Fall 2012/Spring 2013 Colloquia - Scott & Heather Kleiner Lecture Series

Sept 14, 2012 - Kyle Powys Whyte (Michigan State)
"The Responsibilities of Nation States to Indigenous Nations and Their Implications for Climate Change Adaptation"

Philosophers have debated whether Indigenous communities are entitled to special rights within the nation states like the United States and Australia. I show how the debate looks rather different when we ask what rights, liberties, and responsibilities nation states and their citizens are justified in having within Indigenous nations. I argue that before we can answer this question we first have to understand the kind of entity nation states are within Indigenous nations. Nation states are best viewed as brokers of Indigenous political affairs whose mediation and representation were never consented to by Indigenous nations and can never really be terminated, especially in the near term. Based on this understanding, I defend a set of responsibilities to Indigenous nations that nation states must honor because of their nonconsensual but permanent embeddedness in Indigenous political affairs. The arguments in this presentation are situated practically in relation to climate change adaptation issues.

Oct. 19, 2012 - G.R.F. Ferrari (Berkeley)
"The Philosophic Life in Ancient Greece"
also supported by the Wilson Center for the Humanities and Arts

In this talk I defend the way of life recommended by the Greek philosophers from the charge that it lacks humanity or fellow-feeling, and contrast it favorably with the way of life proposed in the typical modern self-help book. The problem I address is this: If what counts for the philosopher is achieving, through a process of self-perfection, a happiness that cannot be disrupted by what others do or by what happens to others, why should the philosopher care at all about the happiness of others? To explain why the philosopher should and does in fact feel concern for others, I consider the philosophic life in terms of a model that the Greek philosophers might themselves have used, had it been available to them: the model provided by a certain kind of computer game. Which kind? I'll leave the answer to that question for the talk.

Nov. 9, 2012 - Lara Denis (Agnes Scott)
"Proper Self-Esteem and Duties to Oneself"

This paper explores the relation between self-esteem and self-regarding duties in Kant’s ethical thought. I am particularly interested in the connection between Kant’s positions (first) that the "self-regarding duties are the … principium of all morality" (Lectures on Ethics, Collins, AA 27:343-4) and (second) that the "principium of the self-regarding duties … [consists] in self-esteem" (AA 27:347). After delineating several notions and facets of Kant’s conception of proper self-esteem, I will elucidate the main relations of self-esteem and self-regarding duties, especially insofar as they bear on the primacy of duties to oneself. Time permitting, I will then confront three interwoven, controversial elements of Kant’s discussion of duties to oneself as essentially pertaining to self-esteem: Kant’s claims that by violating one’s duties to oneself one forfeits one’s claim to demand others’ respect, that one has a self-regarding duty to demand respectful treatment from others, and that morally requisite self-respect may require an action or omission (e.g., in defense of one’s honor) which has one’s own death as a foreseeable consequence.

Nov. 30, 2012 - Carrie Ichakawa Jenkins (U British Columbia)
also supported by the Wilson Center for the Humanities and Arts
Feb. 15, 2013 - Robert Brandom (Pittsburgh)

"Some Post-Davidsonian Elements of Hegel's Theory of Agency"
also supported by the Wilson Center for the Humanities and Arts

April 5, 2013 - Michael Friedman (Stanford)
also supported by the Center for the Humanities and Arts

Alva Noe (Berkeley)