

SoCal Metaphysics Network

Saturday, March, 18, HG 1030

Event Program

9:05-9:55 am: Yuval Avnur	"Death and the Self"
10:00-10:50 am: Rebecca Chan	"Ethics - First Metaphysics"
10:55-11:45 am: Matt Duncan	"Consciousness as a Cross-Temporal Tapestry"
11:45 am-1:25 pm: Lunch Break	
1:25-2:15 pm: Dee Payton	"Normative Metaphysics: A Feminists Worldview"
2:20-3:10 pm: Kevin Richardson	"Just a little gay:" How Sexual Orientation Come Degrees"
3:15-4:05 pm: Jennifer Wang	"The Metaphysics of Personhood and Normativity in Classical Chinese Philodosophy"
4:10-5:00 pm: Neil Williams	"Power and Activity"

Abstracts

"Consciousness as a Cross-Temporal Tapestry" - Matt Duncan

There are good reasons to think that all experiences are temporally extended. For example, the physical correlates of experiences are all temporally extended, and the phenomenology of duration and change suggests temporal extendedness. However, in a recent paper, David Builes and Michele Odissea Impagnatiello (forthcoming) argue that if all experiences are temporally extended, and some other very plausible premises hold, then we can infer that each of us has been conscious forever, infinitely into the past. Thus, we have a dilemma: Give up the well-motivated claim that all experiences are temporally extended or accept the absurd conclusion that we've all been conscious forever. In this paper, I chart a course through the horns of this dilemma. That is, I offer a way of maintaining that all experiences are temporally extended that does not imply that we've been conscious infinitely into the past. The first step along this path is the claim that we are not conscious right now, at this instant. This is not eliminativism or illusionism about consciousness. On the view that I'll introduce, consciousness is very real, it's just not something that ever happens at an *instant*.

"Just a Little Gay": How Sexual Orientation Comes in Degrees " - Kevin Richardson

You can be a little gay or a lot gay. You can be mostly heterosexual. You can be somewhat lesbian. You can be bicurious. You can be heteroflexible. You can be sexually fluid. What I'm saying is: sexual orientation comes in degrees. This point is well-established in sexuality studies but largely neglected by philosophers. The on-off (or absolutist) model of sexual orientation, which is implicit in most philosophical theories of sexual orientation, misrepresents social reality. I aim to correct this state of affairs. I propose a theory of sexual orientation that is fundamentally scalar and multidimensional: scalar, because sexual orientation comes in degrees; multidimensional, because there are various dimensions of sexual orientation—desire, disposition, duration, etc.

"The Metaphysics of Personhood and Normativity in Classical Chinese Philosophy" -

Jennifer Wang

Inspired by early Confucian texts such as the Analects, Mencius, and Xunzi (roughly compiled in the 6th to 3rd centuries BCE), defenders of Confucian role ethics argue that persons are constituted by their social roles and relationships. This view leads to intriguing metaphysical questions regarding, for instance, what notion of constitution is in play, or which roles and relationships matter for personhood. It also has normative implications, for role ethicists argue that a person's social roles and relationships are the source of ethical normativity.

"Power and Activity" - Neil Williams

Powers theorists frequently assert that their neo-Aristotelian frameworks are *dynamic*, and that this gives them a theoretical advantage over their neo-Humean rivals. 'Dynamism' is here understood in terms of activity: a metaphysic counts as dynamic according to the place activity is given within the system. Recently it's been claimed that activity can also be used to divide powers theories themselves: 'activists' give activity a central role, and have claimed the philosophical high ground over 'passivist' powers theories wherein activity plays a diminished role. In this talk I take a closer look at dynamism and activity within powers theories, with a particular focus on the broader ontological impact that commitment to activity carries. Despite what's been claimed, I find no reason to think that activists have any theoretical advantage in this debate. In fact, it's not clear that powers and activity make for a good pairing at all, as there's presently no good model for powers like this.