



Master Teachers in Action:

A Symposium on the Art of Teaching Philosophy and Political Theory



The aim of the symposium is to foster the teaching of philosophy and political theory, drawing on the expertise of three renowned scholars who are also outstanding teachers.

Each speaker will present a favorite “class,” followed by a discussion of what makes the class pedagogically successful. There will also be a final panel discussion, addressing the secrets, keys and importance of great teaching.

Friday, February 24, 2012 • 10 a.m. to 6 p.m. • Whig Hall

First Session: 10:45 a.m.

J. Donald Moon
Wesleyan University

“The Ethics of Political Action: Weber and Gandhi”

This lecture is drawn from Moon’s introductory theory class, “The Moral Basis of Politics.” The class contrasts the account of political ethics that Weber presents (in “Politics as a Vocation”), according to which violence is inherent in political life, with Gandhi’s theory of *satyagraha*, which offers the promise of a world free of violence. The objective will be to identify and critically assess the conflicting premises on which these accounts are based.

Second Session: 1:30 p.m.

Tamar Szabo Gendler
Yale University

“Weakness of the Will, Procrastination and Principles”

This lecture explores the following question: How can Aristotle’s discussion of *akrasia* illuminate and be illuminated by contemporary work on the psychology of temptation and self-regulation?

Third Session: 3:15 p.m.

Shelly Kagan
Yale University

“The Existence Requirement and the Badness of Death”

Why is death bad? According to the “deprivation account,” death is bad for us precisely because it prevents us from possessing the various goods in life that we would otherwise receive (if only we weren’t dead). But how are we to reconcile this explanation of the badness of death with the equally plausible thought that you have to exist in order for anything to be good or bad for you at all?

Panel Discussion Followed by Q&A: 5 p.m. Reception to Follow: 6 p.m.

Moderator: Larry Temkin, Laurance S. Rockefeller Visiting Professor of Distinguished Teaching in the University Center for Human Values

RSVP required for lunch by Wednesday, February 15, to Kim Girman, kgirman@princeton.edu.

