



Department of Philosophy Colloquium Russ Shafer-Landau



11/14/25



3-5pm



HIB 55

How Intuition Produces Action

The Socratic Doctrine, expressed in the slogan “to know the good is to do the good,” represents a challenge to the widespread assumption that only sentiments such as desires and emotions are intrinsically motivating. I'll elaborate and defend a version of the Socratic Doctrine that de-emphasizes knowledge and highlights intuition. The view is designed to explain how moral judgments, conceived as realists and nonnaturalists recommend, can produce action—thereby answering an influential criticism of those theories. The approach is inspired by an underappreciated aspect of what it's like to be a practical agent: from the agent's perspective, vivid presentations of what is practically significant often move one to act. How could this be? The explanation specifies a type of intellectual state, *practical intuition*, whose contents include concepts with mastery conditions implicating a range of practical capacities. The occurrence of these intuitions in subjects who master those concepts leads them to perform morally valuable actions.

BIO

Russ Shafer-Landau works in metaethics, focusing on questions about the status of morality, asking questions about the objectivity and rationality of morality and how we gain moral knowledge. He is the author of several books on ethics, founder and organizer of the annual Madison Metaethics Workshop, and the director of the Marc Sanders Prize in Metaethics. He served as President of the American Philosophical Association (Central Division) in 2021.

If you have any questions, please contact philos@uci.edu