**DAY I – THURSDAY, JULY 25, 2019 - PARK HALL 141**

**DEATH**

**9:30-10:00** Breakfast

**10:00-11:00** Travis Timmerman (Seton Hall) “The Timing Problem is Not a Problem”

*Abstract*: Deprivationists hold that death is bad for the person who dies because, and to the extent that, it deprives them of the net good they would have accrued were their actual death not to occur. The Timing Problem is thought to be the biggest challenge facing deprivationism. That is, deprivationists face the challenge of locating the time that death is bad for a person. Every possible answer to this question has been defended in the literature, yet each answer can seemingly be shown to be subject to compelling objections. In this paper, I argue that the force of the Timing Problem is illusory. Specifically, I argue that the problem, as formulated in the literature, is underspecificed. Any adequately precise form of the question “When is death bad for the person who dies?” is one to which deprivationists have a clear, decisive, and unproblematic answer.

*Bio*: Travis Timmerman is an Assistant Professor of Philosophy at Seton Hall University. His work primarily focuses on death, the actualism/possibilism debate in ethics, global poverty, and animal welfare. Presentations at the University at Buffalo that have turned into publications include The Problem with Person-Rearing Accounts of Moral Status (co-authored with Bob Fischer) in Thought (2019), A Dilemma for Epicureanism in Philosophical Studies (2019), Save (Some of) the Children in Philosophia and You’re Probably Not Really A Speciesist in Pacific Philosophical Quarterly (2018). He owes much of his success in publishing these papers to the excellent comments he received from his fellow Romanell Center colleagues and to the journal referees who were too lazy or incompetent to catch the numerous devastating mistakes contained in each of the aforementioned papers.

**11:00-11:15** Break

**11:15-12:15** Jim Delaney (Niagara University) “Hope, Unrealistic Optimism & Autonomy”

*Abstract*: In medical ethics, there is an important distinction between a patient’s or research subject’s being realistically hopeful and her being “unrealistically optimistic.” The latter state can also be expressed as “self deception” or as “being in denial.” Generally speaking, being realistically hopeful is thought to be a positive state, one to be encouraged. Additionally, the loss of all hope is complete despair or perhaps complete apathy, states that we want patients to avoid. Thus in medicine and in general, we encourage people to “never give up hope.” By contrast, being unrealistically optimistic is normally understood as a negative state, and traditionally one that healthcare professionals ought to correct in their patients. One standard argument for this traditional view is that unrealistic optimism is bad because it undermines patient autonomy. In this paper, I defend this argument against a recent challenge. I therefore conclude that respect for patient autonomy remains a significant concern for patients who are unrealistically optimistic.

*Bio*: James Delaney is a Professor of philosophy and director of the Ostapenko Center for Ethics in Medicine and Healthcare at Niagara University. He works primarily in ethics and bioethics. Remarkably, some of his previous PANTC/Romanell papers have been published in respectable journals. He attributes this to the quality of the feedback he gets from the much brighter members of the Romanell Center.

**12:15-1:00** Lunch

**1:00-2:00** Tim Madigan (Saint John Fisher College) “When a Body Meets a Body: The Ethics of Displaying Human Cadavers”

*Abstract*: Robert Louis Stevenson’s “The Body Snatcher” and Mary Shelley’s Frankenstein both address the very real phenomenon of body snatching (best exemplified by the real-life case of Burke and Hare, the “resurrection men”) which was endemic in early 18th century England. I will discuss the medical demands for cadavers, as well as the interesting reasons why the philosopher Jeremy Bentham had his body put on display in the front foyer of the University of London shortly after his death in 1832, where it still remains, as an attempt to encourage people to donate their bodies to science. I will also address recent examples of “body snatching” in cases where human remains and tissues have been stolen and sold for profit, as well as the phenomenon of such exhibits as Gunther van Hagens’ “Body Worlds” – should cadavers be displayed and, if so, what – if any – should be the ethical limitations on such practices? In particular, what role does consent play when it is obvious that the dead can’t consent?

*Bio*: Timothy J. Madigan is Professor and Chair of Philosophy at St. John Fisher College in Rochester, New York, and the founder of its Irish Studies Program. He received his Ph.D. degree in philosophy from the State University of New York at Buffalo, as well as M.A. and B.A. degrees from the same institution. Dr. Madigan is the author of W. K. Clifford and “The Ethics of Belief” (Cambridge Scholars Publishing, 2010); and co-author of Friendship & Happiness and the Connection Between Them (McFarland, 2017), Lessons Learned from Popular Culture (SUNY Press, 2016), The Sociology of Sports: An Introduction (McFarland, 2015), Beyond Sustainability: A Thriving Environment (McFarland, 2014), and Sports: Why People Love Them! (University Press of America, 2009). He is also an editor of A Global Perspective on Friendship and Happiness (Vernon Press, 2018), Bertrand Russell: Public Intellectual (Tiger Bark Press, 2016), Lucretius: His Continuing Influence and Contemporary Relevance (RIT Press, 2011), and Promethean Love (Cambridge Scholars Press, 2008). Dr. Madigan’s areas of interest include Medical Ethics, Political Philosophy, Philosophy of Religion, and Popular Culture and Philosophy. He is a Fellow of the University at Buffalo’s Romanell Center for Clinical Ethics and the Philosophy of Medicine, the President of the Bertrand Russell Society, and the former President of the Northeast Popular Culture Association. He received the St. John Fisher College Trustees’ Distinguished Scholars Award for 2013, a Moore Institute Fellowship from the National University of Ireland-Galway in 2015, and a Richmond Fellowship from Richmond University in Rome, Italy in 2018.

**2:00-2:15** Break

**2:15-3:15** Phil Reed (Canisius College) “Suicide by Doc”

*Abstract*: I argue in this paper that voluntary euthanasia is suicide. When a doctor (or other third party) kills you with your consent, you have committed suicide despite the fact that we would not typically describe this occurrence as a suicide. I observe several important consequences of this position for matters related to assisted death.

*Bio*: Philip Reed is an Associate Professor of Philosophy at Canisius College, where he works on ethics, applied ethics, and moral psychology. He recently agreed to be Chair of his department despite hearing David Hershenov complain about being Chair for years. His and Hershenov’s paper, “How Not to Defend the Unborn,” will be published posthumously in Journal of Medicine and Philosophy. His 2017 Romanell Conference paper was also accepted by the same journal and will be published in their special Editor’s Confidential Collection edition. His 2018 Romanell Conference paper, “How Suicide and Assisted Suicide Overlap,” currently has two outstanding R&Rs, neither of which is at JMP. His 2016 Romanell Conference paper, “Is ‘Aid-in-Dying’ Suicide?” was finally published this year in Theoretical Medicine and Bioethics after spending years being rejected by many fine journals (though not by JMP). Even getting the paper in TMB required a stringent review process by the managing editor. A condensed, popular version of that paper was published in a local newspaper, which provoked a letter to the editor accusing Reed of being a pompous, self-congratulatory associate professor who sets foot in the homes of other people and tells them they have to suffer because of his religion. However, in September he will be promoted to full professor.

**3:15-3:30** Break

**3:30-4:30** Adam Taylor (University of North Dakota, Fargo) "Death, Immortality, and Monism about Persons”

*Abstract*: Pluralism About Persons (PAP) is the view according to which the basic ontology (whether we conceive of it as essentially physical, or mental, or some combination of these) contains a plurality of personal subjects that can possess properties but are not themselves properties of any more fundamental being(s). Monism About Persons (MAP) is the view according to which the basic ontology contains only a single personal subject. Nihilism About Persons (NAP) is the view according to which the basic ontology contains no personal subjects. Contemporary debates in metaphysics and bioethics largely assume PAP, while Humean and Buddhist thinkers have favored NAP, but recent work on monism, panpsychism, and cosmopsychism have begun to make MAP seem more attractive. MAP has a surprisingly respectable philosophical pedigree both in the West and in the Advaita Vedanta tradition of Indian philosophy. In section 1, I discuss some recent work on monism, cosmopsychism, and panpsychism, and show how it supports MAP. In section 2, I discuss in very basic terms the ontology of Advaita Vedanta and its conception of the human person. In section 3, I suggest some revisions to the traditional view. In section 4, I conclude by discussion how we might apply MAP to some contemporary bioethical questions involving death and immortality. If MAP is true, then I will suggest, that (i) death is not intrinsically harmful to persons (though for reasons very different from those of Epicurus), (ii) contra Williams et al immortality does not imply tedium/boredom.

*Bio*: Adam Taylor is a UB Philosophy alumnus (2014). Since 2013, he has been a full-time Lecturer in philosophy and ethics at North Dakota State University in Fargo. He also serves as a scholar the Northern Plains Ethics Institute at NDSU and member of the Romanell Center for Clinical Ethics and the Philosophy of Medicine at UB. His primary research interests include fundamental ontology, personal identity, ethics (particularly well-being), Indian Philosophy, and disagreeing vehemently with any view defended by Stephen Kershnar. He wishes to make it clear that the highly speculative metaphysical views he will be discussing in his talk are relatively recent developments that should in no way reflect on the quality of his graduate training, they did their best.

**4:30-4:45** Break

**4:45-6:15** Keynote John Martin Fischer (UC Riverside). "To the Edge of the Universe: The Trip of an After-lifetime”

*Abstract*: Most people who have had near-death experiences (NDEs) interpret them "supernaturalistically" (as showing that the mind separates itself from the body and then takes a voyage to a heavenly realm). Two famous recent books are: Proof of Heaven and Heaven is for Real. Near-death experiences are indeed "real"--they really occur with the contents reported by those who have these experiences. But do they establish that the mind is a soul that is not identical to the brain? Do they show that "heaven is for real" and that there is an afterlife? I address these questions and provide a novel interpretation of NDEs--an interpretation that takes the reports seriously and respects the sincerity of NDErs, but also offers a naturalistic approach to these fascinating phenomena.

*Bio*: John Fischer is a Distinguished Professor of Philosophy at the University of California, Riverside, where he is a University Professor in the University of California. He was the Project Leader of the Immortality Project, funded by the John Templeton Foundation (2012-15). He is the author, most recently, of Near-Death Experiences: Understanding Visions of the Afterlife (Oxford University Press, 2016) [with Benjamin Mitchell-Yellin]; and Death, Immortality, and Meaning in Life (Oxford University Press, 2020--but it is out already [time travel?})

**DAY II – FRIDAY, JULY 26, 2019 - PARK HALL 141**

**IDENTITY**

**9:30-10:00** Breakfast

**10:00-11:15** Jonathan Vajda (UB Grad Student) – “Creating Human/Non-Human Chimeras”

*Abstract:* I argue that prohibitions against acts of creating, researching, and organ harvesting from human-nonhuman chimeras may be justified in virtue of certain rights holders. I consider some potential justifications for prohibition, but find them to be ineffective. Some of these justifications find a parallel in arguments against stem cell research or against abortion. Yet in the case of chimera creation and research, prohibitions may be warranted in light of unique problems at the intersection of non-human animal ethics and person-based ethics. From these latter considerations, I defend the view that (a) in some cases, chimeras ought to be protected from being used in research or for organ harvesting, and (b) in some cases, chimeras ought not be created with the intended purpose of use in research or organ harvesting.

*Bio:*  Bio: Jonathan Vajda is a PhD candidate in philosophy at University at Buffalo. While he has attended countless talks funded by Romanell in the past, all such cases, without exception, are liable to be construed nothing less than mooching. He holds an MA in philosophy at Western Michigan University, and an MA in religion from Westminster Theological Seminary; this has lead David Hershenov to believe that Jonathan should know better. Jonathan's research interests are largely historical (early modern metaphysics as it relates to medieval realism about universals), but he appears to pretend to be interested in biomedical ethics for the sake of Romanell finger foods and because he has some delusion about his future prospects on the academic job market. He also does adequate professional work in applied ontology. He is a research assistant to two professors who do not want to be named in this

**11:15-11:30** Break

**11:30-12:45** Barry Smith (SUNY Distinguished Professor of Philosophy and Julian Park Chair) “Minds made of Software vs. Minds made of Flesh”

*Abstract*: The proponents of Transhumanism sometimes argue that human immortality will one day be achieved, because we will one day be in a position to download the contents of our brains into a computer. We would then, somehow, live on, perhaps in the manner of Neo in The Matrix, engaging in endless virtual kickboxing contests with the virus-like Agent Smith. This scenario assumes, however, that human personality, intentions and motives are the sorts of things that can be captured in a digital artifact in such a way that they could, as it were, live on, seamlessly, after the downloading has taken place. This assumption is total nonsense. I will provide arguments against this assumption, drawing on the many impediments already identified to building computers that would manifest human-like behavior.

*Bio*: Barry Smith works on ontology in a variety of areas, currently including proteomics, intelligence analysis, and digital manufacturing.

**12:45-2:45** Lunch and Discussion of John Fischer’s “Responsibility and Autonomy: the Problem of Mission Creep” and “The Frankfurt-Style Cases: Extinguishing the Flickers of Freedom”

**2:45-3:00** Break

**3:00-4:15** David Hershenov (UB Philosophy) “Thinking Animals or Thinking Brains?”

*Abstract*: Unlike the other presentations at this year’s Romanell conference, David Hershenov’s paper cannot be distilled into a brief summary that does justice to its depth, scope, originality, intricacy, and insight. But after Steve Kershnar begged him for an advance copy so he could spend weeks studying it - Kershnar feared the paper would destroy all of his assumptions about personal identity - he decided to use Kershnar’s own caricature of his seminal work taken from Kershnar’s feeble response. Kershnar wrote: “Hershenov claims that it is the animal, not a part such as the brain or cerebrum that strictly produces thought. Hershenov argues that if people are not animals, but small proper parts of animals, then pace McMahan and Parfit, there is still a threat of spatially coincident thinkers. This can only be avoided at the cost of the sparsest of ontologies, one in which there are no larger entities that can become reduced to the size of the brain or cerebrum-size thinker. Likewise, there can’t be any smaller entities like cerebral hemispheres that the brain or cerebrum can be reduced to in size. This will be a rather implausible ontology as such thinkers won’t fit well into the natural world, meet traditional independence or unity criteria for being substances, nor provide a compositional principle with causal glue. The intuitive support that cerebrum transplants and dicephalic twins provide for identifying ourselves with our brain parts is less than the advocates of embedded minds claim. Not only can alternative thought experiments elicit intuitions to the contrary, the Embodied Mind View runs afoul on the only x and y rule in fission cases, while Animalism does not. The importance of the brain in the production of thought has been confused with its being the thinker. There is no way to distinguish parts of the animal being directly involved in the production of thought from those animal parts that are not.”

*Bio*: Although a very good philosopher, David Hershenov is a lousy teacher and bad colleague. His views on personal identity are as infallible as a Papal Pronouncement of Church Dogma, but his ability to teach others the truths he has discovered is very poor as evidenced by the fact that none of his doctoral students defend Animalism in their dissertations but instead write nonsense in favor of Constitution, Cartesianism, Hylomorphism, Four Dimensionalism, and the Embodied Mind View.. His Romanell colleagues also continue to defend such schlock, proof that Hershenov fails as a colleague as well as a teacher. His paper at last year’s Romanell conference “If Fetuses are Parts of their Mothers, then Three Popular Defenses of Abortion Fail on Merely Conceptual Grounds” was submitted to *Thought*. The journal’s managing editor emailed him after a couple of months that they couldn’t yet find a referee and asked Hershenov if he wanted to withdraw it. The email said that if he didn’t withdraw it, the journal would give him a verdict in four months. He wrote back in four months and the managing editor of *Thought* journal said they still had not found a referee and asked again if he wanted to withdraw it. He did so it could be published in the obscure conference proceedings of the University Faculty for Life where it will likely be unread for all eternity.

**4:15-4:30** Break

**4:30-5:45** Shane Hemmer (UB Philosophy Grad) "Personal Identity and Autonomy"

*Abstract*: There is a growing trend in metaphysics which seeks to bring out the ethical implications of various theories of personal identity and persistence over time, and evaluate those implications against our moral theories and theories of prudential reason. Metaphysical theories of personal identity which deliver counterintuitive or appalling moral conclusions are seen as deficient, and rightly so. Of particular interest are materialist theories of personal identity, such as the brain view, the embodied mind account, the neo-Lockean psychological view, the constitution account, and four dimensionalism. Each of these views is charged with a problem of too many thinkers, and thus a multiplication of subjects of moral rights and value. Hershenov and Taylor (2017) suggest that endorsing any of the theories in question would undermine our current ways of understanding moral status, interests, consent, and autonomy. They conclude that animalism, the view that each human person is identical with a human animal, is the best theory of personal identity, not only because it provides the best fit with our current understanding of morality, but also because it is the simplest and most intuitive account of what we are. I argue that the claims about autonomy endorsed by Hershenov and Taylor are too strong, and if correct, would render autonomous action impossible regardless of one’s theory of personal identity. HT’s view is that autonomy is not possible if one mistakenly believes oneself to be someone, or something, else (e.g., a person, rather than an animal). I will show that this assumption would render autonomy impossible on any theory of personal identity, regardless of whether or not that theory faces a problem of too many thinkers. Thus, if HT's claims about autonomy are correct, the animalist will face similar problems.

*Bio*: Shane Hemmer is a Ph.D. candidate at the University at Buffalo. He is writing a dissertation at the intersection of metaphysics and ethics on the topic of four dimensionalism and well-being. In addition to his work on the metaphysics of persistence and personal identity, Hemmer works on issues in bioethics and the philosophy of medicine. Hemmer has spent the past two years working as a clinical ethics consultant at the Buffalo VA Hospital with Dr. Steve Wear, and hopes to secure a job doing medical ethics professionally after completing his Ph.D.

**DAY III – SATURDAY, JULY 27, 2019 - PARK HALL 141**

**DISEASE**

**9:30-10:00** Breakfast

**10:00-11:15** Steve Kershnar (SUNY Fredonia English or Political Science) “Heaven, Drab Eternity, and Everlasting Life: How Should Christians Prioritize Lifesaving Medical Resources?”

*Abstract*: Christians and Jews believe that God sends some people to heaven. In heaven, people have everlasting life. There is an issue as to how everlasting life affects medical decisions such as the distribution of scare medical resources. Problems arise if it is better for a person to be in heaven than it is for him to be alive during the time he would normally be alive, an afterlife has ever-increasing or infinite value (whether negative or positive value), and some people go permanently to hell. These problems worsen if a physician’s treatment can affect whether a patient goes to heaven, how well life the patient’s life goes in heaven, and whether the patient has more children who go to heaven. The problems get still worse if a physician’s treatment can have similar effects with regard to hell.

*Bio:*  Stephen Kershnar is a distinguished teaching professor in the philosophy department at the State University of New York at Fredonia and an attorney. He focuses on applied ethics and political philosophy. Kershnar has written over ninety articles and book chapters. He is the author of nine books, including Total Collapse: The Case Against Morality and Responsibility (Springer 2018), Abortion, Hell, and Shooting Abortion-Doctors: Does the Pro-Life Worldview Make Sense? (Routlege/Taylor & Francis Group, 2017), and Pedophilia and Adult-Child Sex: A Philosophical Defense (Lexington Books, 2015). In the past, he’s demonstrated that members of Buffalo Philosophy’s old boys club (see Jim Delaney, David Hershenov, John Keller, and Phil Reed) are either negligent or akratic in their support of freedom, God, Notre Dame, and souls. He and Bob Kelly think that this fact prevents them from being blameworthy for their 17th Century views. However, he wishes they weren’t so public in their support of newer ideas, such as that state universities ought to discriminate against women when hiring in philosophy, physicians may have sex with their in-shape female patients, some races are per capita more valuable than others, and adult-child sex is permissible only when shot and distributed in HD videos.

**Romanell Center Disclaimer:**  The Romanell Center reluctantly recognizes acknowledges Dr. Kershnar’s positive law right to express his repugnant views. However, the Romanell Center fervently believes that the conference audience has a God-given natural law right to pay no attention to what Dr. Kershnar says. So the Romanell Center has provided a cross word puzzle for the audience to fill out while ignoring Dr. Kershnar’s talk. Answers are on the page following puzzle.

**Across**

1. Dr. Kershnar claimed that John Fischer’s defense of a duty to support Thomson’s violinist committed him to having a duty to undergo painful \_\_\_ if it would save someone’s life

2. Offended members of what University Colorado department took accused Dr Kershnar of racism in his screed against affirmative action prior to the ROME conference?

3. Dr. Kershnar believes what woman philosopher is underrated?

4.Kershnar irritated which keynoter when he told her in his talk that she had a consequentialist- based duty to keep getting pregnant so there would be more intelligent people in the world?

5. Dr. Kershnar believes the Clinton Administration protection of \_\_\_ was a war crime after Yugoslavia broke up

6. The military academy at which Dr. Kershnar gave a talk claiming we didn’t owe veterans gratitude

7-8. Dr. Kershnar believes that it was unjust for the \_\_\_ to invade the\_\_ in its Civil War

**Down**

1. Kershnar has written a disgusting book trying to debunk the human right not to be \_\_

2. Dr. Kershnar believes pro-lifers are committed to assassinating \_\_

3. Dr. Kershnar claims that there is no such thing as exploitation and if there was it would not be \_\_

4. Dr. Kershnar believes that it was a mistake of the US to fight the \_\_ in the 1940s

5. Dr. Kershnar went to what military academy and said it should be shut down and replaced with ROTC but if it stayed open, it should discriminate again women applicants.

6. Dr. Kershnar believes that Christian pro-lifers should \_\_ their children to guarantee that they go to heaven

7. He whose name will not be uttered has written an evil book defending adults having sex with \_\_

**Crossword Puzzle Alternative to Listening to Dr. Kershnar’s Talk**

1D

**\_ 2D**

1A **\_ \_ \_ \_ \_ \_**

**\_**

**\_**

**\_**

**\_ 3D 4D**

**2A \_ \_ \_ \_ \_ \_ \_ \_ \_ 5D**

**\_ 3A \_ \_ \_ \_ \_ \_ \_ \_**

**\_ \_ \_**

**\_ 6D4A\_ ­\_ \_ \_ \_ \_** 7D **\_**

5A **\_ \_ \_ \_ \_ \_ \_ 6A \_ \_ \_ \_**

**\_ \_ \_**

**\_ 7A \_ \_ \_ \_ \_**

**\_ \_**

**\_ \_**

**8A \_ \_ \_ \_ \_**

**Crossword Puzzle Answers**

**T**

**S ODOMY**

**R D**

**T s**

**U .**

**R**

**EDUCATION**

**N AYNRAND**

**J Z N**

**U K INGMA A**

**B O SNIA S V**

**T B ARMY**

**O I**

**R NORTH**

**T O**

**R**

**S OUTH**

**11:15-11:30** Break

**11:30-12:45** Pat Daly (Boston College Lonergan Institute). "Risk Factors and Disease."

*Abstract*: The problematic relation between risk factors and disease remains a contested issue in contemporary philosophy of medicine. In this paper, I present a way to understand risk factors and disease as complementary perspectives on the dynamic unfolding of generically distinct levels of organismic functioning and the ecological context within which organismic functioning unfolds. I begin by comparing the notions of risk factor and disease in several contemporary accounts. Next I show a way to relate them in terms of Lonergan’s account of functional and statistical investigation and his hierarchical account of world order. In doing so, I address the question of the intelligibility of statistical relations (as opposed to their being a cloak for ignorance) and the problem of demarcating distinct boundaries between normal and abnormal function. Finally I evaluate the positions of Christopher Boorse and one of his critics, Élodie Giroux, on pathophysiological (functional) and epidemiological (risk-based) analysis from the standpoint of my account of the complementary relationship of these modes of investigation in support of my conclusion that risk factors and disease do in fact form a dynamic duo.

*Bio*: Patrick Daly is a research associate at the Lonergan Institute at Boston College, where he is working on a long-term project to develop a philosophy of health based on Bernard Lonergan’s generalized empirical method (GEM). After practicing internal medicine and palliative medicine for 35 years, he completed an MA in philosophy at Boston College in 2013 and retired from medical practice in order to write fulltime. He has published a number of articles and reviews in philosophy of medicine and bioethics. Most recently, his paper “The GEM model: a model of health based on generalized empirical method” has been accepted for publication in the European Journal for Person Centered Healthcare. He thinks of his project along the lines of Don Quixote tilting at the windmills of contemporary philosophy of medicine. Not sure that I have dented anyone’s notion of reality, but that’s ok since I’m really having fun.

**12:45-1:45** Lunch

**1:45-3:00** Eric Merrell (UB Grad Student) “Capacities and Brain Processes”

*Abstract:* We propose capability as a universal or type intermediate between function and disposition. A capability is, broadly speaking, a disposition that is of a type whose instances can be evaluated on the basis of how well they are realized. A function, on the view we are proposing, is a capability the possession of which is the rationale for the existence of its bearer. To say for example that a water pump has the function to pump water is to say that the pump exists because something was needed that would pump water. A water pump may have many capabilities, including: to be weatherproof, to run without lubricant, to be transportable, and so forth. But its function is to pump water. We focus here on capabilities possessed by humans – such as piano playing or language using – and we explore the relation between capabilities of these sorts and structures in the brain.

*Bio:* Eric Merrell is a graduate student at UB and plans to follow in the tradition of his graduate student colleagues of not defending a dissertation that defends animalism.

**3:00-3:15** Break

**3:15-4:30** David Limbaugh (UB Philosophy Department Postdoc) “Warranted Diagnosis”

*Abstract*: A diagnostic process is an investigative process that takes a clinical picture as input and outputs a diagnosis. We propose a method for distinguishing diagnoses that are warranted from those that are not, based on the cognitive processes of which they are the outputs. Processes designed and vetted to reliably produce correct diagnoses will output what we shall call ‘warranted diagnoses’. The latter are diagnoses that should be trusted even if they later turn out to have been wrong. Our work is based on the recently developed Cognitive Process Ontology and further develops the Ontology of General Medical Science. It also has applications in fields such as intelligence, forensics, and predictive maintenance, all of which rely on vetted processes designed to secure the reliability of their outputs.

*Bio:*  David works in the Department of Philosophy at the University at Buffalo as an Intelligence Community Postdoc funded by the Department of Energy through the Oak Ridge Institute for Science and Education (ORISE). His past Romanell presentations include "The harm of medical disorder as harm in the damage sense" which was later published in *Theoretical Medicine and Bioethics.*