

Duties to Oneself in Modern Moral Philosophy

The duties or obligations that we owe to ourselves (as opposed to those that we owe to other people, God, or even non-rational animals) have received an increasing amount of scholarly attention in recent years. As this scholarship almost unanimously acknowledges, however, ‘duties to oneself’ is not a new topic of philosophical discussion but has received treatment throughout the history of philosophy. The modern period was a particularly fertile time due to Samuel Pufendorf’s influential division between duties to self, others, and God, which shaped the subsequent discussion. Surprisingly, however, how both major and minor figures from the modern period understood duties to self has received very little scholarly attention – the exception being Kant. The aim of this workshop is to explore the topic of duties to oneself in modern moral philosophy more seriously in an effort to uncover the richness of the period’s approach to this topic. The focus will be on figures and works stretching roughly from Pufendorf to Dugald Stewart, with an emphasis on those that have received comparatively limited scholarly attention in the past. Possible topics include (but are not limited to): the priority of duties to self (or lack thereof); the nature and justification of specific duties to self (such as to one’s body or mind); the moral status of the self; and the alleged impossibility of self-obligation.

Deadline: Abstracts of approximately 500 words should be submitted by **May 31, 2026**, to michaelwalschots@unimi.it

Keynote Speaker: Colin Heydt (University of South Florida)

Time and Place: Tuesday Jan. 26 and Wednesday Jan. 27, 2027
Department of Philosophy, University of Milan, Italy

* Accepted speakers will be eligible for inclusion in a special issue of the *Journal of Modern Philosophy*.



Funded by
the European Union



European Research Council
Established by the European Commission



UNIVERSITÀ DEGLI STUDI DI MILANO
DIPARTIMENTO DI FILOSOFIA
"PIERO MARTINETTI"

