

"Philosophy's Failure in the Face of Slavery."

A Special Talk with Robert Bernasconi

Tuesday, April 9, 2024

2 - 3:15 p.m.

A&S Auditorium

The rejection of slavery by the major European powers early in the nineteenth century was the result of a moral invention of an unprecedented character and yet, until recently, there was almost no mention of any aspect of slavery in histories of ethics or of political philosophy. This was in spite of the fact that questions surrounding the legitimacy and practice of slavery were a regular part of moral philosophy courses at universities from the sixteenth century until its abolition. At a time when many institutions of higher learning are reflecting on their complicity with chattel slavery in terms of the sources of their funding and their use of slave labor, academic philosophy as an institution must come to terms with the fact that at various key historical moments it continued to justify slavery, even when slavery was under attack in society at large. This talk outlines what needs to be done to meet this challenge.



About Robert Bernasconi

Robert Bernasconi is Edwin Erle Sparks Professor of Philosophy and African American Studies at Penn State University. He is a founding co-editor of the journal *Critical Philosophy of Race* and is the author of numerous articles in that area. He has also written two books on Heidegger and one on Sartre.

Co-Sponsors: Philosophy, Religion, and Liberal Studies, The Office of the Dean, College of Arts and Sciences, The Honors College

