

## Abstracts of Philosophy Week Keynote Presentations:

Ž **Tuesday, March 4, 4:00-5:30pm. Center for Automation Technology, 061**

**Elliot Paul (Barnard/Columbia) - "Losing Confidence: A Brief History of Intuition"**

Situating Descartes as the pivotal figure between two worlds, we can see how the concept of intuition has been transformed from medieval thought to its use in philosophy today. I argue that intuition, for Descartes, is a form of perception that is natural rather than supernatural, intellectual rather than sensory, and immediate rather than derived. It is also clear and distinct, and therefore infallible, indubitable, and sufficient for knowledge. This reading shows that, surprisingly, vis-à-vis the Augustinian tradition, Descartes *naturalizes intuition* and *rationalizes faith*. It also reveals the strategic way in which Descartes appropriates "intuition" from his Scholastic opponents. He gives the term the same role to play in his philosophy as it does in theirs – to denote the ultimate source of knowledge – while he "transfers it to his own meaning" (shifting its reference) to exclude the senses and include only perceptions of the pure intellect. As such, the change is not merely verbal – rather, it's the very crux of the contest between Cartesian Rationalism and Scholastic Empiricism. This account also shows how Descartes's notion of intuition differs from ours today – and a striking evolution is revealed. Our concept of intuition is the exact inverse of the late Scholastics' in terms of its scope and epistemic force, and Descartes's reconceptualization is the turning point in between.

Ž **Wednesday, March 5, 4:00-5:30pm. Campbell Auditorium, Stratton Hall 113**

**Nathan Hanna (Drexel) - "The Free Will Defense Reconsidered"**

The Logical Argument from Evil argues that it is logically impossible that God and evil coexist. The Free Will Defense is the most important and most popular objection to this argument. Many philosophers of religion claim that the Free Will Defense refutes the Logical Argument From Evil and demonstrates that, for all we know, God and evil can coexist. I reject this view. I'll formulate and defend an argument that a core claim of the Free Will Defense is inconsistent with the claim that God exists. I start with an overview of the Logical Argument From Evil and of the Free Will Defense. I identify a weak point in the Free Will Defense and formulate my argument against it. I then defend a controversial premise and identify two of the most important objections against it. I respond to one of the objections and identify recent work that deals with the other.

Ž **Thursday, March 6, 4:00-5:30pm. Mitchell Auditorium, Bossone 007**

**Miriam Solomon (Temple) - "Philosophical Perspectives on Translational Medicine"**

The term "translational medicine" is about twelve years old, and there is an abundance of new "translational" initiatives in funding, publications, research institutions, conferences and professional associations. A number of different research and clinical initiatives are referred to as "translational medicine." The most common use of the term, on which this paper focuses, is to describe the challenges of going "from bench to bedside," i.e. from pure research to clinical applications. This paper argues that the need for translational research in medicine is not in fact new, but it has taken on new urgency and significance for *three* reasons: the *perceived slowness* of development of applications of basic research, the need for *different* research standards than those imposed by another recent paradigm, evidence-based medicine and the surprising difficulties with *dissemination* of new practice. In these ways, translational medicine is a response to perceived shortfalls in both results and methods, and a phenomenon of the first decades of the 21<sup>st</sup> century.