

COLLOQUIUM BY QUINN HIROSHI GIBSON

ADDICTION AS DESENSITIZING VULNERABILITY: A FRAMEWORK FOR EXCUSE

TIME: 4:00-5:00 PM, THURSDAY, 10 MAY 2018

VENUE: ACADEMIC BUILDING 1087

Addiction as Desensitizing Vulnerability: A Framework for Excuse

Speaker: Quinn Hiroshi Gibson, Teaching Fellow in the Global Perspectives on Society program at New York University Shanghai

ABSTRACT:

As reasons-responsive agents, when we acquire or develop personal attachments, projects, or commitments we become sensitive to new classes of reasons. My partiality towards those I care about makes me (perhaps constitutively) sensitive to those reasons that bear on their concerns. Commitments thus have dual aspects. The first aspect is sensitizing: our lives are enriched by widening the scope of reasons to which we are responsive. But the other aspect makes us vulnerable: the more things we are invested in, and the more their respective reasons bear on us, the greater and wider the domain in which we are susceptible to loss or injury. In this talk I argue that addiction is substantively bad because (in serious forms) it involves taking on a commitment which (i) leaves little room for the sensitizing enrichment of other commitments and (ii) itself manifests primarily by making addicts vulnerable. The addictive pursuit is itself of little or no intrinsic value, yet it both elbows out other life-enriching activities and demands a very high vulnerability-cost in return. I also argue that this way of thinking about addiction illuminates the ways in which addiction can constitute an excusing condition on moral responsibility: addicts have, by nature of their acquired vulnerabilities, impaired capacities for responding to reasons for action.

BIO:

Quinn Hiroshi Gibson is currently a Teaching Fellow in the Global Perspectives on Society program at New York University Shanghai. He received his PhD in philosophy from the University of California, Berkeley in 2017. He works primarily at the intersection of ethics and philosophy of mind, particularly on philosophy of psychology and psychiatry and the moral psychology of self-deception, addiction, delusion, and other psychiatric disorders.

This event is open to all. For any queries email yg73@duke.edu or call 3665 7149.