



# UNIVERSITY *of* ROCHESTER

## *Department of Philosophy Newsletter Spring 2015, No. 48*

### **From The Chair's Desk**

Many of you will have followed the stories of declining student interest in the humanities these past couple years. And you may wonder: How go the humanities at the University of Rochester?

The answer, as far as philosophy is concerned, is that undergraduate student interest in philosophy is in many respects unchanged over the past decade. Course enrollments are essentially unchanged, though they have exhibited variability. The number of majors is about the same, though the number of students enrolled in ethics minors and clusters is not quite what it was during the Bob Holmes era. The Philosophy Council has meanwhile been one of the most active in the College, by all accounts.

Most indicative of entering freshman attitudes, however, is the experience Bill FitzPatrick and I have had working the fall advising fair before the start of classes. I have represented our department at these events over the past 25 years, and I cannot remember such lines of students as stretch before us now, or a time when it was as necessary for there to be two of us. Working the fall advising fair alone in 1993, I found time to edit a submission for the Central APAs during the lulls in student traffic, while in recent years the two of us have barely found time to sandwich some lunch between conversations. We encounter incoming freshmen who already know they want to major or minor in philosophy, many who want to do a cluster at least, and many more who are curious about philosophy and want to give it a try. Many who have no such antecedent interest find themselves in the ethics course required for their Public Health major and end up with a philosophy major.

Incoming freshmen are as likely to ask about philosophy of physics as legal studies, and our curriculum has been recalibrated accordingly over the past decade. Before Alyssa Ney's arrival in July 2005, the Department rarely offered courses in philosophy of science, let alone such recent offerings as Philosophy of Physics, co-taught PHL/BIO offerings of Darwin and Religion, or Alison Peterman's co-taught PHL/BCS offering of Theory of Perception. Before Richard Dees' arrival in 2003 the department did not even regularly staff Ethical Decisions in Medicine, let alone Neuroethics, Public Health Ethics, or the co-taught PHL/BIO Ethics and Science of Stem Cells.

In this academic year coming to a close, Alyssa hosted another very successful Humanities Project conference on the interface of metaphysics and philosophy of physics, I hosted a Humanities Project workshop on the history and philosophy of education, for the author pairs writing on topics in educational policy for my book series with the University of Chicago Press, and I was also fortunate to be granted a University Research Award for 2014-15 to pursue a collaborative investigation of the nature and conditions of moral motivation with psychologists Richard Ryan and Laura Wray-Lake. In recent weeks, the University has also announced the creation of new centers for humanities and bioethics.

I can't speak for all of the humanities, but philosophy is alive and well at the University of Rochester.

Speaking of Alyssa Ney, we are still recovering from the shocking news of her impending departure to UC Davis. She has done much to make the University of Rochester a better place to pursue philosophy through the decade in which she has flourished here. We will miss her and we

wish her well. Many of you will already know that Alyssa's departure follows that of our colleague, Brad Weslake, in July 2014. We have been fortunate to have David Glick as a visiting Assistant Professor here this year, filling in for Brad.

We are delighted to have Hayley Clatterbuck joining us as a new Assistant Professor in July. Hayley is a University of Wisconsin educated philosopher of biology and cognitive science, with expertise in formal epistemology and a passion for pond hockey. What were the odds of Henry Kyburg's successor in the uncertain inference arena also play ice hockey? A search to replace Alyssa and address other needs is underway, and we hope to have further news on this in the coming weeks.

Finally, congratulations are in order for our colleagues Bill FitzPatrick and Alison Peterman. Alison has been named the James P. Wilmot Assistant Professor for Humanities for 2015-2017. Bill has been named the Gideon Webster Burbank Professor of Moral and Intellectual Philosophy, and awarded the Edward Peck Curtis Award for Excellence in Undergraduate Teaching. They both follow a succession of distinguished predecessors in these titles, and we are very happy for this well-deserved recognition of their excellent work and the contributions of philosophy to the advancement of learning.

Randall Curren

## **2016 Colin and Ailsa Turbayne International Berkeley Essay Competition**

The late Professor and Mrs. Colin Turbayne established a biennial International Berkeley Essay Prize competition in conjunction with the Philosophy Department at the University of Rochester.

The next deadline for submitting papers is November 1, 2016. The winner will be announced March 1, 2017 and will receive a prize of \$2,000. Copies of the winning essays will be sent to the George Berkeley Library Study Center located in Berkeley's home in Whitehall, Newport, RI. Submissions should be sent to: Chair, Department of Philosophy, University of Rochester, PO Box 270078, Lattimore Hall 532, Rochester, NY 14627-0078 or [phladmin@philosophy.rochester.edu](mailto:phladmin@philosophy.rochester.edu). Please see our website for details regarding essay specifications.

**The 2014 winner was "The 'Empty Amusement' of Willing: Berkeley on Agent Causation," by Nancy E. Kendrick, William and Elsie Prentice Professor of Philosophy at Wheaton College, Norton, Massachusetts.**

## **2014-15 Events**

### **COLLOQUIA SERIES**

Wayne Myrvold (Western University)

"What Happened to Phlogiston? Reconsidering the Chemical Revolution"

Nicholas Sturgeon (Cornell)

"Hume on Reason and Passion"

Hasok Chang (Cambridge University)

"A Case for Pluralism in Science"

Esa Diaz-Leon (University of Manitoba)

"Phenomenal Concepts: The Recognitional Account Revisited"

David Glick (University of Rochester)

"Why Physics Doesn't Care Which is Which"

Diana Raffman (University of Toronto)

"What Borderline Cases Cannot Be"



***“Dedicated to the Truth,  
the Half-Truth  
and the Occasional  
Bald-Faced Lie”***

## FACULTY NEWS

### Earl Conee

As usual, I engaged in a typical pattern of teaching, research, and service, culminating in a newsletter entry, although this time, for the first time, it is this one.

### Randall Curren

It is beginning to seem that in this newsletter each May I mostly report what I did in June. June of 2014 was a long time ago now, but it still very pleasantly springs to mind as I contemplate the past year. It featured a memorial lecture in Birmingham, England during a four week residency, lodged in the Gandhi suite at the Cadbury family mansion – a mansion that is now a Quaker Learning Centre and B&B. A few days later I gave lectures at the Plato Centre and (by all appearances distinct) CAVE Research Centre, at Trinity College, Dublin, where I was lodged in posh college rooms and enjoyed the best introduction to Ireland I could have imagined. January was not bad either, with a lecture in Oxford and conference keynote in Bangalore.

### Richard Dees

My days are occupied by many activities that don't sound very philosophical, if only because they seem much too practical. I have been helping develop two new programs that will be operational this fall: an Environmental Health major as part of the Program in Public Health-Related majors which I chair, and a

Master's in Medical Humanities and Bioethics at the Medical Center. I have also become a member of the

Empire State Stem Cell Board, which oversees the state program that funds important research in stem cell and regenerative medicine and I serve as an ethics consultant on a board exploring newborn screening for Duchenne Muscular Dystrophy. All this on top of my regular teaching in the department, and my role as an ethics consultant for various transplant committees and in clinical ethics for the hospital. My research involves work on the ethics of newborn screening and issues in transplant ethics as well as a long-running project about harming the dead.

### William FitzPatrick

It has been a very eventful year for me. Over the summer, I learned that my essay, “Skepticism about Naturalizing Normativity: In Defense of Ethical Non-Naturalism” (which I had given at a Pacific APA symposium a few months before) had won the *Res Philosophica* essay prize (in a contest on the topic of Moral Non-Naturalism). This helps to secure my position as a “Stark Raving Ethical Realist,” but I've been called worse. In January, I had the great honor of being made the Gideon Webster Burbank Professor of Intellectual and Moral Philosophy, a title previously held by Henry Kyburg, Jr., and before him by Lewis White Beck, all dating back to a donation by a 19<sup>th</sup> century flour magnate. And this spring, my first Ph.D. student, Kate Phillips, completed her dissertation and gave a very memorable defense. Much of the spring was also occupied chairing the search committee for the new Dean of the School of Arts and Sciences, which led to the appointment of Gloria Culver (Biology). I continue to serve as an associate editor for *Ethics* and to serve the department as undergraduate adviser, along with the usual teaching and graduate advising.

### Alison Peterman

This year was a fun one in writing and teaching. I worked for a long time on a paper about Spinoza on skepticism, and thinking through epistemology made me feel like a proper member of the Rochester philosophy department. I had a long paper on Spinoza's views about extension and space accepted to *Philosopher's Imprint*. In the fall, I very much enjoyed teaching a new course on the philosophy of perception, which I co-taught with a colleague in cognitive science and from which I also learned a lot. And in the spring I taught a graduate class on British Empiricism. Along with some

conference travel, it was a busy semester, and I am looking forward to having some quiet time to work in the summer and on leave in the fall.

### **Brett Sherman**

I glanced back over my shoulder, to see if it was still there. Through the interwoven shadows, I could make out only a vague semblance of structure. As I began to gather my belongings, I noticed in the outer depths of my peripheral vision an emerging gleam of movement. My pulse quickening, I calmly headed north seeking to evade notice. But I could hear it following, gradually accelerating. I abandoned my possessions and broke out into a full sprint hoping to generate enough distance to mislead. Cutting to the left, I fell suddenly onto the crumpled asphalt, sliding underneath a rusted portcullis. And then I saw that it was there, right in front of me. And it was in that moment, lost in the interface between fear and uncertainty, that I first entertained the thought that there might be an interesting connection between questions and possibilities, about which I wrote a paper this year. Also, I co-edited a collection of papers on metasemantics.

### **Edward Wierenga**

I'm on leave for 2014-15, finally ending an 11-year streak as chair of Religion and Classics. We spent much of the fall in Italy, where I worked on an introduction to philosophy of religion and studied Italian cuisine.

## **GRADUATE NEWS**

### **Job Placement**

**Matthew Frise** accepted a two-year postdoctoral research fellowship at Baylor University

### **2014 Heidi M. Payne Outstanding 1<sup>st</sup> Year Essay winner**

**Kolja Keller**  
“Moderate Internalism Defended From The New Evil Demon Problem”

### **2014 Outstanding Essay winner**

**Matthew Frise**  
“Eliminating the Problem of Stored Beliefs”

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### **Ph.D. Graduate Admissions 2015/16**

Kelley Annesley (Muhlenberg College)  
Yanssel Garcia (Florida International University)  
Craig Knepley (University of Wisconsin-Milwaukee)  
Don Vispi (University of Scranton)

### **M.A. Degrees Awarded 2014-15**

James Elliott  
Robinson Phillips

### **Ph.D. Degrees Awarded 2014-15**

**Matthew Frise**  
“The Epistemology of Memory: Evidentialism Meets Cognitive Psychology”  
(Earl Conee, advisor)

**Kathryn Phillips**  
“Towards an Empirically Adequate Virtue Ethics”  
(William Fitzpatrick, advisor)

**Jason Rogers**  
“On the Epistemic Relevance of Perceptual Experience: A Defense of Experientialist Internalism”  
(Earl Conee, advisor)

### **Matthew Baddorf**

In this, my 5th year in the graduate program, I taught writing, wrote dissertatingly, and experimented with neologisms that are unlikely to catch on. Next year I will do more or less the same thing under the Writing Program's funding.

### **Matthew Frise**

I completed the Ph.D. program this year. I've accepted a two-year postdoctoral research fellowship at Baylor University. I'll be part of the Nature and Value of Faith project team, co-directed by Jon Kvanvig, Dan Howard-Snyder, and Trent Dougherty. I'll miss Rochester and our fantastic department (and, you guessed it, the snowy winters), but I'm thrilled about my new job. I've had a terrific time as a visiting dissertation fellow at Saint

Louis University this year. It's been filled with exciting seminars, conferences, and workshops. I'm afraid I have to leave Saint Louis before I'll have convinced the locals of evidentialism. I wrote the Internet Encyclopedia of Philosophy entry on the Epistemology of Memory (the topic of my dissertation), and presented research at the Midsouth Philosophy Conference and at Saint Louis University.

### **Jannai Shields**

I've now finished three years of graduate school here at Rochester. This year was a good one. I gave my first two conference presentations, one on the problem of evil, the other on functions in biology, and had a great time in both cases. If all goes as planned, I'll be finished with coursework by the time this letter is published. I'm very excited to move to the dissertation phase of the program!

## **GRADUATE ALUMNI NEWS**

### **Charles Caldwell (PhD 1972)**

The big news for Pellissippi State Community College was President Obama's visit and speech. The big news for me was Hackett's publication of my Hornbook Ethics (ISBN 978-1-62466-372-7), a hundred pages that covers the rudiments of ethical theory and the critical thinking skills requisite for analysis and evaluation of ethical problems. I highly recommend the book!

In the upcoming year, I will serve another term as Secretary of the Tennessee Philosophical Association (TPAWeb.org) and continue to grow our philosophy program. This fall, we will be offering 48 sections of philosophy courses taught by four full-time faculty (all PhDs) and 13 active adjuncts (10 of whom have earned PhDs). Our ability to hire such highly qualified persons to teach at roughly \$2000 for a three-hour course tells me that the job market for philosophers is still brutal.

### **Willis ("Will") Heusser (MA 1999)**

Completing a book on film and philosophy on a one year sabbatical/paternity leave this year. Otherwise, more details next newsletter. I have had tenure since 2006 at Cypress College in Orange County, California (was TT in 2002).

Best wishes,  
Will

### **Loretta M. Kopelman (PhD 1966)**

Hello everyone:

Arthur and I continue to enjoy family, friends, travel and the Washington DC area. It is a exciting place for those of us interested in bioethics. This past year I gave a talk at John Hopkins School of Medicine and talks at Georgetown University, where I continue to do some ethics teaching at the Medical School. I participated in two "concept panels" at the FDA. A concept panel does not make decisions about particular studies but offers guidance on policy. For example in one of these panels we needed to recommend how to regard the risk level of procedural sedation for children and thus whether or when studies using procedural sedation can be approved for studies which do not hold out direct benefit to the children who are subjects. I also serve on the FDA as a consultant to the Pediatric Ethics Subcommittee of the Pediatric Advisory Committee. At NIH, I continue to be on the Ethics Advisory Panel of the Adolescent Medicine Trials Network for HIV/AIDS Interventions. I also continue to serve on the Ethics Committee of Inova Fairfax Hospital and on many editorial boards. In addition, I continue to value my association with the Tahirih Justice Center, which offers legal services to those suffering human rights abuses and women and girls trying to escape violence and oppression, including human trafficking, domestic violence, rape, and forced marriage.

I hope this letter finds you to be flourishing.  
With my best wishes

### **James Leshner (PhD 1967)**

Jim Leshner reports that he is nearing the end of his eighth year of teaching at UNC-Chapel Hill. When added to his 40 years at Maryland and his three years serving as a graduate assistant at the U of R, this amounts to 51 years in the classroom, which may be quite enough. He is scheduled to teach courses next year in ancient Greek philosophy and in Philosophy and

Literature, but once these are done, he will concentrate on improving his backhand in tennis, not to mention his lousy forehand. He is still in the midst of a book on Heraclitus' legacy for modern poetry with chapters on Heraclitean ideas in the poems of T. S. Eliot and the novels of Virginia Woolf still to go.

### **Ronald P. Loui (PhD 1988)**

I am an Assistant Professor in Computer Science at UI Springfield. I wrote two articles for the Philosophy Department, published in the APA Newsletter on Philosophy and Computers.

"Scientific and Legal Theory Formation in an Era of Machine Learning: Remembering Background Rules, Coherence, and Cogency in Induction," and

"Paths to Defeasibility: Reply to Schauer on Hart"

I also had IEEE Computer accept the paper "How to Survive a Cyber Pearl Harbor".

### **Jonathan Matheson (PhD 2010)**

This has been an exciting and eventful year. This year I received tenure and was promoted to Associate Professor at the University of North Florida. Another highlight was returning to UR's beautiful campus to participate in the graduate epistemology conference. Other events and highlights are detailed on Facebook.

### **Jeffrie Murphy (PhD 1966)**

My essay "Kant on Three Defenses in the Law of Homicide" appeared in *Reason, Value, and Respect—Kantian Themes in the Philosophy of Thomas Hill, Jr.* edited by Robert Johnson and Mark Timmons (Oxford University Press, 2015). My essay "Last Words on Retribution" will appear in the *Handbook of*

*Criminal Justice Ethics*, edited by Jonathan Jacobs (Routledge, 2015 or 2016) and my essay "Humility as a Moral Virtue" will appear in *Handbook of Humility*, edited by Everett Worthington (Routledge, 2016). I have resisted the suggestion from many friends and colleagues that I should entitle my humility essay "Humility—An Outsider's View."

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### **Randall Curren**

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### **Matthew Frise (PhD 2015)**

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### **Loretta M. Kopelman (PhD 1966)**

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### **James Lesher (PhD 1967)**

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‘Borges’ Love Affair with Heraclitus’ (forthcoming in *Philosophy and Literature*).

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### **Ronald P. Loui (PhD 1988)**

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“Paths to Defeasibility: Reply to Schauer on Hart”

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## **Mark Sagoff**

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## **Brett Sherman**

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