Georgia State University
Phi Sigma Tau Zeta (GA)
Schedule of Events

First Concurrent Session 11:15-12:10

Seminar Room
Mark Herman- Graduate Student- Bowling Green State University
“Towards Enhancing Moral Agency Through Subjective Moral Debiasing”

Commentator: Rachel Lehmann
Chair: Marissa Macaro

The capacity to act in accordance with one’s morality is constitutive of moral agency. Moral irrationality can frustrate this capacity and in turn, stunt one’s moral agency. Similarly, improving moral rationality can strengthen this capacity and enhance moral agency. The empirical research program on *cognitive debiasing* inspires developing techniques to improve our moral rational capacities—i.e., *moral debiasing*. This presupposes *moral biases*—i.e., systematic *moral errors*. The pertinent kind of moral error is *subjective* moral errors. Ultimately, A’s φ-ing is a subjective moral error insofar as φ-ing deviates from A’s *genuine* morality per *instrumental subjective moral rationality*—i.e., insofar as φ-ing frustrates A+’s morally-relevant ends, wherein A+ is a counterfactual idealization of A upon whom is bestowed those endowments that A considers authoritative under ordinary optimal conditions. The provision of an in-principle standard of subjective moral error lays important theoretical groundwork for future empirical research into subjective moral debiasing.

Conference Room
Brian Eckley- Graduate Student- Purdue University
“Personal Foul: Indifference to Native Americans”

Commentator: Ruby Tamariz
Chair: Sam Munroe

Sonia Kruks uses Beauvoir’s *America Day by Day* to discuss a mode of oppression she calls indifference. Beauvoir discusses “the race question” in the United States in relation to Native Americans and Black Americans. I will ultimately argue that the use of pseudo-Native-American imagery (PNAI) in sports is a form of oppressive indifference. Racial comparisons to fictional team names, such as the Washington Blackskins or Yellowskins, will inform my view. I will also address fans’ use of some teams, such as the Notre Dame Fighting Irish, as counterexamples. Finally, I will refute claims that PNAI is meant to honor Native Americans.
Allan Hazlett defines Intellectual Humility as “a disposition not to adopt epistemically improper higher-order epistemic attitudes, and to adopt (in the right way, in the right situations) epistemically proper higher-order attitudes.” (2012:3) Whitcomb, Battaly, Baehr, and Howard-Snyder reject this definition as too narrow and define intellectual humility as “proper attentiveness to, and owning of, one’s intellectual limitations.” (2017: 10) In this paper, I argue that Whitcomb et al.’s definition conflates two distinct but connected kinds of virtues, which Hazlett distinguishes as intellectual and dialectical humility. I aim to defend Hazlett’s definition of intellectual humility as more precisely identifying an intellectual virtue than Whitcomb et al.’s owning account, though I propose a shift in terminology to better capture distinct forms of humility that arise from the value of knowledge held by different epistemic agents.

Past thinkers claimed that individuals are only the agent of beliefs they consciously endorse. I contend that an agent is a person able to engage in rational activity, making one morally responsible for their implicit biases as it is an evaluative judgment that reflects their rational activity. With that in mind, I cogently hold that children also have agency, and so they too have a moral responsibility for their implicit attitudes. In this paper I explore what agency is and its relation to moral responsibility, explaining why conditions previously held by philosophers as exculpatory are invalid. I will also describe what it means for an individual to be morally blameworthy, how it differs from moral responsibility, and why child-agents are exempt from moral blameworthiness, but adult-agents are not.
Third Concurrent Session 2:50-3:45

Seminar Room
Jason Byas- Graduate Student- University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign
“The Meaning of Mass Incarceration”

Commentator: Chase Halsne
Chair: Michael Zilmer

It is becoming increasingly uncontroversial that America’s highly racialized mass incarceration is unjust. Yet explaining that injustice from within philosophical theories of punishment is surprisingly difficult. After outlining that difficulty, I propose a different path. Through punishment’s expressive power, there are unique injustices emerging only when incarceration reaches a mass scale. I give two such examples: “painting antisocial landscapes” and “collective stigmatization.” The second is made even worse in the context of demographic concentration. These explanations are open to appeal irrespective of one’s preferred theory of punishment.

Conference Room
Mingzhu Guo- Graduate Student- Western Michigan University
“Dual-Process Models for Moral Judgements and Motivation”

Commentator: Nicholas Linares
Chair:

It is a striking fact that there is an intimate relationship between moral judgments and motivation. In this paper, I propose a cognitive, externalist, and anti-Humean account of an intimate relationship. In particular, I draw a dual-process approach to explain the matched and mismatched connection between moral judgments and motivation. To illustrate, there are two distinguished cognitive processes—Type 1 and Type 2. Type 1 processes are quick, effortless, subconscious, involuntary, and independent on working memory. On the contrary, Type 2 processes are slow, effortful, conscious, deliberate, and dependent on working memory. There is a necessary connection between motivation and judgments produced by Type 1 processes, and a contingent but direct relationship between motivation and moral judgments produced by Type 2 processes. I hope this proposal can help cognitivists, externalists, and anti-Humeans to account for the link between moral judgments and motivation.
The rise in the public profile of “alt-right” and “white nationalist” groups in recent years is often described as a rise in “hate groups.” The presumption in this nomenclature is that these sorts of groups are defined essentially in terms of their shared hatred for some or all nonwhite individuals and groups. However, the rhetoric of such groups is primarily couched not as hatred, but rather in terms of “self-love” – they do not hate other groups, they are just looking out for themselves. My argument in this essay is that, even if we assume the sincerity of white nationalists’ claims to be only interested in sustaining and defending whites and whiteness, the kind of “self-love” this exhibits is morally and politically pernicious because it is constitutively linked to a foundational contempt for nonwhites.