

# **Philosophy and Religion in The Contemporary World**

**Fall 2017 Colloquium Series  
at  
Belk Library and Information Commons**

**Room 114**

**5:30 pm**

## **September 19**

**Dr. Jack Kwong  
How Hope is Possible**

Hope is ubiquitous in our lives. Yet, its nature is not well understood. According to the standard way of thinking about hope, to hope for an outcome is to desire it and to believe that its realization is possible, though not inevitable. But this account faces difficulties: It cannot explain how people can display differing strengths in hope and it cannot distinguish hope from despair. In this talk, I will propose an account of hope that can meet these deficiencies. Briefly, I will argue that in addition to possessing the relevant beliefs and desires, a hopeful person must also be able to *see* a way in which the desired outcome can come about.

## **October 18**

**Dr. Chris Bartel  
Gender Swapping and Political Identity in Video Games**

Gender swapping is the practice of intentionally selecting a video game avatar whose gender identity differs from that of the player's. The questions that researchers have considered are, who gender swaps in video games and why? Previous research has found that the practice is widespread among gamers and the reasons offered vary widely as well. However, previous researchers have not examined the possible role of political identity in gamers' gender swapping practices. In this presentation, I report on one survey study that was designed to address this question and discuss some of the philosophical implications of the findings.

## **November 1**

**Dr. Davis Hankins  
Science, Religion, and the Economy: Hellenistic Innovation and the Conditions for early Jewish and Christian Imagination**

Much that we think of as modern, like advanced sciences and technologies, began long before the Enlightenment. The first library and museum, the card catalog and table of contents, the Archimedean screw, optics, mathematics, trigonometry, and much more are first documented in Egypt over 1000 years before the Renaissance. If Christopher Columbus had trusted calculations conducted in Egypt over 1500 years earlier than his contemporaries' calculations in Italy, he would have known that he wasn't in India! How might these breathtaking economic and technological innovations have impacted cultural productions such as literature or minority populations like Jews?