# GRADUATE STUDENTS

## CONFERENCE DIRECTORS

Celso Neto
Justin Caouette

## SPEAKERS

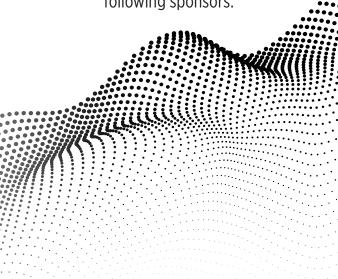Douglas Grattan II
Joshua Stein
Kevin Mills
Matthew Scarfone
Tara Weese

## COMMENTATORS

Alison McConwell
Bokai Yao
Brandon Beasley
Celso Neto
Justin Caouette

## SESSION CHAIRS

Brian Hanley
Celso Neto
Evangelian Collings
Justin Caouette
Oliver Lean
Shelley Hulbert

**UNIVERSITY OF CALGARY**
Department of Philosophy

**UNIVERSITY OF CALGARY**
FACULTY OF ARTS

Canadian Journal of Philosophy

# ETHICS
in the age of
# SCIENCE

**May 3 — 4, 2017**
SS 1253

# WEDNESDAY, MAY 3

**9:30 - 10 a.m.**
Reception

**10 - 11:30 a.m.**
**KEYNOTE** Katrina Sifferd, Elmhurst College.
"The Responsible Brain"
*Chair: Celso Neto, University of Calgary*

**11:30 a.m. - 12:30 p.m.**
**Tara Weese, Duke University. "Can We Forgive Andrea Yates?"**
Commentator: Justin Caouette, University of Calgary
*Chair: Soohyun Ahn, University of Calgary*

**12:30 - 2 p.m.**
Lunch

**2 - 3 p.m.**
**Kevin Mills, Indiana University. "The Role of Science in Kantian Ethics"**
Commentator: Brandon Beasley, University of Calgary
*Chair: Shelley Hulbert, University of Calgary*

**3 - 4:30 p.m.**
**Douglas Grattan II, Colorado State University. "Changes and Limits in Understanding, Cognition, and Emotion: An Argument for Animals as Moral Agents"**
Commentator: Alison McConwell, University of Calgary
*Chair: Brian Hanley, University of Calgary*

**4:30 - 6 p.m.**
**KEYNOTE** Gregg Caruso, SUNY-Corning. "Criminal Punishment in the Age of Science: Free Will Skepticism and the public-health quarantine model"
*Chair: Justin Caouette, University of Calgary*

**6 - 7 p.m.**
Reception (department lounge)

## allen habib
*Blade Runner: Reading Robots as Race*

In the film robots are distinguished from people via the 'Voight-Kampff test'. This is (ostensibly) a test of autonomic reactions in response to a series of questions, very much like a contemporary polygraph (lie-detector) test. The nature of this test can thus inform our understanding of the crucial differences between people and robots. There are a variety of things that the test might be seeking, corresponding to different views on this issue. We might think that the underlying difference is cognitive, or emotional, or a matter of consciousness, or historical/mnemonic, or some combination of these. I survey these possible readings, and I note the relationship between this (narratively imagined) test and Alan Turing's 'conversation game' at the heart of the so-called 'Turing test' for machine intelligence.

## samir chopra
*Taking the Moral Stance: Morality, Robots, and the Moral Stance*

This question is most perspicuously framed as the question of whether a robot can be a moral agent. Further, as the ascription of agency is dependent on the successful ascription of an appropriate set of beliefs and desires to a putative intentional entity, and because a moral agent is a kind of intentional agent, robots can be considered moral agents if they are reckoned as intentional agents displaying direction of their actions by a set of beliefs and desires termed moral. The best strategy for such ascriptions is that of the intentional stance. Thus, my claim is that the ascription of morality to robots depends (just like it does in the case of human beings) on the identification and ascription of moral mental states. To accomplish this we should draw on the well-established battery of techniques of folk psychology, ignore worries about internal constitution, subjective perspectives, and intrinsic properties, and concentrate on linguistic assertions and behavioral evidence. Quine and Davidson made famous the field linguist's task of constructing translation manuals to determine a foreign race's beliefs and language. I draw upon the image of a field moralist studying aliens to determine whether they have morality akin to ours. The field moralist's best resource will be the framework of agency, intentionality, and rationality provided by the intentional stance. As such, she should engage in moral folk psychology, the most perspicuous strategy available to her. And to us, as we prepare for our encounter with the morality of robots.

## gregg caruso
*Criminal Punishment in the Age of Science*

I begin by briefly sketching my arguments for free will skepticism, which are hard incompatibilist (see Caruso 2012; Pereboom 2001, 2014). I contend that our best philosophical and scientific theories about the world indicate that free will skepticism is the most justified position to adopt. I then further argue that it is important to acknowledge that even if one is not convinced by the arguments for free will skepticism, it is still unclear whether retributive punishment is justified. Punishment inflicts harm on individuals and the justification for such harm must meet a high epistemic standard. If it is significantly probable that one's justification for harming another is unsound, then, prima facie, that behavior is seriously wrong. Yet the justification for retributive harm provided by both libertarians and compatibilists, I contend, face powerful and unresolved objections and as a result fall far short of the high epistemic bar needed to justify such harms. After making my case against retributivism, I turn my attention to some recent work in moral and political psychology that points to the potential dark side of belief in free will. These findings, I contend, indicate that the notion of just deserts tends to do more harm than good and often leads to excessively punitive practices. Finally, I conclude by sketching and defending my non-retributive approach to criminal behavior—the public health-quarantine model (Caruso 2016; Pereboom and Caruso 2017). I argue that the model not only provides a framework for justifying the incapacitation of dangerous criminals that is consistent with free will skepticism, it is also more humane than retributivism, preferable to other non-retributive alternatives, and more systematic and holistic in its approach to addressing criminal behavior.

## katrina sifferd
*The Responsible Brain*

In this talk I will advocate for a unique 'reasons' theory of responsibility that emphasizes the way in which executive functions in the brain are vital to reasons-responsiveness and volitional control (Fischer& Ravizza, 1998; Vargas, 2013). Second, I will argue that the folk concepts crucial to the criminal law implicitly track these executive functions, and that cases of legal excuse often apply to defendants suffering from abnormal executive capacities. Third, I will argue for a diachronic understanding of the way in which executive functions underpin responsible agency. Executive capacities operate over time in a way that enables agents to manipulate their own psychological structures and environments, and thus their responses to the environment. I will argue that self-control practices such as habituation of dispositions to act (Annas, 2011; Aristotle, 1985) are an important means for an agent to exercise a compatibilist 'free will worth wanting' (Dennett, 1984) such that the agent can be said to be responsible for their choices (Roskies, 2012, 2016) and deemed culpable under the law.

# THURSDAY, MAY 4

**9:30 - 10 a.m.**
Reception

**10 - 11:30 a.m.**
**KEYNOTE** Allen Habib, University of Calgary.
"Blade Runner: Reading Robots as Race"
*Chair: Celso Neto, University of Calgary*

**11:30 a.m. - 12:30 p.m.**
**Joshua Stein, University of Calgary. "Normativity and the manifested image in the medical practice"**
Commentator: Celso Neto, University of Calgary
*Chair: Oliver Lean, University of Calgary*

**12:30 - 2 p.m.**
Lunch

**2 - 3 p.m.**
**Matthew Scarfone, McGill University. "Normative Ethics and Evolutionary Debunking"**
Commentator: Bokai Yao, University of Calgary
*Chair: Evangelian Collings, University of Calgary*

**3 - 4:30 p.m.**
**KEYNOTE** Samir Chopra, CUNY. "Taking the Moral Stance: Morality, Robots, and the Moral Stance"
*Chair: Justin Caouette, University of Calgary*

**4:30 - 7 p.m.**
Final reception and dinner