SCHEDULE

Friday, October 6
3:00pm Registration (Dodd Hall Auditorium)
3:30pm Keynote Address
   Prof. Michael McKenna
   University of Arizona
   “Punishment and the Value of Deserved Suffering”
5:30pm Reception, Dodd Hall

Saturday, October 7
8:00am Light Breakfast (Dodd Hall Auditorium)
8:30am Andrew Law, UC Riverside
   “Explanations in Frankfurt Cases”
   Commenter: Matthew Jernberg, FSU
9:30am Etye Steinberg, University of Toronto
   “Reflection and Responsibility for Attitudes”
   Commenter: Rachel Amoroso, FSU
10:30am Isaiah Lin, Syracuse University
   “Absence Causation and Supervenience”
   Commenter: Andrew Christman, FSU
11:30am Lunch (on your own)
1:00pm David Poplar, University of Arizona
   “In Praise of Gratitude”
   Commenter: Gordon Cooper, FSU
2:00pm Derek Lam, University of Virginia
   “The Dilemma Defense and Remaining Agnostic in the Right Way”
   Commenter: Jay Spitzley, FSU
3:00pm Phoebe H. Y. Chan, University of Arizona
   “Two Myths of Free Agency”
   Commenter: Nick Sparks, FSU
4:00pm Keynote Address
   Prof. David Shoemaker
   Tulane University
   “Hurt Feelings”
6:00pm Reception, Dodd Hall

Structure of Graduate Student Sessions:
Presentation: 25 minutes
Comment and Response: 10 and 5 minutes
Q&A: 10 minutes
Break: 10 minutes

Florida State University
Tallahassee

A: Dodd Hall Auditorium
B: Suwannee Room
   Campus dining hall (several buffet-style options, including vegetarian and vegan options)
C: Pitaria
   Mediterranean sandwiches and more
D: Sweet Shop
   Great coffee, wraps, and more
E: 1851
   Collection of options including burgers, Asian fusion, and pizza

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Dodd Hall Auditorium

6th Annual
Free Will, Moral Responsibility, and Agency Conference

Friday and Saturday, October 6-7, 2017

Sponsored by the Congress of Graduate Students (COGS) and the Department of Philosophy

Organized by the Florida State University Philosophy Graduate Student Association (PGSA)
In some cases, an agent appears morally responsible for an outcome despite the fact that the outcome was inevitable. In other cases, the agent does not appear morally responsible for an outcome precisely because the outcome was inevitable. It is quite a puzzle giving a principled difference between the two types of cases. In my view, the most promising solution to this puzzle involves pointing out a causal asymmetry: that an agent is responsible for an outcome only if the agent caused the outcome. I offer a new development of the causal solution and argue that it is superior to previous developments.

Commenter: Matthew Jernberg, FSU

“Reflection and Responsibility for Attitudes”
Etye Steinberg, University of Toronto

According to a common, ‘reflectionist’ view, the capacity for higher-order reflection on our lower-order attitudes and mental states is necessary for being responsible for these attitudes, and for the actions that these ensue from these attitudes. Several authors have argued that such reflection is not necessary for responsibility, whether for attitudes or for actions. In this paper, I argue for the more radical claim that, if reflection is necessary for awareness of an attitude, then one cannot be responsible for this attitude. If reflection is necessary for awareness of an attitude, then the kind of knowledge one would have of this attitude will be merely observational, or theoretical. If so, then this attitude is not sensitive to the right kind of reasons. This implies that one cannot be answerable, and therefore responsible, for having this attitude. It also implies that one cannot be answerable for one’s implicit attitudes. This, in turn, raises a challenge regarding whether one can be responsible for actions that are motivated by such implicit attitudes, for which one is not answerable.

Commenter: Rachel Amoroso, FSU

“The Dilemma Defense and Remaining Agnostic in the Right Way”
Derek Lam, University of Virginia

The Dilemma Defense is arguably one of the most persistent pushbacks against the arguments for compatibilism based on Frankfurt-style cases. The traditional argument based on the Frankfurt-style cases assumes determinism yet expects one to retain intuitive judgments about moral responsibility in particular scenarios. According to the Dilemma Defense, that’s begging the question against the incompatibilist. Fischer argues that there is a way to extract the compatibilist insight from the Frankfurt-style cases with a slightly different argument, which I call the Irrelevance Argument. In this essay, I’ll first offer a schematic presentation of the Irrelevance Argument. Then, I’ll critically examine Cohen’s recent objection, which says that one of the premises of the Irrelevance Argument is inconsistent with an agnostic condition the argument needs. I’ll argue that Cohen is wrong: they aren’t inconsistent. Nonetheless, his objection is pointing us to the right direction. I’ll argue that, in order to remain agnostic in the way required while holding on to the premises of the Irrelevance Argument, one must assume a highly objectionable diagnostic position and to offer a convincing argument for a particular theory of the ability to do otherwise while hoping that one’s argument isn’t convincing at the same time. For that reason, I conclude that the Irrelevance Argument isn’t a good way to circumvent the Dilemma Defense.

Commenter: Jay Spitzley, FSU

“Absence Causation and Supervenience”
Isaiah Lin, Syracuse University

Carolina Sartorio’s actual-sequence view, ACS, relies on the truth of (1) the supervenience of facts about freedom on facts about actual causal sequences and (2) the genuine possibility of absence causation. Here, I argue that simultaneously endorsing both (1) and (2) is more challenging than we might have originally thought, since the solution Sartorio adopts to resolve a metaphysical objection to (2) betrays the motivations we have for (1). The trouble, I argue, is as follows: Absence is prima facie implausible, since absences appear to lack the requisite physical properties which would allow them to be causes. In light of this, Sartorio notes there are two solutions available to the ACS theorist. The first solution is to concede that absences are not causes, but are instead quasi-causes (i.e., merely possible causes). The second solution is to give an analysis of the relevant absence-talk in terms of positive events. On this response, absence-talk is really just a disguised way of talking about entities which are not themselves absences at all. Both of these solutions ultimately turn out to be unavailable for Sartorio.

Commenter: Andrew Christman, FSU

“Two Myths of Free Agency”
Phoebe H. Y. Chan, University of Arizona

There are two myths of free agency in the literature. The first myth is that freedom of agency consists of being guided by forms of reasoning that a person understands to attain her present ends. The reason why it is a myth is that free agency can be exercised through exploring new ends and new forms of reasoning, which requires a person’s active effort to act in ways that deviate from what she understands. For instance, a person who lacks the conception of equality does not understand how to reason on behalf of equality or have it as an end. However, the person can exercise freedom of agency through exploring a conception of equality. In doing so, the person necessarily goes through a stage in which her behaviors deviate from a pattern that she understands.

The second myth is that freedom of agency is totally individual and does not depend on collective wisdom. The reason why it is a myth is that a person’s ability to rationally deliberate about important moral matters necessarily requires continuous social inputs. For instance, a person’s ability to rationally deliberate about equality necessarily relies on the society’s continuous effort to clarify the concept of equality.

Commenter: Nick Sparks, FSU