

CARLETON UNIVERSITY

DEPARTMENT OF PHILOSOPHY



# FALL 2025 *Colloquium*

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## “Phenomenology of Life and the Question of God: What Does One Mean for the Other?”

Since at least its modern inception with Descartes, philosophy has tended to deal with the question of God in one of two ways. Either it postulates “God” as an idea and asks whether a reality adequate to it necessarily exists, or it begins with a certain feature of the world and asks whether “God” functions as an ultimate cause or reason. The “phenomenology of life” introduces a third possibility. “Life” is not only an incontestable phenomenon. It also involves a basic, non-representational, and affective structure of experiential givenness. Rather than inferring “self-movement” from features of an object of perception, the goal is to identify life’s internal phenomenological features. The philosophical task is not to argue toward an external source or origin as its cause, but rather to ask in what sense life, in its affective character, permits the philosophical question of God to be posed anew. The approach proposed here involves three steps. First, to delimit and determine the relevant features of life’s phenomenality; second, to identify the kinds of questions these observations elicit relative to the question of God; and third, to propose a methodological way of answering these questions that is consistent, or at least conversant, with classical definitions of God.

FRIDAY, NOVEMBER 28

1:30 P.M. EST

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