The Capstone students will be hosting a poster session on Scholarship and Creativity Day (Thursday, April 23) from 11-12:30 in Quad 341. We hope you will all be able to join us!

Nick Benson, The Nature of a Musical Work

This presentation will be an exploration of the ways philosophers have attempted to define the musical work through time, paying particular attention to how these definitions stand with regards to the idea of musical Platonism.

Nick Hamel, Educational Transformation, An Opening for Freedom

A commonplace notion of education is one that entails the absorption of information and knowledge by the pupil. While this view is simplified, even complex theories of education operate on the foundational idea that the information of the world is taken into the established self. A challenge to this idea is the notion of the existential self in the context of education. This understanding of the self views the student as actively defined by where he or she stands in the context of the her world. Here, the student is building an understanding of self in the world as she encounters and incorporates information in the world. Within this educational process is an opening of possibility within the student, an opportunity for new beginnings through new understanding. This opening in the self is the introduction of positive freedom. It is through this transformation of self that a student may realize the possibility she contains and become more positively free in her understanding of herself. An exploration of this phenomenon, and all that it entails, seeks to prepare educators to pay heed to and facilitate this transformation within their students.

Tom Hirschboeck, The Ethics of Authenticity

My research will focus on the possibility of creating a normative ethics on the basis of existentialist authenticity (or an individually meaningful value-orientation toward the world). Since existentialism takes the individual to be essentially free and self-determining, this is often seen as an impossibility; total self-determination seems to lead directly to relativism. My argument is that, by reconceptualizing the concept of freedom to see the given world not as a limitation to the subject but as the basis for the possibility of intersubjective significance, it is possible to create a normative ethical model based on authentic, individualized value systems. I will illustrate this with a discussion of the case of Armin Meiwes, a German man who killed and ate the body of a consenting victim in 2001, arguing that a truly authentic ethical system would reject these actions as a closing of possibility.

Cole Minkel, The Practical Meme
The study of memetics aims to add a secondary replicator to the common understanding of human evolution. In addition to a gene, the memetic standpoint is that memes (loosely defined as replicable ideas) interact and, indeed, interfere with genetic fitness and self-interest—traditionally considered to be the lone determinants of evolutionary processes. This paper discusses the foundations of meme theory, memetic evolution and how this process interrupts genetic favorability—distinguishing the meme by its own self-interest, as well as some of the issues facing memetics. Specifically, the approach is to examine the practical value of this study, and this will be accomplished through a consideration of the necessity of discreteness, in regards to memes. The ambition here is to dismiss concerns that discredit memetic existence based merely on the likely truth that a heritage of memes may often prove difficult to obtain. The argument that postulates meme ambiguity implies inexistence is ill conceived, and rashly defended. However, such indiscreetness may affect the ability to gain anything from such a study, which will, obviously, be contributive to its overall value. Patented technology will serve to show at least one area of interest where memetics may be able to provide us with useful, and hopefully unexpected, information.

**Her Vang, The Existence of the Soul**

My research project will follow two historically well known Philosophers, Aristotle and Plato, as they use reasoning to prove the existence of the soul through the four causes and the forms. The four causes and the forms will be my argument for the existence of the soul as it contributes to the physical world as an immortal entity that is the essence of the physical body that it harbors. I will argue this through pure reasoning as the soul does have an important role in the physical world as the mover of all things. In addition, I believe that it is also important to understand the soul’s impact on the physical world if it does exist through Aristotle and Plato’s literature.

**Tanner Wright, Violent Retaliation in Sports**

My research topic explores the ethical implications behind violent retaliation in sports. The main issues are when and if it is right to retaliate against a certain team or opponent for their actions. This issue is highly criticized in the philosophy of sport realm because it incorporates violent retaliation against another person. It is also controversial because the role of violence in sports is permeating into society. There are instances such as the Ray Rice and Adrian Peterson incidents which show that violent sports have a bleeding effect into player’s personal lives. Throughout my paper, I argue that violent retaliation is only acceptable in specific instances.

**Chendan Yan, Grounding an Appropriate Philosophical Foundation for Effective Environmental Policy**

This thesis project carefully examines existing theories of environmental ethics that are categorized into three schools: the instrumental approach, intrinsic value approach and the relational approach. The work of leading philosophers representing each school will be discussed, among which existing work of the intrinsic value approach and relational value approach schools will be particularly focused on. Papers from J. Baird Callicott, a leading philosophical interpreter of Aldo Leopold’s land ethic, will be examined and used to discuss the intrinsic approach. Callicott’s work will be compared with the work of Marion Hourdequin,
David. B. Wong and Gary E. Varner whose theories will be used to represent the relational approach. This paper suggests that Varner’s biocentrism individualism, with a theoretical foundation in the relational approach, can potentially provide an appropriate ethical foundation for effective environmental policy.