A warm welcome to all readers of the Department of Philosophy newsletter that keeps you in touch with developments in your department. I thank the editor, Robert Burch, for the work that he put into the newsletter.

One event that we hope keeps you in touch is our Annual Public Lecture in Philosophy. This year’s lecture will be given by Allen Carlson on April 7, 2011, and is entitled “How Should We Aesthetically Appreciate Nature.” Everyone is welcome to both the lecture and the reception that will follow. Details can be found below.

The question of how we should aesthetically appreciate nature has both historical and contemporary significance, since our appreciation of natural environments has greatly influenced and continues to influence how we treat such environments, in particular, which of them we preserve and which we allocate to various human uses, such as resource extraction and development. The question has been addressed by several different accounts of the aesthetic appreciation of nature, ranging from time-honoured approaches such as the picturesque tradition and landscape formalism to more recent points of view, which are typically associated with cultural relativism and postmodernism. This lecture will review these different positions, arguing that, concerning the question of how we should aesthetically appreciate nature, some are more fruitful than others.
Amy Schmitter works mostly in the history of early modern philosophy and the philosophy of art. Both fields cut across many areas and even disciplines, something she values very much, particularly for the opportunity to speculate about issues of methodology and approach. Much of her past work in both fields has concerned representation and power. Recently, she has been working a good deal in the history of “passions,” “affections” and “sentiments” – roughly comparable to what we now label “emotions,” but descended from what Aristotle called patê. Her work in the area started with considering how René Descartes’s writings on the passions offer a view of the self, ideas, and our relation to our bodies very different from what is usually attributed to him. It has now grown to encompass much of the British 18th century, as well as the historical background to the early modern period. She is particularly fascinated by somewhat dusty questions of taxonomy and terminology, since 17th and 18th century authors often emphasized unexpected passions such as “wonder,” “caution,” or “glory.” Right now, she’s finishing two pieces on the passions for The Oxford Handbook of British Philosophy in the Seventeenth Century, and The Oxford Handbook of British Philosophy in the Eighteenth Century. Forthcoming work includes a piece on the passions in Hume for an anthology with Oxford, and another article on Hume’s aesthetics for yet another anthology with Oxford. But not all her work is for Oxford: she has been commissioned to contribute an article on Descartes’s Third Meditation for a Cambridge Companion and has several forthcoming articles in other venues on 17th century figures, as well as an article co-authored with a U of A Ph.D. candidate on Hume and feminist aesthetics. She also finds herself on the program committees for a number of conferences, including the organizing committee for the 2012 Hume Conference in Alberta. Schmitter is pleased to see that there is a large group of Humephiles now in Alberta, three of whom will be represented at the big Hume Conference this July in Edinburgh for the tercentenary of Hume’s birth in 2011. Anybody who wants to join us in Edmonton to celebrate Hume’s birthday in early May is welcome. Scotch will certainly be involved.


Alexander Rueger’s research interests lie in two somewhat disparate areas: the philosophy and history of physics and Kant and the history of aesthetics. He has published widely on issues in the historical development and interpretation of quantum field theory and on questions arising from the theory of dynamical systems (which includes ‘chaotic’ systems). One aim of this research is to formulate a view of emergent properties in physics that de-mystifies such properties by giving a scientifically informed metaphysical analysis of them. In the second line of research he has pursued problems in understanding Kant’s theory of taste in the Critique of Judgment. The Critique is a difficult and fascinating work because it aims at combining what Kant saw as the two branches of philosophy, the theory of knowledge and the theory of morality. The one branch tells us that we cannot know what lies beyond experience (the supersensible) while the other portrays us as inhabitants of a supersensible realm. Somewhere in between these realms lies the experience of beauty. How to understand, first, this precarious position of beauty in the ‘gulf’ between theoretical and practical philosophy and, second, how Kant came to develop this view are the two main objectives of a book Rueger is currently working on. The study will also include an analysis of the early reception of the Critique and of various attempts by followers of Kant to design a ‘Kantian aesthetics’ before the master published his own.
MESSAGE FROM THE CHAIR

continued

A retirement party, full of speeches, reminiscences, congratulations, and gifts, was held for Allen Carlson and Wes Cooper in early December at the home of Bernie Linsky and Betty Millar. A good time was had by all. Thanks very much to all those who participated, whether in person, or by email or note, and especially to Bernie and Betty for hosting the affair. Allen and Wes were very appreciative.

Next up is Adam Morton, who retires in June after seven years in the department as a Canada Research Chair. We expect to be holding a retirement party for Adam as well, and urge all of you to send greetings and reminiscences you have to Anita Theroux (anita.theroux@ualberta.ca), our department administrator. Allen, Wes, and Adam will be much missed in the daily life of the department.

This has been a busy year for conferences and workshops. The department hosted the Canadian Society for Continental Philosophy Annual Congress last October; a SSHRC sponsored workshop, Rethinking the Nonhuman: Asian, Continental and Comparative Perspectives also in October; and the 11th Annual Meeting of The Foucault Circle this March. Much thanks to the organizers and those who helped them. If you wish to be informed of conferences and colloquium talks sponsored by the Department and open to the public, please contact Wendy Minns (wendy.minns@ualberta.ca), our department secretary, to be put on the mailing list.

As part of his Living Archives project on eugenics in western Canada, funded by a $1 million Social Science and Humanities Research Council of Canada (SSHRC) Community University Research Alliance (CURA) grant, as well as by community and university partners, Rob Wilson has hired Moyra Lang to set up its office and organize its activities. An inaugural conference was held last October at the Stanley Milner Library in downtown Edmonton. Readers interested in events and talks connected with this project and open to the general public are welcome to keep in touch through the Living Archives web page at www.eugenicsarchive.ca or by contacting Moyra Lang at Moyra@ualberta.ca.

The Department continues its remarkable record for faculty receiving nationally awarded research grants. Of particular note this past year, in addition to the CURA grant for the Living Archives project, major SSHRC and other national grants were received by Jennifer Welchman, Katalin Bimbo, Chloë Taylor, and Geoffrey Rockwell. In addition, department members continue to receive awards for their teaching. Sam Hillier was awarded the Faculty of Arts Contract Instructor Teaching Award, and Kristin Rodier, Bart Lenart, and Jason Taylor received Graduate Student Teaching Awards.

We hope that you enjoy reading more about our students and colleagues and their activities and achievements. We intend this newsletter for you; please stay in touch and share your news with us. And please visit our web page: www.uofaweb.ualberta.ca/philosophy

Izaak Walton Killam Memorial Postdoctoral Fellowship

The Department has a remarkable record of securing young Killam Fellows over the years: Gillian Russell (Princeton) and Yujin Nagasawa (Australian National University) in 2004; Gabriella Coleman (Chicago) and Ingo Brigandt (Pittsburgh) in 2006; Joanne Faulkner (LaTrobe) in 2007; Robert Nichols (Toronto) and Georg Theiner (Indiana) in 2009, Riin Sirkel (University of Western Ontario) in 2010 and Seth Lazar (Oxford) was offered a Fellowship for 2011. Only 4-8 Fellowships are awarded annually in a university wide competition, and, with only about 2% of the university’s faculty members, our Department’s record in attracting Fellows is a testament to the quality and international reputation of our researchers. Our current Killam Fellow, Riin Sirkel, hails from Estonia. She received her BA (2002) and MA (2005) degrees from the University of Tartu, Estonia, and her doctorate in philosophy from the University of Western Ontario in 2010. Riin’s area of interest is Ancient Philosophy and especially the thought of Aristotle and his school. Her postdoctoral project explores the philosophy of the Ancient Greek Commentators on Aristotle (200-600 AD), which represents the missing link between Ancient and Medieval Philosophy. In particular, she is interested in the role of the Commentators in the development of the problem of universals (i.e. whether and how universals exist). Even though the contribution of the Commentators is not yet generally recognized, they deeply influenced the discussion of this problem in the Middle Ages and in contemporary philosophy.
Department Conference Activity

A SSHRC funded workshop, Rethinking the Nonhuman: Asian, Continental and Comparative Perspectives, October 1-3, 2010, was organized by Chloë Taylor and Neil Dalal. The purpose of this workshop was to build bridges between the Asian and continental traditions in philosophy, specifically with respect to the burgeoning fields of environmental and critical animal studies. The workshop included two distinguished keynotes: Christopher Key Chapple, Navin and Pratima Doshi Professor of Indic and Comparative Theology at Loyola-Marymount University in Los Angeles, and Mick Smith, Associate Professor and Queen's National Scholar of Philosophy and Environmental Studies at Queen's University, Kingston, Ontario. A number of graduate students from the Philosophy department (Sara Kundrik, Taylor Murphy, Jessica Moore, and Kristin Rodier) assisted in making the event a great success, as did the participation as commentators by Cressida Heyes and Marie-Ève Morin. In addition to SSHRC funding, the departments of Philosophy, Religious Studies, and East Asian Studies made generous financial contributions to this event.

The Canadian Society for Continental Philosophy held its annual congress at the University of Alberta, October 14-16, 2010. Local organizer was Marie-Ève Morin in the Department of Philosophy. Keynote speaker was John Protevi from the Department of French Studies at Louisiana State University. Robert Burch and Karyn Ball from University of Alberta were among the invited speakers, and Cressida Heyes and Chloë Taylor took part in a special panel on Foucault's work. Kristin Rodier, PhD student in the Department of Philosophy, presented a paper on Simone de Beauvoir. The congress was sponsored by the Office of the Vice-President Research, the Conference Fund of the Faculty of Arts, the CRC in Cultural Studies and the departments of Philosophy, English and Film Studies, Modern Languages and Cultural Studies, Political Science, and Sociology.

Three members of our Department — Dr. Marie-Ève Morin and PhD candidates Charles Rodger and Hande Tuna — participated in the Rewriting Lyotard conference that took place at the University of Alberta, February 11-13, 2011. The conference brought together an international group of senior and junior scholars whose research engages with various facets of Jean-François Lyotard’s thought. The conference was organized by Prof. Rob Shields, Henry Marshall Tory Research Chair in Sociology/Art and Design and Heidi Bickis, PhD student in the Department of Sociology, and was co-sponsored by the Department of Philosophy.

The 11th Annual Meeting of The Foucault Circle is meeting March 25-27, 2011, Banff, Alberta. This event will mark the first time that the Foucault Circle has met outside the United States, and indicates the emerging international reputation of the University of Alberta for Foucault studies. The meeting has attracted leading Foucault scholars from as far afield as Australia and Europe. Chloë Taylor, Cressida Heyes and Robert Nichols are organizing the event, and it will also feature presentations of current research by Cressida Heyes and philosophy MA student, Megan Dean. The meeting is sponsored by the departments of philosophy and political science, and by Cressida Heyes’ Canada Research Chair in the Philosophy of Gender and Sexuality.

The Publication Support Group (PSG) A forum run by graduate students, for graduate students, that provides opportunities to present and discuss works in progress amongst one’s peers. CONTACT Yasemin Sari (yasemin@ualberta.ca) or Hande Tuna (etuna@ualberta.ca). Upcoming talks listed at: www.uofaweb.ualberta.ca/philosophy/nav02.cfm?nav02=48255&nav01=12331&
PHILOSOPHY FACULTY AWARDS

Current Holders

Ingo Brigandt - SSHRC, Standard Research Grant, “Integrating different biological approaches: a philosophical contribution.”

Phil Corkum - SSHRC, Standard Research Grant, “Aristotle on Ontological Dependence.”


F. Jeffry Pelletier - NSERC, Standard Research Grant, “Theories and Computation.”

Geoffrey Rockwell, Philosophy & HUCO (selection of current awards) -
— SSHRC, Major Collaborative Research Initiative, Co-applicant (with Ray Siemens, principal investigator, University of Victoria), “Implementing New Knowledge Environments (INKE)” $2,484,500 (2009-2016)
— National Centres of Excellence Grant, Network Investigator (grant led by Kellogg S. Booth University of British Columbia), “Graphics, Animation and New Media,” $23.5 million (2009-2014).
— SSRHC (Canada), NEH/NSF (USA), JISC (UK), Canadian Project Director, (with Tim Hitchcock, University of Hertfordshire, UK Director, and Daniel Cohen, George Mason University, USA Director). “Digging Into Data application for ‘Using Zotero and TAPoR on the Old Bailey Proceedings: Data Mining With Criminal Intent’.”

Alexander Rueger - SSHRC, Standard Research Grant, “Kant’s Aesthetic Theory in Context.”

New Awards in 2010

Katalin Bimbo - SSHRC, Standard Research Grant, “Investigations into problems in relevance logics: some extensions and decidability.”


Geoffrey Rockwell, Philosophy & HUCO (selection of new awards) -
— SSHRC, Standard Research Grant, “Just What Do They Do? Studying the Usage of Online Text Analysis Tools.”
— SSRHC Knowledge Synthesis Grant, Co-applicant (with Sean Gouglas, principal investigator, University of Alberta), “Computer Games and Canada’s Digital Economy”

Chloë Taylor - SSHRC, Standard Research Grant, Co-applicant (with Alain Beaulieu, principal investigator, Laurentian University of Sudbury), “Le tournant éthique du dernier Foucault et les usages de sa pensée.”

Jennifer Welchman - SSHRC, Standard Research Grant, “Environmental Stewardship.”

Robert A. Wilson - SSHRC, Community Research Alliance Grant, “Living Archives on Eugenics in Western Canada,” $1,000,000 (2010 - 2015).
Philosophy for Children Alberta

The Philosophy for Children Program is an international program that gives students from Kindergarten to Grade 12 the opportunity to explore the philosophical questions that they are already discussing amongst themselves. This exploration is structured so that it promotes a skill set that is important for both critical thinking and living in communities. Philosophy for Children Alberta (P4CA) was founded in spring 2008, with a threefold mission:

1. Developing students’ critical thinking skills and caring communities within schools via various methods of philosophical inquiry.
2. Promoting the Philosophy for Children Program as an exemplary method of achieving critical thinking skills and caring communities.
3. Developing and supporting extensions and alternatives to the Philosophy for Children program whenever student learning would be enhanced by a non-traditional approach.

The current Director of Philosophy for Children Alberta is Professor Rob Wilson. Sessional Instructor John Simpson is the Program Administrator throughout the year and the Director of EUREKAMP, P4CA’s summer day-camp adaptation of the program. For more information about P4CA and its activities visit our website: www.ualberta.ca/~phil4c

Recent Activities

The profile of P4CA was expanded significantly over the past 12 months through the pursuit and formation of strategic partnerships. Through these partnerships hundreds of teachers were exposed to the program through hands-on workshops at various venues. The most significant of these were:

Philosopher in Residence at Indus School & Leo Nickerson School
Participating teachers received a week of hands on demonstration and practice using the Philosophy for Children approach within their own classrooms.

Ongoing Presence at both major Teacher Conventions (GETCA & NCTCA)
We offered workshops at both conventions this past year, providing training to over 120 teachers.

Edmonton Catholic School Division (ECSD)
We held two separate training events for 250 teachers.

The Alberta Teachers’ Association (ATA) Bookstudy
We provided 9 hours of targeted training, demonstrations, and individual skill building over 6 weeks.

Festival of Ideas for Kids
P4CA was the only Humanities-based group providing programming at this portion of the festival.

Long Term Goals

- 200+ university students exposed to the program annually through courses, CSL placements, summer camp related jobs, and on-campus workshops
- 25 schools actively offering the program in the Edmonton area
- 8 week-long day-camps offered annually
- 3 Philosopher in Residence Programs offered annually
- 1 certificate program offered by the UofAlberta
- 2-3 new courses in the philosophy of education

Achievement Snapshot

- 12+ schools actively using the program
- 500+ teachers actively engaged through workshops
- 2 ongoing school board relationships (public and separate)
- 379 texts and teacher manuals in the hands of teachers
- 120 students exposed to the basic approach through four Philosophy 101 course adaptations, some with CSL.
- 5 weeks of summer camps delivered (EUREKAMP)
REMEmBERING SUE CAMPBELL

Sue died at the age of 54 on Saturday, February 12, at the Victoria General Hospital, surrounded by her family. She had been a member of Dalhousie’s Philosophy Department since 1992. Sue was enrolled in our graduate program some 35 years ago; she was awarded a Master’s Degree, and then went on to the University of Toronto where she completed a PhD degree.

Her academic work first came to my attention when she did a course with me in ancient philosophy. She didn’t make comments in the class-room; her brilliance showed itself in her papers and examinations. In private discussions Sue reached for implications and arguments. In reading the required papers on aspects of Greek philosophy I thought her papers the best in the class—not just in insight and argument but also in style and clarity. The same thing could be said regarding her written work the next year. She eventually decided on a topic for her MA degree drawn from Aristotle’s discussion of Greek tragedy and, in particular, from his account of emotions typical of tragedy—fear and pity and emotion implicit in catharsis.

Sue’s interests diversified and she became interested in theories of emotions in a general way. How, for example, do emotions fit in with theories of the mind? One summer—during that time—I visited her at a family cottage near Pigeon Lake. She had been thinking about Edmond Rostand’s play Cyrano de Bergerac and Cyrano’s love for Roxanne expressed in his speeches—but speeches to be presented in such a way as to appear to be made by Roxanne’s suitor—a handsome fellow who had no rhetorical power at all. It is to be granted that Cyrano expresses his love for Roxanne through another man. Sue’s questions were, first, whether Roxanne was herself in love with Edmond Rostand or, second, whether that love could be mediated. I thought it felt difficult to answer that question without a theory of emotion. Sue agreed, and contributed many ideas towards answering the question.

Sue also agreed that a great amount of philosophy is best dealt with in discussions and dialogues with interested friends; yet she developed that idea much further than I have managed to do. Sue had a very strong aptitude for philosophical and literary dialogue, being a poet herself. It is with profound regret and sorrow to acknowledge the end of her short life.

Sue and I used to meet together with other graduate students; we had a common view—that philosophy is—or can be—a communal matter. Of course, Sue was also a poet. She had has a very successful academic life with honors won on the basis of her written philosophy. She will be deeply missed.

— RICHARD BOSLEY
Thank you to our Donors!

We are sincerely grateful for continued donations to the Department of Philosophy. Such donations help in vital ways to sustain and improve the life of the Department and to support philosophical activities and events that, for want of such support, would have to be foregone.

We would like to thank our 2010-11 donors: Mrs. Elizabeth King-Farlow, Andrew S. Lang, Richard Blaskovits.

How to Donate

If you are interested in donating to the Department of Philosophy, or would simply like more information about donating, please contact:

Anita Theroux, Administrator
Department of Philosophy,
2-40 Assiniboia Hall
780-492-4102
anita.theroux@ualberta.ca

Donations to the Department of Philosophy are tax deductible. Please make cheques payable to the University of Alberta. Alternately, you may donate via Electronic Fund Transfer (bank withdrawal, void cheque) or credit card (Mastercard/VISA/Amex).

The Herman Tennessen Undergraduate Philosophy Essay Contest

The Herman Tennessen Undergraduate Philosophy Essay Contest was established in honour of the late Herman Tennessen, Professor in the Department of Philosophy (1961-1983) by a start-up donation from the late Professor John King-Farlow, and is being now continued by the generosity of his widow, Elizabeth King-Farlow. The Tennessen essay contest is open to any undergraduate registered at a degree granting institution wishing to submit an essay of less than 4000 words on any philosophical topic.

The contest winners for 2010 were:

FIRST PRIZE - Warren Bowen,
University of Alberta, “Expressing Objections to the Expressivist Objection.”

SECOND PRIZE - Trevor Lashyn,
University of Alberta, “The Importance of Potentiality in the Abortion Debate.”

For information on this year’s contest, visit: www.uofaweb.ualberta.ca/philosophy/nav02.cfm?nav02=35512&nav01=12320&

Alumni News

Patrick McGivern (PhD, 2005) is teaching at the University of Wollongong in Australia.
Chris Legock (PhD, 2008) had a two-year post-doctoral fellowship at the University of Toronto, and now works for Athabasca University.
Seyed Mousavian (PhD 2008) has returned to Iran and teaching at the University of Tehran.
Shaheen Islam (PhD, 2009) returned to teaching at the University of Chittagong in Bangladesh.
John Simpson (PhD 2010) is working as the Program Administrator for Philosophy for Children Alberta, and as a Research Assistant for Geofffrey Rockwell on the “Digging Into Data” project.
Ken Boyd (MA, 2007) is currently a PhD student at Queens University, Kingston.
Yual Chiek (MA 2007) is currently a PhD student at Queens University, Kingston.
Victor Kumar (MA 2007) is currently a PhD student at the University of Arizona.
Hector Maclntyre (MA, 2007) is currently a PhD student at the University of Ottawa.
Alan McLuckie (MA, 2007) is currently a PhD student at Stanford University.
David McPike (MA, 2007) is currently a PhD student at the University of Ottawa.
Patrick Gamez (MA, 2008) is currently a PhD student at Notre Dame University.
Laurel Ralston (MA, 2008) is currently President, Kimberley Arts Council, and Director, Kimberley Chamber of Commerce, and Outreach Coordinator for Wildsight, a wildlife and wild spaces protection organization.
Justin Jalea (MA, 2009) is working for the Chumir Foundation in Calgary, and leads an a capella choir, Il Sono.
Brent Vizeau (MA, 2010) is currently a PhD student at the Centre for Theory and Criticism at the University of Western Ontario.
Steven Sych (BA honours, 2010) is currently an MA student at McGill University.

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