

UMBC DEPARTMENT OF PHILOSOPHY

invites you to a talk by

BLAKE FRANCIS

UMBC Postdoctoral Fellow for Faculty Diversity

Friday February 12th, 2021 at 2:00 pm

Webex Meeting link:

<https://umbc.webex.com/umbc/j.php?MTID=m6a3e3ec82e22bdf5e777318efdd76e9f>

Meeting number:	120 332 2462	Password:	ppFEMtJr683
Join by phone	1-202-860-2110	Access code:	120 332 2462

“MIDDLE EMISSIONS: A CASE FOR AGGREGATIVE CLIMATE ETHICS”

Abstract:

Climate change ethicists argue that in contrast to the “subsistence emissions” of the poor, the “luxury emissions” of the rich are impermissible because they inflict harm on others for the sake of frivolous benefits. In light of shifts in global demographics, emphasis on the subsistence emissions/luxury emissions distinction leaves a crucial gap in our moral understanding of the problem of climate change. By 2027, 60% of the world’s population will be middle class, earning enough income for discretionary spending, strongly correlated with greenhouse gas emissions. The emissions of the global middle class, “middle emissions,” will largely determine the global emissions trajectory. After showing that standard accounts of climate ethics fail to account for middle emissions’ moral significance, I argue that determining the permissibility of middle emissions requires weighted aggregation of the benefits and harms. I defend my argument against non-aggregative non-consequentialist theories, which I argue fail to account for the moral importance of the benefits of activities that cause climate change. I also defend my account of aggregative climate ethics against the charge that it is at odds with considered judgments about the permissibility of subsistence emissions and the impermissibility of luxury emissions.