enhancing life!

A PUBLIC INTERDISCIPLINARY CONFERENCE

Religion • Media • Social Science • Medicine

August 4-6, 2017

The University of Chicago Gleacher Center
450 N Cityfront Plaza Drive, Chicago

enhancinlife.uchicago.edu/events/conference
The sculpture depicted on the cover is “Looking Up” by Tom Friedman, as installed on Chicago’s lakefront, 4800 S. Lake Shore Drive, September 21, 2016 – September 30, 2017.
enhancing life! Interdisciplinary Conference

Religion • Media • Social Science • Medicine

August 4-6, 2017
The University of Chicago Gleacher Center
450 N Cityfront Plaza Drive, Chicago

We hope you will enjoy the symposium. Please be aware that some events may be photographed and filmed for use by the Enhancing Life Project to help with online and educational materials. If you do not want your contribution or image to be used, please inform the organizers.
Welcome to Enhancing Life!

Over the next three days, we invite you to engage one of the most basic human questions. Part of human existence is the desire to enhance life. This desire is seen in the arts, technology, religion, medicine, culture, and social forms. Throughout the ages, thinkers have wondered about the meaning of enhancing life, the ways to enhance life, and the judgements about whether life has been enhanced. In our global technological age, these issues have become more widespread and urgent.

For the last two years, 35 renowned scholars from around the world in the fields of law, social sciences, humanities, religion, communications, and others, have explored basic questions of human existence. These scholars have generated individual research projects and engaged in teaching in Enhancing Life Studies within their fields, as well as contributed to public engagement via lectures and blog posts. Three summer residency seminars provided the opportunity for intense exchange among the scholars and their fields of research.

This Capstone Conference aims both to present the findings of the scholars and to create new knowledge. In Research Presentations, scholars will present results from individual projects. In Research Laboratories, audience members and groups of scholars from a variety of disciplines will address a current public problem. The Enhancing Life Project has been made possible by a generous grant from the John Templeton Foundation, and the support of the University of Chicago and Bochum University Germany. We express our profound gratitude to these institutions.

We are excited you are here. It is our hope that you will sense the urgency and gravity of the questions pursued at this Capstone Conference, and share our fascination with Enhancing Life Studies.

Our world deserves it and needs it.
## NOTES

i. Research Presentations allow individual ELP Scholars to describe results from two years of research, and to engage in Q&A.

ii. Research Laboratories are innovative formats which allow audience members to interact with a panel of ELP Scholars and Interlocutors in addressing a problem of public relevance.

iii. Keynotes are given by the Principal Investigators of *The Enhancing Life Project*.

iv. More information on the conference program, ELP Scholars and their research projects, and registration can be found at enhancinglife.uchicago.edu/events/conference.

v. This conference is open to all interested persons, with a processing fee of $15. Your registration fee shows your commitment to and support for the type of research embodied in *The Enhancing Life Project*.

vi. There will be a ten [or twenty] minute break in the middle of each Research Presentation session. You are free to change sessions if you wish; we have built in breaks to allow fluid movement between sessions if desired.

vii. If you ordered a box lunch when you registered, you may pick it up at noon on Saturday. There will be a few box lunches available for purchase on Saturday.

viii. We welcome active audience participation throughout our conference. We are especially interested in getting your written comments and questions in preparation for our Closing Panel on Sunday afternoon. Please send them to enhancinglifeproject@gmail.com.
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Time</th>
<th>Session</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>8:45-9:15</td>
<td>REGISTRATION</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9:15-9:30</td>
<td>WELCOME</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9:30-10:40</td>
<td>RESEARCH LABORATORIES</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Session I</td>
<td>Discerning Strength in Vulnerability</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sarah Bianci • Elizabeth Bucar • Gregory Cootsona • Michael Ing • Monique Mitchell • Nazar Shabila</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9:30-10:40</td>
<td>Session J</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Politics and Enhancing Life: Disruption, Dialogue, and Democracy</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Andrea Bieler • Christian Chautard • Jeffrey Haynes • Michael Hogue • Aasim Padela • Amit Pinchevski</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9:30-10:40</td>
<td>Session K</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Integral Ecology: Enhancing Human and Non-Human Life</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Jason Danely • Ronne Hartfield • Karline McLain • Anne Mocko • William Schweiker • Lea Schweitz</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>11:00-12:00</td>
<td>KEYNOTE</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Enhancing Life - Competing Visions in a World of Conflict</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Günter Thomas, Professor of Theology, Bochum University</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>12:00-1:30</td>
<td>LUNCH</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1:30-3:30</td>
<td>RESEARCH PRESENTATIONS</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Session L</td>
<td>Enhancing Life through Freedom and Constraint</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Michael Hogue • Nazar Shabila • Christoph Krönke • Amit Pinchevski • Karline McLain</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Session M</td>
<td>Enhancing Life when Less is More</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Michael Luchs • Anne Mocko • Paul Jones • Nicole Vincent • Ruben Zimmermann</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Session N</td>
<td>Enhancing Life at its Edges</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ruth Farrell • Kristine Culp • Christopher Scott • Martin Wendte • Daniel Sulmasy</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4:00-5:10</td>
<td>RESEARCH LABORATORIES</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Session O</td>
<td>Enhancing Life in a Digital Age</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Menahem Blondheim • Nick Coulby • Evelyn Finger • Steve Kloehn • Christoph Krönke • Günter Thomas</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Session P</td>
<td>Sharing to Enhance Life</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Maria Antonaccio • Dean Bell • Michael Luchs • Barbara Rossing • Ruben Zimmermann</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Session Q</td>
<td>Transcending Limits of Spaces and Times</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Markus Höfner • Paul Jones • Alexander-Kenneth Nagel • Piet Naudé • Matthew O'Hara • Heike Springhart</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
SUNDAY, August 6

12:30-1:00  
REGISTRATION

RESEARCH PRESENTATIONS

Session R  
Enhancing Life and Imagined Futures

Barbara Rossing  
Matthew O'Hara  
Günter Thomas  
Maria Antonaccio

Session S  
Enhancing Life: Vulnerability and Vitality

Andrea Bieler  
Michael Ing  
William Schweiker  
Heike Springhart

1:00-2:30  
RESEARCH LABORATORY

Session T  
Drawing the Edges of Human Life

Kristine Culp  
Ruth Farrell  
Sebastian Sattler  
Christopher Scott  
Daniel Sulmasy  
Ellen Ueberschär  
Martin Wendte

2:50-3:50

CLOSING PANEL

ENHANCING LIFE! SCOPE, IMPACT, FUTURE

Elizabeth Bucar  
Monique Mitchell  
Piet Naudé  
Christopher Scott  
Ellen Ueberschär  
Ruben Zimmerman

Panel moderated by Gretchen Helfrich,  
Associate at Loevy & Loevy and former host of WBEZ’s Odyssey

SPEAKERS

Maria Antonaccio. Religion and Ethics, Bucknell University, USA
Sarah Blanchi. Philosophy, Humboldt University Berlin, Germany
Andrea Bieler. Practical Theology, University of Basel, Switzerland
Menahem Blondheim. Communications, The Hebrew University of Jerusalem, Israel
Elizabeth Bucar. Religion and Islam, Northeastern University, USA
Nick Coulby. Communications and Social Theory, London School of Economics, UK
Kristine Culp. Theology, The University of Chicago, USA
Jason Danely. Anthropology, Oxford Brookes University, UK
Ruth Farrell. Medicine, Cleveland Clinic, USA
Jeffrey Haynes. Political Sciences, London Metropolitan University, UK
Michael Hogue. Theology, Meadville Lombard Theological School, USA
Markus Höfner. Systematic Theology, Bochum University, Germany
Michael Ing. Religion and Confucianism, Indiana University, USA
Paul Dalyd Jones. Theology, University of Virginia, USA
Christoph Kränke. Law, LM University Munich, Germany
Stephen Lakkis. Systematic Theology, Tainan Theological College and Seminary, Taiwan
Michael Luchs. Marketing and Economics, College of William & Mary, USA
Karline McLain. Religion and Hinduism, Bucknell University, USA
Monique Mitchell. Social Work, University of South Carolina, USA
Anne Mocker. Religion and Jainism, Concordia College, USA
Alexander-Kenneth Nagel. Sociology of Religion, Göttingen University, Germany
Matthew O’Hara. History, University of California Santa Cruz, USA
Aasim Padela. Medicine, University of Chicago, USA
Amit Pinchevski. Communications and Journalism, The Hebrew University of Jerusalem, Israel
Barbara Rossing. Bible, Lutheran School of Theology at Chicago, USA
Sebastian Sattler. Sociology and Social Psychology, University of Cologne, Germany
William Schweiker. Theological Ethics, The University of Chicago, USA
Lea Schweitz. Theology and Science, Lutheran School of Theology at Chicago, USA
Christopher Scott. Biotechnology, Baylor College of Medicine, USA
Nazar Shabila. Public Health, Hawler Medical University, Iraq
Heike Springhart. Systematic Theology, Heidelberg University, Germany
Daniel Sulmasy. Medicine and Ethics, Georgetown University, USA
Günter Thomas. Principal Investigator, Bochum University, Germany
Nicole Vincent. Philosophy, Law and Neuroscience, Macquarie University Sydney, Australia
Martin Wendte. Systematic Theology, Tübingen University, Germany
Ruben Zimmermann. Bible, Mainz University, Germany

PUBLIC INTERLOCUTORS

Dean Bell. History, Dean of Spertus Institute for Jewish Learning and Leadership, USA
Christian Chautard. Business Consultant, Korian Group and Theano Advisors, Germany
Gregory Coeotana. Faculty in Comparative Religion, California State University, USA
Evelyn Finger. Senior Editor, DIE ZEIT, Germany
Ronne Hartfield. Author, Essayist, Intern. Museum Consultant, USA
Gretchen Helfrich. Lawyer, Loevy & Loevy, USA
Steve Klaehn. Vice President, Marketing & Communications, Carnegie Mellon University, USA
Piet Naudé. Director, University of Stellenbosch Business School, South Africa
Ellen Ueberschär, Co-Chair, Heinrich Böll Foundation, Germany

THE ENHANCING LIFE PROJECT LEADERSHIP TEAM

Sara Bigger. Associate Director, The University of Chicago, USA
Markus Höfner. Project Coordinator & Research Associate, Bochum University, Germany
William Schweiker. Principal Investigator, The University of Chicago, USA
Heike Springhart, Project Consultant & Research Associate, Heidelberg University, Germany
Günter Thomas. Principal Investigator, Bochum University, Germany
William Schweiker
Professor of Theological Ethics, The University of Chicago

Keynote: Enhancing Life and the Forms of Freedom
Friday, August 4, 3:45-4:45 pm

What precisely do we mean by “enhancing life?” There are many answers to that question found throughout history and in contemporary life. Based on the work of The Enhancing Life Project, this keynote lecture seeks to set out a conception of enhancing life in relation to several “forms” of freedom found within the dimensions of human and non-human life. It does so, first, in order to refute the popular idea that “enhancement” is merely the biomedical technology extension of life against death or the increase of human power in the face of frailty. Second, the lecture develops a conception of enhancing life as the deepening of life’s freedom and complexity that bridges natural causality and human moral freedom. The lecture concludes by showing the importance of religious sources for articulating the meaning of enhancing life.

Günter Thomas
Professor of Theology, Bochum University

Keynote: Enhancing Life - Competing Visions in a World of Conflict
Saturday, August 5, 11:00-12:00 am

This lecture will describe a hopeful and passionate religious realism as a prospectus for Enhancing Life Studies. The rich variety of visions for enhancing life is itself part of the flourishing of life, and yet this variety can easily reach the tipping point of social and political conflict. Against this background, three questions central to this religious realism need to be addressed: What are the powerful challenges built into the fabric of social life which realistically need to be faced? Is it possible and is it necessary to ground the processes of enhancing life in counter-worlds, providing an encompassing narrative framework sustaining a culture of hope? How can insight, passion, and patience conceptually be related in the many endeavors striving for enhancing life?

Panel moderated by Gretchen Helfrich, Associate at Loevy & Loevy and former host of WBEZ’s Odyssey

Enhancing Life! Scope, Impact, Future
Sunday, August 6, 2:50-3:50 pm

Elizabeth Bucar, Philosophy and Religion, Northeastern University, USA
Monique Mitchell, Social Work, University of South Carolina, USA
Piet Naudé, Director, University of Stellenbosch Business School, South Africa
Christopher Scott, Health Policy, Baylor College of Medicine, USA
Ellen Ueberschär, Co-Chair, Heinrich Böll Foundation, Germany
Ruben Zimmerman, New Testament, Mainz University, Germany
Research Presentations

Session A, Friday, August 4, 5:00-6:30 pm
ENHANCING LIFE IN A PLURALITY OF CULTURES

Elizabeth Bucar
Religion and Islam, Northeastern University, USA

Why Do Bodies Matter to God?
5:00-5.20 pm
Reactions to transgendered people illustrate vehement disagreements over whether bodily modifications enhance the human condition or violate it. And the fact that these reactions are often expressed with religious language demonstrates the importance of theology to the understandings of gender, sex, and transformation in broader cultural conversations. Religious traditions have debated the role of bodies and sex in human flourishing long before the physical transformation was medically possible, and thus have deep intellectual depositories—concepts, logics, frames—for thinking about embodied sex’s moral significance. I will present part of a larger work in progress, The Good of Ambiguous Bodies, which explores these religious resources in order to provide new ways to identify and assess assumptions about the moral significance of gendered bodies.

Jason Danely
Anthropology, Oxford Brookes University, UK

Compassion, Culture, and Counter-Worlds,
5:20-5:40 pm
Compassion is an act of imagination as much as it is an embodied practice. How do cultural images, narratives, and social imaginaries enhance our capacity for compassion? I compare experiences of caring in Japanese and English societies. I found that while Japanese carers valued the proximity, intimacy, and vulnerability of care, English carers concentrated on managing services and finances in order to establish security and independence for the cared-for. I suggest that English carers might learn from the kinds of imaginative “counter-worlds” that characterized Japanese compassion, but also that Japan might find ways to provide more UK-style direct support.

Stephen Lakkis
Systematic Theology, Tainan Theological College and Seminary, Taiwan

Connection and Disconnection: Challenges Facing Nation-building and Social Development in Taiwan
5:50-6:10 pm
How do human beings seek to enhance life in the aftermath of atrocious violence? What kind of practices do they develop to learn again what it means to be human in the face of utmost experiences of dehumanization? What are the aspirations, values, and core beliefs that help or hinder victims, bystanders, and perpetrators in coming to terms with traumatic violence in a life-giving way? During my Enhancing Life Project, I engaged these questions by exploring various projects that attend to the aftermath of violence in South Africa, Germany, Israel, and Italy. In my presentation, I will present some of my findings.
Research Presentations

Alexander-Kenneth Nagel
Sociology of Religion, Göttingen University, Germany

Refugee Camps in Germany as Sites of Religious Enhancement and Restriction
6:10-6:30 pm

Since 2015 Germany has received more than a million refugees, mainly from the Near and Middle East, many of whom had to be housed in provisional emergency shelters, such as school gyms or old caserns. Focusing on expert interviews with camp directors and social workers, the talk investigates how these emergency shelters have dealt with religious practice and diversity, e.g. by providing prayer rooms, accounting for dietary needs, assisting with religious celebrations, and collaborating with local religious communities of various backgrounds.

Session B, Friday, August 4, 5:00-6:30 pm
ENHANCING LIFE AND TECHNOLOGICAL INNOVATIONS

Menahem Blondheim
Communications, The Hebrew University of Jerusalem, Israel

Between Enhancement and Diminution: The Role of the Smartphone in the Lives of Teenagers
5:00-5.20 pm

The notion of enhancing life in this study of smartphone use by teenagers is supplemented—enhanced or possibly compromised—by A. Aron and E. N. Aron’s concept of self-expansion. While fundamentally psychological, oriented to identity and cognition, the notion of self-expansion also brings into play the interpersonal and cultural life of individuals, hence its usefulness. The study itself evaluates the claim that the smartphone has become crucial for self-expansion, by tracing the texture and experience of living without one for a week. Flouting the personal expectations of participants, as well as theory in the fields of media studies and of addiction, it was found that upon refraining from smartphone use, alternative means of self-expansion came into play, reshuffling the ecologies of enhancement and diminution of everyday life.

Sebastian Sattler
Sociology and Social Psychology, University of Cologne, Germany
with Guido Mehlkop, Jonathan Wörn, Vanessa Bahr, Cornelia Betsch
Sociology/Psychology, University of Cologne/Erfurt University, Germany

Enhancing our Children’s Lives? Parental Decisions to Give Prescription Drugs to Healthy Children to Increase their Cognitive Performance
5:20-5:40 pm

Research indicates that a significant share of parents would feel pressure to give prescription medication with the aim of enhancing the cognitive performance of their children, if classmates were taking such medication. In the ethical and societal debate, opponents and proponents of such so-called “Cognitive Enhancement” discuss the hopes and problems associated with this practice. However, little is known about the role of social influences in parental decisions to give or not give such medications to their children. Here, results of experiments using vignettes that explore different mechanisms of social influences will be presented.
Aasim Padela
Medicine, University of Chicago, USA

Preserving Life is Enhancement: Essential Dimensions of Human Health and Health Policy Based on the Maqāṣid al-Sharīʿah
5:50-6:10 pm

The maqāṣid al-sharīʿah represent overarching human interests that Islamic law aims to protect. Muslim thinkers increasingly turn to maqāṣid to construct moral and legislative frameworks that address contemporary contexts in light of scriptural values and scientific knowledge. This presentation will examine the utility of maqāṣid for biomedicine by describing (i) models for the essential dimensions of human health and (ii) a health action agenda that can be generated from leading theories of the maqāṣid al-sharīʿah. I will argue that preserving these essential dimensions of health and combating the leading causes of human mortality is the minimal level of what Islam morally obligates upon humankind, and that when we collectively protect these aspects of life, human life is enhanced.

Sarah Bianchi
Philosophy, Humboldt University Berlin, Germany

Vulnerable Truthfulness: Imagining the Future from a Nietzschean Perspective
6:10-6:30 pm

Nietzsche stated in 1879 that the more machines become perfect, the more an ethical perspective is needed. Our newest biotechnological developments, such as human gene editing, seem to confirm that Nietzsche was right. While imagining the future, we need a reliable - in Nietzsche's words, a truthful - foundation, from which we can measure enhancements autonomously. Such truthfulness, however, is not self-evident; rather, it is socially constructed and thereby lays bare its vulnerability, conceived as risk and potential. As a consequence, every human being is challenged to ponder its own ethical decisions through an inner dialogue, weighing as "dividual,” following Nietzsche, the particular and general points of view.

Session C, Friday, August 4, 5:00-6:30 pm

ENHANCING LIFE AND THE TRANSFORMATION OF SOCIAL PRACTICES

Monique Mitchell
Social Work, University of South Carolina, USA

Transcending Adversity: The Lived Experience of Youth in Foster Care
5:00-5:20 pm

How do youth transcend adversity while in foster care? Integrating Viktor Frankl’s comprehensive meaning-centered theory, this presentation will address how youth in foster care draw upon their intrinsic resources in the midst of loss, grief, and trauma. Reports from youth in foster care will reveal how they make meaning of their circumstances, engage in self-transcendence, and defy hopelessness and meaninglessness through tragic optimism. As one youth reports, "Everything I’ve been through, it’s made me stronger, it’s made me wiser.” Join this presentation where the voices of youth in foster care will speak to the transformational potential in us all.
Research Presentations

Jeffrey Haynes
Political Sciences, London Metropolitan University, UK

The United Nations Alliance of Civilizations: Enhancing Life?
5:20-5:40 pm
The United Nations Alliance of Civilizations (UNAOC) was created in the aftermath of September 11, 2001 (“9/11”). Its aim was to increase dialogue and reduce enmity between “civilizations,” notably between Christians and Muslims. In other words, the UNAOC was created to enhance life for the millions of people around the world imperiled by inter-civilizational and inter-religious tensions and conflicts. To what extent, if at all, has the UNAOC achieved its objective of enhancing life for such people? To what extent, if at all, is the world now committed to enhanced dialogue and understanding of different civilizations, cultures, and religions as a result of the activities of the UNAOC?

Lea Schweitz
Theology and Science, Lutheran School of Theology at Chicago, USA

Phenomenology of Urban Ecology for a Theology of Urban Nature
5:50-6:10 pm
Through an inductive, case study method, this paper brings together urban natural history and contemporary ecology to paint a portrait of two sites on Chicago’s south side: a restored urban wetland, Hegewisch Marsh Park, and an abandoned steel-making plant, the Acme Coke Plant. This paper argues that listening to urban ecology yields productive openings for theologies of the cross and aesthetic concepts such as vibrancy. The result is a political theology of urban nature activated for enhancing lives on an increasingly urban planet.

Nick Couldry
Communications and Social Theory, London School of Economics, UK
with Jun Yu, Communications and Social Theory, London School of Economics, UK

The Price of Connection
6:10-6:30 pm
This project explores the contradiction between the values of freedom and autonomy (considered basic to any enhanced quality of life) and the continuous automated surveillance that is increasingly a dimension of our lives online. The project has analyzed discourses about data collection in general debate, and in the specific areas of health and education, and found that surveillance is regularly sidestepped or naturalized to foreground other potential positives. Instead a more open debate is needed, drawing on critical resources from legal theory, philosophy, and elsewhere to identify the risks to autonomy from surveillance, and how those risks might be addressed.
**Research Presentations**

**Session L, Saturday, August 5, 1:30-3:30 pm**

**ENHANCING LIFE THROUGH FREEDOM AND CONSTRAINT**

**Michael Hogue**  
Theology, Meadville Lombard Theological School, USA

**Resilient Democracy in the Anthropocene: A Theopolitics for a Time of Uncertainty and Paradox**  
1:30-1:50 pm

This presentation articulates “resilient democracy” as a way to enhance life in the geocultural context of the Anthropocene. The Anthropocene is a paradox that signifies simultaneously a dangerously human age for the Earth and an age of ecological possibility for humanity—in making the Earth homo imago, we have discovered ourselves as terra bestiae. Attuned to the coincidence of the political and socio-ecological vulnerabilities of the Anthropocene paradox, “resilient democracy” provides a normative theory of democratic life that generates and guides efforts to enhance human and more-than-human life in contexts that threaten life.

**Nazar Shabila**  
Public Health, Hawler Medical University, Iraq

**Understanding the Roots of the Practice of Female Genital Mutilation (FGM) in Iraqi Kurdistan Region**  
1:50-2:10 pm

There are many false cultural beliefs around FGM, which is primarily meant to control women’s sexuality. Women are poorly aware of the harm FGM can cause, while men see it as a “women’s issue.” FGM is often perceived as a religious obligation in Islam. Religious leaders, allied with different doctrines, have different views about FGM ranging from being an obligation/wajib, encouraged/sunna, or optional. The religious scripts that are the basis for FGM are generally weak and inconclusive. People and religious leaders need to seek reliable medical evidence and the advice of Muslim scholars against FGM to fight and stop the practice.

**Christoph Krönke**  
Law, LM University Munich, Germany

**“Data Paternalism” – A Viable Concept for Enhancing Digital Life?**  
2:10-2:30 pm

With my project on Governmental Paternalism, I tried to find answers to the big question “What is enhancing life?” by asking another question: Who should decide what an enhanced life actually is? Is it the government or is it the individual? For a libertarian, the answer would be simple. The individual gets to decide. If he or she wants to drink, smoke, gamble, it’s up to him or her to do so. But if you are a liberal or hold moderate political views, you would probably say that the government has certain responsibilities with respect to the well-being of its citizens. In my presentation on “Data Paternalism,” I will discuss fundamental questions of data protection law in order to illustrate this “tightrope walk” between governmental enhancement and personal autonomy.
Research Presentations

Amit Pinchevski
Communications and Journalism, The Hebrew University of Jerusalem, Israel

Echology: The Virtues of Communication Under Constraints
2:50-3:10 pm

This project develops a counterintuitive theory of communication as enhancing of life. It consider echo as a fundamental medium of communication, hence “echology.” Taking its cue from the mythological Echo, who turned the curse of repeating the words of others into a creative resource, this project considers communicative constraints as redemptive. Echo is paradoxical, affirmitive and partial, enhancive and detractive, and such paradoxes are the source of its richness. Covering diverse fields, from philosophy to literature, to acoustics, to technology, this project discovers echo as mediating the outside to the inside, and the other to the same. Prior to meaning, it is a form of primary relation.

Karline McLain
Religion and Hinduism, Bucknell University, USA

Self-Control and Self-Sacrifice at Gandhi’s Intentional Communities
3:10-3:30 pm

Mahatma Gandhi is known worldwide for his nonviolent fight to attain India’s independence from colonial rule. Lesser known are his residential experiments conducted at the intentional living communities, or ashrams, that he founded in South Africa and India. Residents at these ashrams engaged in crucial small-scale experiments with the ideals and methods for living a just life that Gandhi would apply to larger-scale social, religious, and political problems. My research focuses on the communal observances and experiments undertaken at the ashrams. I examine how central voluntary constraint was to Gandhi’s utopian vision for individual and communal flourishing, and explore the relationship between self-control and self-sacrifice.

Session M, Saturday, August 5, 1:30-3:30 pm
ENHANCING LIFE WHEN LESS IS MORE

Michael Luchs
Marketing and Economics, College of William & Mary, USA

Towards a Theory and Measure of Consumer Wisdom
1:30-1:50 pm

Conventional consumption-oriented lifestyles in developed economies detract from individual and societal well-being given their negative impact on financial stability, emotional health, and social connections. While prior research has focused on understanding and measuring dysfunctional consumption patterns of behavior, such as materialism, very little research has attempted to develop an aspirational model of consumer behavior. In response, and building on extant wisdom literature, we draw from a set of 31 interviews of nominated wise individuals to develop a theoretical framework of Consumer Wisdom. We identify and describe five, mutually reinforcing facets of Consumer Wisdom and we provide a preliminary self-assessed questionnaire for assessing these five facets.
Research Presentations

Anne Mocko
Religion and Jainism, Concordia College, USA

Eco-Karma: Notes on What Western Environmentalists might Learn from India’s Jains
1:50-2:10 pm
Environmental responsibility in the West is often conceived in terms of needing to develop better environmental consciousness, by learning about the science of oceans or atmospheres. But what if, instead of providing people with more information about climate change or extinction and hoping that they change their habits, we began by interrogating and redesigning the daily habits we lived by? To explore this possibility of ethical embodied action, I will present excerpts from my manuscript Eco-Karma, to contrast Western lifestyles with the daily devotional and karma practices of India’s Jains, to point to ways that Jains might inspire non-Jains to live better.

Paul Dafydd Jones
Theology, University of Virginia, USA

Patience: God, World, and Counter-Worlds
2:10-2:30 pm
This presentation offers an overview of how the motif of patience supplies new ways to think about the enhancement of life in the present and future. The presentation focuses particularly on: divine patience as an act of “letting be” and “letting happen”; creaturely responses to God’s exercise of patience; the formation and realization of “counter-worlds” that reward God’s patience; and human patience as a dimension in communal and individual processes of transformation.

Nicole A. Vincent
Philosophy, Law and Neuroscience, Macquarie University, Australia
with Emma A. Jane
Digital Media Studies, University of New South Wales, Australia

Cognitive Enhancement: A Social Experiment With Technology
2:50-3:10 pm
Emerging cognitive enhancement (CE) technologies—for instance, so-called “smart drugs” and transcranial electrical and magnetic brain stimulation devices—may change society and our values in a range of not-obviously-positive ways. But because CE is framed as a medical topic a bioethics and neuroethics niche such social and moral hazards are almost completely overlooked, downplayed, or simply ignored. Accordingly, current US government policy on the design and regulation of CEs borders on reckless social and moral experimentation. To explain what current US policy overlooks and why these things are important, we re-frame CE as a philosophy of technology topic. Within this framing, we concede that social experimentation with emerging technologies is not only inevitable but even necessary. However, we also offer a methodology for conducting such social experiments in a responsible way, and draw out the implications of our methodology for how all emerging technologies (not just CE) should be designed and regulated in order to enhance our lives.
Enhancing life! Interdisciplinary Conference
The Enhancing Life Project, The University of Chicago, Bochum University

Ruben Zimmermann
Bible, Mainz University, Germany

Less Is More! How a Bible-based Ethics of Relinquishing Can Inspire Modern Medicine
3:10-3:30 pm

Ethics have often focused upon the manner in which one can create opportunities for disadvantaged individuals and groups. In my project, I consider a different approach. Enhancing life in the world of the future can also occur when people voluntarily relinquish their claim to certain rights and possibilities to which they are entitled. Quality of life is enhanced not only through an expansion, but also through the giving up. On the basis of a phenomenon in Early Christianity, I will describe a theory of an ethic of relinquishing which can inspire current ethical debate. Specifically, I will demonstrate how such an ethics could work in the contemporary world based on the example of medical treatment at the end of life.

Session N, Saturday, August 5, 1:30-3:30 pm
ENHANCING LIFE AT ITS EDGES

Ruth Farrell
Medicine, Cleveland Clinic, USA

Understanding the Worlds and Spiritual Laws that Guide Prenatal Genetic
1:30-1:50 pm

This decade is testament to the power of biotechnology to enhance life. The magnitude of scientific achievement is evident in reproductive medicine where information generated by genetic tests enables expectant parents to make pivotal decisions about the pregnancy. Such decisions include the choice to prepare for the birth of a child with a serious medical condition and, in some cases, to end the pregnancy. This presentation will present conception and empirical findings of a study to examine how values and beliefs undergird the translation of new genetic technologies that impact not just those living now but also future generations.

Kristine Culp
Theology, The University of Chicago, USA

The Glory of Living Things: Aliveness not Limitlessness
1:50-2:10 pm

What is creaturely life like at full capacity and integrity? Consider the wild splendor of lilies, the push and pull of color in a Rothko painting, and the satisfaction of sharing good bread. Such experiences, albeit evanescent and often ambiguous, can suggest what the aliveness of life looks, feels, even tastes like. At such moments, more life seems impossible to bear or imagine. As theologians have taught (and cautioned), “fully alive” creatures are edged by a magnificence that is not self-generated/generating, and also by limits beyond which their lives may become diminished, endangered, and/or endangering of other living things.
Christopher Scott
Biotechnology, Baylor College of Medicine, USA

Make Aging Great Again: Imagining a YUGE lifespan
2:10-2:30 pm
The new era of longevity research seeks extended healthy life, slowing the aging process so that one year of clock time is matched by less than one year of biological time. Embedded in longevity discourse is humanity’s oldest and most pervasive wish: defying death. Slowing the process of aging, it is hoped, will lead to treatments to reverse it. Social arenas and actors at the center of longevity are grounded in big science and a breathtaking sense that “the person who is born today will live to 200.” I will present an analysis of the longevity situation, the moral narratives used, and the future social imaginaries that are central to the movement and spur us to take action today.

Martin Wendte
Systematic Theology, Tübingen University, Germany

Spiritual Health in a Fitness-Oriented Society
2:50-3:10 pm
For many people in our achievement-oriented societies in the West, health – understood as bodily fitness – is pivotal to their identity. Accordingly, sick people and persons with disabilities are often less integrated into society. In the New Testament we find a counter-world to this understanding of health and identity. Jesus heals people, but his understanding of health does not focus on bodily fitness, but includes the spiritual and the cultural dimensions. My presentation combines sociological observations with exegetical insights and explores the consequent dimensions of a theology of disability.

Daniel Sulmasy
Medicine and Ethics, Georgetown University, USA

Can We Enhance the Life of the Dying?
3:10-3:30 pm
Contemporary bioethics casts the care of the dying in consumerist terms—as a struggle between the rights of the dying and the paternalistic and technocratic impulses of medicine. Yet this characterization has failed to meet the needs of patients, families, and health care professionals. Dying persons are members of the human natural kind, and one of the most significant of the features that characterize humans is the fact of their mortality. Human beings are mutually interdependent, social, and keenly aware of their finitude. In solidarity with the dying, aware of their finitude as well as their freedom, Western medicine can take important strides towards improving care at the end of life. Death can neither be avoided nor enhanced, but can enhance the life of the dying.
Session R, Sunday, August 6, 1:00-2:30 pm

ENHANCING LIFE AND IMAGINED FUTURES

Barbara Rossing
Bible, Lutheran School of Theology at Chicago, USA

Tree of Life for the Healing of the World: Abundant Life, the Bible, and Hope
1:00-1:20 pm

Hope for the future—the theological category sometimes called “eschatology”—plays a vital role in religious and spiritual life. Medieval eschatology focused people’s imagination individualistically on the “four last things”—death, judgment, heaven, and hell. Today, imagination about the future must focus more on community-building and healing, drawing on insights from science and art as well as sacred texts. The biblical image of the tree of life, shared by many religions and also by scientists, can serve as a corrective to overly individualistic understandings of our place in the world. The tree of life can also become an image for hope, inspiring a healing vision for life on Earth.

Matthew O’Hara
History, University of California Santa Cruz, USA

The History of the Future in Mexico
1:20-1:40 pm

Historians and other humanists have spent a great deal of energy studying historical legacies. The notion that “the past weighs heavily on the present” is now a standard mode of analysis in the humanities. In this project I turn our attention to the more common, but overlooked historical practices of “futuremaking.” Placing time experience at the center of analysis forces us to rethink our interpretation of Mexico’s past, where tradition and religious resources created opportunities for innovation. It also demands we rethink standard models of historical change. Colonial Mexico developed a culture of innovation, human aspiration, and futuremaking that was subsequently forgotten, in part because we now view modernity and innovation as secular conditions with few links to the past.

Günter Thomas
Systematic Theology, Bochum University, Germany

The Communication of Faith, Hope, and Love as Transformative Entanglement of World and Counter-World
1:50-2:10 pm

The presentation will first outline a typology of counter-worlds and describe the crucial role of future-oriented counter-worlds for the transformative enhancement of life. In a second step, it will introduce the Christian unity of faith, hope, and love as a dynamic pattern of communication which not only characterizes Christian life, it also connects in lively, complex ways what is taken to be the world and the imagined counter-world in favor of enhancing life. In a last step, the presentation will sketch out implications of this dynamic triad for a political philosophy in the 21st century.
Research Presentations

Maria Antonaccio
Religion and Ethics, Bucknell University, USA

Making Time Visible: Sustainability in the Anthropocene
2:10-2:30 pm

In response to climate change and other threats to planetary life, the concept of sustainability has spread through virtually every sector of society. Although often defined as a commitment to limit consumption of resources to a level that can be maintained indefinitely, I argue that theories of sustainability address broader moral-existential questions than resource use alone and involve a more complex relation to time than this standard definition suggests. I present several models for thinking about the relation between sustainability and time, demonstrating how each model projects a vision of the good society and of what it means to enhance life.

Session S, Sunday, August 6, 1:00-2:30
ENHANCING LIFE: VULNERABILITY AND VITALITY

Andrea Bieler
Practical Theology, University of Basel, Switzerland

Enhancing Life in the Aftermath of Atrocious Violence:
Exploring the Religious and Cultural Imaginary
1:00-1:20 pm

How do human beings seek to enhance life in the aftermath of atrocious violence? What kind of practices do they develop to learn again what it means to be human in the face of utmost experiences of dehumanization? What are the aspirations, values, and core beliefs that help or hinder victims, bystanders, and perpetrators in coming to terms with traumatic violence in a life-giving way? During my Enhancing Life Project, I engaged these questions by exploring various projects that attend to the aftermath of violence in South Africa, Germany, Israel, and Italy. In my presentation, I will present some of my findings.

Michael Ing
Religion and Confucianism, Indiana University, USA

Vulnerabilities of the Self in Confucian Thought
1:20-1:40 pm

My project is about the necessity and value of vulnerability in human experience. More specifically, I bring Confucian texts into dialogue with questions about the ways in which meaningful things are vulnerable to powers beyond our control. In today’s world vulnerability is often understood as an undesirable state; invulnerability is usually preferred. While recognizing the need to reduce vulnerability in some situations, I demonstrate that vulnerability is pervasive in human experience, and enables values such as morality, trust, and maturity. Vulnerability is also the source of the need for care for oneself and for others.
William Schweiker
Theological Ethics, The University of Chicago, USA

Vital Humanism and the Enhancing of Life
1:50-2:10 pm

This paper seeks to show the ways in which a vital humanism, that is, a humanism grounded in human situated and embodied freedom, contributes to enhancing life in ways that are of crucial, vital importance in our historical situation. The paper begins with a brief description of the current debate about the standing, distinctiveness, and importance of human worth. In the second step of the argument, I set forth four basic principles of humanistic thought gleaned from contemporary and classical humanistic thinkers. The concluding step of the paper brings these principles to bear on the question of enhancing life in our global age.

Heike Springhart
Systematic Theology, Heidelberg University, Germany

Vitality in Vulnerability: Realistic Anthropology as Humanistic Anthropology
2:10-2:30 pm

The acknowledgment of ontological and situated vulnerability constitutive of the human condition forms the center of a realistic anthropology. I will argue that a humanistic anthropology focuses on vulnerability as a value or human good. Vulnerability as an anthropological concept is based on the distinction of ontological vulnerability as the human condition and situated vulnerability that can be increased or decreased by social, political or religious conditions. The inherent mutuality and processive character of situated and ontological vulnerability characterizes it as crucial to a humanistic vision of enhancing life.
Session I, Saturday, August 5, 9:30-10:40 am
Discovering Strength in Vulnerability

Sarah Bianchi, Philosophy, Humboldt University Berlin, Germany
Elizabeth Bucar, Philosophy and Religion, Northeastern University, USA
Gregory Cootsona, Faculty in Comparative Religion, California State University, USA
Michael Ing, Religious Studies, Indiana University, USA
Monique Mitchell, Social Work, University of South Carolina, USA
Nazar Shabila, Public Health, Hawler Medical University, Iraq

The purpose of this Research Laboratory is to unfold a differentiated concept of vulnerability that takes seriously that vulnerability is, at the same time, both a resource and a risk. This conception challenges widespread beliefs that vulnerability is a condition that ought to be avoided by persons and communities. In order to clarify the importance of this nuanced concept of vulnerability, the laboratory seeks to demonstrate how individuals and communities can discover strength in vulnerability; address interdisciplinary approaches by bridging the sciences and humanities to explore and understand vulnerability in its diverse dimensions; and to highlight how vulnerable individuals and populations can counter hegemony and thereby envision a future of freedom and flourishing.

Session J, Saturday, August 5, 9:30-10:40 am
Politics and Enhancing Life: Disruption, Dialogue, and Democracy

Andrea Bieler, Practical Theology, University of Basel, Switzerland
Christian Chautard, Business Consultant, Korian Group and Theano Advisors, Germany
Jeffrey Haynes, Political Sciences, London Metropolitan University, UK
Michael Hogue, Theology, Meadville Lombard Theological School, USA
Aasim Padela, Medicine, University of Chicago, USA
Amit Pinchevski, Communications and Journalism, The Hebrew University of Jerusalem, Israel

The premise of our laboratory is that in order to engage fully the questions of enhancing life, one must explore it in relation to global political challenges. This is because global political challenges (e.g. climate disruption, terrorism, refugee crises, post-truth media) provoke questions about power (who’s got it, who doesn’t), value (forms and loci) and shared life (social and ecological, global and planetary) that directly bear on the questions of Enhancing Life Studies. The purpose of our laboratory is to test the utility of “Enhancing Life Studies” as a framework for interpreting and/or morally engaging global political challenges. Our group hypothesis is that Enhancing Life Studies provides a way of looking at global political challenges that illuminates them in new ways which we will explore in the laboratory.
Research Laboratories

Session K, Saturday, August 5, 9:30-10:40 am
Integral Ecology: Enhancing Human and Non-Human Life

Jason Danely, Anthropology, Oxford Brookes University, UK
Ronne Hartfield, Author, Essayist, Intern. Museum Consultant, USA
Steve Kloehn, Vice President, Marketing & Communications, Carnegie Mellon University, USA
Karline McLain, Religion and Hinduism, Bucknell University, USA
Anne Mocko, Religion and Jainism, Concordia College, USA
William Schweiker, Theological Ethics, The University of Chicago, USA
Lea Schweitz, Theology and Science, Lutheran School of Theology at Chicago, USA

The task of this Research Laboratory is to provide perspectives from philosophy, history, theology and anthropology about the possibilities for engaging in each other’s lives and in the natural world. Rather than exploring ecology and just the sum of its parts, we explore fundamental aspects of and “integral ecology.” That is, we examine the ways environments and social relationships organize, inspire, and vitalize each other. The laboratory will also look across different societies to explore the ways these integral interactions are mediated by material infrastructures and cultural belief systems. In doing so, we seek to reflect on the webs of mutuality, interdependence, and exchange that can and do enhance the integral coexistence of human and non-human life.

Session O, Saturday, August 5, 4:00-5:10 pm
Enhancing Life in a Digital Age

Menahem Blondheim, Communications, The Hebrew University of Jerusalem, Israel
Nick Couldry, Communications and Social Theory, London School of Economics, UK
Evelyn Finger, Senior Editor, DIE ZEIT, Germany
Christoph Krönke, Law, LM University Munich, Germany
Günter Thomas, Systematic Theology, Bochum University, Germany

The aim of this laboratory is to capture and evaluate the most significant impacts of digitalization and media on economic, social, cultural and political life. These impacts may come with enhancements, but also with threats. These impacts include potentials and problems such as data/privacy protection and IT security concerns as well as phenomena such as “hate speech” on the internet; artificial intelligence and “digital labour” (e.g. the impact of permanent [“enhanced”?] availability of employees on labor markets); the “echo chamber” or “filter bubble” effect (as a result of algorithm-based, personalized news streams in social networks, users can get separated from information which disagrees with his/her preferences and views); the use of “big data” applications in the health care sector and many more aspects.
Research Laboratories

Session P, Saturday, August 5, 4:00-5:10 pm
Sharing to Enhance Life

Maria Antonaccio, Religion and Ethics, Bucknell University, USA
Dean Bell, History, Dean of Spertus Institute for Jewish Learning and Leadership, USA
Michael Luchs, Marketing and Economics, College of William & Mary, USA
Barbara Rossing, Bible, Lutheran School of Theology at Chicago, USA
Nicole Vincent, Philosophy, Law and Neuroscience, Georgia State University, USA
Ruben Zimmermann, Bible, Mainz University, Germany

The aim of this laboratory is to explore what scholars can offer – from philosophical, theological, historical, and social science perspectives – that might provide ideas about a) what sharing means, b) what is shared, c) how sharing occurs, d) what inspires and promotes sharing (e.g. religion, culture, institutions, economic forces), and e) barriers and limits to sharing (e.g. cultural, infrastructure, habits, systems, individual concerns about trust and equity).

We construe sharing in the broadest possible sense, to include the material (e.g. commodities/products, water, land) and immaterial (e.g. energy, time, culture, community). In this way, we hope to isolate the ways in which acts of sharing enhance personal and social life.

Session Q, Saturday, August 5, 4:00-5:10 pm
Transcending Limits of Spaces and Times

Markus Höfner, Systematic Theology, Bochum University, Germany
Paul Jones, Theology, University of Virginia, USA
Alexander-Kenneth Nagel, Sociology of Religion, Göttingen University, Germany
Piet Naudé, Director, University of Stellenbosch Business School, South Africa
Matthew O'Hara, History, University of California Santa Cruz, USA
Heike Springhart, Systematic Theology, Heidelberg University, Germany

The objective of this Research Laboratory is to explore the role of temporal and spatial boundaries for the enhancement of life. While refuge migration provides an example of how the crossing of spatial boundaries might save or enhance life, patience or enduring and embracing vulnerability of finite, temporal life point to the acceptance or cultivation of boundaries as modes of the enhancement of life. In addition to engaging the philosophical and sociological meanings of time and space for enhancing life, often in paradoxical ways, we also turn to the resources of the religions. In religious traditions, the ‘boundary management’ between present and future and between (finite) time and eternity offer tools to discuss the topic of enhancing life in an differentiated way.
Research Laboratories

Session T, Sunday, August 6, 1:00-2:30 pm
Drawing the Edges of Human Life

Kristine Culp, Theology, The University of Chicago, USA
Ruth Farrell, Medicine, Cleveland Clinic, USA
Sebastian Sattler, Sociology and Social Psychology, University of Cologne, Germany
Christopher Scott, Biotechnology, Baylor College of Medicine, USA
Daniel Sulmasy, Medicine and Ethics, Georgetown University, USA
Ellen Ueberschär, Co-Chair, Heinrich Böll Foundation, Germany
Martin Wendte, Systematic Theology, Tübingen University, Germany

This laboratory session will attempt to bridge our research findings (encompassing technological, social, and moral dimensions) on human enhancements at the beginning and end of life with those normative views, beliefs, and attitudes operating in the public sphere. Which narratives about enhancement achieve valence? Which “publics” participate? How does the definition of “health” draw margins and borders of fitness that implicate resource allocation, justice, and disparity? Are the margins changing? To what extent can notions of human flourishing, the awe of life, and living finite life to its fullest move and shift the normative boundaries and expectations for the beginning and end of life that predominate our technology-driven cultures?
Night Talks

Session D, Friday, August 4, 8:00-9:30 pm
STUDENT TALKS A

Tanja Dannenmann
New Testament Studies, Mainz University, Germany

Life Enhancement, Emotions and Ethical Decision-Making: Inspirations by Biblical Narratives
Throughout ancient and modern European Philosophy emotions have mostly been neglected in ethical debate. But this talk shows that in early Christian narratives about Jesus, first of all, emotions are portrayed as an important aspect in the decision-making process. Secondly, Christianity motivates an "ethics of sympathy", illustrating that not only positive, but especially negative emotions are crucial factors in the process of doing "the right thing", resulting in an enhancement of personal and social life. This suggests a more precise evaluation of the significance of suffering in increasing the quality of life.

Herbert Lin
Theological Ethics, The University of Chicago, USA

Is Human Understanding Translatable? On the Very Idea of Intentionality in Artificial Intelligence
The question of whether or not computers can successfully exhibit human-level intelligence is a debate that continues to pose far-reaching implications for our everyday human life. This presentation aims to bring the debate into sharper relief by examining whether intentionality, a distinctive function of human understanding, can be reproduced by artificial intelligence. In my argument, I shall show, by way of certain thought-experiments, why it would be impossible for computers to "understand" things in the same way as human beings do, and consequently, how we should rethink our relation to machines in an age increasingly defined by technological progress.
Night Talks

Florence Häneke
Practical Theology, Basel University, Switzerland

LGBTIQ* Pastors and Social Changes on Gender and Sexuality
Perception and awareness of the variety of sexuality and gender considerably changed in the Protestant churches in the last decades. Churches are actors in social movements, offer their recourses (such as gathering spaces) and take part in education. Today most Protestant churches and congregations in Germany are accepting towards LGBTIQ* persons and pastors. In my PhD I conduct biographical interviews with LGBTQ* pastors. What lead to the described changes and how are these perceived by LGBTQ* persons in pastoral work? What is the impact of pastors on the broadening of possibilities for everyone, not limited to gender and sexuality?

Jun Yu
Media and Communications, London School of Economics, UK

Social Solidarity in the Age of Algorithmic Communication
What role do social media play today when the division between different groups and individuals is ever more growing? While they are often acclaimed as a new social infrastructure that provides possibilities of free communication and community-development, they, at the same time, are powered by ‘personalization algorithms’ that tend to support only what we believe in, or what is most popular and self-validating, rather than a diversity of views and countervailing opinions. My research project aims to explore how such paradoxical situation might create conditions that are incompatible with ‘social solidarity’, a value essential for different people to live and enjoy a communal life together, and therefore fundamental to the fulfilment of our social life.
Night Talks

Session E, Friday, August 4, 8:00-9:30 pm
STUDENT TALKS B

Daniel Kim
Theology, The University of Chicago, USA

The Normative in Global Health: Just and Meaningful Relations of Love

For all its vast scale and complexity, global health practice is at root a human response to human need. To be true to itself, global health needs a truthful vision of human life and what it means to enhance and respect it. This presentation, in particular, explores what our ordinary relations of love have to do with global health. It does so through an engagement with Harry Frankfurt’s and Augustine’s accounts of love. The idea is to thereby push beyond the utilitarian and liberal political imperatives that now dominate our use of global health’s far-reaching scientific and institutional powers.

Kristin M. Kostick
Medical Ethics and Health Policy, Baylor University, USA

Old Habits Die Hard: Reconciling the Emerging “Epi-Human” Condition with our Timeworn Human Modalities

As medicine and technology change the landscape of “humanity,” our sociocultural institutions remain entrenched in our species’ evolutionary history. Our societies, healthcare systems and even intimacies were optimized in contexts where people grow old and die. These contexts are changing. The rising “dissonance” between what we – as individuals and societies – are evolutionarily and historically designed to be versus what we’re capable of becoming requires careful reflection currently lacking in sociopolitical and cultural discourse. This presentation argues for more active reflection on how to build sociopolitical and cultural infrastructures to support new potentials for living healthier, longer and more technologically-facilitated lives.
Night Talks

Darryl Dale-Ferguson
Theological Ethics, The University of Chicago, USA

**Envisioning a Fragile Justice**
What if justice were a project? Borrowing from Ricoeur’s conceptualization of the self as a project marked by fragility, my presentation will propose a view of justice as fragile. The fragility of justice is expressed in the tension between both its righting of wrongs and its producing conditions of human achievement. Conceived thus, justice both forecloses action and enables it. The threat to justice is therefore dual: the subsumption of plurality under a singular conception of right; and the multiplication of interests under the aegis of possibility. A justice that is fragile continually reminds of the work that is required.

Nasir Malim
Medicine, The University of Chicago, USA

**Improving Quality of Life Using Islamic Bioethical Perspectives on Gender Identity for Intersex Patients**
Numerous factors influence the quality of life for intersex patients, particularly their physical, emotional, and mental well-being resulting from treatment practices. Analyzing Islamic resources regarding intersex individuals helps inform Islamic bioethical views on the most appropriate medical approaches to diagnosis and treatment. Based on readings of a classical Islamic legal manual as well as contemporary legal rulings we contend that a delayed approach to gender identity assessment be applied to challenging cases of intersex patients. Additionally we discuss how Islamic legal precedent problematizes the notion of a complete gender binary, which sets the stage for negotiating the gender identity of intersex patients.
Night Talks

**Alda Balthrop-Lewis**  
Religion, Australian Catholic University Sidney, Australia

**Thoreau Against Philanthropy: Cultivating the Goods Between Us**

In Henry David Thoreau’s most famous work, Walden, he writes about getting his own living, alone in the woods. I argue that the offbeat ascetic practice he portrays himself undertaking was motivated by a strong critique of philanthropy, especially the giving of money in charity. His neighbors considered such philanthropy an appropriate Christian response to the poor. But Thoreau objected to it, on theological grounds, and he spent the rest of Walden seeking an alternative. In this paper I uncover Thoreau’s vision of common good in what is often read as a foundational text of American individualism.

---

**Sara-Jo Swiatek**  
Theological Ethics, The University of Chicago, USA

**Virtuality as/and Counter-Worlds**

This paper explores the relationship between virtuality and the notion of counter-worlds as defined by the principle investigators of The Enhancing Life Project. I argue that insofar as virtual worlds inspire creative ways of enhancing life and open up spaces for critique, they may very well be conceived of as counter-worlds. However, if we take this one step further, and suggest that it is the tension between worlds that creates the conditions for the possibility for creative transformation of the “real” world, then virtuality both as a concept and as an aspect of our everyday lives, introduces profound theoretical and practical problems, which need to be investigated more closely.
Night Talks

Benedikt Friedrich
Systematic Theology, Bochum University, Germany

A Void of Trust and Hope – Counter-Evident Approaches in Religious Discourse on God’s Omnipotence

With respect to the reality of evil, at least in the wake of 20th century it doesn’t seem rational to speak of God’s omnipotence at all. This paper will show that compared to what appears evident in the reality of everyday life, faith in God’s almighty presence is much more based on another kind of reality. But in situations of crisis, for instance, this opens up a gap between these two sources of evidence. My assumption is that this void has a creative potential, which is necessary for both trust and hope to emerge. At the same time, it is the task of Christian theology to seek intermediations between experienced and believed reality in order to avoid a naïve kind of anti-realism.

Florian Rast
Law LM, University Munich, Germany

Enhancing Corporate Environmental Responsibility

According to a UN report the world’s 3000 biggest companies alone are responsible for environmental damages amounting to 2.15 trillion dollars in one year. This shows that the protection of the environment is a task not only for the state but also especially for companies. But what strategy should a state pursue in order to promote corporate environmental responsibility? One option would be “classical” regulation and enforcement. However this approach has not always proven effective in the past. As a consequence, lawmakers developed new regulatory strategies which aimed at activating companies’ environmental self-reflection and at enhancing (instead of enforcing) their contributions to protecting the environment. In my presentation I would like to discuss two of these instruments of enhancing corporate environmental responsibility and compare them to the “classical” strategies.
Night Talks

Marie-Christine Valitutto
Sociology and Social Psychology, Cologne University, Germany

Sebastian Sattler
Sociology and Social Psychology, Cologne University, Germany

Qualitative Results from an International Survey on Prescription Drug Use in Healthy Children: Mastering or Surpassing the Performance Standards

With respect to the reality of evil, at least in the wake of 20th century it doesn’t seem rational to speak of God’s omnipotence at all. This paper will show that compared to what appears evident in the reality of everyday life, faith in God’s almighty presence is much more based on another kind of reality. But in situations of crisis, for instance, this opens up a gap between these two sources of evidence. My assumption is that this void has a creative potential, which is necessary for both trust and hope to emerge. At the same time, it is the task of Christian theology to seek intermediations between experienced and believed reality in order to avoid a naïve kind of anti-realism.

Andrew Packman
Theology, The University of Chicago, USA

Enhancing Racialized Social Life: The Implicit Spiritual Dimension of Critical Race Theory

This paper considers two prominent trajectories of critical race theory, the volitional-idealistic and the structural-materialist models, as strategies for enhancing racialized social life. Each imaginatively projects anti-racist counter-worlds, theorizes personal and social change, and issues action-guiding prescriptions vis-à-vis those counter-worlds. These under-interrogated spiritual depths of critical race theory are precisely those which theologians have pondered and, at their best, rendered articulate. By foregrounding these two competing models of personal and social change, I show critical race theory’s potential as a contributor to “Enhancing Life Studies” and as a beneficiary from constructive engagement with Christian theological insights about moral motivation and failure.
Night Talks

Session G, Friday, August 4, 8:00-9:30 pm
Film & Discussion: Roadside Radiation (2016)
Created by earlybirdpictures

With stories and impressions from the Zone of Alienation around the Chernobyl Nuclear Power Plant, Roadside Radiation portrays the different fates of its past and present residents and researches the complex human consequences of the Chernobyl catastrophe: a place of collective loss but also of individual survival.


Michael Sladek and Julian Springhart of earlybirdpictures will be present at the screening and engage in discussion of their work.

---

Session H, Friday, August 4, 8:00-9:30 pm
Film & Discussion: Healing of Memories in South Africa (2017)
Created by Andrea & Ralf Bieler

The documentary portrays the work of the Institute for Healing of Memories (IHOM) in Cape Town (South Africa). The IHOM was founded in 1998 to open up a space for encounters between people who were classified as blacks, colored, Indian or white under the dehumanizing logic of the apartheid regime. It developed particular methods and venues that enable participants to engage communally the intersection of intimate autobiographic storytelling and the history of the nation. The documentary also shows how the range of topics has expanded over the course of time and how the work of the IHOM has spread all over the globe to places where massive violence has occurred.

Andrea Bieler and Ralf Bieler will be present at the screening and engage in discussion of their work.
Public Interlocutors

Dean Bell
History, Dean of Spertus Institute for Jewish Learning and Leadership, USA

Christian Chautard
Business Consultant, Korian Group and Theano Advisors, Germany

Gregory Cootsona
Faculty in Comparative Religion, California State University, USA

Evelyn Finger
Senior Editor, DIE ZEIT, Germany

Ronne Hartfield
Author, Essayist, Intern. Museum Consultant, USA

Gretchen Helfrich
Lawyer, Loevy & Loevy, USA

Steve Kloehn
Vice President, Marketing & Communications, Carnegie Mellon University, USA

Piet Naudé
Director, University of Stellenbosch Business School, South Africa

Amy Northcutt
Chief Information Officer, National Science Foundation, USA

Heike Springhart
Systematic Theology, Heidelberg University, Germany

Ellen Ueberschär
Co-Chair, Heinrich Böll Foundation, Germany

Christian Wolf
Pastor, Consultant, Public Lecturer, Germany
The Enhancing Life Leadership Team

Sara Bigger  
Associate Director,  
The University of Chicago, USA

Heike Springhart  
Project Consultant & Research Associate,  
Heidelberg University, Germany

Markus Höfner  
Project Coordinator & Research Associate,  
Bochum University, Germany

Günter Thomas  
Principal Investigator,  
Bochum University, Germany

William Schweiker  
Principal Investigator,  
The University of Chicago, USA

In Memoriam

Pamela Sue Anderson  
Philosophy of Religion,  
Oxford University, UK  
† March 12, 2017

Amy Northcutt  
Chief Information Officer,  
National Science Foundation, USA  
† May 6, 2017
Floorplan Gleacher Center 6