

The Baldy Center Working Group on *Theory*

Invites faculty, law, and graduate students to a **Work-in-progress presentation**



Wednesday, April 16, 2008

1:00 – 2:30 pm (note delayed start time)

509 O'Brian Hall

RSVP to ekausner@buffalo.edu (lunch available at 12:30)



Ontology of Law

Barry Smith, Director

Ontology Research Group
UB Philosophy

Introduced by **Ken Ehrenberg**, UB Philosophy

Professor Barry Smith explores scientific research requiring the integration of data to which a variety of different kinds of licenses and firewalls are attached. As the Science Commons organization, a leader in the field of unlocking scientific data in ways designed to accelerate the research cycle, points out, "Materials are hard to get. Universities are overwhelmed with transfer requests that ought to be routine, while grant cycles pass and windows of opportunity close. It's not uncommon for research sponsors to invest hundreds of millions of dollars in critically important efforts like drug discovery, only to see them fail" in part because of contractual or regulatory or financial hurdles on reuse of data. As computers are used to integrate and reason with the data, so, prospectively, they will be used to navigate the hurdles of licenses, contracts, fees and permissions. But to realize this end, it will be necessary to develop an ontology, a consensus-based structured representation of such entities which will support computing about legal information. Professor Smith will introduce the project of building such an ontology, and describe the steps involved in its realization.

Barry Smith's primary research focus is the application of ontology in biomedicine and biomedical informatics. He is one of the principal scientists in the National Center for Biomedical Ontology and a member of the Scientific Advisory Board of the Gene Ontology Consortium. Professor Smith's research has been funded by the National Institutes of Health, the US, Swiss and Austrian National Science Foundations, the Volkswagen Foundation, and the European Union. Smith is SUNY Distinguished Professor and holder of the Julian Park Chair of Philosophy at UB. He is also Research Director of the Institute for Formal Ontology and Medical Information Science in Saarbrücken, Germany, and editor of *The Monist: An International Quarterly Journal of General Philosophical Inquiry*.