



PHILOSOPHY DEPARTMENT SPEAKER SERIES

UNIVERSITY
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CHANGING LIVES
IMPROVING LIFE

VIRTUE, AFFECTION, AND THE SOCIAL GOOD: THE MORAL PHILOSOPHY OF CATHARINE TROTTER COCKBURN AND THE BLUESTOCKINGS

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ROOM: MACK 230
FRIDAY, MARCH 9
11:30-1:00



This paper explores the intellectual relationship between three eighteenth century women thinkers: Catharine Trotter Cockburn, and the Bluestockings, Elizabeth Carter and Catherine Talbot. All three share a virtue-ethical approach according to which human happiness depends on the harmonization of our essentially rational and sociable natures. The affinity between the Bluestockings and Cockburn illuminates new avenues for thinking about the Bluestockings as philosophers and about the feminist dimensions of Cockburn's morality. Further, their shared moral outlook sheds light on the feminism of the eighteenth century and highlights these thinkers' contributions to a new and growing discourse about the social and political role of women.