Philosophy Department Colloquium Series

Friday, November 22, 2019
3:00 p.m.
D-634
Everyone is welcome

Doing Clinical Ethics with Philosophy

Eric Mathison
Alberta Health Service's Clinical Ethicist

Abstract: A clinical ethicist is part philosopher, part investigative journalist, part negotiator, and part therapist. The clinical ethicist's task is to identify ethical issues in health care and find ways to improve them. Some of this occurs at the case-based level: e.g., a physician wants to know if it's ethically permissible to withdraw life-sustaining treatment, or a spouse is trying to make a treatment decision for her incapacitated partner but isn't sure of the best choice. There is also the system level, which involves setting policies that will promote ethical outcomes. In this talk, I'll describe what it's like being a clinical ethicist and go through some of the difficult cases I've encountered.

Bio: Eric Mathison is Alberta Health Service's clinical ethicist for the south zone. Before that, he was a postdoctoral fellow at Baylor College of Medicine in Houston, Texas. He did his PhD in philosophy at the University of Toronto, researching ill-being (the opposite of well-being) and asymmetries between the good and the bad. His bioethics research interests include the goals of medicine, assistance in dying, and emerging technologies.

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