

PHILOSOPHY COLLOQUIUM SERIES

FALL 2021

1. Friday September 17, 2021, 3:00pm (REMOTE)

“Envy and Prejudice: The Role of Envy in a Racially Divided Public Sphere.”

Sara Protasi, Dept. of Philosophy, University of Puget Sound

In recent times philosophers of emotions have started investigating the role of anger, hatred, fear, and contempt in relation to racism and racial injustice. Envy, however, has been so far ignored. In this talk I start remedying this lacuna by asking what role group envy may play in racial relations. I suggest that different forms of malicious envy play a central role in anti-Asian racism, in particular, and explore the possibility that more benign forms of envy may drive positive, if limited, political change.

2. Friday October 1, 2021, 3:00pm in BEH 106 (IN-PERSON)

“Do Beliefs Need Justification?”

Jonathan Jenkins Ichikawa, Dept. of Philosophy, University of British Columbia

I argue that the widespread use of “justification” language in contemporary epistemology carries substantial normative presuppositions. “Justification” language in general presupposes that the action in question is pro tanto wrong. In the case of epistemology, discussion of whether beliefs are “justified” insinuates that belief in general is to be suspected or regretted, even if one’s answer is that a given belief is justified. This feeds into a negative bias in epistemology, tilting the scales in favour of skepticism prior to inquiry. Moreover, since there are substantive connections between epistemology and action — responsible action requires responsible belief — this bias towards the skeptical also results in a bias against efforts at reform. For this reason, the role of “justification” language in epistemology constitutes a harmful ideology, further entrenching oppressive elements of the status quo.

3. Friday, October 15, 2021, 3:00pm in BEH 106 (IN-PERSON)

“Saving The Indexing Account From Philosophical Decay.”

Samantha Wakil, Dept. of Philosophy, University of Nevada Las Vegas

The debate surrounding mathematical platonism has effectively come to a standstill. With indispensability arguments as the stopping point, the literature now focuses almost exclusively on vetting purported examples of distinctively mathematical explanations of empirical phenomena. But there is a plausible alternative position that denies the supposed explanatory role of mathematics in science. According to the indexing account, mathematics can only map or ‘index’ physical systems in the sciences. The merits of this view, and the corresponding pitfalls of the received view, have not been recognized or are underappreciated. This state of affairs is likely due to the fact no one has responded to the platonist’s set of criticisms: (1) It’s not clear mathematics can index in complex scientific cases; (2) Indexing proponents have not undermined the paradigm cases of seemingly genuine mathematical explanations of scientific phenomena; (3) The exact details of the indexing proposal are underdeveloped and is therefore philosophically impoverished. I defend the indexing account against these objections and argue that this debate should stop focusing on indispensability arguments and start analyzing other inferential roles mathematics may have in scientific reasoning.

4. Friday, October 22, 2021, 9:00am (REMOTE, Note the time)

“The Morality of Gossip.”

Cécile Fabre, Faculty of Philosophy, University of Oxford

Gossip is pervasive and wide-ranging. It lubricates and wrecks social relationships. Many people openly confess to loving it yet acknowledge that gossiping, while often gratifying, is, if not morally wrong, at least not quite right. Gossip has not received much attention in moral philosophy. In this paper, I argue that notwithstanding the fact that gossip often has beneficial effects, it is wrong to the extent that gossipers fail to treat gossipees as well as one another as persons. To

6. Friday, November 19, 2021, 3:00pm in BEH 106 (IN-PERSON)

“Nation versus Cosmos.”

Abigail Aguilar, Dept. of Philosophy, University of Nevada Las Vegas

Much current political discourse relies on the assumptions that nations, nation-states, and nationalism are obviously and inherently bad, and that larger political communities (global or “cosmopolitan” views) are viable and good. Yet these assumptions are not scrutinized in popular discourse in a rigorous, philosophical manner. My aim is to provide (some of) what is missing by clarifying the terminology, showing how a meaningful distinction can be made between good and bad forms of nations and nationalism, and why problems with (some forms of) nationalism do not mean a larger political community is a good alternative.

7. Friday, December 3, 2021, 3:00pm in BEH 106 (IN-PERSON)

“Gender as Constraint in the Justice of Migration Policy.”

Erica A. Nieblas, Dept. of Philosophy, University of Colorado, Boulder

What moral constraints might human rights place on the types of migration policies that states can adopt? This talk answers this question in light of recent developments in global migration governance. It focuses primarily on the moral obligations that underlie the 2018 Global Compact for Safe, Orderly and Regular Migration (GMC). The GMC is an international agreement in which states reaffirm their commitments to the human rights of migrants — in part by agreeing to adopt national migration policies that are “migrant-centered, human rights- based and gender-responsive.” I argue that the inclusion of the “gender-responsive” criterion creates additional (but necessary) moral constraints on immigration policy. There is a relationship between gender and border policy, such that states deliberately benefit from oppressive transnational gender norms and practices. As long as such a relationship exists, gender-responsiveness should be understood as a justice constraint on national migration policy.

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