

From the Chair

Issue 3 / Spring 2013



Dear Friends of the University of Memphis Philosophy Department,

There have been many exciting new developments in the Philosophy department since our last newsletter. To name just a few: We have made four new faculty hires over the past two years! Despite the economic downturn, our administration has supported our efforts to build our program. They know a good investment when they see it. Dr. Somogy Varga and Dr. Luvell Anderson have joined us as Assistant Professors in the fall of 2012. Dr. Melissa Ebbers joined us as a full-time instructor and coordinator of our online BA program in the fall as well. We have also very recently recruited Dr. Verena Erlenbusch as an assistant professor, and she will join us in the fall of 2013. These hires have allowed us to reinforce our strengths in social and political philosophy. Dr. Varga's research in critical theory, Dr. Anderson's research on racial slurs, and Dr.

Erlenbusch's research on terrorism and sovereignty will provide our students with cutting edge work in social and political philosophy. Please be sure to read about them in our new faculty spotlight.

In addition to faculty recruitment, our graduate and undergraduate programs continue to flourish. With over 75 majors and an active philosophy club, our undergrads are taking the campus by storm. Their undergraduate conference received over 50 submissions this year and was a huge success. Our graduate students are giving talks at national and international conferences and remain competitive despite a difficult job market.

As you will see in this newsletter, our faculty, students, and alumni are doing amazing things. I am extremely proud to have served as its Chair for the past five years.

Welcome New Faculty

In the fall of 2012, we welcomed assistant professors Dr. Luvell Anderson and Dr. Somogy Varga to the philosophy department, along with Dr. Melissa Ebbers as an instructor and online B.A. coordinator (see more about the online program and Dr. Ebbers on page 10).



Luvell Anderson

Luvell Anderson received his B.A. in philosophy from the University of Missouri in St. Louis and completed his PhD in philosophy at Rutgers University. Before coming to Memphis, he was an Alain Locke Postdoctoral Fellow at Pennsylvania State University. He specializes in the philosophy of language and philosophy of race and has published various articles on racial slurs, including in the *New York Times*. His work concentrates on the semantics and ethics of racial language and racist humor. Luvell also has interests in social and political philosophy and the philosophy of mind.

Somogy Varga completed his PhD at Goethe Universität, Frankfurt am Main. He has worked at the Institute of Social Research in Frankfurt and has conducted postdoctoral research at the Institute of Cognitive Science at the University of Osnabrück. He was also a visiting researcher at the Centre for

Subjectivity Research at the University of Copenhagen. His primary areas of research are philosophy of psychiatry/mind, moral psychology, social philosophy, and critical theory. His book *Authenticity as an Ethical Ideal* was published in 2011.



Somogy Varga

Visiting Scholars

In 2011, the department welcomed Ondřej Švec and in 2012, Anne Gléonec, in concert with the Erasmus Mundus Master EuroPhilosophie Program, which provides graduate students and faculty of the participating universities to travel as visiting scholars.

Ondřej Švec is the Director of Interdisciplinary Center (Language-Mind-Society) at Hradec Králové (Czech Republic) and Assistant Professor at the Department of Philosophy and Social Science, Faculty of Arts, University of Hradec Králové. He is the editor of Jan Patočka's complete works. His philosophical interests are in the history and philosophy of science, philosophy of social science, and historical epistemology. He co-taught a course on Patočka and Merleau-Ponty with visiting professor Bryan Smyth in spring 2011.

Anne Gléonec is a Doctor and Professor *agrégée* of Philosophy. After teaching for five years in France, she continued to pursue professional activities at the Faculty of Humanities of Charles University, Prague, where she has taught and conducted research since 2009, while serving as the leading francophone professor for the Erasmus Mundus EuroPhilosophie program. Her philosophical interests focus on phenomenology and phenomenological thinking, following two primary axes: phenomenology of the body and its critical relation to the sciences via the work of Merleau-Ponty, and

phenomenology of the political. She taught a graduate course entitled "A Path into Merleau-Ponty's Work: The Notion of Institution, or from the Phenomenology of Perception to the Phenomenology of Action" in fall 2012.

In addition to the Erasmus Mundus program, the department continues to welcome visiting professors to teach and share their research:

Ayca Boyle was a visiting professor from 2011-2012 after having completed her PhD in Philosophy at the University of Virginia earlier in 2011. She was selected as a Junior Fellow of the Society of Fellows at the University of Virginia in 2006. She also received the Excellence for Scholarship in the Humanities & Social Sciences Award in 2011. Her dissertation, "Morality as Understanding Human Being," defended the view that excellence in ethical cognition lies in moral understanding rather than moral knowledge. She taught a seminar on virtue epistemology in fall 2011.

Dale Matthew joined the department as a visiting assistant professor and diversity post-doctoral fellow in fall 2012. He works mainly in political philosophy and the philosophy of race. He defended his dissertation, "Racial Discrimination and the Site of Distributive Justice," in July 2012 at York University in Toronto, Canada.

Spindel Conference

The 30th annual Spindel Conference, held September 29-October 1, 2011 under the direction of **Dr. Kas Saghafi**, was entitled "Derrida and the Theologico-Political: From Sovereignty to the Death Penalty." The conference drew on Derrida's later seminars on "sovereignty" (published in 2008 and 2010) with particular emphasis on the "death penalty seminars." The keynote addresses were given by Peggy Kamuf (University of South Carolina) and Geoffrey Bennington (Emory University). Other sessions featured the work of Michael Naas (DePaul University), Kelly Oliver (Vanderbilt University), Thomas Dutoit (Université Lille 3), and Elizabeth Rottenburg (DePaul University).

The 31st annual Spindel Conference entitled "Freudian Futures" took place October 4-6, 2012 under the direction of **Dr. Pleshette DeArmitt**. The conference welcomed speakers working at the intersection of psychoanalysis, philosophy, comparative literature, political theory, religion, and science, addressing the

continued relevance of Freud's thought. The conference featured keynote speakers Elissa Marder (Emory University) and Philippe Van Haute (Radboud Universiteit Nijmegen). There were also papers delivered by Gil Anidjar (Columbia University), Adrian Johnston (University of New Mexico), Tracy McNulty (Cornell University), Paul Moyaert (Katholiek Universiteit Leuven), and a special session entitled "Sovereign Cruelty of Psychoanalysis" that featured Martin McQuillan and Simon Morgan Wortham (both from Kingston University London).



Professor Gil Anidjar (Columbia University) responds to questions after his presentation as commentator Emily Zakin (Miami University of Ohio) takes note at the 2012 Spindel.

The upcoming 32nd annual Spindel Conference is set to take place on September 26-28, 2013. The conference director is **Dr. Stephan Blatti**, and the theme is "The Lives of Human Animals."

The problem of personal identity is one of the most bewitching puzzles in all of philosophy. Until very recently, most philosophers subscribed to the view first advocated by John Locke (1632-1704). Locke held that our

Professor James Retires



The Spring of 2011 saw the retirement of **Dr. Gene James**. James earned his B.A. in philosophy from Wake Forest University in 1959 and followed this up with a Ph.D. from the University of North Carolina in 1969. James joined the philosophy department in 1964. He served as chair of the department from 1973 to 1978 and from 1980 to 1981. And was designated Professor Emeritus in January 2013.

During his tenure at The University of Memphis, he served as managing editor of *The Southern Journal of Philosophy* from 1972 to 1986 and assistant editor from 1987 to 2008. He served as editor of *Dialogue & Alliance*, book review editor of *The National Forum*, and on the executive council for the Southern Society for Philosophy and Psychology.

In addition, he is a past president of the American Society for Value Inquiry and a past recipient of the University of Memphis Distinguished Teaching Award. He, along with Dr. Nancy Simco, coauthored *Elementary Logic* (Wadsworth), and he is editor of the anthology, *The Search for Faith and Justice in the Twentieth Century* (Paragon). He has published numerous articles over his career, most recently in applied ethics, value theory, and philosophy of religion.

James was instrumental in starting the graduate program in philosophy at The University of Memphis. As a teacher, Dr. James taught every

fundamental nature is given by our status as self-conscious, rational agents ("persons") and that the conditions under which we persist through time and change are thus to be accounted for in terms of psychological continuity. The main topic of the Spindel Conference will be the anti-Lockean view that has recently gained support amongst philosophers. According to the view known as "animalism," our fundamental nature is given not by our psychological capacities, but by our biological constitution: we are primates (*Homo sapiens*), and like all organisms, we persist just in case we continue living.

The overarching aim of the conference is to provide a forum in which metaphysicians and philosophers of mind working on animalism are brought together with those who are presently engaged in pertinent debates in other areas of philosophy -- including philosophy of biology, metaphysics, ethics, philosophical psychology, and philosophy of religion. So, besides animalism in its own right, among the topics to be explored are the nature of organic life, the metaphysics and ethics of death, issues in animal cognition, the possibility of the afterlife, and animal interests.

philosophy course on the books at some point during his years here, including the ever-popular Philosophy and Film and Human and the Divine.

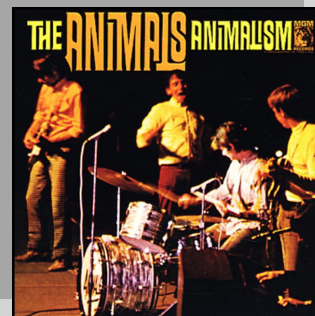
Dr. Tom Nenon had this to say of his colleague since 1985:

"Gene James was a mainstay of the department for over four decades. If there were ever a life-long learner (long before the phrase was coined), Gene is it. His scholarship came out of a genuine curiosity and intellectual commitment that he conveyed effectively to the students in his classes, where he genuinely challenged his students to think critically and independently. His students and his colleagues could not help noting his wit, his commitment to philosophy, and his passion for life."

"He is one of those rare professors who truly does make a difference in the lives of his students, as I know he has had a significant impact on mine."
- Donna Roland

Dr. Donna Roland, who took courses from James in 2005 and 2006, going on to complete her PhD in I/O Psychology in 2010, had this to say of Dr. James:

"Dr. Gene James was one of my very favorite professors in all of my college and graduate school years. His coursework profoundly impacted my life and continues to do so to this day. Aside from his academic contributions, though, he was one of the most genuine and respectable professors I had the privilege of working with. He took an active interest in my life outside of school and became both a mentor and friend. He is one of those rare professors who truly does make a difference in the lives of his students, as I know he has had a significant impact on mine. The philosophy department will certainly be missing something from here on out, but he can rest assured that his many years in that department have made a positive and life-enriching difference to all of the students who had the sense to pay attention and take his teachings to heart. I wish him all the best in his retirement."



The finalized schedule and list of participants will be available on the philosophy department website. At press time, the confirmed speakers include John Dupré (University of Exeter), Paul Snowden (University College London), Eric Olson (University of Sheffield), Steven Luper (Trinity University), Colin Allen (Indiana University), Hud Hudson (Western Washington University), Lori Gruen (Wesleyan University), Robert Lurz (City University of New York – Brooklyn College), and David Shoemaker (Tulane University).

Faculty Spotlight

After wrapping up the 2010 Spindel conference and publication, which focused on empathy's import for contemporary ethics, **Dr. Remy Debes** turned his attention to the history of ethics. He completed two book chapters, one for an Oxford University Press anthology *Reading Hume's on The Principles of Morals*, entitled "Hume on Personal Merit," and another for the *Routledge Companion to Eighteenth Century Philosophy*, entitled "Moral Rationalism and Realism." In the spring of 2012, his article "Adam Smith on Dignity and Equality," appeared in *British Journal for the History of Philosophy*, as well as a Spanish language translation of one of his earlier articles on Hume in *Cuadernos filosóficos* ("Philosophical Notebooks"). Also in spring his article "Recasting Scottish Sentimentalism" appeared in the *Journal for Scottish Philosophy*, and his entry "Moral Sentiments" appeared in the massive *International Encyclopedia of Ethics*. At present he is writing an invited essay for an Oxford University Press volume on the history of the concept of "Sympathy" and an invited essay for a Princeton University Press guidebook to the philosophy of Adam Smith.

In 2013, Dr. Debes intends to turn his attention back to contemporary ethics, and, in particular, the concept of human dignity. He has been invited to edit a volume in the Oxford Philosophical Concepts series on "Dignity" and is busy planning a conference based on that anthology. This coming summer he will also break ground on a book length manuscript devoted to a defense of his hypothesis that persons have dignity in virtue of their affective or passionate personalities.

Besides these publishing efforts, Dr. Debes has been busy presenting his work, including giving one of two keynote presentations at the South Central Seminar in Early Modern Philosophy in the fall of 2011 and the keynote presentation to the Graduate Conference in the Philosophy Department at Texas Tech in spring 2012. In other conference related work, Dr. Debes co-directed a conference on "Scottish Reactions to Mandeville" held at Princeton, March 2013 and a fully funded Liberty Fund conference on "Liberty, Nature, and the Question of Human Dignity" to be held in La Jolla, April 2013. Other recent highlights include being named (in fall 2011) the sole recipient of the Dean's Award for Excellence in Advising for his previous three and a half years of service as Undergraduate Advisor, and election to the Board of the International Adam Smith Society.

Faculty Research

Our faculty has numerous notable publications on the books. **Dr. Shaun Gallagher**'s book *Phenomenology* (Palgrave-Macmillan) was released in 2012. **Dr. Tom Nenon** co-edited a volume on *Husserl's Ideen* for the Contributions to Phenomenology series (Springer) in cooperation with the Center for Advanced Research in Phenomenology. **Dr. Pleshette DeArmitt**'s book *The Right to Narcissism: A Case for an Impossible Self-Love* is forthcoming in 2013 with Fordham University Press. **Dr. John Tienison** is currently writing a book with Terry Horgan and George Graham entitled *Phenomenal Intentionality* (Oxford University Press).

Dr. Stephan Blatti has published "A New Argument for Animalism" in *Analysis* and a reply to this paper by Carl Gillett will appear in *Analysis* in 2013. He has also published "Death's Distinctive Harm" in *American Philosophical Quarterly* and "Material Constitution," in *The Continuum Companion to Metaphysics*, ed. R. Barnard and N. Manson.

Dr. Bill Lawson received a Fulbright Scholar Award for 2011-2012. Dr. Lawson was selected for his project entitled "John Locke, Forced Labor, and the Two Treatises of Government," which concerns Locke's writings on forced labor and colonization, as well as the social and cultural history of 16th century Britain. In addition, Dr. Lawson conducted a master class at University College Cork

(Ireland) on articulations of race and racism in policy and cultural contexts. This workshop was held on March 7-8, 2012.



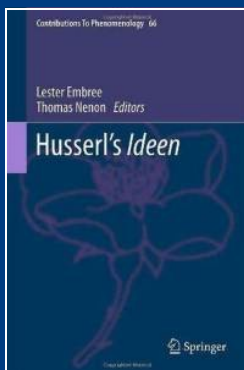
Dr. Mary Beth Mader has published "Modern Living and Vital Race: Foucault and the Science of Life" in a 2011 issue of *Foucault Studies*.

Dr. Hoke Robinson's article "Empirical Intuitions, Schemata, and Concepts in Kant's Critical Epistemology" will be published in the forthcoming *Proceedings of the 11th International Kant Congress*, which took place in Pisa in 2010.

Dr. Tim Roche is currently working on a book defending a unique interpretation of Aristotle's conception of *eudaimonia* (happiness) in his *Nicomachean Ethics*.

Dr. Kas Saghafi has had numerous articles published in 2011 and 2012, including "Thomas the Marvelous: Resurrection and Living-Death in Blanchot and Nancy" in *Mosaic*, and "Incurable Haunting: Saluting Michel Deguy" in *Oxford Literary Review*.

Dr. Deb Tollefsen has also published numerous articles in 2011 and 2012, including "Groups as Rational Sources" in a volume entitled *Collective Epistemology* (Ontos Verlag, 2011), "Naturalizing Joint Action: A Process-Based Approach" co-authored with Rick Dale in *Philosophical Psychology*.



Faculty Research



Dr. Shaun Gallagher receiving the Anneliese Maier Research Award in Heidelberg

Dr. Shaun Gallagher was one of seven researchers in humanities and social sciences awarded the Anneliese Maier Research Award by the Alexander von Humboldt Foundation at a ceremony at the University of Heidelberg in September 2012. The award of €250,000 will be used to support research collaborations between the University

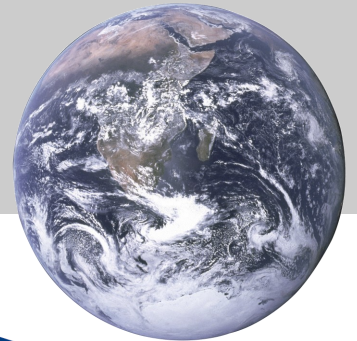
of Memphis and the Ruhr University, Bochum, in Germany.

With support from this award, Dr. Gallagher and the philosophy department sponsored an international and interdisciplinary workshop on “Schizophrenia: Levels of interpretation—Subpersonal, Personal, and Interpersonal” that took place on October 25-26, 2012 in downtown Memphis. The aim of this workshop was to examine the different levels of explanation of schizophrenia—person-level, phenomenological descriptions; subpersonal, neurological, and cognitive descriptions; or “super-personal” social accounts—asking which offered the best account of schizophrenic symptoms.

Gallagher Leads Investigation into Space Flight

Dr. Shaun Gallagher is also the Principle Investigator on a Templeton Foundation grant entitled “Space, Science and Spirituality.” This two-year \$300,000 grant supports phenomenological and empirical research on experiences reported by astronauts during space flight, often in aesthetic, spiritual, or religious terms. This interdisciplinary research team is comprised of philosophers, psychologists, neuroscientists, simulation engineers, and art historians at the University of Central Florida and the Humboldt University in Berlin, as well as three philosophy graduate students – **Benjamin Aguda**, **Chris Lucibella**, and **Lucas Olsen** – from The University of Memphis. The research involves conducting experiments in a simulated environment, measuring, and analyzing the test subjects’ experiences using physiological, neurophysiological, and phenomenological methods.

Test subjects are interviewed right after going through a visual, audio, and atmospheric simulation that mimics viewing earth from space. They are interviewed with phenomenological interview techniques—using words supplied by the subject, talking about the experience as if it was happening in the now, and getting a description of an invocative state as opposed to a re-examining of the experience. The aim is to get different dimensions of their experience, including their bodily experience, what they were thinking about during the experience, and what those thoughts were like.



Graduate Program

Our graduate students continue to be recognized for their excellence in teaching. **Matthew Lexow** was chosen by a university-wide committee as one of two recipients of the Graduate Assistant Meritorious Teaching Award for the 2010-11 academic school year, and **Michael Burroughs** was a recipient of the same award in 2011-12.

In 2012, **Alice Everly** attended the Third Annual International Summer School in German Philosophy in Bonn, Germany. **Marygrace Hemme** presented a paper at the first annual Kristeva Circle Conference entitled, “Feminine Genius and the Importance of Re-narrating Lives.” **Paul Hammond** presented a paper titled “Saying the Same Thing to Someone Else: A Lyotardian Account of Translation” to the philoSophia conference at Miami University of Ohio in April 2012. He also attended the International Summer School in Political Philosophy in Istanbul, Turkey in July, and presented a paper titled “Hegel’s Theory of Social Groups.” **Justin Sledge** spoke at the Memphis International Solidarity Committee’s “Cairo to Memphis” event on the topic of “Class Struggle and Prospects of the Egyptian Evolution” and was asked to march with several others at the head of the Civil Rights March sponsored by the historical AFSCME local 1733.

Our graduates continue to enjoy placement success. **Timothy Golden** (PhD, 2011) started in fall 2011 as an Associate Professor of philosophy at West Chester University. **Tina Fernades Botts** (PhD, 2011) began in fall 2011 as an Assistant Professor at The University of North Carolina at Charlotte. **Michael Burroughs** (PhD, 2012) is currently a Visiting Professor and Parr Center Outreach Fellow at The University of North Carolina, Chapel Hill. **Arsalan Memon** (PhD, 2012) has a visiting position at Lewis University for 2012-13. **Tamara Haywood** (PhD, 2011) and **Cheri Carr** (PhD, 2012) have remained closer to home, continuing to teach philosophy at Memphis.



PhD Student Paul Hammond instructing his Values and the Modern World class.

Philosophy Graduate Student Conference

The graduate students continue to host an annual **Philosophy Graduate Student Conference**. The 8th annual conference on the theme of “Feminism and Liberalism” was held on February 10-11, 2012 with keynote speaker Lisa Schwartzman (Michigan State University). Papers explored many aspects of the influence of feminist liberal theory on the liberal political framework, as well as critiques of the liberal model from a feminist perspective. The organizers of this conference were led by graduate student **Paul Hammond**.

The 9th annual conference, led by graduate student **Justin Sledge**, will be in April 2013, on the theme of Philosophy of Labor. The motivation behind this topic stems from the impact of the so-called “Great Recession,” which has created a space for the reconsideration of economic and political concerns which tend to be obscured in times characterized by perceived wide-spread prosperity. One of these concerns is a renewed interest in



and the politicization of labor. This was a key issue in the 2012 presidential election; it was at the heart of the “Arab Spring” uprisings; it was central to controversial legislation and protests in Wisconsin in 2011; and it was one of the fundamental talking points of those involved in the Occupy Movement. Philosophy, too, has something to offer in this international conversation.

This conference is more than a sharing of papers. In addition to graduate student papers, the aim is to emphasize the practical character of bringing philosophy to the streets. The conference is being sponsored by local labor unions, including Teamsters Local 984, United Campus Workers Local 3865, and Workers Interfaith Network. It will include a philosopher-activist round table and a visit to the **National Civil Rights Museum** downtown. The keynote speaker will be Jason Read (University of Southern Maine), who has published on Marxism, revolution, and neoliberalism.

Graduate Student Spotlight



Corey Barnes is a second year doctoral student in the Philosophy Department. Barnes received a B.A. in Religious and Philosophical Studies from Fisk University in 2006. From there he attended Union Theological Seminary in New York, receiving a Masters of Arts in 2009. He then attended Howard University, completing a

M.A. in philosophy in 2011.

When Barnes attended Fisk, it was initially to study Computer Science and Music Performance, as Barnes is an accomplished pianist. His mother taught piano, and Barnes even wrote music for his graduation from seminary. Barnes’ interests have always oscillated between religion and philosophy. Among his influences are Hegel’s Philosophy of Religion and the works of Paul Tillich. At seminary, Barnes studied systematic theology with an emphasis on American transcendentalism as a way to keep studying philosophy. He returned to academic philosophy after, “I realized that I couldn’t systematize morality or study it in a broad view while looking just at Christian ethics.”

One of the things that drew Barnes to the philosophy department at Memphis was its tradition in pluralism and a strong history of producing African-American philosophers. His research interests are primarily in

moral philosophy, as well as African-American philosophy and ancient philosophy (particularly Aristotelian Ethics) insofar as they are subsumed under moral philosophy. Although only in his second year, he intends to combine these interests in a dissertation project, possibly by looking at a specific problem that arises in the African-American experience and finding an Aristotelian answer. Although his philosophical background is primarily analytic, he has found since coming to Memphis that being able to work on both sides of the fence and consider continental approaches to problems has been helpful.

In the fall of 2012, Barnes was able to travel to University College at Cork (Ireland) and be a guest lecturer in two classes. In the first, he presented on Martha Nussbaum and Alain Locke on the notion of “the cosmopolitan,” and the second was on morality in the work of Frederick Douglass. As a part of the same trip, he also visited University College of Dublin and did a workshop on race and racism. All the participants in the workshop were Irish students, and they were receptive and eager to ask questions on the subject. Barnes reflects that although Nussbaum was a known figure, the students were unfamiliar with Alain Locke and Douglass. One of the specific topics that came up was the work on feminism Frederick Douglass did after visiting Ireland.

Barnes’ goal after finishing his PhD is to go into academic philosophy. He has an interest in teaching applied ethics, as well as ethics more broadly construed and African-American philosophy.

Alumni Spotlight

David Gougelet graduated from Memphis in 2007. He wrote his dissertation on Michel Foucault's concepts of biopower and biopolitics as they pertain to the questions of race and population. After graduating from Memphis, he taught at American University in Washington D.C., for three years, and then moved on to Simpson College where he has been teaching for the past two years.

In general, his research continues to focus on Foucault, and he has published on the concepts of race and medicalization in Foucault's work. Coming soon is a co-authored piece titled "Genealogies of Race and Gender," that will be included in *A Companion to Foucault* (Blackwell). Of his time in Memphis, Gougelet says that the emphasis on giving graduates a foundation in the history of philosophy, as well as on giving a pluralistic education, has helped him adapt to different departments. And beyond the academic realm: "I think it's a testament to Memphis's departmental culture that I continue to be quite close to the people I went to grad school with. There is an unmistakable connection between those of us who either taught or studied at Memphis, and I'm always glad to reconnect with Memphis people at conferences, where we stand out as a tight-knit group."



David Gougelet



Michelle Bliss

Undergraduate Alumni Spotlight

We caught up with **Michelle Bliss** who earned a BA in English Literature from The University of Memphis in May 2005, and then completed her philosophy degree in May 2006.

What have you been doing since graduating?

I attended The University of Memphis Cecil C. Humphreys Law School, obtaining my J.D. in May 2009. That fall I began volunteering with the Political Science Department's Mock Trial Team as the outside coach. In Spring 2010, I began teaching as an adjunct instructor in the POLS department. I currently am a full time Instructor and the Departmental Advisor for the Political Science Department. I also serve as the Public Policy Chair for the Tennessee Equality Project and am active in local, state, and federal campaigns.

How has your philosophy degree benefited you?

My philosophy degree has given me useful critical reading and analytic skills. My ethics classes come in handy in my political work, as does my logic class. Having a fundamental knowledge of logical fallacies is very useful when constructing policy positions and arguments. I can honestly say, though, I have never used a truth table in real life, at least not yet.

Are you using anything you learned in your current in line of work?

I teach Intro to Ancient and Modern Political Thought. Although we look at political philosophy a bit differently in my department, my foundation of knowledge is based in what I learned in the philosophy department. I teach everything from Plato's *Republic* to Marx. I admit I enjoy torturing freshmen with my lecture on the Theory of the Forms.

Undergraduate Program

The undergraduate program has had a successful past two years, with **Dr. Hoke Robinson** returning as Director of Undergraduate Advising and **Dr. Somogy Varga** taking over as advisor to The Undergraduate Philosophy Circle.

Like our graduate students, our undergraduate majors are also quite accomplished. In 2012, **Mallie Dennis** received the Carroll R. Bowman Scholarship, which is awarded every year based on academic potential. **Kevin Newton** received the 2011-12 Outstanding Student in Philosophy award, which is granted to a graduating senior in philosophy for academic achievement and departmental service.

The Undergraduate Philosophy Circle continues to be a strong presence in the halls of Clement. It is a registered student organization run by philosophy majors, but welcome to any undergraduates with an interest in philosophy. For the 2012-13 academic year, "The Circle" is led by President **Chris O'Neill**, Vice President **Mallie**

Dennis, and Sergeant-at-Arms **Nick Tominello**. They hold regular meetings and social events throughout the school year that involve lively debates about contemporary ethical and philosophical issues, bringing to life the important tradition of philosophical dialogue. They continue to advertise the department with an information table on "Discover You Major" day. This year they have also started providing tutoring to students in philosophy classes in need of extra help.



The philosophy circle once again held its annual **Midsouth Undergraduate Philosophy Conference** on February 16, 2013 in conjunction with the Midsouth Philosophy Conference. This year the conference was held at Rhodes College in Memphis. They received 50 undergraduate paper submissions from across the country and the UK, choosing 16 papers to be presented for the event.

Undergraduate Spotlight

Mallie Dennis is a senior set to graduate in December 2013 as a double major in Philosophy and French. Originally from Memphis, as a home-schooled student, she was able to set her own curriculum, and she was always interested in the history of ideas.

After starting at The University of Memphis, she was an undecided major for a long time. The rest of her family is in the medical field, but she was always more interested in writing than math or science. Her first philosophy course was an introductory course with Dr. Remy Debes, and becoming a philosophy major was a gradual process as her interest increased.

Before this department I never felt like I belonged anywhere. The teachers know who I am. I'm not just another face.

—Mallie Dennis

One of the things she likes best about the philosophy department is the pluralism. Since declaring her major as philosophy, she has taken a course every semester with Dr. Debes. One of her favorites was a course on egoism that involved reading the works of Adam Smith and Mandeville. This has led to her doing research with Debes on Mandeville and human dignity. Her knowledge of French has helped her in this

endeavor, as Mandeville was influenced by French writers, some of whose work has not been translated into English. After taking her first continental philosophy course on Kristeva with Dr. Pleshette DeArmitt, her appreciation for both sides of the philosophical spectrum has grown, and she feels more competent as a scholar.

For a long time her plan was to go to law school, but she has been encouraged by the faculty here to pursue a PhD in philosophy. Dennis is a member of the French Honor Society, the vice president of The Undergraduate Philosophy Circle, and in 2012, she was the recipient of the Carol Bowman Award, given by the philosophy department every year to an outstanding undergraduate.



Of her time spent in the philosophy department at Memphis, she states that, “As a female in the department, I have felt really included, and teachers have made sure that the environment has been amenable and not intimidating.” And also, “I feel so fortunate that I’ve gotten to do philosophy at Memphis. I had no idea there was such a strong department when I started here; before this department I never felt like I belonged anywhere. The teachers know who I am, and I’m not just another face.”

Philosophical Horizons



Undergraduate philosophy student Harrison Chapman reads to children at the Campus School.

For the fall of 2012, Philosophical Horizons continued its outreach and development. Working with Westside Middle School, The University of Memphis Campus School, and the Lipman School, our three graduate and three undergraduate volunteers were able to discuss a variety of questions and, more importantly, develop their philosophical instincts. In the future, the plan is expansion. By working with contacts at MCS and the new Achievement School District, Philosophical Horizons will have a presence in more schools in the spring of 2013 and beyond.

ing philosophical discussion, including group work, dramatic skits, and examples from international politics. However, our most effective prompt—by far—was popular music.

The students were interested in questions surrounding beauty, they asked: How come some people who you find unattractive at first become beautiful once you get to know them or vice versa? Does beauty change? Are there different kinds of beauty?

To facilitate the conversation, Lucas and I brought in two songs: “That Way” by Wale (feat. Jeremih and Rick Ross) and “Make Me Proud” by Drake (feat. Nicki Minaj). The songs presented different perspectives regarding what makes someone beautiful. Drake complimented character attributes like intelligence, Nicki Minaj endorsed material wealth, and Wale focused on physical attributes. This prompted the students to engage in a rich discussion, in which they drew on their own experiences to reflect on and challenge common conceptions of beauty. The music’s significance in the students’ lives seemed to give our philosophical considerations a relevant context in which to frame the discussion, and being able to access meaningful everyday experience provided a source for us to draw on throughout the remainder of the semester. Now anytime my car radio is tuned to something other than WEVL or public radio, it’s because I’m doing “research” on Hot 107!

Graduate student **Sarah Marshall** shares this anecdote from her work with Philosophical Horizons in the spring of 2012:

“Lucas Olsen and I worked at Sheffield High School with a 10th grade English class. Early on, we found it difficult to engage the students through the use of traditional texts. Consequently, we tried different strategies for prompt-

Erasmus Mundus Spotlight

The Erasmus Mundus program continues to bring in students from Europe to study for a semester in the philosophy department. In the Spring of 2012, **Michael Stadler** was one of our visiting students and was happy to share with us his experience with the Erasmus Mundus program:

“My name is Michael Stadler, I am 26 years old, and I am from southern Germany. After high school, I went to the Netherlands to do my undergraduate study in both Cultural Studies and Philosophy. I lived there for four years before joining the Erasmus Mundus program.

The Erasmus Mundus program consists of two years. While you as a student can choose the university where you want to study during the second year, the universities where you study for the first and second semester of the first year are chosen for you by the organization of the master. Memphis was the second semester of the first year for me. It was chosen according to the philosophical interests I listed in my application.

The first semester of the first year I was in Luxembourg, which now is no longer part of the program. For the second year of the master I chose Prague, where I am right now. Prague fit the best with my philosophical interests for the last year.

I am interested in traditional and contemporary metaphysics, ontology, and aesthetics, including the philosophy of literature and culture. My master's thesis will be about the German philosopher Heinrich Rombach (1923-2004). In his work, he combines some very original ideas of ontology, phenomenology, hermetics (as opposed to hermeneutics), and picture theory to a very well elaborated and unique whole. I will try to interpret some of his ideas in the framework of the Kantian schematism and the

so-called ‘image schemata’ developed by Mark Johnson and George Lakoff.

As my philosophical interests are very broad, they fit very well with the three classes I had in Memphis: Hegel's *Philosophy of Right*, French philosophy of the 20th century, and modal logic. In the end, I think that under the right conception everything in philosophy is combinable, and the stronger your theory is and the more open your mind, the more everything makes sense in its plurality. Even modal logic.



Michael visiting Graceland

From the first moments of my arrival in Memphis until the very last seconds, the so-called southern hospitality was omnipresent. There were so many truly helpful and generous people (fellow students, teachers, people from the international office, good-humored and curious workers in the all-you-can-eat restaurants on campus, random people on the street) all the time, that I never felt lost, but always integrated. This was a very good experience. Furthermore, I liked the campus and the free sport facilities, not to mention the BBQ and the music down on Beale Street. (I only wish that there would be more public transport in Memphis [editor: Don't we all!], because as a foreign student normally you don't have a car.)

I just wanted to cordially thank all the members of the department of philosophy at the UofM, who in one way or the other contributed to the wonderful time I had in the United States. I am glad that Memphis is part of the Erasmus Mundus program and I hope that they will be until the end, so that many more students from Europe can benefit from the US-American educational and social experience.”

Ida B. Wells Conference



The Ida B. Wells conference continues its tradition at The University of Memphis. The 6th Annual conference was organized by graduate students **Corey Barnes** and **William Allen** along with **Dr. Luvelt Anderson**. It was held November 16-17, 2012 and featured guest speakers Charles Mills (Northwestern University), author of *The Racial Contract* (Cornell University Press, 1997) and, more recently, *Contract and Domination* (with Carol Pateman, Polity Press, 2007), who presented “White Time: The Chronic Injustice of Ideal Theory,” and Vanessa Wills (St. Joseph's University) who presented “Human Nature, Human Rights,

and the Struggle for Human Liberation.”

Two Memphis graduate students presented their work at the 2012 conference with **William Allen** presenting “A State of War: The Life of Disadvantaged Communities in The Wire” and **Jordan Liz** presenting “The Role of the Body in Double Consciousness.” The conference continues to be a forum for visiting undergraduate students to not only present their work, but to engage in discussion about African-American philosophy to which the philosophy department at Memphis remains dedicated.

The year 2012 marked the 150th birthday of Ida B. Wells, the namesake of the conference. The conference continues to be a celebration of the legacy of Wells, who, for more than 40 years was an anti-lynching crusader, women's rights activist, a journalist and teacher who spoke out against racial issues, and a civil rights pioneer who was one of the founders of the NAACP.

Online B.A.

The face of education is changing in our ever-increasing technological world, and the philosophy department is changing with it! In the fall of 2010, the philosophy department began offering undergraduate courses online; this is still expanding and is even closer to offering a B.A. in philosophy that can be completed entirely online (or in combination with on-campus courses) with a concentration in applied ethics. In addition to courses in Elementary Logic, Biomedical Ethics, and Contemporary Moral Problems, the program now includes Introductory Philosophy, Introductory Ethics, Environmental Ethics, African-American Philosophy, and Philosophy of Food. The program focuses on ethical theory and ethical problem-solving in the context of a number of professional domains including medicine, law, and business. Although the concentration is on ethics, the program also provides core courses to establish a foundation in the history of philosophy and logic, with history of ancient philosophy, history of modern philosophy, and philosophy of law courses in development.

The University of Memphis has a growing number of online programs, all accredited through the Southern Association of Colleges and Schools. This enables students to not only take their philosophy classes online, but their general education credits as well. Degrees and transcripts are identical in substance and appearance to those earned by on-campus students with the convenience of flexibility and portability.

The department has hired **Dr. Melissa Ebberts** as online coordinator for this program. She received her B.A. in Philosophy and B.S. in Psychology at The Ohio State University, her M.A. in Philosophy from Western Michigan University, and her PhD in philosophy from University of Maryland. Her primary research interests include philosophy of language, philosophy of mind, and philosophy of food (including food ethics). Contact her for more information via the form found at http://memphis.edu/ecampus/undergrad/ba_philosophy.php

Lambuth Campus Expansion



The University of Memphis has expanded to the Lambuth Campus location in Jackson, TN, and the philosophy department was fortunate enough to expand there too, with the hiring of **Dr. Lucien Manning Garrett**. The Lambuth Campus is a branch campus that was once Lambuth University, which ceased operations in June 2011. The University of Memphis, along with the city of Jackson, Madison County, West Tennessee Healthcare, and the Jackson Energy Authority worked together to open the school as a branch campus in the fall of 2011.

Dr. Garrett had been a professor at Lambuth University at the time of its closing. In the fall of 2012, he offered courses in ethics and the philosophy of religion.

Softball Champs

In the spring of 2012, the English Department issued a challenge to the Philosophy Department in the form of an interdepartmental softball game. Held at a neutral location, our philosophy department went on to an overwhelming victory of 19 runs to 6, thus demonstrating Plato's assertion in *The Republic* that both *musike* and *gymnastike* are "established chiefly for the sake of the soul" (410c).



Back row (L to R): Corey Barnes, Lucas Olsen, Alfonso Giscombe, Nick Drozd, Michael Burroughs, Barrett Schwarz, Shaun Gallagher, Tom Nenon, Dan Larkin, Stephan Blatti, Remy Debes. Front row (L to R): Deb Tollefsen, Cheri Carr, Sarah Marshall

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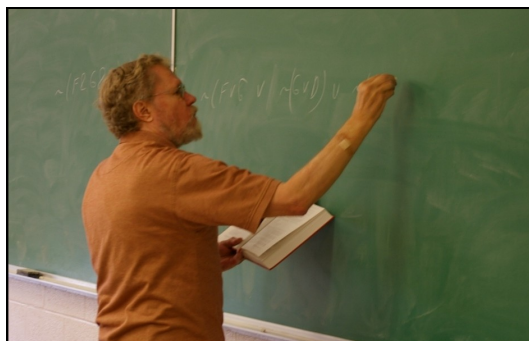


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Faculty List

Luvell Anderson, Assistant Professor, philosophy of language, philosophy of race, semantics

Stephan Blatti, Assistant Professor & Editor of *The Southern Journal of Philosophy*, metaphysics, philosophy of mind

Pleshette DeArmitt, Assistant Professor, feminist theory, psychoanalysis, contemporary continental philosophy

Remy Debes, Associate Professor, ethics, moral psychology, philosophy of emotion, Scottish Enlightenment, Hume, Adam Smith

Shaun Gallagher, Professor & Moss Chair of Excellence, phenomenology, philosophy of mind, philosophical psychology

Bill Lawson, Distinguished Professor & Graduate Admissions Director, African-American philosophy, social and political philosophy

Mary Beth Mader, Associate Professor, 20th century continental philosophy, feminist theory, continental philosophy and the life sciences, ontology

Thomas Nenon, Professor & Vice Provost, Husserl, Heidegger, Kant and German idealism, hermeneutics, philosophy of the social sciences

Hoke Robinson, Professor & Director of Undergraduate Studies, Kant, rationalism, history of modern philosophy

Timothy Roche, Associate Professor, Greek philosophy, history of moral philosophy, ethical theory

Kas Saghafi, Associate Professor & Director of Graduate Studies, contemporary continental philosophy, aesthetics, philosophy and literature

John Tienson, Professor, philosophy of mind, metaphysics, philosophy of language, British empiricists

Deborah Tollefsen, Professor & Department Chair, philosophy of mind, epistemology, social ontology

Somogy Varga, Assistant Professor, philosophy of psychiatry/mind, moral psychology, social philosophy

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