



Ethical Interventions

Department of Philosophy and
Centre for the Study of the Sciences and the Humanities

SPEAKERS AFFILIATION, TOPICS AND ABSTRACTS:

Georg Meggle,

Prof. Dr. George Meggle is professor emeritus in Philosophy at the University of Leipzig. Since 2011 he has held Guest Professorships at Cairo (Al Azhar University and American University in Cairo) and at the University of Salzburg/Austria. Main topics: Philosophy of Action, Communication and Language – and Practical Ethics, focusing on Terrorism, Just War Theory and Refugee Policy.

On Terrorism

What is terrorism? And what are the reasons for our nearly absolute moral condemnation of terrorism? These are my two simple questions. Contrary to the general practice of our present-day „terrorism“-discourse, this talk is a plea for keeping both questions radically separate. Keeping the questions separate constitutes part of a necessary paradigm shift in the way we talk and think about terrorism.

Anat Biletzki

Anat Biletzki is the Albert Schweitzer Professor of Philosophy at Quinnipiac University (in Connecticut, USA) and (retired) Professor of Philosophy at Tel Aviv University. She is also Professor II in the Department of Philosophy at the University of Bergen, and has been a visiting professor at Boston University and MIT. In Philosophy she teaches and researches analytic philosophy (mostly Wittgenstein) and human rights. In real life she engages in human rights and peace activism.

Refugee Ethics (and a case study)

What are our ethical obligations to refugees? An unprecedented number of people around the world are now considered refugees. In order to determine the ethics of this new situation, one needs to both define the term “refugee” and investigate the moral status of individuals, societies, and states in this (according to some) novel context. Although the legal field – both domestic and international – attempts to provide some clarity and guidance, it is the conceptual, ethical, and political arenas in which we encounter challenging conundrums. The case of the Palestinian refugees serves as an exemplar of such challenges.

Gunnar Skirbekk

Gunnar Skirbekk is Professor emeritus, Centre for the Study of the Sciences and the Humanities and the Department of Philosophy, University of Bergen. Main focus: philosophy of the sciences and modernization theory.

Freedom of expression

In this talk I shall present a normative justification of the legal protection of freedom of expression. This will be done by an analysis of presuppositions for three modern institutions: democracy, truth seeking, and individual autonomy. Moreover, I shall discuss a main ambiguity of the term “offense”, namely, the difference between offense in terms of negative feelings and offense in terms of indoctrination and brainwashing.

Silje Aambø Langvatn

Silje Aambø Langvatn is a Postdoctoral researcher in political philosophy and philosophy of law at the PluriCourts University of Oslo. Langvatn has a PhD from the Centre for the Study of the Sciences and Humanities (SVT) at the University of Bergen, and was a Law and Philosophy Fellow at Yale Law School last fall. Her current research focuses on the legitimacy of international courts and on public reason in courts. She is co-editing a forthcoming book called Public Reason and Courts with Mattias Kumm and Wojciech Sadurski.

Is there a place for public reason in post-truth politics?

Last year Oxford Dictionaries declared that its international word of the year was "post-truth", citing a 2000% increase in usage compared to 2015. The phenomenon the word denotes is hardly new, but modern social media and a 24 hour news cycle reinforce many of the old pathologies of democratic public spheres and create new versions of them. Ideals of public reason have been presented as both a driver, and as a possible remedy, against such pathologies of the public political sphere, but is most often dismissed as an overly idealistic and utopian way of trying to address these problems. The paper discusses the potential, and the dangerous fallacies, of inserting such ideals of public reason into post-truth politics.