

## **UNDERGRADUATE CONFERENCE**

The 2017 University of Victoria Western Canada Philosophy Undergraduate Conference features works of students across Western Canada and distinguished keynote speakers.

**Conference: March 11, 2017**

**Time: 9:30am-5:30pm.**

**Location: Michele Pujol Room (Student Union Building: University of Victoria)**

### **SCHEDULE:**

9am-9:30am: Arrival

9:30am- 9:45am: Opening Remarks

**9:45am-10:30am**

**Kelsey Vicars (Simon Fraser University)**

**“The Legitimacy of Mathematical Models as Non-Propositional Explanations”**

**Abstract:**

Scientific explanation is traditionally thought of as being necessarily propositional in form. This project will argue against this view, and will argue for the legitimacy of non-propositional explanations, using mathematical models as an illustrative example. This claim opposes accounts put forth by Peter Lipton and Kareem Khalifa, and draws on previous literature from Elisabeth Camp and Abrahamsen and Bechtel.

10:30am-10:45am: Break & Discussion

**10:45am-11:30am**

**Cyril C. House (University of Alberta)**

**“Without You”**

**Abstract:**

This short essay covers the topic of consciousness. The author defends the dualist-position regarding the interaction of components which themselves do not possess consciousness, and the resultant phenomenon of consciousness. Drawing on three very distinct examples of interactions we experience in our daily lives which result in similar dualist phenomena, it is argued that consciousness too just appears when you put things together in certain ways.

11:30am-11:45am: Break & Discussion

**11:45am-1:00pm**

**Keynote. Dr. Paul Teel (PhD University of Victoria)**

**“Christian Theology and The Rise of Modern Science”**

**Abstract:**

Concerning the rise of modern science, Bertrand Russell wrote, “Fortunately there were Protestant countries, where the clergy, however anxious to do harm to science, were unable to gain control of the State.” Combine this sentiment with the image of Galileo detained under house arrest, and you’ll get a good picture of the still-common conception of an antagonistic relationship between Christianity and science. One decade prior to Russell’s comment, however, the philosopher Michael Beresford Foster wrote a series of articles for the journal *Mind* in which he argued that Christian theology played a crucial role in the conceptual shifts needed to establish the possibility of the rise of modern science. This talk will explain and explore Foster’s argument.

1:00pm-2:00pm: Lunch & Discussion

**2:15pm-3:00pm**

**Blair MacDonald (Simon Fraser University)**

**“Terrorist Acts in the Context of Supreme Emergencies”**

**Abstract:**

Terrorist acts often provoke strong moral outrage – and justifiably so. However it will be argued that under specified “supreme emergencies” certain terrorist acts may be excusable. Supreme emergencies are circumstances of such great threat to humanity that standard moral prohibitions become outweighed. Under such circumstances terrorist acts may be excusable if they are done proportionally and as a last resort.

3:00pm-3:15pm: Break & Discussion

**3:15pm-4:00pm**

**Alex Moser (University of Victoria)**

**“A Subjective Deprivation Account of the Normative Status of Death: Sometimes Evil, Rarely to be Feared”**

**Abstract:**

This paper discusses two distinct yet closely related questions: whether or not death should be considered an evil, and whether or not it is to be feared. It argues that the way in which we ought to ascribe value to life and death is inevitably and inherently subjective. Ultimately, death should sometimes be seen as an evil insofar as it would subjectively be considered a deprivation. An evaluation method is provided in order to determine whether or not, given some circumstance,

someone would likely regard their own death as a deprivation, or alternatively, whether something other than death is a more fundamental cause of one's deprivation. The evaluation results in three distinct and exhaustive classes of death as an evil, partial-evil, or non-evil. These classes are explained in terms of the Aristotelian efficient versus final cause distinction, in accordance with the interpretation of the efficient cause as the most fundamental. Lastly, death should not be actively feared, but rather realized as a necessary fact of life that should be appropriately avoided and treated with caution. Fear is only warranted if it is in response to an immediate threat of a depriving death, and motivates action to evade that death.

4:00pm-4:15pm: Break & Discussion

**4:15pm-5:30pm**

**Keynote Speaker. Dean Chris GoTo-Jones (Dean of Humanities, University of Victoria)**

**“Is there Philosophy where Philosophy Isn't? Considering Lost and Discarded Voices.”**

**Abstract:**

This paper considers some of the principles of inclusion and exclusion around the edifice of disciplinary Philosophy and asks whether it is possible to find Philosophy in cultural spaces that fall outside the European or Western tradition. Along the way, we will be forced to engage with some fundamental questions of identity and value — what are the stakes (and of what nature are these stakes) in the debate about the parameters of Philosophy? Does the category of 'Philosophy' include the category of 'not-Philosophy'? And what the heck is this thing called Philosophy anyway?

**5:30pm: Dinner and Discussion.**