

GWU Department of
Philosophy presents the
2010 Elton Lecture

Dr. Ed Casey
Professor of Philosophy
State University of New
York at Stony Brook

Friday, October 1st
5:00PM

MPA Building Rm 310
805 21st Street, NW



“On Not
Putting Too
Fine an Edge
on Things”

Edward Casey is Distinguished Professor at SUNY Stony Brook and the current President of the American Philosophical Association, Eastern Division. He has been at Stony Brook since 1978, and was chairman of the philosophy department from 1991-2001. Since the early 1990s, he has focused on the role of place in people's lives, writing a series of four books on this topic. More recently, he published [The World at a Glance](#) (2007), and he is currently writing a companion volume to be entitled [The World on Edge](#). His lecture will draw upon research he is doing for this last book.

Abstract: Philosophers, taking their lead from natural and social scientists, pride themselves on achieving clarity and exactitude. This aim has been indisputable to the accomplishment of many of the enduring achievements in philosophy – for instance, Descartes's *Principles of Philosophy*, Kant's *Critique of Pure Reason*, Peirce's semiotics, Russell and Whitehead's *Principia Mathematica*. At the same time, the virtues of vagueness have been increasingly pursued ever since William James (inspired by certain strains in Peirce himself) proclaimed “the value of the vague” in his *Principles of Psychology* (1890). In this talk, I consider the merits of the vague in philosophy by a concerted exploration of the edges of things and topics: those extremities where the exact yields place to the less than precisely designatable and discussable.