria McGeer

Visiting Professor
Susan J. Brison
Andre Laks
Sara Magrin, also Council of the Humanities

Visiting Assistant Professor
Una Stojnic

Visiting Associate Professor
Ralph M. Bader

Associated Faculty
Charles R. Beitz, Politics
Andrew Chignell, Religion, University Center for Human Values
Robert P. George, Politics
Jonathan Gold, Religion
Sanjeev R. Kulkarni, Electrical Engineering
Melissa S. Lane, Politics
Tania Lombrozo, Psychology
Alan W. Patten, Politics
Philip N. Pettit, University Center for Human Values
Peter Singer, University Center for Human Values
Catherine Jane Amour

*De Anima* II 5 + II 6: Perception and Perceptible Objects

in Aristotle

This thesis focuses on Aristotle’s account of perception that features in the *De Anima*. It is divided into two halves. The first half addresses Book II Chapter 5 of the text where Aristotle speaks about perception from its broadest point of view. The second half addresses Book II Chapter 6 where Aristotle introduces a division of perceptible objects into three kinds.

Homin Ban

As a Free Will Skeptic, I argue against the possibility of meaningful free will and moral responsibility, mainly drawing from the ideas of the Humean Theory of Action and Galen Strawson’s Basic Argument. The refusal to accept the skeptical position has resulted in detrimental social consequences, such as retributivism. Thus, there are important practical reasons to accept the skeptical position.

Ryan Christian Born

In my senior thesis, I confront what I call “the problem of permissible exploitation.” Exploitation, while *prima facie* bad, is sometimes considered to be justified, if the exploitation is both *voluntary* and *mutually advantageous*. I argue that, if ‘voluntariness’ and ‘advantage’ are understood correctly, exploitation is rarely voluntary and never mutually advantageous. Therefore, exploitation is impermissible in most or all cases.
Senior Thesis Abstracts

James Hudson Brown-Kinsella
In *Quantitative Information*, I explain how information may be measured; discuss the debate around whether contradictions are maximally informative; and present, critique, and modify the leading theory of quantitative information. In *Symbol Grounding*, I situate the Symbol Grounding Problem as the Rule-Following Paradox, present a new solution thereof, identify how it solves the paradox, and discuss its limitations regarding communication.

Duncan Michael Carson
How much might morality demand from us? I approach this question by evaluating the trendy moral theory of effective altruism, and conclude that, while demanding, EA overlooks structural and individual obligations not to harm. Then, I address the ensuing anxiety of moral inadequacy by arguing that we should be skeptical of anything but, given the socio-historical contingency of moral evaluations.

Miranda Dorothy Goodman Christ
I argue that permissivism is reasonable. Then I present what I take to be a good imaginary role model. I suggest that given permissivism, it might seem that we should add a certain feature to our imaginary role model. I argue, however, that agents who have this feature should structure their minds in peculiar way.

Charlie Edward Cohen
This thesis argues that Spinoza’s rationalist metaphysics of the Ethics must incorporate brute facts, facts which have no explanation. Specifically, this paper argues that God’s existence must be embraced as a brute fact. Upon making these claims, this paper demonstrates that Spinoza’s rationalism cannot be as thoroughgoing as we would like if there are foundational facts which have no explanation.
Hudson Howard Cooke
According to Susan Sontag’s theory of interpretation, one first recognizes what there is to be interpreted, and then transforms that content into some deeper meaning. After a close reading, we can see that her conception of interpretation is defensible, but that her disavowal of its usefulness is unpersuasive because she neglects the interconnected nature of formal analysis and interpretation.

Adedipupo A. Dina
I present a case which raises a puzzle about how agents should choose all-things-considered. This case represents a class of cases in which reasons that are self-interested conflict with reasons that are non-self-interested and altruistic. In thinking through this case, we can gain insight into the normative considerations that underlie resolutions to these conflicts.

Clark William Doyle
The Buddhists believe the self does not exist. My senior thesis first explores their arguments for the nonexistence of the self and then offers potential counterarguments. I ultimately propose the existence of the dispositional self, an enduring entity that manifests itself consistently throughout a person’s entire life and is a reasonable candidate for self-hood.

Preston Evers
My senior thesis draws attention to the collective consequences of historic, structural injustice and makes a series of interrelated arguments about how we ought to understand and assume responsibility for these injustices. I consider backwards- versus forwards-looking approaches to wealth redistribution, blameworthiness for participation in structural injustice, and the obligations that follow from benefiting from injustice.
Max Feldman
This senior thesis presents an overview of critiques of the “moving now” conception of time – the conception on which time is taken to consist of past, present and future – in an effort to describe what implications these critiques might have for film.

Syed Asad Zafar Haider
We often say things like “He will live on in his works,” and “The ones we love live forever within us,” about the dead. Generally, it is taken to a kind of elaborate metaphor or even a meaningless statement meant solely to comfort the bereaved. In this thesis, I argue that we should take such statements to be literally true.

Iskandar Tarabai Haykel
My senior thesis attempts to formulate and defend a new view of moral responsibility for attitudes and actions, according to which an agent is responsible insofar as she has reason to reflect on and endorse or reject attitudes. Throughout its two chapters, I seek to revise certain cornerstone ideas of several 20th-century philosophers in the Free Will & Moral Responsibility literature.

Elizabeth Nicole Jobson
Ancient Cynicism has often been dismissed as lacking the formal principles to constitute a philosophy. Is Cynicism a lifestyle, a social movement or, perhaps, a performance art? Combining analysis of ancient schools with the lens of modern philosophers Wittgenstein and Rorty, I show it not only constitutes a philosophy, but its unique form evades problems faced by other philosophical schools.
Sydney Alexandra Jordan
Historically, free speech rights in the United States have only protected individuals from government regulation. The policies, practices, and power of modern corporations, however, can also threaten free expression. Using Jack M. Balkin’s theory of “cultural democracy,” corporate social responsibility theories, and current free speech debates, this paper argues that corporations also have responsibilities to respect individuals’ free speech rights.

Hassan Ahmed Khan
Semi-compatibilism offers a unique solution to the traditional problem of free will, by separating the sort of control we typically associate with freedom and that which is required for moral responsibility. I examine the potential challenges in scientific accounts of both determinism and indeterminism. To conclude that robust theories of morality need not depend on our ability to do otherwise.

Simeon Elijah Lane
My senior thesis examines the connection between intellectual property and societal welfare. In order to optimize both knowledge creation and societal welfare, intellectual property laws must allow knowledge to disseminate freely while still incentivizing people to innovate. This can be accomplished through a utilitarian approach to intellectual property protection.
**Senior Thesis Abstracts**

**Brighid FitzGibbon Leach**
In this thesis, I consider how personalization of Google search may undermine truth, democracy, and autonomy. In light of these risks, I recommend Google take one of two steps: (1) increase transparency around their collection and application of personal data and provide an easily accessible opt-out option or, preferably, (2) transition from their personalized model to a more objective approach.

**Jasmine Samantha Lin**
Respect for autonomy and concern for patient well-being are both major guiding principles in clinical medicine, yet they often come into conflict with each other. When this is the case, which should take precedence? This thesis examines the value of autonomy, the concept of well-being, and the relationship between health and well-being.

**Mengqian(Crystal) Liu**
This senior thesis explores questions in the philosophy of language. I examine Wittgenstein before turning to cognitive science research on the nature of concepts. Throughout the essay, I supplement philosophical texts with literary ones, attempting, via a personal reading history, to develop a synthetic answer to the question of how language is processed.

**Alice Tupper Maiden**
In this senior thesis, I argue that it is morally justifiable to extend refugee protection to people whose territories become uninhabitable due to the effects of climate change and other environmental threats. I conclude that refugeehood under the UN Refugee Convention is inadequate as a response to the slow-onset harms of climate change and insufficient to facilitate group resettlement.
John Robert Marshall
Friedrich Nietzsche, as the illusive pedagogue the eternal recurrence, presents the doctrine in a stylistically, perspectivally, and pedagogically ambivalent way to challenge the threat of existential nihilism. This thesis analyses how Nietzsche uses ambivalence in his teachings to simultaneously avoid dogmatism, affirm life itself as nihilistic, yet avoid the individual implications that existential nihilism seemingly entails.

William Joseph Nolan
On Aristotle’s view, incontinent action is voluntary despite being caused by appetitive desire. According to Aquinas, however, since incontinent action is voluntary, it must be caused by rational desire. Aquinas therefore interprets Aristotle as contending that all such action is willed action. I argue that the new interpretation is a philosophical improvement while benefitting other aspects of Aristotle’s greater picture.

Sinan Adil Özbay
This thesis attempts to vindicate a strain of meta-normative views known as quietist realism. Specifically, it examines the main objections to T.M. Scanlon’s version of quietist realism and considers whether an amended version of Scanlon’s position might fare better against such objections. In particular, the amendment invokes the notion of Carnapian linguistic frameworks in the service of quietist realism.
Ryan Richard Ozminkowski
An exploration of the question in aesthetics known as the Paradox of Fiction and how it applies to *Tangible Fictions* - experiences that are more physical and immersive than the typical movies and novels discussed in existing literature. The author included several case studies of sites including Disney’s Animal Kingdom, Cirque du Soleil, and Magic Castle.

Gabriel Blackwood Parlin
This senior thesis explores the cognitional theory and epistemology of twentieth-century philosopher Bernard Lonergan. I give analyses of the operations on each level of Lonergan’s three-tiered cognitional structure, using several extended exercises in order to demonstrate to the reader how these operations work concretely. I conclude by discussing the implications that Lonergan’s philosophy has for the notions of realism and objectivity.

Katelyn Elizabeth Petersen
I begin by arguing that insofar as natural theology succeeds at establishing propositions about God, it establishes the necessity of two criteria in a full account of knowledge of God: (1) a reparation of the relationship between God and humanity and (2) what I call an ‘ever-growingness.’ I then present and extend Alvin Plantinga’s account of knowledge of God, showing that it fulfills both of these criteria.

Emerson West Salovaara
Thomas Aquinas understands ethical goods to be dependent upon human nature. Aquinas is less clear in addressing the role that “theoretical” knowledge about human nature plays in ethical deliberation. My thesis confronts this ambiguity in the context of contemporary natural law scholarship, and I argue that such theoretical knowledge must in fact significantly factor into sound ethical reasoning.
Daniel Judah Schwartz
In my thesis, I examine the idea of divine ineffability. I first note several prominent formulations of divine ineffability. I then explain why divine ineffability seems to threaten the value of asserting things about God. I provide three models by which one can find value in assertions about God despite these threats.

Daniel Owen Shepard
In this senior thesis, I construe climate change is a structural injustice. I argue that every individual who contributes to the structural processes that produce the injustice must take political action to make the structures less unjust. Because responsibility is shared and remedies take the form of collective action, this framework helps us overcome the worry that individuals’ actions are negligible.

Delaney Dawson Thull
In Plato’s Republic, political unity requires mutually acknowledged agreement about who should rule. Contra Aristotle’s interpretation, I argue that Plato does not locate the origin of unity in a homogeneity produced by property and family arrangements. Rather, unity stems from a shared moral understanding of what is good for the city. In fact, differences among citizens harmoniously reinforce political unity.

Ryan Bao Vinh
Some philosophers claim that friendship may require us to form biased beliefs about our friends. In contrast to this, I argue that the information we have about our friends can actually account for many of the apparent biases in how we form beliefs about them. Any attempt to form beliefs beyond what this information suggests, however, seems morally dubious.
Sebastian Pendleton Witherspoon
In my senior thesis, I consider two arguments for Black reparations, which rest on different conceptions of historic injustice and different theories of responsibility. I argue that these two arguments, in their most plausible forms, are actually quite compatible, and that a hybrid approach is better suited to the nature of historic injustices.

Esin Yunusoglu
Improvisational dance pieces are characterized by their collaborative, spontaneous nature, and by their blurring of the lines between virtuosic and messy, expected and unexpected, natural and unnatural. In this paper, I argue that the Kantian notion of “the sublime” is applicable to the appreciation of improvisational dance, as it accounts for the negative pleasure, we feel in experiencing something we cannot fully comprehend.

Kevin Austin Zhang
Are there any objective moral truths? Since Plato, one broad approach has answered yes, holding that morality is independent of human attitudes. I cast doubt on attitude-independent views, arguing that they face epistemological concerns in light of our evolutionary origins. Nonetheless, I maintain that there are objective moral truths, which arise from rational requirements upon our most fundamental orientations.
Maya Berry Hyo Won von Ziegesar
This thesis expands upon Miranda Fricker’s *Epistemic Injustice*, arguing that a theory of epistemic injustice must be attuned to the ways in which it is intrinsically tied to heterogeneous social structures and spaces, and how epistemic injustice in turn serves to construct these structures and spaces. It calls for a reframing of epistemic injustice with an increased focus on structural phenomena.