

**Friday, November 20, 2015**

**4:10 – 5:00 PM**

**EPS103**

**Mach, Wittgenstein, and I**

**Regents Professor Gordon Brittan**  
**MSU Department of History & Philosophy**

**Abstract:**

Mach's critique of Newtonian space and time influenced the development of the Special Theory of Relativity. But perhaps of equal importance, he provided many 20th century physicists with their default philosophical position, that physics is no more than an economic summary of experimental facts on the basis of which predictions can be made, and many 20th century philosophers with their default "scientific" position, that philosophy consists in making clear the logical-conceptual structure of physics. Wittgenstein began by tracing the implications of Mach's position to what he took to be their logical conclusions, and ended by rejecting the task Mach assigned to philosophy. Importantly, Mach and Wittgenstein, from very different directions, undermined the idea of a self that is the subject of experience and thought, a claim that continues to resonate across our culture.

**Host: Rufus Cone**

**\*\*\* Refreshments served in the EPS second floor atrium at 3:45 \*\*\***