



CHARLES PHELPS

TAFT  
RESEARCH  
CENTER

ANNUAL  
RESEARCH  
SYMPOSIUM

*March 9th-13th, 2015*



## REBECCA SANDERS

### *Getting Away With Torture: The Dynamics of Rule Evasion in the "Global War on Terror"*

The prohibition on torture in international and American law is universal and absolute. Nonetheless, it is well established that after 9/11, the United States subjected detainees to extensive abuses. The architects of these "enhanced interrogation techniques" have escaped prosecution and sanction, raising questions about the efficacy of legal rules and broader human rights norms as checks on state violence. This presentation explores varying modalities of rule evasion, arguing that government lawyers have engaged in legal interpretations to facilitate human rights violations.



### INTERLOCUTOR / CLIFFORD BOB

Clifford Bob is a Professor and Raymond J. Kelley Endowed Chair in International Relations at the Graduate Center for Social and Public Policy at Duquesne University. He is a leading scholar of global human rights politics. His publications include *The Global Right Wing and the Clash of World Politics* (Cambridge University Press, 2012), *The International Struggle for New Human Rights* (University of Pennsylvania Press, 2009), and *The Marketing of Rebellion: Insurgents, Media, and International Activism* (Cambridge University Press, 2005), which won the International Studies Association 2007 Best Book Award. *International Activism* (Cambridge University Press, 2005), which won the International Studies Association 2007 Best Book Award, as well as numerous peer reviewed articles.



## PETER LANGLAND-HASSAN

### *Imagination Reimagined*

Imagination allows us to transcend the here and now, and to step outside of our beliefs to inhabit other perspectives. The remarkable power, flexibility, and creativity of imagination has led most philosophers and psychologists to conceive of imagining as a distinct cognitive ability that is unconstrained by, and irreducible to, our ordinary beliefs, desires, and practical reasoning capacities. These theorists find imagination to be irreducible in the sense that we could give a person her full complement of beliefs and desires, together with the ability to use such states in practical reasoning, without yet having given her the ability to imagine. In the book I am developing, I seek to overturn this picture of imagination by showing how imagining is a mental activity that is fully entwined with and inextricable from our ordinary beliefs and desires. We use our beliefs and desires in order to imagine, I argue, and do not in the process enter into *sui generis* mental states that are distinctive only of imagination. A great advantage of this approach is that, once we understand how to model, within a naturalistic framework, the less mysterious states of belief and desire, we know how to model imagination as well.



### INTERLOCUTOR / JONATHAN M. WEINBERG

Jonathan M. Weinberg is Associate Professor of Philosophy at Arizona University. He has published widely on issues in the philosophy of mind, aesthetics, and philosophy of cognitive science. He is the author of several important papers on the cognitive architecture of imagination and the relation of imagination to aesthetic appreciation. Weinberg is also at the center of a current debate in philosophy over the role of intuition in philosophical argument.





## ZVI BIENER

*Organizing the Disciplines: Philosophical Systems, Applied Mathematics, and the Geometrical Manner in Early Modernity.*

How are academic disciplines related to one another? Since the 19th century, a common assumption has been that the disciplines are relatively independent. This is why 'interdisciplinarity' is important to us and why we applaud those who realize it—they seem to overcome some intellectual (and certainly social) barrier. But this was not always the case. The project of constructing a complete system of knowledge—a system capable of integrating all that is and could possibly be known in a single edifice—was common to many early-modern philosophers. The inspiration for this project often came from geometry and, in particular, applied geometry. My project examines why the applied sciences were so important to the construction of philosophical systems, how those systems integrated disparate fields, how this should alter the historiography of early-modern philosophy, and what we may learn about interdisciplinarity itself from our predecessors.



## INTERLOCUTOR / BRANDON C. LOOK

Brandon Look is University Research Professor and Chair at the University of Kentucky. His work focuses on the history of modern philosophy, especially on the metaphysics, epistemology and natural philosophy of Leibniz and Kant. He has published several monographs on the subject, a critical edition of the Leibniz-Des Bosses correspondence, and is currently at work on *Leibniz, Kant and the Possibility of Metaphysics*, which details Kant's critical reaction to Leibniz's philosophy.



## BRIANNA LEAVITT-ALCÁNTARA

*Alone at the Altar: Gender, Devotion, and Marriage in a Guatemalan City, 1670-1870*

This project reframes our understanding of single women and religious culture in colonial and nineteenth-century Latin America. Scholarly and popular portrayals of women in colonial Latin America generally assume that women had two honorable options: marriage or the convent. Historians thus typically describe single and widowed women as symbols of marginality and disorder who were more vulnerable to suspicions of religious "deviance." My book examines another side to this story in the specific context of Guatemala City, the colonial capital of Central America. I explore how single and widowed women navigated the tensions and contradictions within religious gender ideals and ultimately shaped Guatemala City's urban religious culture during the pivotal period of late colonial reforms, Independence, and nation formation.



## INTERLOCUTOR / DR. GRETCHEN STARR-LEBEAU

Dr. Gretchen Starr-LeBeau is an Associate Professor of History at the University of Kentucky. She is the author of *In the Shadow of the Virgin* (Princeton, 2008). Her work has been funded by the Fulbright Commission (1993-1994), the National Endowment for the Humanities (2001), the Program for Cultural Cooperation between Spain's Ministry of Education, Culture, and Sports and US Universities (2003, 2006), and the American Philosophical Society (2010-2011).

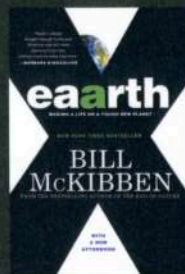




## KEYNOTE SPEAKER

*Bill McKibben*

Bill McKibben is an author and environmentalist. His 1989 book *The End of Nature* is regarded as the first book for a general audience about climate change, and has appeared in 24 languages. He is founder of 350.org, the first planet-wide, grassroots climate change movement. The Schumann Distinguished Scholar in Environmental Studies at Middlebury College and a fellow of the American Academy of Arts and Sciences, he was the 2013 winner of the Gandhi Prize and the Thomas Merton Prize, and holds honorary degrees from 18 colleges and universities; Foreign Policy named him to their inaugural list of the world's 100 most important global thinkers, and the Boston Globe said he was "probably America's most important environmentalist." A former staff writer for the New Yorker, he writes frequently a wide variety of publications around the world, including the New York Review of Books, National Geographic, and Rolling Stone. He lives in the mountains above Lake Champlain with his wife, the writer Sue Halpern.



## JANA BRAZIEL

*Necropolitical War  
Machines in Cité Soleil*

In "Necropolitical War Machines in Cité Soleil," I address the myriad, interlocking forms of violent "traffic" (in drugs, guns, and political street warfare) in Port-au-Prince as depicted in Danish film director Asger Leth's *Ghosts of Cité Soleil* (2005). First, I conceptualize Port-au-Prince as a biopolitical city and Cité Soleil as its dark underbelly where necropolitical warfare was waged. I thus theorize Port-au-Prince (under United Nations "peace-keeping" forces and its "Empire of NGOs") as the international production of a "biopolitical city"; and Cité Soleil, the militarized battle zone of a biopolitical Port-au-Prince, then became the impoverished and abjectly poor neighborhood where necropolitical warfare was waged in the streets.



## INTERLOCUTOR / ALEXANDER G. WEHELIYE

Alexander G. Weheliye is Professor of African American Studies at Northwestern University. He is the author of *Phonographies: Grooves in Sonic Afro-Modernity* (Duke University Press, 2005), which was awarded The Modern Language Association's William Sanders Scarborough Prize for Outstanding Scholarly Study of Black American Literature or Culture. In addition he is the author of *Habeas Viscus: Racializing Assemblages, Biopolitics, and Black Feminist Theories of the Human* (2014, Duke UP).



KEYNOTE SPEAKER

*The Taft Research Center in collaboration with UC Sustainability is very excited to introduce this year's Symposium*  
**Keynote Speaker: BILL MCKIBBEN**

