## Fall Graduate Philosophical Conference Schedule

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Time</th>
<th>Room 203 BCSB</th>
<th>Room 205 BCSB</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>9:15 - 9:45</td>
<td></td>
<td>Bagels and Coffee</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9:45 - 10:45</td>
<td></td>
<td>Samuel Taylor &quot;Putting it in Perspective&quot;</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>11:55 - 1:30</td>
<td>Lunch</td>
<td>Lunch</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1:30 - 2:30</td>
<td>Hannibal Jackson &quot;Undermining van Inwagen's Defence Against the Problem of Evil&quot;</td>
<td>John Depoe &quot;The Bayesian and the Skeptic&quot;</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2:40 - 3:40</td>
<td>Abe Graber &quot;Affording Direct Perception&quot;</td>
<td>Jeremy Shipley &quot;Varying Variance (Invariantly)&quot;</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**KEYNOTE SPEAKER:**
Marc Alspector-Kelly
Departments of Philosophy
Western Michigan University
“Why You Might as Well Deny Knowledge Closure”
4:00 pm, Saturday, December 5th
205 BCSB
Presentation Abstracts

Samuel Taylor – “Putting it in Perspective: Responding to Bergmann’s Dilemma for Internalism”
Abstract: One of the main motivations for internalism in epistemology – understood as a theory of epistemic justification that imposes an awareness requirement – is what Michael Bergmann calls the Subject’s Perspective Objection (SPO). The main idea is that unless a believer has an awareness of what their belief has going for it, the belief’s truth is accidental from their perspective. Bergmann argues that internalists face a dilemma: 1) either the awareness is strong and leads to a vicious regress, and consequently skepticism or 2) the awareness is weak and cannot meet the SPO, leaving internalism unmotivated. In this paper I argue that Bergmann has not adequately considered what is required for a justificatory feature to be part of a subject’s perspective; moreover, I suggest that non-conceptual awareness of a justificatory feature is sufficient for its being included in a subject’s perspective, and therefore non-conceptual awareness of a justificatory relationship between an experience and a belief will allow the internalist to meet the SPO while avoiding vicious regress and skepticism.

Abstract: Churchland’s account of the semantics of neural networks depends on distributed representation, where the content of a vector space is determined solely by its topological relations to other state-space regions. A consequence of this is that individual dimensions of the state-space are not semantically interpretable. Prinz draws on the relationships between prototypes and features in the psychology literature to argue that semantically uninterpretable dimensions are irreconcilable with empirical data (and with our basic and apparent cognitive capacities), and hence that Churchland’s semantic holism is unacceptable. For Prinz, this lacuna invites a concept empiricism that grounds the semantics in feature-based dimensions. Prinz’s argument, however, depends on an equivocation on decomposition: it is an unwarranted assumption that the conceptual or linguistic capacity for reflective decomposition of prototypes is interdependent with the semantic decomposition of state-space content vehicles into feature dimensions. Prototype concepts with a holistic semantics can exhibit features in just the way Prinz is detailing, consistent with feature-prototype relationships demonstrated empirically and with Churchland’s semantic holism. Furthermore, the alleged dependence of feature processing on semantic decomposition is belied by the results from existing connectionist systems. The partitioning of activation patterns in the hidden layers of well-known connectionist networks seem to directly contravene Prinz’s objection, as the resulting partitions appear to be semantically interpretable and decomposable despite the fact that individual dimensions do not map to features.

Hannibal Jackson – “Undermining van Inwagen’s Defense Against the Problem of Evil”
Abstract: Peter van Inwagen in his book The Problem of Evil argues that the existence of God and the existence of evil can be reconciled. He attempts to do this by presenting a version of the free will defense in which God follows a plan to save humanity after the Fall described in the Bible. In this paper I will criticize van Inwagen’s defense on three issues: whether van Inwagen can establish the concept of free will that he needs for his defense, whether this defense has God treating humans in an appropriately loving manner, and whether different stories could represent better options for God. First I will argue that van Inwagen does not establish that the libertarian concept of free will is correct, without which his story will not work. Next I will contend that van Inwagen’s God treats humanity as a whole instead of as individuals, a way of acting that I maintain is incompatible with God’s omnibenevolence. Finally I will suggest three stories about how God could save humanity: first, that God could terrorize humanity into turning to Him; second, that God could distribute suffering to humans according to their actions – those who do bad actions suffer more; third, God actively proclaims His existence and love for humanity. These three stories, I will argue, are at least as plausible as van Inwagen’s. In the end I will argue that these objections undermine van Inwagen’s defense in its aim to be plausible to neutral agnostics.

John Depoe – “The Bayesian and the Skeptic”
Abstract: One way to construe the epistemological challenge of skepticism is to question how we can be justified from the first-person perspective in believing that the external world exists. I argue in this essay that the skeptical challenge can be met by making use of probabilistic inferential forms such as Bayes’s theorem. On the one hand, there are barebones skeptical hypotheses, which I argue do not adequately explain the evidence of our sensory states of mind. On the other hand, there are robust skeptical hypotheses, which I contend lack ontological and explanatory simplicity. The hypothesis of the external world, then, turns out to be more probable than any skeptical competitor. The skeptical challenge, therefore, can be met by one who is willing to endorse Bayesian principles of inference.
Abe Graber – "Affording Direct Perception"
Abstract: Chemero’s argument for his non-representational radical embodied cognitive science rests on the ability to cash out the notions of direct perception and affordances. Chemero defines an affordance as a relationship that exists between a feature of the environment and the abilities of the perceiver. If one accepts the presumably uncontroversial claim that perception of a relationship requires perception of the relata Chemero is faced with two distinct problems. First, how can one perceive one’s own abilities? Second, if the only perceivable things are affordances then in what sense can one perceive the relata of the relationship which constitutes an affordance?

Jeremy Shipley – “Varying Variance (Invariantly)”
Abstract: There’s recently been a good deal of discussion among epistemologists about “pragmatic encroachment”, the idea that whether a subject knows P is sensitive to the stakes in that subject’s acting as if P. Jeremy Fantl and Matthew McGrath have argued that intuitions in encroachment cases are best explained by an independently motivated knowledge-action norm, which in turn motivates a version of subject-sensitive invariantism (where the sensitivity is to the subject’s stakes in acting as if P). This is a problem for stable invariantists (viz., evidentialists), but I argue that if the view is that there’s a stakes sensitive epistemic probability threshold for knowledge then the evidentialist can avoid the pragmatist conclusion. I then shift focus from traditional epistemology to decision-theoretic formal epistemology. After discussing some of the virtues of decision making with imprecise probabilities I explain, in particular, the imprecise Dirichlet model (IDM) and discuss some of its nice properties. I’m especially interested in the choice of a "hyper-parameter" that must be made in setting up an IDM: the choice of variance. I then argue that the choice of variance should be stakes sensitive in a way that blocks the evidentialist’s way out of the pragmatist’s version of subject-sensitive invariantism. Whether a subject knows some odds on P to be advantageous depends on what the subject stands to lose.

KEYNOTE SPEAKER:
Marc Alspector-Kelly
Western Michigan University
“Why You Might as Well Deny Knowledge Closure”
Abstract: Knowledge closure is, or at least is in the vicinity of, the following claim: necessarily, for every agent W and propositions P and Q, if W knows P, knows that P implies Q, and believes Q because it is so implied, then W knows Q. There is a widespread conviction to which closure advocates very often appeal in support of closure, notwithstanding the existence of certain prima facie examples of closure failure. In order to mobilize that conviction in response to those examples, it must of course sensibly apply to those examples as well as to the run-of-the-mill cases in which closure is intuitively not violated. I will argue that, on a wide range of epistemological views, it is not so applicable. So advocates of those views might as well deny closure.