

**Guest Speaker: Dr. Peg O'Connor, Professor—Department of
Philosophy, Gustavus Adolphus College**

Event: Philosophical Engagements with Trauma

Location: Laurel Forum of Karpen Hall

When: Friday, March 22, 2019 from 7-8:15 pm

**Title: The Moral Crisis of Childhood Trauma: Hindering the
Essential Arts of Personhood**



Childhood trauma is one of the greatest yet largely unacknowledged public health crises in the United States. It is a moral crisis as well because trauma hinders a child's ability to acquire essential arts and skills a person needs to navigate the physical and social worlds. The essential arts this talk explores are imagining, hoping, having empathy, and maintaining bodily self-possession. These arts are crucial in a person's coming to have self-respect, exercising agency, and being treated as a full person by others. When these arts are not lovingly and consistently cultivated, a person may become indifferent to her own self. The talk ends with some suggestions about preventing childhood trauma and addressing its effects.

Peg O'Connor is Professor of Philosophy at Gustavus Adolphus College in St. Peter, MN. She is the author of *Life on the Rocks: Finding Meaning in Addiction and Recovery*. Her most recent publication is, "Our Stories, Our Knowledge: The Importance of Addicts' Epistemic Authority in Treatment," in *The Routledge Handbook of the Philosophy and Science of Addiction*. Her current project focuses on the work of William James and the contributions his work can make to the field of addiction studies and to individuals struggling with addiction. She writes a blog, "Philosophy Stirred, Not Shaken," for psychologytoday.com that has nearly 1.3 million views. When not doing philosophy, she volunteers with a dog rescue that brought Clooney, the best dog in the world, into her life. She also can be found on the tennis court trying to prove that an old dog can learn new tricks.