

# Department of Philosophy

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## PRESENTS

STEVEN NADLER (UNIVERSITY OF WISCONSIN):

*SPINOZA'S ETHICS AS A  
THEOLOGICAL-POLITICAL TREATISE*



**Tuesday, September 19, 2017**

**12:30 – 2:00pm**

**Philosophy Seminar Room (3305 Boylan)**

A Spinoza scholar once famously suggested that the Theological-Political Treatise (TTP) is of "no use whatsoever" in understanding the Ethics. This same scholar also claimed that propositions 21-42 of Part Five of the Ethics are "an unmitigated and seemingly unmotivated disaster" and dismisses them as of "negligible" interest and importance. In fact, a proper understanding of Part Five requires the TTP, since only in light of the latter work's attack on the political ambitions of religious authorities can we understand what exactly Spinoza is doing in the final propositions of the Ethics, particularly his doctrine of the eternity of the mind and his account of "blessedness" and "salvation". In this lecture we will see that the real political dimensions of the Ethics lay not in the Hobbesian propositions of Part Four, but the admittedly opaque yet crucial propositions in the second half of Part Five. In this way we can see how the Ethics is as integral a part of Spinoza's theological-political project as the TTP.