



COLLOQUIUM SERIES

“Vulnerability and Love”

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Reference to the idea of vulnerability is often used in moral and political philosophy to designate moral obligations. Why such obligations should flow from an individual's vulnerability is not always clear, however. I argue that some kinds of vulnerability are morally problematic because to be vulnerable challenges our capacity to be autonomous and to be effective agents in the world. I then propose a typology of vulnerability that helps distinguish morally problematic from not immediately problematic kinds of vulnerability. Some kinds of vulnerability, I want to say, are not immediately morally problematic because they help us develop individual agency; they allow us to realize a specific conception of ourselves. Vulnerability to loved ones is one such kind. I argue that vulnerability to a loved one can be what I call a 'self-enhancing' kind of vulnerability – even though I acknowledge that sometimes, such vulnerability turns into a self-negating kind. To make sense of this claim, I discuss different accounts of what love is, philosophically.

Friday, March 7th, 2014

Room: 3202 River Building

Time: 3:00 pm

All are welcome!