

SOCIETY FOR THEORETICAL AND PHILOSOPHICAL PSYCHOLOGY



**Spring
20
25
Meeting**



**May 2nd - 4th
Pittsburgh Pennsylvania**

Conference Abstracts

Division 24

Society for Theoretical and Philosophical Psychology

Conference Committee

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Kay Holler

Jenna Armstrong

Nisrine Fettah

Autumn Vick

Friday May 2nd Schedule			
9:00 to 10:00	Lawrence Hall 2nd Floor: Welcome and Awards		
10:30 to 11:30	Lawrence Hall 2nd Floor- Invited Talk Darcia Narvaez: The Evolved Nest: The Only Future for Humanity?		
	2nd Floor Lawrence Hall	JVH Auditorium	Academic Hall 308
11:45 to 1:00	<u>Paper Session</u> Elizabeth Pienkos At the threshold of the Other: A phenomenological approach to the mental status exam Zach Fry, Adrianna Mendrek, James Crooks, Maxime Gilbert, Catherine Malboeuf-Hurtubise “What is the point of it all if we are just going to die anyway?”: Exploring Heideggerian concepts of developing-towards-death with children using arts-based existential therapy Chris Bell Mapping evolving concepts of interpretation in contemporary psychoanalysis	<u>Paper Session</u> Annah Darling Prisoners of Cope: How Neoliberal Values Shape Assumptions of Normativity in Psychotherapeutic Practice Aram Zelman The TikTok Problem: Self- diagnosis, social media, and neoliberalism Adam A. Ghali Normativity in psychology and in the cosmos in the wake of neoliberalism: A tensional approach	<u>Workshop</u> Kate Greer Dickinson The Normativity of conditional love: Shadow work through Feeding Your Demons
1:00 to 2:00	Lunch		
2:00 to 3:15	<u>Paper Session</u> Jakob Thorn Neuropsychology’s ecological validity problem: Theoretical issue or clinical crisis? Jackson Lucy Phenomenological similarities between schizophrenic and meditative experience: A re-examination using the Ipseity Disturbance Model River Heisler Constructing a livable Gestalt of nonbinary experience: The "otherwise" contra cisnormativity	<u>Conversation Session</u> Lucas B. Carroll & John Dall’Aglio Normativity in the age of neuro-ontology	<u>Conversation Session</u> Autumn Vick, Vivian Kinter, Opal Dickman & Jeremy Northup "What ought to be": Unofficial and informal lessons from Dr. Brent Robbins

Friday May 2nd Schedule Cont.			
	2nd Floor Lawrence Hall	JVH Auditorium	Academic Hall 308
3:30 to 4:45	<u>Paper Session</u> Will Adams Mystical/Contemplative Writing and Hermeneutic Phenomenology: Kindred Ways of Letting Mystery Speak	<u>Paper Session</u> Joe Huang From Marx to Murthy: the ethics of alienation	<u>Symposium</u> Navigating shifting values and narratives around psychopathology: Lessons from the stacks, state archives, and classroom
	Kate Stone & David Goodman Normativity as suffering: a Schopenhauerian approach to clinical practice	Gregory Hood American ‘algorithmicality’ and the crisis of normativity: From psychological reductions to ethical AI	Jamie M. Hansen The costs and opportunities of eschewing normative language in the teaching of psychopathology: Are we trading one problem for another?
	Michael Miller The empty normative in psychology education and ethics	Pam Leck The Question of Normativity	Hannah L. Stokes From labeling to understanding: Student responses to archived asylum medical case files and implications for the teaching of psychopathology
5:00 to 6:00	Lawrence Hall 2nd Floor <u>Plenary.</u> Lisa Cosgrove: How "Normative” Science Went Mad: When Research Becomes Pathological		
6:30 to 8:00	Lawrence Hall 3rd Floor Ballroom Poster Session and Reception		

Saturday May 3rd Schedule			
	2nd Floor Lawrence Hall	JVH Auditorium	Academic Hall 308
9:00 to 10:15	<u>Symposium</u> Breaking the Happiness Mandate: Bethany Aronson Sex and Cringe: Pleasure and Enjoyment in the Absence of Freud Chase O’Gwin “Completely Happy and a Tiny Bit Sad”: Renormalizing Negative Affect Sebastienne Grant Beyond Happily Ever After: Engaging Suffering Through Entertainment for Healing and Resistance	<u>Paper Session</u> Matthew Clemente & David Goodman Discerning the Good: Suffering, normativity and human flourishing Kelsey Watson Dysfunction is not disordered: Diagnosis in a person-centered approach Don Marks Escaping the manacles of measurement: A case for the beautiful and the sacred in clinical psychology	<u>Paper Session</u> Steen Halling: Dialogue, humility and fidelity Emily Purtschert: When metaphors become metaphysics: How demystification has bred distortion Sophia Shieh: Reclaiming humanistic psychology: Integrating indigenous knowledge and liberation theories
10:30 to 11:45	<u>Symposium:</u> The (in)sane society: Critiquing normality from a historical, political and societal perspective Ashley Bobak: Marketed minds and manufactured selves: Philip Cushman’s analysis of social pathologies Brent Robbins:Social pathology in the Frankfurt school tradition of critical theory Jeremy Northup: Negative communities and a phenomenology of failing institutions	<u>Paper Session</u> Aidan Blockley: (Ab)normality and sexual sanity in Canadian psychiatry: An historical discourse analysis Jim Creswell: “Hackance” & short dialogue: The emergence of a dangerous normativity from misappropriation of some good ideas	<u>Paper Session</u> Dani Park Being, ought andthe psyche: A metaphysical approach to psychoanalytic theory Timon Hogenaar: Apathy versus violence: A Fanonian-Lacanian exploration of responses to societal racist norms Caroline L. Stotz: No time to make it unconscious: Fanon’s revision of psychoanalysis

Saturday May 3rd Schedule Cont.			
	2nd Floor Lawrence Hall	JVH Auditorium	Academic Hall 308
12:00 to 1:15	<u>Roundtable Discussion</u> Suzanne R. Kirschner, Derek Hook & Stephanie Swales Normativity and its discontents: Psychoanalytic perspectives in theory and practice	<u>Symposium</u> Psychology and Its Stories: Historical Explorations of Transformations, from Care of Souls to Modern Mentalities A. Taiga Guterres “Cura Personalis: Shifting Concepts of the Care of Souls and Guidance in Post-World War II Jesuit Education” Karley Guterres, A. Taiga Guterres, and Kaila Pelton-Flavin “Stories of Electroconvulsive Therapy (ECT): Early Accounts and Contested Narratives” David Goodman, Matt Clemente, and Kate Stone “From Moral Imagination to Adaptation: A Mentality Shift in Psychology	<u>Conversation Session</u> Joe A. Ostenston, Brady Wiggins, James Christopher Head & Joshua W. Clegg Jazz Standards: Monological and Dialogical Processes in the Standardization of Qualitative Methods
1:15 to 2:30	Lunch		
2:30 to 3:45	<u>Paper Session</u> Ana Júlia Segala Unseen bonds: The impact of familial normativity on identity and the experience of otherness Tim Beck & Patrick Whitehead Navigating identity within a majority-minority institution Antoinette Donofrio Simone Weil, relational spirituality and the therapeutic alliance: Transcendental connections in theory and clinical practice	<u>Conversation Session</u> Stephen Yanchar, Hannah Stokes & Michael Westerman Philosophical Perspectives on Issues Regarding Normativity in Psychology	<u>Paper Session</u> B. Mason Judy Speaking of panic: Lacanian perspectives on panic attacks Salma Siddique The fragile mandate: Psychoanalytic reflections on normativity and early development <u>Conversation Session</u> Rebecca Keating The Question of Normativity Through The Lens of Love

	2nd Floor Lawrence Hall	JVH Auditorium	Academic Hall 308
4:00 to 5:15	<u>Symposium</u> Ruptures in the Sexual non-rapprt: A gap in the big other Sam Alston Digitization of Beings: Self and Online Relations Eleanor Harrison It’s Reigning Men: Sexuation and the Capitalist Discourse Andrew Flores Crisis in the Field of Knowledge: on the University Discourse and Capitalist Market	<u>Symposium</u> Living Subjects, Fluid Norms Brent Robbins and the Dynamic Heart of Psychology Justin Karter Diagnosis as Discourse: Conceptual Competence and the Limits of Psychiatric Normativity Ashley Bobak A Psychoanalysis for the Culture: Metabletics as a Cultural Therapeutics Jeremy Northup Hermeneutics Doesn’t Have to Be So Sad: Interpretation Beyond Cynicism and Resentment	<u>Paper Session</u> Jack J. Bauer Deep psychological science Jared Parker Theoretical and philosophical psychology at Hillsdale College: An emerging model Ed Gantt, Samuel Major & Emily C. Purtschert: Psychology and the legacy of romanticism: The emotive self, expressionism and the therapy of affirmation
5:30 to 6:30	Lawrence Hall 2nd Floor: <u>Plenary Speaker</u> Fred Wertz Toward integrative methodological normativity in psychology: Progress, challenges and prospects		
6:45 to 8:00	Lawrence Hall 3rd Ballroom- Dinner		

Sunday May 5th Schedule			
9:00 to 10:00	Lawrence Hall 2nd Floor: <u>Plenary Speaker</u> Stephanie Swales On (Not) Being Empathic: Or On (Not) Wanting to Receive Empathy		
	2nd Floor Lawrence Hall	JVH Auditorium	Academic Hall 308
10:15 to 11:45	<u>Symposium</u> From humanity to the human: A non-normative philosophy of psychology Bolin Yu Normativity and the Massacre of the Soul: Rethinking Ethics Through Epistemic Justice Kathryn Stone Who Are We Accompanying, Really?: On the Fetishization of Mechanistic Practice in Psychology Jackson Rowley Empathic Socrates: A Vision of a Psychotherapist as Philosophical Collaborator	<u>Conversation Session</u> Denielle Rose & John-Michael Spangler Metrics of wellness In contemporary psychology and society	<u>Paper Session</u> Kira Charles Decolonizing Intelligence Assessment: Cultural Bias, Normativity, and Indigenous Realities Tate Hudson Becoming-psychotherapeutic: Deterritorializing doxa in the clinical field Ashley Morgan How does psychiatric diagnosis and the language of “disorder: shape humanistic counselling practice?: A qualitative reflexive thematic analysis



Division 24 Spring 2025 Meeting

**May 2nd-
May 4th**

**2nd Floor
Lawrence
Hall**

**Friday
May 2nd
11:45 to 1:00**

**Elizabeth Pienkos
At the
threshold of the Other: A
phenomenological approach to
the mental status exam**

The Mental Status Exam (MSE) is commonly used by physicians and mental health practitioners to assess patients' psychological state and functioning, to aid in diagnosis and to help monitor changes in presentation. Although perhaps indispensable in contemporary psychiatric practice, typical usage of the MSE establishes an objectifying relationship to the patient via disengaged observation of the patient's behavior. Such a relationship risks not only generating misleading or incorrect data, but also interfering with the potential for therapeutic change. Instead, it is suggested that phenomenology has much to offer those who use the MSE in clinical practice. This paper will consider phenomenological insights into the nature of perception, cognition, expression, and intersubjectivity, all of which need to be considered in order to arrive at some understanding of the patient's behavior in a psychiatric context. From this foundation, specific findings regarding subjective experience in different psychiatric conditions may be addressed as communicative of the patient's embodied and socially- and culturally-situated experience: that is, viewed as an understandable expression of subjectivity more than a pathological deviation from a cultural norm. This paper will address questions related to the validity and rigor of collecting and assessing subjective "data," applying insights from contemporary discussions in qualitative research. It is suggested that such a phenomenological approach to the MSE may enable a more accurate assessment of the patient's mental state, and, more importantly, facilitate a more engaged and therapeutic encounter with the Other.



Division 24 Spring 2025 Meeting

**May 2nd-
May 4th**

**2nd Floor
Lawrence
Hall**

**Friday
May 2nd
11:45 to 1:00**

Zach Fry
**“What is the point of it
all if we are just going to die
anyway?”:**

Exploring Heideggerian concepts of developing-towards-death with children using arts-based existential therapy

The pursuit of finding meaning in death has been a topic of interest for existentialists and phenomenologists over the centuries (Shim, 2019). One phenomenologist whose theories on death have been extensively recognized by existentialists is Martin Heidegger (Buben, 2013). In his seminal work "Being and Time" (2008), Heidegger identifies being-toward-death as a requirement for living with authenticity, i.e., for being transparently related to the structure of one's own being rather than conforming to the norms and expectations imposed by society. To Heidegger, an authentic existence also requires having an acute awareness and recognition of our finite existence in the world. However, this awareness is likely to be accompanied by feelings of anxiety: “In this state-of-mind, the 'nothing' [i.e., death] is encountered in its full and complete 'insignificance', and it is this 'nothing' which arouses anxiety. Anxiety does not 'see' an entity at all, but rather the world as such; it is the essential disclosure of the world as such”. (Heidegger, 2008). The recognition of our finite existence can illuminate a harsh reality, which may lead some to avoid acknowledging their finitude altogether. Becker (1998) warned that a prolonged denial of death can lead to numerous subsequent problems, namely: psychological distress, destructive behaviours (i.e., violence and aggression), existential anxiety, and inauthenticity. Rather than persisting in the denial of death, Heidegger argues in favour of embracing the anxiety that accompanies awareness of it. As he says that “it is only in the state of such anxiety that we are able to confront our own potentiality-for-Being and the inevitability of our death, thus leading us to live more authentically and purposefully”, Heidegger proclaims that we find meaning in life not by avoiding death, but instead, by embracing it as a constant possibility (Heidegger, 2008). Although it can generate psychological distress, being authentic enables us to find meaning and purpose while simultaneously discarding the superficial details of life. This insight from Heidegger has been found to be helpful for adults in a therapeutic setting (Mandic, 2008; Yalom, 2008). However, little is known about whether this insight could be therapeutically adapted for children.



Division 24 Spring 2025 Meeting

**May 2nd-
May 4th**

**2nd Floor
Lawrence
Hall**

**Friday
May 2nd
11:45 to 1:00**

Chris Bell
**Mapping evolving
concepts of interpretation in
contemporary psychoanalysis**

Across the wide range of psychoanalytical orientations (e.g. Classical Freudian, Kleinian, Ego-Psychology, Object Relations, Lacanian, Jungian, Self-Psychology, and Relational Psychoanalysis) a fundamental goal that is common to all is that of making the unconscious conscious. A key intervention made by psychoanalysts to achieve this goal is psychoanalytic interpretation. However, there are clearly a large variety of ways that psychoanalysts of different orientations conceptualize and make interpretations in practice. For instance, just with reference to classical Freudian theory, Etchegoyen (2018) proposes three distinct kinds of interpretation: “the topographical, which corresponds to the older and simpler formula of making conscious what is unconscious; the dynamic, that of overcoming a particular resistance; and finally the economical, which takes the material at the precise point at which the strongest affects are crystallizing.” (p. 543). Even within the same psychoanalytical orientation, there may be significant differences in how analysts think about and make interpretations. The purpose of this proposed paper is then two-fold: first to document how psychoanalytic interpretation has been conceived of throughout the major psychoanalytic orientations and secondly, to focus on concepts of interpretation in Lacanian psychoanalysis. Specifically, with regard to this latter goal, I am interested to understand whether Lacan’s concept of interpretation evolved or changed over the course of his theorizing as well as in post-Lacanian theory. Relatedly, I’m interested to understand if different modes of interpretation are used in different phases of Lacanian psychoanalysis, i.e. at the beginning, middle, and later stages of an analysis.



Division 24 Spring 2025 Meeting

**May 2nd-
May 4th**

**JVH
Auditorium**

**Friday
May 2nd
11:45 - 1:00**

**Annah Darling
Prisoners of
cope: How neoliberal
values shape
psychotherapeutic
practice**

The configuration of psychotherapy in our culture is not constant, but rather its role and values are primarily shaped by the material foundation and ideological superstructures of our time. This presentation explores the implicit ideas of normativity in the field of psychology by examining psychotherapeutic practice and therapeutic culture in its sociopolitical context. Grounded in the writings of relational psychoanalysis and hermeneutics scholars such as Philip Cushman and Donnel Stern, as well as social and political historians such Philip Rieff, Christopher Lasch, and Charles Taylor, we ask how neoliberalism shapes assumptions of normativity in our work.

Neoliberal ideology elevates individualism, self-management, and adaptability as cultural ideals, influencing psychotherapy to prioritize personal responsibility while minimizing systemic and relational factors. This ideology is built upon an economic process of wealth extraction through privatization, deregulation, and marketization following monopolistic prerogatives. This system resists change, channeling psychology into individualistic interventions and understandings. Psychological distress is often reduced to individual pathology, conceptualizing patients as passive subjects rather than agents within a dysfunctional and dehumanizing system. Moreover, certain diagnostic categories can naturalize the demands of a mechanized and isolating capitalist order. Even when therapists and patients attempt to resist the alienation of neoliberal social orders, they often fail to escape its hegemonic heuristics.

This presentation critically examines these dynamics, asking how psychotherapy can effectively challenge neoliberal assumptions and cultivate values rooted in collective, systemic understandings of distress. I seek to advance a dialogue on how psychology might resist complicity with neoliberalism and reimagine psychology's role in fostering social change.



Division 24 Spring 2025 Meeting

**May 2nd-
May 4th**

**JVH
Auditorium**

**Friday
May 2nd
11:45 - 1:00**

**Aram Zelman
The TikTok
Problem: Self- diagnosis,
social media, and
neoliberalism**

A common experience for psychotherapists, especially those working with young people, is a client telling the therapist, often within minutes of walking in the door, that they “have” a particular psychological diagnosis. Often, these diagnoses are self-applied based on an idea of the disorder the client has developed from exposure to social media. This paper critically examines social media discourse about mental health based on research on mental health-related TikTok videos. This engagement with social media discourse has revealed themes of diagnostic expansion through identification of new symptomatology, group inclusion and exclusion, and defense of the validity of self-diagnosis. I address the question of why our contemporary culture creates an environment in which psychiatric diagnoses are not only destigmatized but actively sought, even outside “approved” channels. I propose that self-diagnosis serves as a brake on the inexorable pursuit of enjoyment, providing an explanation for why the subject cannot enjoy as they “should.” Drawing on Lacanian theory of the superego, I frame self-diagnosis as a phenomenon best understood in the context of its function for subjects of a market-based society.



**Division 24
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**JVH
Auditorium**

**Friday
May 2nd
11:45 - 1:00**

Adam A. Ghali
Normativity
in psychology and in the
cosmos in the wake of
neoliberalism: A tensional
approach

Despite various implicit normative commitments (e.g., Brinkmann, 2011; Richardson et al., 1999), psychology's value of non-normativity contributes to erosions in substantive value commitments (Cushman, 1995; Madsen, 2014). Psychology thus participates in moral conflicts that reverberate through liberalism (Owen, 2024), with ideals of cosmopolitanism and self-constitution pitted against views of moral constraints embedded in an authoritative order (Gerstle, 2022). With allegiance to the former, psychotherapists have struggled to know how to approach their clients' values, despite their manifest importance to clients (e.g., Burns et al., 2013; Doherty, 2021), unwittingly taking sides in the modern tension between an "unchallengeable framework [that] makes imperious demands which [people] fear being unable to meet...the pressure [of which] is potentially immense and inescapable," and "something close to the opposite: the world loses altogether its spiritual contour, nothing is worth doing, the fear is of a terrifying emptiness,...or even a fracturing of [one's] world and body-space" (Taylor, 1989, p. 18). Changes in neoliberalism along with recent philosophical resources for acknowledging value intrinsic to the cosmos (Hart, 2024; McGilchrist, 2021; Walsh, 2008), suggest an opportunity and necessity for psychologists to reappraise their views on normativity as well as its cultural sources. I will argue for grounding a commitment to normativity in the constitution of reality given the classical transcendentals of goodness, truth, and beauty, while allowing for psychologists to hold normativity in a creative tension with freedom. There are implications for values in psychotherapy, psychology's role in social issues, and the place of psychological science in portraying reality.



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**May 2nd-
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**Academic
Hall 308**

**Friday
May 2nd
11:45 - 1:00**

**Kate Greer Dickson
The Normativity of
conditional love: Shadow
work through Feeding Your Demons**

Since Carl Rogers first introduced the concept of ‘unconditional positive regard’ for clients, to the flourishing fields of positive psychology, mindfulness, and wellness today ‘Love’ has undoubtedly found its way into the fields of mental health and psychospiritual wellbeing. However, to what extent is that love truly unconditional? Certainly, as therapists of all kinds may be willing to admit, at least on the inside, our care for clients (among other people) remains conditional at times. They cancelled at the last minute, or were unfaithful to their spouse again – whatever it is, our clients’ behavior can sometimes make them harder to love. Is it any wonder, when our own love for ourselves is so conditioned? Our internal judgements may be the harshest, and unsurprisingly, the generosity we are able to offer others often reflects our internal generosity, or withholding as the case may be. In this workshop, Kate Greer Dickson will guide the process of ‘Feeding Your Demons,’ as created by her Buddhist teacher, Lama Tsultrim Allione. Feeding Your Demons is an adaptation of the 11 th century Tibetan Buddhist practice of Chöd, and is a secularized version of the practice adapted for westerners, regardless of religion. The entire practice is done with the eyes closed and guided visualization, and no prior meditation experience is necessary. At its core, Feeding Your Demons is a radical practice of self-love, one that teaches us to love ourselves unconditionally, so that we can therefore be greater agents of love in the world.

An aerial photograph of Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania, showing the city skyline with numerous skyscrapers, the Allegheny River, and the Golden Gate Bridge. In the foreground, there is a large green park area with a circular fountain and a baseball field.

**Division 24
Spring 2025
Meeting**

**May 2nd-
May 4th**

**Lawrence
Hall 2nd Floor**

**Friday
May 2nd
2:00- 3:15**

Jakob Thorn
**Neuropsychology's
ecological validity problem:
Theoretical issue or clinical
crisis?**

A litany of work highlighting poor to moderate ecological validity of common neuropsychological assessment measures has stoked growing concerns regarding the clinical utility of traditional neuropsychological testing. An examination of the core assumptions underlying neuropsychological assessment can offer a reconceptualization to explain findings of suboptimal ecological validity as a product of theoretical dogmatism rather than as a mechanism of psychometric design. The current project examines the concept of ecological validity through a historical contextualization of psychometric theory and norm-driven assessment against the background of cognitive structuralism by using seminal texts in the philosophy of science and psychology.

Work highlighting the suboptimal ecological validity of neuropsychological assessment measures ostensibly threatens the legitimacy of diagnostic practice. However, reexamination of these findings through a functionalist lens, one in which cognitive domains are little more than heuristics by which to classify subjectively similar, observable behaviors, can offer a resolution to these concerns. Using such a framework, one is returned to an earlier conceptualization of ecological validity that considers the utility of neuropsychological assessment not in the unfalsifiable claim of quantifying cognitive function and correlating it to disorder with the aid of normative data but in its ability to accurately predict the distal stimulus of disease from the given cues of definable behaviors. I propose a reconceptualization of ecological validity in diagnostic practice and offer a critique of the tautology underlying a cognitive structuralist approach to norms-driven psychometric testing.



Division 24 Spring 2025 Meeting

**May 2nd-
May 4th**

**Lawrence
Hall 2nd Floor**

**Friday
May 2nd
2:00- 3:15**

Jackson Lucy

Phenomenological similarities between schizophrenic and meditative experience: A re-examination using the Ipseity Disturbance Model

The phenomenological similarities between psychotic/schizophrenic and mystical/meditative states have long been acknowledged (Brett, 2002; Buckley, 1981; Wapnick, 2013) with William James famously noting that they both “spring from the same mental level (James, 1902). Previous literature has examined these connections almost exclusively from a standardized model of schizophrenia which considers the overt symptoms of hallucinations/delusions as constitutive of the disorder. Sass & Parnas (2003) propose a significantly more phenomenological framework for understanding schizophrenia with their Ipseity Disturbance Model (IDM). This model contends that the manifest symptoms of hallucinations/delusions are not what constitute schizophrenia but are rather secondary, symptomatic, compensatory responses to a fundamental disturbance or disorder of the self. The present paper aims to re-examine these similarities/distinctions, particularly between schizophrenic and meditative states, through the lens of IDM - making use of the revised model recently put forth and with special attention to the prodromal phase of schizophrenia (Sass & Feyaerts, 2023). It will be argued that the IDM’s notion of compulsive hyper-reflexivity as the essential component of the disordered self bears a striking phenomenological resemblance to the intentional practice of meditation. While both experiences involve close, careful, meticulous attention to one’s experiential stream of consciousness, the appraisal of such experiences is, of course, radically different. Volition will be suggested as a fundamental variable in accounting for the extreme contrasts in appraisal.

The overall aim of this paper is to demystify the psychotic experience and challenge the normative conception of schizophrenia as a fundamentally ‘un-understandable’ disorder whose experiential content is considered impossibly foreign and strange (Jaspers, 1963). Through a comparative phenomenological analysis of meditative and schizophrenic experience respectively,

this paper attempts to ameliorate this ‘un-understandable’ conception of the disorder and give voice to the breadth of possible human experience. In coming to grips with schizophrenia as a disorder of the self, we can begin to see that the bizarreness of its symptoms exist in a context which is not so foreign after all. Echoing Maitland (2008), previous literature has explored the psychotic/mystical connection in service of pathologizing the mystical - the present paper does so in service of humanizing the psychotic



Division 24 Spring 2025 Meeting

**May 2nd-
May 4th**

**JVH
Auditorium**

**Friday
May 2nd
2:00- 3:15**

Lucas B. Carroll & John Dall’Aglio Normativity in the age of neuro-ontology

This conversation session will raise the question of contemporary metaphysics/ontology and philosophical anthropology in our contemporary era of neuroscience. We currently live in the age of neuro-ontology. This is not a mere shift in discourse. Conclusive evidence from neuroscience and neuropsychology has demonstrated that the mind, personality, and subjectivity are inextricably bound up with the brain. The brain is increasingly the site of our neural self. This “neuro-ontology” has entered into both scientific and broader social discourse (e.g., “brain-hacking” or “neurotropic” enhancing products advertised on social media). Moreover, recent advances in brain-machine interface – linking our brain directly with a computer – raise the pressing issue of neuro-technology in what it means to be human.

Today, perhaps more than ever, philosophical questions permeate our everyday lives. What does it mean to be human today, when our subjective experience can be increasingly linked to and impacted by interventions that act on our neural-substantial self? What does it mean to be human today when machine-learning algorithms can be trained to decode the activity of our brain to generate what we “see” by interpreting electrical signals alone? What does it mean to be human today when computers can be trained to interpret our brain activity such that we can directly move external robotic arms and exoskeletons through thought alone? Does such a neuro-ontology delete or otherwise unhouse our traditional notions of normativity, replacing these perhaps at the limit with a new ‘technological’ normativity?

We will discuss these questions by dialogically revisiting key issues in metaphysical anthropology and contemporary models in computational neuroscience and the neuroscience of consciousness. The presenters recognize two potential sources of delimitation to the techno-functional overhaul of traditional notions of normativity, which a certain widespread interpretation of neuro-ontology has seemed to promote.

In the first place, some reason for pause is given by philosophical reflection upon that which has traditionally claimed the status of ‘normative,’ this being especially: the epistemic dimension of truth and the ethical dimension of goodness. In the epistemic dimension, the achievement of and desire for truth is a norm which is both arguably indispensable to the practice of the sciences, while also being only problematically explicable by the claimed results of neuroscientific researches. In the ethical dimension, the human orientation towards the good – towards excellence, perfection, flourishing – is both arguably the indispensable presupposition and goal of therapeutic practice, while also being only problematically explicable within a fundamentally hedonic and deterministic neuro-ontological anthropology. The question arises then whether or not the latter can sufficiently account for, or else supply adequate replacements to, the normative ideas of ‘knowledge’ and ‘virtue.’



Division 24 Spring 2025 Meeting

May 2nd- May 4th

Academic Hall 308

Friday May 2nd 2:00- 3:15

arvick@pointpark.edu
nasmall@pointpark.edu
vakinte@pointpark.edu
bethany.aronson@pointpark.edu
jnorthup@pointpark.edu

**Autumn Vick, Vivian Kinter, Opal Dickman, & Jeremy Northup:
"What ought to be": informal lessons from Dr.
Brent Robbins**

In his presidential address, Brent Robbins suggested that questions about normativity, especially in the clinic, are composed of implicit notions of "what ought to be." As we are never fully transparent to ourselves, our conceptions of the good life must be sought out and understood through relationality and dialogue with others. In this symposium, students of Brent Robbins attempt to articulate some of those underformulated philosophical tenets, bringing to the fore unofficial and informal lessons learned about what psychology "ought to be" from seminars, classes, and discussions with Brent Robbins.



Division 24 Spring 2025 Meeting

**May 2nd-
May 4th**

**Lawrence
Hall 2nd Floor**

**Friday
May 2nd
3:30- 4:45**

**Will Adams:
Mystical/Contemplative Writing and Hermeneutic Phenomenology:
Kindred Ways of Letting Mystery Speak**

This presentation will explore the deep affinity between how spiritual mystics (or contemplatives) put their ineffable experiences into words, and how hermeneutic phenomenologists cultivate interpretative understanding of lived experience. We will look into the writings (and writing methods) Julian of Norwich and Saint John of the Cross – two renowned Christian mystics – and place these into dialogue with key insights from phenomenologists such as Edmund Husserl, Martin Heidegger, and Hans-Georg Gadamer. In particular, we will explore spiraling process of discovering/creating meaning. Stated concisely and evocatively, this generative process of interpretative moves from conversation to meditation to revelation to transformation to (further) conversation. Seen in a complementary way, meaning unfolds from mystery to poetry to story to mystery. We will discuss these views may be applied in psychotherapy and qualitative research.

An aerial photograph of Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania, showing the city skyline with numerous skyscrapers, the Allegheny River, and the Golden Gate Bridge. In the foreground, there is a large green park area with a circular fountain and a baseball field.

Division 24 Spring 2025 Meeting

May 2nd- May 4th

Lawrence Hall 2nd Floor

Friday May 2nd 3:30- 4:45

Kate Stone & David Goodman: Normativity as suffering: a Schopenhauerian approach to clinical practice

Arthur Schopenhauer, a seminal writer whose insights on suffering continue to shape the philosophical tradition, is typically regarded as having had a predominantly negative view of life. On further consideration, the Schopenhauerian view of suffering as ineluctable to life offers an opportunity to reorient clinical practice away from approaching suffering as pathological toward embracing it with compassion. Viewing patient and therapist as interconnected through Schopenhauer's 'will to life' invites clinicians to experience a visceral linkage with their patients' suffering, which would then be seen as reflective of clinicians' own pain through their metaphysical oneness with their patients. Schopenhauer argued life to be a constant struggle driven by an insatiable will, leading to unending suffering. He quintessentially characterized life as a "business that does not cover its costs," (1844) implying suicidal ideation as a rational response to suffering's overrepresentation in life's balance. This perspective challenges normative views of suicidality within clinical contexts. Compassion lies at the heart of Schopenhauer's ethics, which foreground alleviation of suffering rather than its (impossible) eradication. Coupling this with perceived metaphysical singularity within the therapeutic dyad could ignite a deeper bond with the suffering of the Other as witnessed in the therapy room. This approach dovetails with liberation psychotherapy, which seeks a "field of experience and feeling" (Koss-Chioino, 2007, as cited in Comas-Díaz, 2020) between patient and therapist. Clinicians are called to retain reverence for each patient's unrepeatable subjectivity, as championed by Emmanuel Levinas, while realizing their metaphysical conjoinment with them—imploding the normative pathologization of suffering.



Division 24 Spring 2025 Meeting

**May 2nd-
May 4th**

**Lawrence
Hall 2nd Floor**

**Friday
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3:30- 4:45**

lydial2@bu.edu

Michael Miller

The empty normative in psychology education and ethics

The American Psychological Association's view of the normative training of psychologists is articulated in its "Profession Wide Competencies," by which accredited programs must abide in the training and evaluation of doctoral interns. The "PWCs" are written to be non-theoretical, allowing programs to supply the dimensions and indicators upon which proficiency in a given area will be judged (e.g. "intervention" or "ethical and legal standards"). While it is obvious and even beneficial that the larger professional community therefore lacks the authority to give content to this normative form, many internship training programs are themselves not united by any theoretical or ethical point of view, or indeed anything beyond their employment as clinicians. The task of intentional thinking and agreement, then, about what ought to inform the PWCs may not be taken up seriously in many programs. The fact that many psychologists eschew deeper considerations of epistemology and ethics (leaving these to other disciplines) combined with the APA's implicit claim to have done this thinking in advance through its endorsement of the PWCs, makes such thinking all the less likely. Supervisors are then asked evaluate performance based on an empty shared sense of normativity, one that evades any considered commitments regarding what ought to be—except measurement and memorialization itself. At the same time, the culture of higher education has become explicitly suspicious of the power of the teacher to define or enforce what ought to be vis à vis the student, to the extent that renunciation of authority on normativity is one of a few low-risk public normative commitments available to them. This talk will explore, using real-world vignettes, what reveals itself as normative under, and despite, these circumstances.



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JVH Theater

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Joe Huang

From Marx to Murthy: the ethics of alienation

In 2023, U.S. Surgeon General Vivek Murthy released an advisory declaring an epidemic of loneliness. In tandem with other clinical research, social disconnection has been correlated with poor health outcomes (be it cardiovascular, cognitive decline, etc.). Despite the recent evidence, this concern with social connection contra alienation has been a topic of inquiry for the past two centuries. Unlike previous social theories, the 2023 advisory is absent of etiological or ideological analysis. This talk will explore ways in which the psy-disciplines may contribute to a normative social isolation through instrumentalism and neoliberal hyperindividualism. The question of creative maladjustment will also be considered. Authors such as Fromme, Cushman, and Byung-Chul Han will be explored to consider the ethics of alienation in the realm of clinical psychology."



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JVH Theater

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Gregory Hood
**American ‘algorithmicality’ and the
crisis of normativity: From psychological reductions
to ethical AI**

The recent commercial ascendancy of artificial intelligence (AI) has exposed critical tensions in psychology’s foundations. Many psychological models tend toward algorithmic reductions, using simplified frameworks to explain complex human behaviors heuristically. Such frameworks conflict with understanding consciousness as inherently dynamic and heterogenous. Increasingly, fluid and diverse self-perceptions are clashing with preconceptions of “normativity.” I argue the rise of “algorithmicality,” which prioritizes productivity and efficiency, reinforces reductive proclivities as rules. Automated decision-making amplifies these effects, adversely affecting human cognition and behavior, serving to constrain human autonomy, privilege conformity, and disparage difference. I introduce the concept of “chattel- consciousness” to theorize a social-psychological state where algorithmicality automatically diminishes individuals to objects for efficiency, just as chattel slavery, promulgating racism, historically reduced individuals to tools for economic production. W.E.B. Du Bois’s “double-consciousness” counters classic chattel-consciousness. Attending to affected individuals, Du Bois articulated internalized conflicts experienced by marginalized Black persons negotiating systemic brutality and oppression. Du Bois’s sociological ideas remain revolutionary in today’s age of revolutionary technology. They resonate with a contemporary quantum notion of a self in “superposition,” existing in multiple states at once. Elaborating on this theoretical lineage, I argue that algorithmic systems perpetuate chattel-consciousness, encouraging biased norms that constrain human complexity and agency. To counter this inclination, with dissemination of quantum computing principles increasing, I propose drawing on “superposition,” “entanglement,” and “interference” to offer a framework to better understand consciousness in terms of human diversity. This approach opposes sedimented ideas of psychological “normativity,” opening an urgent pathway towards developing ethically aware AI systems.

An aerial photograph of Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania, showing the city skyline with numerous skyscrapers, the Allegheny River, and the Golden Gate Bridge. In the foreground, there is a large green park area with a circular fountain and a baseball field.

**Division 24
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**Academic
Hall 308**

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Jamie M. Hansen

**The costs and opportunities of
eschewing normative language in the teaching of psychopathology:
Are we trading one problem for another?**

The question of normativity is perhaps nowhere more embedded in psychological discourse than in university classrooms taking up the problem in the context of human behavior and suffering—even if the essential and unsettled nature of that question is rarely taken seriously. Historically, these courses went by the name of Abnormal Psychology and focused primarily on the theories and features of deviant, dysfunctional, and/or maladjusted human behavior as well as a host of related clinical issues regarding the diagnosis, assessment, and treatment of such behavior. In recent years, this course seems to be undergoing something of a disciplinary makeover and is much more likely to be listed in today's university catalogs as Psychopathology, Psychological Disorders, or Clinical Psychology. While this shift in language likely represents a concerted and laudable effort to promote greater sensitivity and tolerance of human differences, it is worth considering whether such a move may bring with it some unintended consequences. In this paper, I draw attention to this trend away from blatantly normative language toward more medicalized language and explore the potential costs and consequences of such a move, drawing on insights gained from examining historical texts in Abnormal Psychology (from 1914-1981) and archived university catalogs.



Division 24 Spring 2025 Meeting

**May 2nd-
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**Academic
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**Friday
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Hannah L. Stokes

**From labeling to understanding: Student responses to
archived asylum medical case files and implications for the teaching
of psychopathology**

In a recent history of mental health treatment course, I used archived medical files from asylums in the state of Pennsylvania to demonstrate some of the features of diagnostic conceptualization and treatment throughout U.S. history. Students were presented with case material predating 1950 and contrasts were drawn between historical and modern treatment and diagnostic conceptualization.

While some of the responses were expected, including many moments of shock at the treatments and diagnostic labels employed, others were somewhat surprising and illuminating. Students did not appear interested in the “scientific” treatment or clinical diagnosis, rather they demanded more about the life and story of the person being treated. Many of the class periods involved the students speculating (e.g., what was the relationship between this person and their parents? Did they have friends in the community?) Students were unsatisfied with my focus on how socio-political forces shaped broad trends in treatment and diagnosis. This move away from a focus on who is historically considered “abnormal” and who is “normal” and toward contextualization and understanding of the individual seemed to suggest something important about this new generation of students’ beliefs about normativity. In this paper, I will reflect on implications of this observation, exploring how history—manifest both in individual case files, and broader trends related to the medicalization in U.S. asylums—sheds light on the question of normativity.



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Shae Sackman

Exploring Psychology's Normative Discourse Practices

The psychological sciences embody a wide range of normative practices. The implications of many of these practices have been examined and critiqued, but the discipline's communication standards have not been as fully interrogated as other so-called "questionable research practices." These discourse practices bear on everything from common expressions and framings; descriptions of psychological theory; documenting methodological approaches, procedures and methods; and disseminating scientific findings within peer-reviewed publication outlets. In the proposed work, we explore normativity in psychological discourse practices through three studies, each examining a different aspect of how research in psychology shapes and is shaped by normative discourse practices. The first study involves an examination of how statistically significant results are characterized, documented, and discussed within published findings. The second study explores how scientific realist understandings of psychological constructs may perpetuate the erasure of social and political context that underlies human behaviour within marginalized populations. The goal of the third study is to identify potential philosophical commitments (ontological, epistemological, and axiological) underlying the utilization of a set of literary devices (e.g., metaphor, reification, allusion, hyperbole) in psychological science discourse. Our hope is that these studies will contribute to further illuminating the implicit assumptions that are embedded within psychology's common discourse practices and, thus, contribute further insights into the prevalence and persistence of questionable research practices.



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Alice Ripberger & Kristen Tetzmann
Normativity, Sustainability and System-Oriented Care

This presentation examines the intersection of sustainability, mental health practice, and systemic healthcare through the lens of waste, centering on the concept of normativity. It explores how waste reveals assumptions about what is considered "normal" in care delivery and resource allocation. This session positions waste as a tangible reminder of systemic resource inequities, inviting mental health practitioners to reflect on their roles within a broader framework of consumption and care. Waste becomes a phenomenological artifact, highlighting underlying systemic norms and beliefs. This exploration is informed by two distinct but interconnected research projects. The first investigates the creative reuse of medical waste as a medium for visual and poetic expression, examining how these materials critique systemic inefficiencies in healthcare. The second explores sustainability practices in community art spaces like Art Hives, analyzing how resource availability shapes collective notions of adequacy and normativity.

Together, these projects provide a foundation for examining how material realities and societal norms intersect to influence mental health practice and systemic care approaches. This session invites mental health practitioners to critically reflect on how their beliefs, perceptions, and practices are shaped by broader societal norms of consumption and care. By addressing waste as a symptom of capitalist systems and a metaphor for systemic care, this presentation challenges attendees to critically engage with philosophical discussions of normativity, inspiring a reimagining of their roles in shaping equitable, sustainable mental health practices.



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Alston YH Berkman

**A Discourse Analysis of Normative Narratives Used by Cisgender
Individuals in
Coming to Terms with Understanding and Accepting Transgender
Identities**

The question of normativity is very pertinent in the study of transgender individuals and identities. Not only is the very nature of being transgender outside of the normative ideas about gender held by much of Western society as a whole, but also within these identities, there are more and less normative and socially acceptable ways of being transgender.

Much of the research that has been done about transgender individuals utilizes their own self-presentation and the narratives they use to portray themselves. Cisgender (non-transgender) individuals can engage in normative thinking in how they come to understand someone they know as transgender. This project will utilize discourse analysis to examine how these cisgender individuals employ narratives that are seen as more or less

“acceptable” by cisnormative society as they begin understanding the identity of someone who is transgender. The proposed poster will discuss the research questions, methods, and results of this project.



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**Dean Robbins, Dr. Brent Dean Robbins & Dr. Paul Radich
Novelty in Advertising's Repetition: Freud, Merleau-Ponty &
Scitovsky in Marketing Psychology**

Behavioral economist Tibor Scitovsky observed in *The Joyless Economy* (1976) that all goods require enough repetition to be intelligible while having enough novelty to stand out. Products require both repetition and novelty to have any differentiation or definition. The art of marketing requires a careful balance between what the consumer already knows and what they may desire or need without knowing. A book or a movie, for instance, is sold both by comparison (“similar to *The Shawshank Redemption*...”) and originality (“...but it adds in the angle of vampires”). The importance of repetition in philosophy and psychology has been evidenced throughout history from Aristotelian habits to psychoanalysis. It has been studied in a marketing context (Schmidt & Eisend, 2015), too, but a fully-developed theoretical framework is lacking. This poster aims to compare and contrast the concepts of repetition as construed by Scitovsky as comfort, Freud as the repetition compulsion, and Maurice Merleau-Ponty as part of one’s equilibrium. Freud posited that we seek repetition because we desire death, or the total lack of the unknown. On the other hand, Scitovsky argued for a tendency for novelty, or the indeterminate. These seemingly conflicted tendencies are resolved in Merleau-Ponty’s ideas of equilibrium and optimal grip. For Merleau-Ponty, perception is motivated to seek an optimal balance between repetition and novelty, which is inherent to time consciousness. This poster will explore the implications of these theories in a marketing psychology context.



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Emma Vestovich

Beyond Linear Healing: The Altered Sense of Time in Grief

This study aims to explore the lived experience of temporality during grief, focusing on how the loss of a loved one alters an individual's perception of time. Using phenomenological insights, the research investigates the relationship between grief, temporal disruptions, and societal expectations. Temporality is understood as one's subjective experience of time which during grief can become desynchronized. Through an interpretive phenomenological approach, three participants who experienced significant loss at least five years prior will be interviewed, to examine how grief reshapes perception of time, including feelings of being "stuck," or otherwise an inaccessible future. The literature review highlights theoretical perspectives from phenomenology, sociocultural critiques, and clinical frameworks, emphasizing temporal desynchronization, as well as cultural norms. Research suggests grief profoundly affects the temporal experience, disrupts the perceived flow of time, and alienates individuals from their social contexts. Furthermore, societal pressures to "move on" and productivity-oriented norms marginalize mourners who require more time to grieve. Data collection will consist of semi-structured interviews, analyzed using thematic and interpretive methods to uncover patterns and meaning. Ethical considerations include ensuring participant confidentiality, informed consent, and emotional safety. This study also recognizes the intersectionality of grief, aiming to remain sensitive to diverse cultural and personal contexts. By investigating temporality through the lens of grief, this study contributes to a deeper understanding of how loss reshapes lived experience, challenging normative and linear models of healing.



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Aidan MacGowan

Climate Anxiety and Existentialism through Attack on Titan - A Means for an Ideological Revolution

In the modern era of the climate crisis, there is a direct parallel to the existential moment in the wake of the WW2 condition. Similar to then, a new wave of existentialism is needed to help revitalize humanity in order to overcome our own modern apocalypse - the climate crisis. The show Attack On Titan will be used to present this issue, as its primary theme of existentialism challenges the characters to face the absurdity and darkness of their existence while taking individual responsibility for their lives and their freedom. With this, Attack On Titan will function as a model for humanity to embrace a second existential moment in history, offering the necessary tools for us to navigate and persevere through the forthcoming climate apocalypse.

An aerial photograph of Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania, showing the city skyline with numerous skyscrapers and bridges over the Allegheny River. In the foreground, Clairton Park is visible, featuring a large circular fountain with multiple water jets and a green baseball field.

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Claire Park

Brooklyn 99's Amy Santiago through a Jungian perspective

In this poster, I will be exploring the character Amy Santiago from the TV Series Brooklyn Nine-Nine (2013-2021) using Jungian and Pearson based theoretical lenses with a focus on the shadow. I identify Santiago as an idealist based on the Pearson archetypes and show how the Jungian shadow interacts with her archetype. She tends to be an optimist who trusts life, the legal system, and others. While Santiago is competitive with her peers, she is simultaneously conflict-avoidant and a people pleaser. Across the series, she develops from an immature idealist who is unable to acknowledge, much less admit, her faults and imperfections to a leader who is able to not only accept her weaknesses using a growth mindset, but value differences in her coworkers. I will focus on the roots of Santiago's shadow in the context of an idealist, showing how her relationship with her mother developed her shadow, as well as how she was able to mature and grow more secure in herself through her relationships with Captain Holt and Jake Peralta. This poster matters in the world because there is a lack of emphasis on the relational aspects of the shadow. It is commonly thought that the Jungian shadow is individual based. However, the classic Jungian take is that collectives have shadows, which tends to be missed. Relationships, families, workplaces, and even nations cast shadows. This aspect of the Jungian shadow needs to be further discussed and researched to improve mental health care by further applying the shadow into relationship-based counseling.



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Brynna Quigley:

Missing the Point: Fight Club and the Dangers of Media Illiteracy

The film *Fight Club* (1999) by David Fincher, at the time has been regarded as a critique on hypermasculinity, and the male cult of aggression. In current times, this generation is losing this interpretation, idolizing characters like Tyler Durden and understanding the film as an ideal reflection of masculinity. Evidence on social media shows that young men idealize these character archetypes, projecting themselves onto them to feel a sense of power while seeking understanding of their own internalized anger. Through the lens of dark comedies and irony, this poster will offer the dangers of this trend, as well as alternatives to ease the severity of its consequences on our society.



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Marley Parker

“You Can Debate Pizza Toppings, but You Cannot Debate a Life”: A Qualitative Phenomenological Study of How Political Affiliation Effects Engagement on Race-based Social Movements

The study utilizes the method of Interpretive Phenomenological Analysis (IPA) to illuminate the experiences with Western Democratic Politics and Social Movements. Semi Structured interviews were done with four participants who were asked about their experiences with their personal political affiliation and their level of social engagement, specifically with race-equity movements. The goal of the study is to answer the question: how does an individuals' personal political beliefs impact their behavior with social movements? The research on this topic is limited, with an emphasis on quantitative studies. This study aims to provide a deeper understanding of personal belief systems in the context of group social psychology theories and improve understanding of the polarizing topic of how people adapt their personal beliefs and their behavior to political engagement. Participants across the board talked about how they use more therapeutic measures to achieve social change.



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Vivian Kinter

A Discourse Analysis of In-Patient Psychiatric Nursing: Subjugation and the Subject Position

Mental health nurses are at the forefront of in-patient psychiatric care as they make contact with patients throughout their day. As psychiatric nurses go through the process of their education and step into their work, there is a subject position that has been constructed by the world that must be contended with. Norms are generated through the discourses of society, be it through architecture, film, education webpages, job and trait descriptions, how-to videos, and more. This study will use the method of discourse analysis to uncover and analyze the world that constructs in-patient psychiatric nurses. Through the discourse analysis, themes of the environment, the patients, and the psychiatric nurses themselves emerge.

An aerial photograph of Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania, showing the city skyline with numerous skyscrapers, the Allegheny River, and the iconic yellow bridges. In the foreground, there is a green park area with a circular fountain and a baseball field.

Division 24 Spring 2025 Meeting

**May 2nd-
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**2nd Floor
Lawrence Hall**

**Saturday
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9:00 to 10:15**

Matthew Clemente & David Goodman

Discerning the Good: Suffering, normativity and human flourishing

Flourishing, it may seem, is not possible in the midst of intense suffering. Flourishing is often portrayed as being synonymous with happiness and success. Harvard University's Human Flourishing Program lists five central domains for evaluating human flourishing: 1. happiness and life satisfaction, 2. physical and mental health, 3. meaning and purpose, 4. character and virtue, 5. close social relationships. There is no doubt that these are fundamental aspects of a life well lived. But how is one supposed to prosper when survival has become life's dominant value and all our typical markers of a good life have come to an abrupt halt? What does flourishing look like in the face of intense anxiety and profound distress, when hope gives way to despair and the belief that one can live a rich, fulfilling life wanes? In this paper, the authors consider whether human flourishing is a normative category and what it might mean to flourish in the midst of anguish and chaos.



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**2nd Floor
Lawrence Hall**

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**Kelsey Watson: Dysfunction is
not disordered: Diagnosis in a
person-centered approach**

The task of defining ‘normal’ functioning in diagnosis lies with the interviewer, potentially leaving interviewees dissatisfied with the outcome of the interview: their diagnostic label. A person-centered approach allows diagnosis in therapy to describe the richness of experience sometimes lost in comparison to population norms rather than prescribing treatment options.



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**2nd Floor
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Don Marks

Escaping the manacles of measurement: A case for the beautiful and the sacred in clinical psychology

Since its emergence from philosophy in the 19th century, psychology has been cast by many of its proponents as a measurement science. E. L. Thorndike's (1918) credo "Whatever exists at all exists in some amount" (p. 16) has served as the discipline's bedrock supposition, a foundational – and foundationally normative – claim. Anything that could be known in a qualitatively meaningful way, Thorndike intimated, must also be capable of quantification. The anthropological implications of this dictum for clinical psychological discourse have seldom been considered. In this paper, I propose to examine three of these implications and their consequences for psychotherapy. First, it is easy to recognize that there are primary human attributes that conform poorly to the requirement for quantification. It is for this reason, perhaps, that of the 88 evidence-based interventions recognized by the Society of Clinical Psychology, not one mentions such crucial human immeasurables as love, faith, friendship, or wonder. Second, insistence on quantifying human qualities shackles psychology to mechanistic and functionalist epistemologies, which reduce phenomena either to causal processes or pragmatic workability -- neither of which is adequate to irreducible human characteristics, such as tenderness, awe, or vulnerability. Third, quantification obscures life's aesthetic and spiritual dimensions, including the heteronomous claims that both interpersonal dialogue and the transcendent can make on human persons (Westphal, 2017). Finally, using Jacques Ellul's (2024) "ethic of non-power" and William Desmond's (2012) "ways of wondering," I will advance a brief argument for prioritizing alternative truth criteria in clinical psychology, specifically the beautiful and the sacred.



Division 24 Spring 2025 Meeting

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**JVH
Auditorium**

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Bethany Aronson

Sex and cringe: Pleasure and enjoyment in the absence of Freud

This paper asks about the loss of eros in contemporary American culture, both in and out of the clinic. By first considering the historical elements that led to the desexualization of psychoanalysis and psychology, I will then suggest that this has led to an exchange of eros for enjoyment at the expense of the subject. This enjoyment manifests in a multitude of ways, but I will explicitly consider the exchange of pleasure for consumption through contemporary media examples, sex for power in the therapeutic context, and desire in exchange for supplementary jouissance in the context of cringe culture.



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**Chase O’Gwin:
“Completely Happy and a Tiny Bit Sad”:Renormalizing Negative
Affect**

With the rise in the proliferation of the ideas such as positive psychology, “therapy-speak”, and other psychological terms in popular discourses e.g. social media, YouTube, school initiatives, etc. there is interest in how psychology can potentially increase one’s overall happiness, particularly as emotional wellbeing seems to be an increasing area of concern. However, there comes with this increase of discourse problematic elements that need to be explored and addressed. One such element is the eschewing of all negative experiences and/or emotions in an attempt to minimize suffering and maximize happiness; treating one’s emotional life and well-being like a zero-sum game that instrumentalizes positive affects. This presentation seeks to challenge such a viewpoint, by looking at negative experiences and affects hermeneutically and more philosophically. Drawing examples from Charles Addams’ the Addams Family, psychoanalysis, the psychology of suffering and my own work in horror, this presentation will explore the idea that happiness is not an emotional state but an ontological one, a philosophical choice that necessitates negative and positive experience.



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**JVH
Auditorium**

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Sebastienne Grant: Beyond Happily Ever After: Engaging Suffering Through Entertainment for Healing and Resistance

Why do we seek suffering in entertainment, and what does this engagement offer us that psychology often cannot? This presentation explores how literature and film provide critical spaces for confronting, exploring, and processing suffering in a culture that normalizes happiness and pathologizes pain. Drawing on Frank Gruba-McCallister's work on the role of suffering in liberation and Rae Johnson's work on embodied activism, it examines how repressing suffering—whether individual, societal, or environmental—sustains oppressive systems by disconnecting us from our emotions. While therapy often treats suffering as an individual problem to resolve, popular film and literature create opportunities for collective engagement, offering the safety of distance paired with the intimacy of emotional experience. This presentation highlights how art becomes a transformative medium for emotional engagement, collective healing, and resistance to systemic apathy.



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**Academic Hall
308**

**Saturday
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Dani Park

Being, ought and the psyche: A metaphysical approach to psychoanalytic theory

This paper introduces a metaphysical foundation for psychoanalysis that redefines normativity as the teleological drive of being itself, emerging from an inherent disjunction between Ought and Being. Initially, there exists a state of pure ontology in which the normative demands inherent to being are immediately and perpetually fulfilled; as such it is akin to the French philosopher Gilbert Simondon's notion of preindividual matter. It is only when the ought is not fulfilled immediately that there exists a lag between being and its normative ideal, and once such a distinction is born it becomes ever greater until two states of being emerge: being and its ideal, resonant with Plato's theory of forms. This disjunction—expressed as the phrase ought/to-be—creates a fundamental alienation of undifferentiated matter, which generates a directional agitation that I identify as the origin of normativity and the psyche. This agitation, in turn, seeks its own abolition through the fulfillment of its teleological purpose: the abolition of distinction between ontology and its normative ideal. By situating normativity as the product of this ontological split, the theory demonstrates how justice and tradition, as the two fundamental means of fulfillment of this drive, becomes both the goal and the impossibility inherent in being. This hypothesis offers critical implications for psychological theory, particularly within psychoanalysis. It bolsters the theoretical foundation of psychoanalysis and situates terms such as repression, splitting, and the libido, within a broader metaphysical context, showing how they emerge from the ontological disjunction as well as biological and social forces. For example, the Freudian drive can be reconceptualized as the agitation produced by the ontological split, while Lacanian desire can be understood as the psyche's striving for the unattainable teleology of justice towards the (re)collapse of being. Additionally, anxiety, neurotic fixation, and moral development can be reinterpreted as manifestations of the psyche's engagement with this normative horizon. By grounding the psyche's emergence in metaphysics, this theory provides a unifying framework for understanding the interplay between morality, normativity, and psychological development. It bridges philosophical discussions of being with clinical phenomena, opening new avenues for both theoretical inquiry and therapeutic practice. This approach not only addresses gaps in psychoanalytic theory but also repositions the human mind as fundamentally oriented toward justice—a striving that shapes the trajectory of both individual and collective existence.



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Timon Hogenaar:

Apathy versus violence: A Fanonian- Lacanian exploration of responses to societal racist norms

In 2024, national elections in several Western countries have demonstrated the omnipresence and electoral acceptance of racism and refusal to distance oneself from their colonial pasts. In these times, norms are shifting; politicians are making comments we had not heard for decades, and marginalized individuals are facing discrimination and oppression at increasingly higher levels. In this paper, I analyze these tendencies via an intersectional Lacanian-Fanonian lens, particularly from a post-colonial perspective on anti-imperialistic resistance. Through this perspective, I propose that both normative and casuistic interpretations of acts of resistance from the oppressed require a more elaborate understanding, which we can find via Jacques Lacan's theories on psychosis and Frantz Fanon's theories on violence and colonialism. I will start off via Lacan's dissertation, in which he discusses the (psychotic) attack on a celebrity. Evidently, we cannot easily compare this attack and its nuances with general acts of frustration and aggression due to a societally-induced feeling of being excluded; however, by integrating these early Lacanian ideas with Fanon's essays on racism, I demonstrate that colonialism brings forth dynamics that are rather comparable to a psychotic discourse as proposed by Lacan. Following this narrative enables us to re-evaluate 'abnormal' responses, as these can also be considered as normal responses to an abnormal environment. Given the increased spreading of divisive and racist rhetoric, it is likely that more marginalized individuals will feel cornered and will act out accordingly; via this paper, I argue that a punitive discourse can further worsen the situation for those impacted and that it conveniently disavows complex histories.



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**Academic Hall
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Caroline L. Stotz

No time to make it unconscious: Fanon's revision of psychoanalysis

In stark contrast to Freud's dictum "the processes of the system Ucs. [unconscious] are timeless," (1915/1953, p. 187), Frantz Fanon writes in *Black skin, white masks*: "Since the racial drama is played out in the open, the black man has no time to 'make it unconscious.'...The Negro's inferiority or superiority complex or his feeling of equality is conscious," (1952/2008, p. 116). In brief, what Fanon is underlining here is the impotence of repression as a defense against the all-encompassing experience of colonial racism for the colonized subject. This poses problems in a traditional psychoanalytic conceptualization that defines neurosis by the subject's use of repression. Nonetheless, Fanon insists that the colonial environment of the French Antilles is a "neurotic situation" (p. 153) in which the black subject is alienated by a neurotic wish to be white. Key to Fanon's theorization is the decisive influence of the social in the etiology of neurosis (sociogenesis). This paper will use the concept of "no time to 'make it unconscious'" as a starting point to demonstrate how Fanon critically revises psychoanalysis to make sense of the psychology of colonized subjects in the French Antilles. It will compare and contrast Fanon and Freud to highlight how Fanon's critical revision re-writes psychoanalysis outside of the normative European setting of its birth and privileges sociogenic factors that belie the simplistic equation of normativity and health.

An aerial photograph of Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania, showing the city skyline with numerous skyscrapers, the Allegheny River, and the iconic yellow bridges. In the foreground, there is a large green park area with a circular fountain and a baseball field.

**Division 24
Spring 2025
Meeting**

**May 2nd-
May 4th**

**Lawrence Hall
2nd Floor**

**Saturday
May 3rd
10:30 to 11:45**

Ashley Bobak

**Marketing minds and manufactured selves: Philip Cushman's
analysis of social pathologies**

This symposium addresses societal, political, and historical factors contributing to conventional understandings of normalcy. It calls into question what psychology has proclaimed as “normal,” examining how modernity has shaped a society that is in itself, pathological.

Ashley Bobak continues an examination of socially patterned defects in Phillip Cushman's work on the “empty self” and the “multiple, flattened self” to explore how colonialism, capitalism, and neoliberalism culminate in the formation of a modern, Western self who is isolated, vapid, and yearning to fill a void that cannot be filled.

This symposium seeks to illuminate the context in which standards for normality have been established, and calls into question what is normative in itself, which is critical for a field that is complicit in the subjugation of those deemed “abnormal.”



Division 24 Spring 2025 Meeting

**May 2nd-
May 4th**

**Lawrence Hall
2nd Floor**

**Saturday
May 3rd
10:30 to 11:45**

Brent Robbins

Social pathology in the Frankfurt school tradition of critical theory

This paper will critique traditional assumptions of normativity through the lens of Erich Fromm's pathology of normalcy. He examines how Fromm conceptualizes society itself as sick, and highlights how characteristics and traits typically lauded in modern society are problematic – or in Fromm's terms, “socially patterned defects.”



Division 24 Spring 2025 Meeting

**May 2nd-
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**Lawrence Hall
2nd Floor**

**Saturday
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10:30 to 11:45**

Jeremy Northup

Negative communities and a phenomenology of failing institutions

This paper argues that contemporary norms for subjectivity arise from what Philip Rieff calls negative communities--particular types of anti-belonging which emerge when cultures shift from predominantly religious to psychological cosmologies. Northup argues that negative communities are exacerbated when brought into contact with what Wendy Brown calls the normative reason of neoliberalism which sets standards for both economic policy and the shape of subjectivity itself. Neoliberal negative communities constitute the shared horizon of current normal selfhood.



Division 24 Spring 2025 Meeting

**May 2nd-
May 4th**

**JVH
Auditorium**

**Saturday
May 3rd
10:30-11:45**

**Aidan Blockley:
(Ab)normality and sexual-
sanity in Canadian
psychiatry: An historical
discourse analysis**

What is “normal” in a field which attempts to uncover the inner worlds of its subjects? As it stands, the contours of “normality” have been determined, re-determined, undermined, and re-structured based around a relationship between “sanity,” and “insanity” and “reason,” and “unreason-” discursive constructs which can only be defined by lacking what the other has. Equally nebulous to the concept of “normality” is the concept of “abnormality.” Certain identities, however, seem to be consistent repositories of “abnormal” meaning; this is especially true of the Mad and the Queer. This paper uses the results of a Foucault-heavy archival study into Canada’s recent psychiatric history to explore what Canadian and American psychiatrists have, and have not, said about normality, reason, and sanity. Debates and discourses about normality are revealed to be deeply sexualised and sanist, levying pathologized language and conduct programs against sexual-minority subjects to define, refine, and contour the definition of psychological normality. This is done through a sexual-sanist logic, which uses sexuality as a marker of mental illness and mental illness a marker of sexual deviance. These debates played out, larger, in three streams of discourse: the debate surrounding the differences between transvestites and transsexuals; the studies and conduct programs which would define perversion and, in turn, “abnormal” heterosexuality; and in the counter-conduct of Mad/Queer activists. In this way, cis-heterosexism and sanism are mutually-constituting and overlapping, a shifting discourse which, in turn, bolsters definitions of what it means to be “normal” in “North American” psychology.



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Jim Creswell: “Hackance” & Short Circuiting Public Dialogue: The Emergence of a Dangerous Normativity from Misappropriation of Some Good Ideas

This paper is about a phenomenon that I refer to as “hackance”. Good hacks are shortcuts that can be elegant solutions to a problem, but good hacks are exceptionally rare. The idea of finding shortcuts has worked its way into the collective subjectivity of our society, which means that shortcuts are the normative mode du jour. As such, hackance refers to a general normativity that constitutes subjectivities where (1) people support their positions merely by feeling committed to them, (2) raise boundaries prohibiting interpersonal understanding, (3) prohibit critique a priori, and (4) discredit experts a priori. The danger of hackance is that it precludes the possibility of generative dialogue about social goods at individual, interpersonal, and societal levels. I offer an understanding of the emergence of hackance by turning to the work of two semi-public intellectuals: Richard Rorty and Charles Taylor. Their vision inspires important ideas in the public discourse, but I will explain how they could not have anticipated how our current technological milieu has morphed these ideas in ways that lead to hackance. Taylor, for example, raises the value of discussing experience as an essential moment in understanding another and this value has translated into normativity where people support their position by merely feeling committed to it. He points to the value of thinking about “imports”, which are the meanings and significances that are essential human subjectivity and this value has morphed into a normativity where understanding another becomes prohibited a priori. Consider Rorty’s notion of “final vocabularies” that highlight how one cannot appeal to reality independent of languages and communities in the search for truth. This notion has paved the way for a normativity marked by the a priori prohibition of critique. This lack of anchors outside of languages and communities blurs the lines between the literal and the metaphorical in a way that has enabled a normativity of a priori skepticism of knowledge and expertise. The purpose of my presentation is to show how crucial ideas promoted by Taylor and Rorty have been filtered through technological phenomena in a way that creates normativity constitutive of subjectivities expressive of hackance, which prohibits robust dialogue about the good.



Division 24 Spring 2025 Meeting

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308**

**Saturday
May 3rd
10:30 to 11:45**

Steen Halling
Dialogue, humility and fidelity

To put it simply, entering into dialogue requires humility and it is through dialogue with the phenomenon and fellow researchers that one is able to be faithful to the subject one studies. Fidelity and humility are typically conceived of as virtues while dialogue is thought of as a noteworthy but rarely achieved human possibility. Yet it is also the case that dialogue, humility, and fidelity are, as a practical matter, essential to the successful qualitative research process. How is this the case? Dialogue, as Gadamer (2004) argued, involves giving oneself over to the topic being discussed and to the conversation as a process outside of one's ego control. In phenomenological research, as well as in everyday life, dialogue is essential to the emergence of new understandings. And dialogue entails humility as it requires committing oneself to the authentic exploration of a phenomenon, leading one beyond one's theories and presuppositions. In my presentation, I will reflect on these three aspects of research. Although scholars' theories may be valuable and illuminating, my approach to this topic will be primarily experiential and reflective insofar as I draw on examples from my own research practice. As a phenomenological researcher I have been guided by the notion of being faithful to phenomena. For me this means that I take the topic as my guide and inspiration while seeking to follow David Karp's (1996) admonition to provide an analysis that "rings true to people's experience and lets them see things in a new way,"



Division 24 Spring 2025 Meeting

**May 2nd-
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308**

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May 3rd
10:30 to 11:45**

Sophia Shieh

Reclaiming humanistic psychology: Integrating Indigenous knowledge and liberation theories

This paper critiques the adaptation of humanistic psychology within the neoliberal framework, which has shifted its focus from humanistic roots to individual success and status. Originally a revolution against the deterministic views of psychoanalysis and behaviorism, humanistic psychology, as advocated by thinkers such as Carl Rogers and Abraham Maslow, recognized each person as an autonomous agent capable of meaning-making, self-actualization, and genuine connection. This approach aims to foster personal growth and self-understanding within a therapeutic setting through unconditional positive regard.

However, this discipline has been co-opted by neoliberal ideologies, increasingly reflecting a society that prioritizes self-entrepreneurship over collective welfare. The therapeutic emphasis on self-actualization and personal boundaries, once revolutionary, now often serves to reinforce the capitalist ethos of self-promotion and individualism at the expense of community and relational values.

This paper argues for a version of humanistic psychology that integrates indigenous knowledges and liberation theories, inherently including communal and relational dimensions of well-being. Indigenous perspectives and liberation theories provide a profound understanding of the interconnectedness of life and the necessity of freeing individuals and communities from oppressive structures. They emphasize the welfare of the community and ecological health over individual gain, promoting resistance against oppressive forces and the empowerment of marginalized voices.

By incorporating these principles, humanistic psychology can challenge the prevailing neoliberal appropriation of its theories and practices, reorienting its focus toward fostering a genuine concern for 'the Other'—placing the faces and needs of others before the self, per the ideas of Emmanuel Levinas and the broader goals of liberation. Through this integration, the proposal aims to redefine the goals of humanistic psychology to reflect a true commitment to communal and ecological well-being, resisting the commodification of personal identity and promoting a more inclusive and socially responsible practice. This approach not only enriches the therapeutic process but also aligns with broader efforts to address systemic inequalities and enhance collective actualization.



Division 24 Spring 2025 Meeting

**May 2nd-
May 4th**

**2nd Floor
Lawrence Hall**

**Saturday
May 3rd
12:00 to 1:15**

**Suzanne R. Kirschner, Derek
Hook & Stephanie Swales:
Normativity and its discontents:
Psychoanalytic perspectives in
theory and practice**

When it comes to exploring questions of normativity, psychoanalytic theories and practices offer fertile ground. Psychoanalytic approaches have been appraised in multiple, even conflicting, ways. While Freud and many subsequent theorists/practitioners were criticized for being (among other things) patriarchal, androcentric, and ethnocentric, and for promoting adaptation to societal norms, they have also been applauded for eroding society's normative standards and forms of life, precisely because psychoanalysis reveals their ubiquitous counter-currents and undertows. While many thus appreciate how psychoanalytic approaches have challenged and disrupted societal norms and communal constraints in ways that enable greater choice and self-expression, others claim they have thereby contributed to ethical and societal decline. Still others have argued that psychoanalytic "freedom" is really a softer and more entrenched form of governance. This roundtable brings together three theoretical and critical psychologists, all of whom recognize how psychodynamic approaches can bring to light and work against normativity at both societal and individual levels. Two are Lacanian 2 theorists who are also clinicians. The third, a sociocultural psychologist and psychological anthropologist, studies how psychodynamic processes enable humans in all cultures to tolerate the vicissitudes of desire and attachment, as well as the constraints of social order.



Division 24 Spring 2025 Meeting

**May 2nd-
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**JVH
Auditorium**

**Saturday
May 3rd
12:00-1:15**

A. Taiga Guterres, “Cura Personalis: Shifting Concepts of the Care of Souls and Guidance in Post-World War II Jesuit Education”

This symposium examines the evolving, and at times conflicting, narratives that shape psychology's understanding of the mind, care, and human behavior. Through historical and interdisciplinary explorations, the panel explores how shifting cultural, institutional, and scientific paradigms have influenced psychological practices and ideologies.

The first paper, "Cura Personalis: Shifting Concepts of the Care of Souls and Guidance in Post-World War II Jesuit Education," investigates the transformation of Jesuit educational care models from spiritual guidance to holistic personal development, reflecting broader cultural shifts in psychology and education. The second paper, “Stories of Electroconvulsive Therapy (ECT): Early Accounts and Contested Narratives,” explores competing narratives surrounding the early implementation of ECT, highlighting tensions between innovation, ethics, and patient experience. Finally, the third paper, "From Moral Imagination to Adaptation: A Mentality Shift in Psychology," addresses broader changes in how psychology conceptualizes its relationship to the creation of a more just and purposeful version of society.

Together, these papers demonstrate how psychology’s stories are deeply intertwined with historical moments and cultural shifts, revealing the discipline as both a mirror and molder of societal values. This symposium invites attendees to reflect on how historical insights can inform contemporary practices in psychology, care, and education.

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**Saturday
May 3rd
12:00-1:15**

**Karley Guterres, A. Taiga Guterres, and Kaila Pelton-
Flavin, “Stories of Electroconvulsive Therapy
(ECT): Early Accounts and Contested Narratives”**

This symposium examines the evolving, and at times conflicting, narratives that shape psychology's understanding of the mind, care, and human behavior. Through historical and interdisciplinary explorations, the panel explores how shifting cultural, institutional, and scientific paradigms have influenced psychological practices and ideologies.

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Auditorium**

**Saturday
May 3rd
12:00-1:15**

**David Goodman, Matt Clemente, and Kate Stone,
“From Moral Imagination to Adaptation: A Mentality Shift in
Psychology”**

This symposium examines the evolving, and at times conflicting, narratives that shape psychology's understanding of the mind, care, and human behavior. Through historical and interdisciplinary explorations, the panel explores how shifting cultural, institutional, and scientific paradigms have influenced psychological practices and ideologies.

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**Division 24
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**Academic Hall
308**

**Saturday
May 3rd
12:00 to 1:15**

**Joe A. Ostenston, Brady Wiggins, James Christopher
Head & Joshua W. Clegg: Jazz Standards: Monological
and Dialogical Processes in the Standardization of
Qualitative Methods**

In this conversation hour, we will discuss the roles and functions of standards and standardization in psychological inquiry, taking qualitative inquiry as our focal case. Historically, standardization has tended toward the monological, with abstract rules that flatten and constrict the contextual and dynamic, seemingly in opposition to the qualitative ethos. We wish to explore whether and how standards might be approached from a more dialogical frame, where standards are grounded in, and beholden to, the multiple voices of an epistemic community (perhaps resulting in something akin to the improvisational, yet structured, dynamic of a jazz performance). Some questions that we hope to address within the context of qualitative inquiry include: What work do standards do in epistemic systems and how is that work shaped by monological and dialogical impulses? How might monological and dialogical “standardization” differ? How do (or can) monological and dialogical approaches to standards function differently within epistemopathological systems (amid other forms of pathology)? In this discussion, our aim is to go beyond conventional and abstract values such as “rigor” by collectively exploring to what or to whom our normative practices are, could be, and should be meant to serve.



Division 24 Spring 2025 Meeting

**May 2nd-
May 4th**

**2nd Floor
Lawrence Hall**

**Saturday
May 3rd
2:30 to 3:45**

**Ana Júlia Segala: Unseen bonds:
The impact of familial normativity on identity and the
experience of otherness**

The Impact of Familial Normativity on Identity and the Experience of Otherness, will critically examine the role of normativity within family dynamics and its profound implications for psychological identity formation and the experience of otherness. Familial normativity, encompassing the implicit and explicit values, roles, and behaviors deemed “natural” or “desirable,” is deeply embedded in cultural, linguistic, and societal contexts. Drawing on existential-phenomenological frameworks, this work interrogates how these unspoken assumptions shape individual and collective identities through mechanisms of transmission, such as language, modeling, and non-verbal interactions.

By engaging with key concepts from Sartre, Heidegger, and Husserl, the presentation will explore the tension between inherited familial expectations and personal freedom. It highlights the psychological challenges that arise when individuals confront rigid or conflicting norms, particularly as they navigate their evolving identities in adolescence and adulthood. The discussion focuses on the internalization of familial roles, the role of cultural narratives in reinforcing normative frameworks, and the interplay of societal and spatial structures in shaping family dynamics.

This presentation calls for a critical reflection on the normative assumptions underlying psychological theory and practice, particularly in the context of family relationships. By shedding light on how familial norms influence identity and contribute to experiences of otherness, it aims to foster dialogue on the importance of addressing normativity as a central concern in psychology, ultimately promoting more inclusive and reflective approaches to theory, research, and practice.



Division 24 Spring 2025 Meeting

**May 2nd-
May 4th**

**2nd Floor
Lawrence Hall**

**Saturday
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2:30 to 3:45**

Tim Beck & Patrick Whitehead: Navigating identity within a majority-minority institution

In this presentation, we will discuss insights from original research examining social camouflaging and identity formation among college students. Camouflaging, a term used most often for autistic persons, is usually defined as the performance of an expected social role with the overarching goal being to conceal traits that might be perceived by others as abnormal. Mounting research has revealed troubling consequences stemming from sustained camouflaging, linking it to higher levels of anxiety and depression (Chapman et al., 2022)—experiences which are also reported in growing numbers within Gen Z more generally. Recent literature is mixed, however, regarding what camouflaging is precisely, how it relates to identity, and whether its conceptual utility extends beyond autism (Petrolini, V., Rodríguez-Armendariz, E., & Vicente, A., 2023). Our research explores social camouflaging among college students across learning environments where their identities as social minorities have become the majority—black students at a historically black university and neurodivergent students at a school that specializes in supporting diverse learning styles. Methods of data collection are both qualitative and participatory, including individual and group interviews, and analytic procedures draw on the descriptive phenomenological method and discursive approaches in psychology. Key themes in our presentation will include technologies of identity (Moeller, H.-G., & D'Ambrosio, P. J., 2021), anxiety and depression, agency, culture, and normativity.

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Division 24 Spring 2025 Meeting

**May 2nd-
May 4th**

**2nd Floor
Lawrence Hall**

**Saturday
May 3rd
2:30-3:45**

Antoinette Donofrio

**Simone Weil, relational spirituality and
the therapeutic alliance: Transcendental connections in theory and
clinical practice**

In modern secular talk therapy, mystical aspects of the work have been historically shunned; cast out of normative theoretical orientations and most gold standard evidence-based clinical practice. Yet, effective psychotherapy often contains an intangible ingredient, one currently encompassed by the ever-elusive therapeutic alliance. As scholarship grows on Relational Spirituality, an approach advanced by researchers at Boston University's Daniels Institute, my interest in more deeply understanding the spiritual aspects of therapeutic relationships, and relationships between other theories concerned with the metaphysical, grows in correlation. This paper aims to make connections and find through lines among Contemplative and Existential traditions as well as Jung's work on alchemy in psychotherapeutic practice utilizing French philosopher and Christian mystic Simone Weil's concepts of Attention, Dekatharsis, and the human need for roots. Weil, a radical thinker and political activist of her time, was concerned with these concepts on a societal scale as class-related unrest flooded Western Europe in the midst of World War II. This paper seeks to understand if and how her ideas applied at the dyadic level could afford personal and social transformation when psychotherapists attempt to embody these ideas in practice. Striving to shed light on the intermediary space between human and the divine, these loose yet intriguing overlaps may help the field of psychology better understand common factors theory, relational spirituality in psychotherapy, and uncover nonnormative ways that we can grasp the intangible and healing nature of connection from mystical, nonnormative perspectives.



Division 24 Spring 2025 Meeting

**May 2nd-
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**JVH
Auditorium**

**Saturday
May 3rd
2:30 to 3:45**

**Stephen Yanchar, Hannah Stokes & Michael
Westerman: Philosophical Perspectives on Issues
Regarding Normativity in Psychology**

Philosophical perspectives can shed light on issues concerning normativity because they offer viewpoints on basic questions about the nature of the person and the person's relationship to the world. To provide prompts for an active discussion about what philosophical positions have to offer, three panelists will offer brief statements about key points in the work of several influential philosophers and discuss how those points inform our understanding of normativity. Attendees will also be encouraged to introduce ideas from other philosophical positions that can enrich the discussion.



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**Academic Hall
308**

**Saturday
May 3rd
2:30 to 3:45**

B. Mason Judy: Speaking of panic: Lacanian perspectives on panic attacks

In his 1962-1963 seminar on anxiety, Jacques Lacan challenged the normative distinction between fear and anxiety, that of fear having an object and anxiety having none. Instead Lacan situates anxiety as the affect signaling what is lost by the speaking being, the object a, the cause of one's desire and argues, "Anxiety is for us witness to an essential breach, onto which I bring testimony that Freudian doctrine is that which illuminates." In contemporary times, the illumination of this essential breach a white-hot light—anxiety, and its more extreme manifestation, panic, are ubiquitous. In Lacanian theory, the effluence of panic is part of what's indicated in "new symptoms," a category denoting the effects of hypermodernity on the speaking being, one which erodes the mediation of anxiety. Or put differently, Freudian-Lacanian perspectives consider how the body speaks through panic and disrupts assumptions of normativity in categorizing, understanding, and treating an individual's experiences of suffering within the bio-medical discourse. In the United States, clinical interventions addressing the suffering of panic have been at the forefront of structured psychoanalytic approaches, namely Panic-Focused Psychodynamic Psychotherapy. Although eclectic and efficacious, this theoretical treatment model does not engage with Lacan's work or theorizations regarding anxiety and the intersections of culture and the speaking being. Through analysis of qualitative research interviews and contemporary Lacanian clinical perspectives, this paper will elucidate what a Lacanian understanding of anxiety and panic has to offer the wider field of clinical psychoanalysis and psychology.



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Salma Siddique: The fragile mandate: Psychoanalytic reflections on normativity and early development

This presentation examines the question of normativity through the lens of psychoanalysis and existential philosophy, focusing on early childhood development and its implications for training undergraduate students in pre-school observation methodologies. Drawing on the works of Freud, Winnicott, and Sartre, as well as contemporary psychoanalytic thought, I interrogate how normative expectations infiltrate individual psyches and institutional paradigms. The paper explores how these influences shape the practices of observing and interpreting behaviour in preschool settings, particularly in the context of undergraduate training in human development. By reflecting on the interplay between subjective experiences of difference and the collective imperatives of normativity, this paper proposes a framework for understanding psychological observation as a site of ethical and existential tension. By integrating psychoanalytic and existential perspectives with real-world applications in preschool observation training, the paper contributes to a deeper understanding of how "what ought to be" shapes our methodologies, ethical considerations, and educational practices. It aligns with the conference's mission to foster rigorous debate and advance conversations about normativity within psychology.



Division 24 Spring 2025 Meeting

**May 2nd-
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**Academic Hall
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May 3rd
2:30-3:45**

Rebecca Keating: The question of normativity through the lens of love

This paper will be an exploration of the human condition as one rooted in anxiety as developed in the face of the freedom and choice. The anxiety which is germinated through circumstances in which one must choose can be resolved by love in the Binswangerian sense. This is an open-forum discussion about the phenomenological presence of love in the structure of humanity as a resolution to existential anxiety.



Division 24 Spring 2025 Meeting

**May 2nd-
May 4th**

**2ND Floor
Lawrence Hall**

**Saturday
May 3rd
4:00-5:15**

**Sam Aston, Eleanor
Harrison & Andrew Flores:
Ruptures in the sexual non- rapport: A gap in the big other**

According to Lacan, the most normal of relationships, a sexual relationship, does not exist. Instead, both man and woman are defined by their subjugation to the singular masculine signifier in which society occurs, the phallus. There is do-er and done to, desirer and desired, phallus-having and phallus-being. Due to the rise of scientific technology, along with the capitalist market, a gap in the Big Other (i.e., the phallic field) has manifested, creating a crisis in modern subjectivity. In this symposium, we discuss how developments in capitalism, technology, and ideology have begun to fundamentally alter the ways we talk about the sexual relationship, and what that might mean for our future. One talk will showcase how technology has fundamentally changed our understanding of self and non-rapport with others by putting Baudrillard's Hyperreality in conversation with Lacan's three orders and exploring what occurs when the individual is able to exist where it creates its own signifiers. Another talk will examine the ways that sexual relationships have become increasingly "hommo-sexual" due to the progression of capitalism utilizing Lacan's concepts of sexuation and the four discourses. Our third talk will explore the relationship between capitalist ideology and the discourse of the university as mechanisms for producing knowledge for the sake of consumption and the maintenance of the status quo. Ultimately and collectively, we argue that the fundamentals of the symbolic order itself are being challenged through these societal advancements, and thus a "new normal" (one that may not be desirable) is being generated.

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**Division 24
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**May 2nd-
May 4th**

**JVH
Auditorium**

**Saturday
May 3rd
4:00 to 5:15**

Justin Karter: Diagnosis as discourse: Conceptual competence and the limits of psychiatric normativity

This symposium honors Brent Robbins, whose scholarship challenges entrenched norms in psychology and envisions more humane, inclusive approaches. Drawing from his work in existential, humanistic, and critical traditions, each presenter reveals how Robbins' ideas inspire resistance to static categories and do justice to the complexity of human life. This particular paper critiques contemporary diagnostic practices through conceptual competence, engaging Robbins' call for ethically responsible, human rights-centered psychology. Karter argues for resisting pathologization of normal experiences and reimagining diagnostic models that safeguard dignity and lived meaning.

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**Division 24
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**May 2nd-
May 4th**

**JVH
Auditorium**

**Saturday
May 3rd
4:00 to 5:15**

**Ashley Bobak: A psychoanalysis for the
culture: Metabletics as a cultural therapeutics**

This paper will examine the metabletic method, based in J.H. van den Berg's phenomenological study of historical change, to show how Robbins disrupts fixed notions of psychological norms. Emphasizing synchronicity between historical and cultural events, Bobak's analysis demonstrates how Robbins fosters richer understandings of human existence.



Division 24 Spring 2025 Meeting

**May 2nd-
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Auditorium**

**Saturday
May 3rd
4:00 to 5:15**

Jeremy Northup: Hermeneutics doesn't have to be so sad: Interpretation beyond cynicism and resentment

This paper delves into Robbins' hermeneutics of love, relating it to generosity through reparative (Sedgwick) and immanent (Coffeen) readings, and Gadamerian and Midrashic traditions. Northup shows how Robbins' interpretive practices deepen understanding of relationality, spirituality, and ethical inquiry.



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**Academic Hall
308**

**Saturday
May 3rd
4:00 to 5:15**

Jack J. Bauer: Deep psychological science

In addition to the big, fast juggernaut of mainstream psychological science, the field of psychology could benefit from a deep psychological science (DPS). Mainstream psychological science has grown bigger, faster, and in many ways better in recent decades, with increasingly representative samples, greater replicability of findings, and sophisticated methods and statistics. However, these scientific virtues often lead researchers to prioritize method over theory, to overestimate normativity, and to jeopardize the psychological realism of research.

DPS draws on rich traditions in multiple disciplines (e.g., Bronfenbrenner, 1979; Bruner, 1986; Carlson, 1971), aiming not to replace but rather to complement mainstream psychological science, enabling it to take greater risks, often with slower methods.

DPS has five main principles. First, deep personhood emphasizes that the person, as an organismic system-among-systems over time, serves as a context for all psychological phenomena, including the following three principles. Second, deep relationality emphasizes that psychological phenomena emerge within social systems, notably with respect to social-ecological dynamics, epistemology, ethics/morality, and hegemony/marginality. Third, deep interiority emphasizes narrative meaning-making and the varieties and depths of human experiencing and suffering. Fourth, deep temporality calls for a thick view of time (not just thin, chronological time), emphasizing personal/intersubjective time, organismic development, and social history. Fifth, deep pluralism emphasizes transdisciplinarity, methodological pluralism, and idiosyncrasies of scientists and participants.

Each DPS principle warns of the limitations of normativity. Mainstream science and statistics direct our attention to central tendencies in theory, method, and practice. DPS prioritizes the fully psychological in “psychological science.”



Division 24 Spring 2025 Meeting

**May 2nd-
May 4th**

**Academic Hall
308**

**Saturday
May 3rd
4:00 to 5:15**

Jared Parker: Theoretical and philosophical psychology at Hillsdale College: An emerging model

The psychology department at Hillsdale College has been tasked with aligning its curriculum and teaching practices with the college's classical liberal arts foundation. The institution has specifically directed the department to situate modern psychological insights within their historical and philosophical context, emphasizing psychology's deep roots in Western thought. In essence, that is, the department has been charged with building a theoretical and philosophical psychology program from the ground up. Although the department's approach to this is still evolving, a framework for teaching psychology from a theoretical and philosophical perspective has begun to take shape. This "emerging model" is defined by (a) a broad conceptual approach to psychology and (b) an emerging set of pedagogical practices. Regarding the former, the department embraces a broad conception of psychology that is open to any scholarship, past or present, scientific or philosophical, that seeks to understand the nature of the psyche. At the same time, the modern psychological tradition remains a central focus. The emerging model also includes several pedagogical changes: (1) a shift toward primary sources over textbooks, with even introductory courses taught primarily from original texts; (2) an emphasis on theories and theorists rather than isolated empirical findings; and (3) the introduction of seminar-style courses that utilize Socratic questioning as a central teaching method. Looking ahead, it is uncertain whether the department will ultimately coalesce around a specific school of philosophical psychology, such as existential phenomenology or hermeneutics, or continue to embrace an eclectic approach.

An aerial photograph of Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania, showing the city skyline with numerous skyscrapers, the Allegheny River, and the iconic yellow bridges. In the foreground, there is a large green park area with a circular fountain and a baseball field.

Division 24 Spring 2025 Meeting

**May 2nd-
May 4th**

**2nd Floor
Lawrence Hall**

**Sunday
May 4th
10:15-11:45**

Pam Leck: Motherhood as birth into normativity

“Normative” implies a normal that is inferred to be correct, which in psychology easily morphs into healthy--psychology, explicitly or implicitly, plays a powerful role in dictating what is normative. The normative is the primary lens through which we view the beginning of human life--how we are seen in utero, how we give birth, and how we are raised. This norming, however, for both the birthing parent and child, disrupts our connection to our innate sense of value as unique, intrinsic selves. Experiencing ourselves existing outside the bell curve causes shame and suffering that leads people to seek help from psychology. A return to the values of humanistic psychology offers a path to remember how each person has the capacity to connect to and express their own unique, intrinsic worthiness. Humanistic psychology believes in a person’s lived experience of having a self that is alive and valued regardless of whether this fits under the current tide of the normative. It offers a description and deep understanding of an internal sense of ourselves and our uniqueness. Furthermore, humanistic psychology’s grounding in existential-phenomenology reminds us that our understanding of what it means to be a human being informs every aspect of the psychology we create. When we support the value of people experiencing their separate, unique selves we can appreciate the impact psychology can have in reducing suffering for individuals and communities. We will use the work of J.H. van den Berg, Clark E., Moustakas and Robbie E. Davis-Floyd to outline this path of understanding.



Division 24 Spring 2025 Meeting

**May 2nd-
May 4th**

**2nd Floor
Lawrence Hall**

**Sunday
May 4th
Time**

Bolin Yu

Normativity and the massacre of the soul: Rethinking ethics through epistemic justice

Frequentism, a way of utilizing probability to set a norm for a certain event or subject, has profoundly shaped modern research in both human and natural sciences. This panel critically examines its pervasive influence on psychological research and practice, focusing on theoretical and practical implications. This paper of the panel explores frequentism's social impact using the concepts of "looping effect" and "dynamic nominalism" termed by Ian Hacking. Societal categories assigned to individuals shape behaviors, which influence the creation of new categories, perpetuating a feedback loop of identity construction and social perception, revealing the complexities of using frequentism in human research.



Division 24 Spring 2025 Meeting

**May 2nd-
May 4th**

**2nd Floor
Lawrence Hall**

**Sunday
May 4th
Time**

Kathryn Stone

**Who are we accompanying, really?: On the fetishization of
mechanistic practice in psychology**

The second paper in the panel on frequentism critiques frequentism's dominance in research, highlighting how it drives methodologies that allow for universalized "gold standards" to be established, that are incompatible with human irreducibility. Psychology is called to reckon with the non-universalizability of the human experience, engaging with a myriad of work by scholars including Kimberlé Crenshaw, Eiko Fried, and many more.

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Division 24 Spring 2025 Meeting

**May 2nd-
May 4th**

**2nd Floor
Lawrence Hall**

**Sunday
May 4th
Time**

Jackson Rowley

Empathic Socrates: A Vision of a psychotherapist as philosophical collaborator

The third paper in the panel on frequentism proposes a non-frequentist philosophy of psychotherapy that reorients its focus from humanity to each human being. Instead of addressing the ancient question of “What is a good life?”, addressing the existential dilemma of “What is a good life for this particular subject?” This approach frees practitioners from pursuing generalized ideals, allowing them to address clients’ existential dilemmas with sensitivity to individual circumstances. In conversation with the works of Philip Cushman, Ignacio Martín-Baró, and other thinkers, it advocates for reimagining psychotherapy outside the medical model, urging a more nuanced and individualized understanding of humanity.

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Division 24 Spring 2025 Meeting

May 2nd- May 4th

2nd Floor Lawrence Hall

Sunday May 4th Time

Ed Gantt, Samuel Major & Emily C. Purtschert: Psychology and the legacy of romanticism: The emotive self, expressionism and the therapy of affirmation

In this paper, we will argue that many contemporary psychological theories, despite their pretensions to being grounded in a positivist philosophy of science, and its concomitant investment in reductive and mechanical forms of explanation, also (somewhat incoherently) reflect the philosophical assumptions and embody the practical implications of 18th and 19th Century Romanticism. Drawing inspiration from the philosophical anthropology of Jean-Jacques Rousseau and others, many mainstream therapeutic approaches seek to account for and treat human action in a way that privileges the twin legacies of romantic thought: emotivism and expressive individualism. In so doing, many influential personality theories, and their resultant psychotherapeutic approaches, place great emphasis on the importance – certainly the presumed therapeutic centrality – of individual emotional experience. Indeed, such experience is usually taken to be foundational for not only explaining human action, but also for understanding what it means to live an authentic life – i.e., how to live a flourishing life of psychological, interpersonal, and moral well-being.

This paper will trace how the emotivist and individualist legacy of Romanticism has influenced the theoretical and practical formulations of traditional Freudian Psychoanalysis, the humanistic theories of Rogers and Maslow, and other contemporary identity-based affirmation approaches that encourage individualistic expressions of emotional authenticity as a central therapeutic aim. In a more critical vein, the paper will examine some of the problematic implications that emotivism and expressive individualism have for our understanding of the moral and relational foundations of human social life. We will argue that emotivist and expressivist assumptions and practices ultimately entail moral relativism, which in turn undermines proponents' claims of possessing unique and elevated insight or expertise regarding how individuals ought to best live to improve their mental health. As such, the emotivist and expressivist perspective ultimately entails a fundamentally normative understanding of human relationships, one in which they are seen to be of secondary importance to the quest for individual gratification and self-affirmation. More precisely, rather than understanding human relationships as an intrinsically social and moral given of human nature the emotivist/expressivist vision paints a picture in which interpersonal relationships are primarily a deployable means for achieving individually desired and benefitting ends; that is, as fundamentally instrumental in nature. An alternative account of human flourishing will be briefly discussed, one where psychotherapy can be grounded in a vision of the good life in which human flourishing is not taken to be found in the ethos of expressive individualism, but rather only in the context of genuinely moral engagement between persons in non-instrumental social relationships.



Division 24 Spring 2025 Meeting

**May 2nd-
May 4th**

**JVH
Auditorium**

**Sunday
May 4th
10:15-11:45**

Denielle Rose & John- Michael Spangler: Metrics of wellness in contemporary psychology and society

Concepts and metrics of normativity measure wellness in Western culture, and yet very few people fall exact on any measure of average. Humans are diverse, a feature that has kept us viable. Yet normative societal constructs keep us constrained, producing systems that leave many marginalized. Since its inception, psychology has pathologized deviation based on normativity and continues to tighten the standards for those who fit in or within acceptable ranges, producing more and more outliers. Neurodiversity acknowledges human differences in cognition, learning, behavior, and socialization (Walker, 2021). However, those who fall outside of normative brackets are considered neurodivergent and are classified as disordered within the field of psychology. And yet, this distinctness has marked some of the greatest contributors to philosophy, art, science, and more.

This session will challenge the pathology paradigm of contemporary society and psychology, as well as the metrics of wellness that leave so many unwell. It will resist the notion that difference must necessarily be perceived as a threat and explore new concepts that recognize the power and beauty of diversity and deviation. We will use the concept of optimal grip (Merleau-Ponty, 1974) to highlight person-centered approaches to understanding wellness, strengths, and support and access needs. Finally, we hope to lead a discussion where we can collectively begin reshaping possibilities for future psychology directions for neurodivergent people.

We join a growing number of researchers who recognize that research on neurodiversity is lacking, particularly from a hermeneutic and phenomenological stance. As neurodivergent academics, we recognize the need for neurodivergent voices and perspectives in this field of study and research.

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Division 24 Spring 2025 Meeting

**May 2nd-
May 4th**

**Academic Hall
308**

**Sunday
May 4th
10:15-11:45**

Kira Charles: Decolonizing Intelligence Assessment: Cultural Bias, Normativity, and Indigenous Realities

This literature review critically examines the complexities of intelligence assessment within Indigenous communities, challenging traditional frameworks of normativity in neuropsychological evaluation. It investigates the cultural biases embedded in the standardization of IQ tests, focusing on how these norms fail to account for the diverse realities of multicultural contexts. By analyzing the influence of acculturation and educational disparities on cognitive performance, this paper highlights the limitations of current assessment practices in accurately capturing the intellectual abilities of Indigenous individuals. The findings call for a reimagining of normative standards, advocating for culturally responsive and equitable evaluation methods that honor the unique identities and lived experiences of Indigenous populations. Through this work, we aim to foster a deeper understanding of the intersection between cultural diversity and cognitive assessment, promoting transformative change in how intelligence is measured, how normal is defined, and how both are applied in clinical and educational settings.

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Division 24 Spring 2025 Meeting

**May 2nd-
May 4th**

**Academic Hall
308**

**Sunday
May 4th
10:15-11:45**

Tate Hudson: Becoming- psychotherapeutic: Deterritorializing doxa in the clinical field

A striking parallel exists between human science psychology and Gilles Deleuze and Félix Guattari, which points to a vitally expressive relationship. Swirling at the confluence of philosophy and psychology is the question of how might one live? This productive inquiry engenders a response to the kinds of dogmatic structures the human science approach attempts to dismantle. That is to say, the Western traditional, rhetorical notions of must and ought stifle change, normalize identifying strata, hierarchize relations, and ultimately limit becoming. While considering these limitations, this essay strives to accomplish the following: the work of Deleuze and Guattari is often perceived as too radical, too abstruse, perplexing, and so on. That said, my aim is to make some of their more challenging concepts approachable and deployable. Furthermore, my intention is to hold space within the field of clinical psychology for these two influential thinkers. Structurally speaking, each concept is implicitly situated thematically in congruence with a clinical counterpart; the idea here being a generative orientation that seeks experimentation and creativity over fixation and common belief, or doxa. The accessible nature of the writing is meant to evoke a kind of novel expression often lacking in philosophical / psychological discourse. Thus, when we ask the intriguing question - how might one live? – elements of discovery coil around creative concepts in such a way that affirmational potential increases through a person's sense of entanglement with the world, leading us to consider how Deleuze and Guattari's philosophical concepts might translate clinically.



Division 24 Spring 2025 Meeting

May 2nd-
May 4th

**Academic Hall
308**

**Sunday
May 4th
Time**

Ashley Morgan: How does psychiatric diagnosis and the language of “disorder: shape humanistic counselling practice?: A qualitative reflexive thematic analysis

BACKGROUND: Research exploring attitudes and approaches of “mental health professionals” towards clients associated with psychiatric “disorder” reveal evidence of stigma, reduction in empathy, and prognostic pessimism. Much of this existing research is quantitative and does not overtly include humanistic counselling professionals within participant sampling. Humanistic therapy traditionally adopts a non-pathologising stance and as such warrants a closer exploration of its relationship with psychiatric discourse.

METHOD: Using Reflective Thematic Analysis, this qualitative study conducted semi-structured interviews to explore the attitudes and approaches of (n=7) humanistic counselling professionals in Ireland toward psychiatric discourse, and working with clients given a psychiatric diagnosis. This research was explored through the lens of critical realism.

RESULTS: Four themes are reported in this paper: (i) therapist attitudes, (ii) therapeutic approach, (iii) training, knowledge and understanding, and (iv) therapist resistance to psychiatric discourse. Evidence of incongruent, suspicious, and pessimistic attitudes among participants towards clients presenting with a psychiatric diagnosis were identified within the data. These attitudes may be shaped by stigma and stereotypes associated with a client's diagnosis. Participants described directive and cautious approaches to working with clients diagnosed with a “disorder”, and at times appeared to prioritise management over the meaning of “symptoms”. Counselling education may play a role in counsellor attitudes and approaches to psychiatric discourse. Attempts to resist the dominance of psychiatric discourse of psychiatry in practice were evident throughout the data.

CONCLUSION: Findings of this study suggest that psychiatric language may threaten the integrity of humanistic counselling practice through incongruent attitudes, focus on “fixing”, and pessimism among therapists when clients are viewed in terms of psychiatric “disorder”. Results of this paper invite therapists to reflect critically upon their relationship with psychiatric discourse. This includes consideration of the influence of any taken-for-granted knowledge of psychiatric “disorder” and how this may shape their attitudes and approach to counselling practice. Further research might examine the epistemological assumptions that therapists hold with regard to psychiatric discourse.