

**Belmont Undergraduate Research Symposium**

**Asian Studies**

**Moderator: Dr. Cynthia Bisson**

**April 11, 2019, 7:00 p.m.  
JAAC 2090**

7:00 p.m. – 7:15 p.m.

**Chang'e 4: China's Moon Landing**

Alexis DeBoer

Faculty Advisor: Qingjun Li

Chang'e No. 4 was a Chinese lunar exploration vehicle and project that achieved the first soft landing on the far side of the Moon on January 3, 2019. In this presentation, I consider the logistical, historical and cultural issues surrounding this endeavor and accomplishment.

7:20 p.m.—7:35 p.m.

**Methodological Analysis of May Sims' *Remastering Morals with Aristotle and Confucius***

Carolina Maggio

Faculty Advisor: Ronnie Littlejohn

This paper is a short attempt to highlight the accomplishments and points of improvement in comparative analysis offered in May Sim's book *Remastering Morals with Aristotle and Confucius*. Her mission is to establish topical points of commensurability rather than direct translations between the two "alien" philosophers. I analyze points of success in Sim's work, such as her clarity and compatibility as an introductory work; however, the paper additionally emphasizes areas of fault in her argument, such as lack of sufficient background, and imprinting language and vocabulary of one philosopher onto the other. "Methodological Analysis of May Sim" not only highlights specific issues in Sim's work but alludes to larger "occupational hazards" that might occur when working within the comparative field of study.

7:40 p.m.—7:55 p.m.

**Reason vs. Ritual and the Development of Character**

Tommy Kessler

Faculty Advisor: Ronnie Littlejohn

The development of character is an important aspect of virtue ethics, but divergent traditions emphasize different means of development as being most effective. In my paper, I explore how Aristotelian and Confucian ethical frameworks approach the issue of character development and make the argument that Confucian ethics, in its focus on ritual, makes a more psychologically cogent case for how we should think of character development than the rationalist, Aristotelian model.

8:00 p.m.—8:15 p.m.

**Sense of Justice in the *Analects***

Peyton Harrington

Faculty Advisor: Ronnie Littlejohn

In Erin Cline's book *Confucius, Rawls, and the Sense of Justice*, she argues for the coherence of Kongzi's sense of justice as she describes it in the *Analects*. She defends the *Analects* against a possible objection that the text is ambiguous about the concept of justice at best and inconsistent at worst. In this paper, I grant that there is some sense of justice in the *Analects* for the sake of argument; however, I will argue that Cline's defense against the objection of its incoherence is unconvincing and a better defense is necessary, which I will attempt to provide.

8:20 p.m.—8:35 p.m.

**Commensurability as a Metaphilosophical Problem in Sims' *Remastering Morals with Aristotle and Confucius***

Brenton Wolford

Faculty Advisor: Ronnie Littlejohn

May Sim focuses on a central methodological question of comparative philosophy throughout her book *Remastering Morals with Aristotle and Confucius*. Sim asserts the reality of partial commensurability by demonstrating that Aristotle and Confucius share a fundamental set of categories. This demonstration, she argues, is enough to prove the reality of a limited commensurability. It is my argument, however, that her position is deficient. My claim is that in order to argue convincingly for the possibility of partial commensurability one must provide an explanation for how this phenomenon can be, otherwise there is no way of differentiating between a kind of biased projection of similarities and a true recognition of commensurability. Absent this phenomenological grounding, Sim's methodology falls in on itself because it is unable to escape the confines of its own subjective particularity. Therefore, I call Sim to engage with the metaphilosophical considerations necessary for constructing a durable methodology for the comparative philosopher.