Defining Mental Disorder
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Biography:
Before coming to Memphis, Dr. Varga worked at the Institute of Social Research in Frankfurt and conducted postdoctoral research at the Institute of Cognitive Science at the University of Osnabrück. Much of Dr. Varga’s work explores the intersection between philosophy, psychiatry, and cognitive science. His publications include Authenticity as an Ethical Ideal (Routledge 2011), Naturalism, Interpretation, and Mental Disorder (Oxford University Press 2015), and The Actively Scaffolded Mind: Integration and Disintegration (under contract, MIT Press).

Abstract:
The publication of the influential Diagnostic and Statistical Manual of Mental Disorders (DSM–5) has initiated new debates about conceptual questions in psychiatry. While defining the concept “mental disorder” is important for psychiatric research and practice, distinguishing between conditions that warrant this label and conditions that reflect normal variation (“neurodiversity”) remains a source of controversy. The talk will assess the most influential attempts at defining the concept “mental disorder” and offer an alternative account.