

Joseph E. Davis, Associate Professor of Sociology and Associate Director, Institute for Advanced Studies in Culture, University of Virginia

An ever-growing swath of troublesome human behavior and emotion has been recast as a mental disorder. Shyness, sadness, perfectionism, school misbehavior, underperformance—each of these and many more are now conceived in terms of an illness with an accompanying prescription drug on offer as a treatment. This “medicalization” of everyday problems has broad implications for society and individuals. Drawing on the experience of college students, Professor Davis will explore how the colonizing power of medical language and practice is reshaping understandings of personhood, self-address, and suffering.

Elizabeth R. Schiltz, Associate Professor and Thomas J. Abood Research Scholar, University of St. Thomas School of Law; Co-Director, Terrence J. Murphy Institute for Catholic Thought, Law, and Public Policy

Theologian Stanley Hauerwas has written that “No group exposes the pretensions of the humanism that shapes the practices of modernity more thoroughly than the mentally handicapped.” The very existence of persons with serious cognitive disabilities challenges our modernity-drenched conception of the human person as a rational, autonomous being. Professor Schiltz will explore the many ways in which this conception permeates our thinking and our practices—even those of people who we might expect to reject modernity’s model of the human, such as disability rights activists and theorists, and parents and caregivers of persons with disability.

THE PROBLEM OF THE MODERN SELF

Imagining Personhood
in Light of Limitations, Disability,
and Suffering

Tuesday | August 2, 2011
7:00 a.m. – Noon

RSVP Required | Breakfast Provided

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LOCATION: The Campus Club, Coffman Memorial Union