



UNIVERSITY of ROCHESTER

Department of Philosophy Newsletter *Spring 2012, No. 45*

Top New Stories of 2011-12

Staring into the Abyss, US Economy Takes a Bold Step Forward

With the US economy mired in recession and public sector employment prostrate, first quarter private sector hiring surged in the UR Department of Philosophy.

“We didn’t expect to make two tenure-track hires this year,” the Department Chair noted, “let alone those and an additional two-year visiting appointment.”

The Department is very pleased to welcome Alison Peterman (Ph.D. in Philosophy, Northwestern, 2012; M.S. in Physics, U. of Maryland, 2012), Brett Sherman (Ph.D., Princeton, 2008), and Noell Birondo (Ph.D., Notre Dame, 2004).

Peterman, who specializes in Early Modern Philosophy and the History of Philosophy of Science., is replacing the retiring Ralf Meerbote [see below]. Sherman, an epistemologist and philosopher of language, is returning to Rochester from a visiting position at Brandeis, replacing Mike Caie, who will join his wife, Jessica Gelber, at Syracuse U. Birondo, a

specialist in ethics and moral theory with strong secondary interest Ancient Greek Philosophy, will join the Department as a two-year visitor.

Meerbote Retires For the First Time

Professor Ralf Meerbote is retiring after a thirty-two year career at UR. Born in Merseburg, Germany, he earned a B.S. in mathematics from the U of Chicago in 1964, and M.A. and Ph.D. degrees in philosophy in 1967 and 1970 from Harvard. He joined the UR faculty in 1979 when Lewis White Beck retired, and has sustained UR’s program in the history of modern philosophy through the intervening years. He will remain in residence teaching one course per year for the next three years.

Gandhi Reading Room Doubles as Anthony Appiah’s Office

UR hosted its inaugural Distinguished Visiting Professor of Humanities, Anthony Appiah, for three intense days in February. He met with the Philosophy

Council and with reading groups led by Curren, Dees, and FitzPatrick, gave two massively attended public lectures, and took afternoon tea in the Gandhi Reading Room.

Awesome Gifts

Terry Parsons, having taken his degree at UR in physics, credits Colin Turbayne for teaching him how to do philosophy. Having made an enviable career of it, he made a very large gift to UR Philosophy in December. Thank you, Terry!

Peg Brand has meanwhile made UR a gift of Myles’s extensive philosophical library. We are very grateful to Peg for this marvelous collection, which will be integrated into the Department library and Rush Rhees collections.

In Memoriam

We note with sadness the passing of Dr. Shrinivas Bokil, a devoted Ph.D. alumnus, December 12, 2011, in Pune, India.

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

2012 Colin and Ailsa Turbayne International Berkeley Essay Competition

The late Professor and Mrs. Colin Turbayne established an 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, 2012. The winner will be announced March 1, 2013 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 pbladmin@philosophy.rochester.edu. Please see our website for details regarding essay specifications.

COLLUQUIA 2011-2012 **Speakers**

Derrick Darby
(University of Kansas)

Hud Hudson
(Western Washington University)

Gordon Belot
(University of Michigan)

Derk Pereboom
(Cornell University)

Earl Conee
(University of Rochester)

Sarah McGrath
(Princeton University)

Donald Ainslie
(University of Toronto)

James Lennox
(University of Pittsburgh)

FACULTY NEWS

Earl Conee

In this past academic year, I engaged in a typical combination of philosophical writing, teaching, and service, culminating in the composition of this newsletter item. I hereby supply some variation to the report, for the sake of those who have seen similar newsletter reports from me in years gone by. Having supplied similar variations to some previous reports, I add this as well. On further reflection, that sort of variation too may be getting predictable and tiresome. It's time to introduce this genuine novelty.

Randall Curren

This past year I have been on a mission to free up the time to complete some accumulated writing projects. I'm concluding nine

consecutive years as department chair and a decade of journal editing, and I'm happy to report that I'll have a break from both. As much as I love Rochester, I'm also looking forward to a change of scene, which I'll have as a member in residence at the Institute for Advanced Study in Princeton for the 2012-13 academic year.

One of the best aspects of the past year was collaborating on a paper on human flourishing with UR psychologists, Rich Ryan and Ed Deci, and giving related talks at the German Congress of Philosophy in Munich in September, and at Teachers College, Columbia in March. I also presented at conferences in Pittsburgh in March and Seattle in April, and participated in invitational conferences at Harvard and Northwestern in October.

Richard Dees

This year, we will graduate the first students in the new bioethics major, and the major is still small, but growing slowly, while the courses we offer in bioethics continue to be a large draw, both for public health majors and for students electing to take the ethics cluster. The course I team-taught last fall on the science and ethics of stem cells proved a great success: the course offers non-science majors the intellectual tools to think about major scientific advances from scientific, ethical, and public policy perspectives. We will offer it again next fall, and we hope it can then become a regular part of the curriculum.

I currently have several projects in the works: one on the ethical conflicts that arise in the new newborn screening mandates, one on disclosure issues in organ transplants, and one on thinking about the ways we can harm the dead and the implications such a view has for bioethical issues.

I now serve as the chair of the University's Interdisciplinary Cluster on Health and Human Values, which coordinates events in medical ethics and medical humanities throughout the university. I continue to work with the ethics committee and the ethics consult service at Strong Memorial Hospital and with both the

kidney and the liver transplant teams, and I continue to serve on the Stem Cell Research Advisory Committee for the State of Connecticut.

William FitzPatrick

This year I took over as undergraduate adviser, which has been a great way to get to know our students better and to learn how remarkably clever they can be at devising ways to try to get around cluster requirements. I've been working a lot recently on defending ethical realism against evolutionary debunking arguments, presenting work along these lines at Princeton, Cornell, and a special symposium session at the Eastern APA this year. I've also been working more on the Doctrine of Double Effect, with two new pieces forthcoming on it (developing a version that avoids Scanlon's recent objections), and have extended my earlier critique of Korsgaard's work to her most recent neo-Kantian Constitutivism. This spring I also served as an external reviewer for Binghamton University's philosophy department and programs, which was very interesting and educational.

Edward Wierenga

In October I filmed 6 hours of interviews for the public television program *Closer to Truth*. Check local listing for riveting discussion of omnipotence and other divine attributes. In the spring I got a lot of mileage out of a paper on "The Ontological Argument and Objects of Thought," presenting versions of it at a Central APA symposium in honor of Gareth B. Matthews, at the Center for Philosophic Exchange at SUNY Brockport, and at SUNY Potsdam. At Brockport I also gave a talk on the Stone Paradox.

GRADUATE NEWS

Matthew Baddorf

I presented three papers, all in the last month and a half: one on metaethics at the West Chester University Graduate philosophy conference, one on philosophical theology at Houghton College, and one on Aquinas' theory of human freedom at the regional meeting of the American Catholic Philosophical Association. Other than that, I've started TA work and continued to enjoy my studies, especially in free will and ethics. I took a metaethics class at Cornell with Nick Sturgeon, and with two seminars on the topic I am starting to feel somewhat less confused. I look forward to next semester, when Bill Fitzpatrick will clear up all my remaining metaethical questions. I've also enjoyed a research credit with Ed Wierenga on Aquinas, which has taught me that medieval philosophy isn't as foreboding as I had feared—at least when it's translated.

Matthew Frise

This year I began organizing the 7th Biennial Rochester Graduate Epistemology Conference, which will take place this Fall. Michael Huemer has agreed to be our keynote speaker, and Trent Dougherty our secondary speaker. Also, I became the Graduate Student Representative to the faculty. In the Fall I passed my primary exam (in epistemology), and in the Spring (I hope!) I passed my secondary exam (in philosophy of mind). I presented papers at conferences at the University of Oxford and at the University of Texas, Austin. It's been a good second year!

Kevin McCain

As Frank Sinatra said, "It was a very good year". This academic year I defended my dissertation, for which I received commendation in the Outstanding Dissertation Award competition for the humanities and humanistic social sciences. I

am very grateful to the faculty for nominating me for this honor.

In addition to completing the requirements for my PhD this year, I also published a few articles on skepticism (against, of course!). Also, I had the good fortune to participate in fantastic seminars and reading courses this year just like the previous four years. I am privileged and honored to have been part of such great department these past five years. Since this concludes my time as a graduate student at the University of Rochester, I feel like some "thanks" are in order. Thanks to Earl and Rich for being extraordinary advisers. Thanks to all of the members of my dissertation committee (Earl, Rich, Brad, Ed, and Jonathan) for their help with the project. Thanks to the entire faculty for superb instruction and support throughout my time as a graduate student. Thanks to my fellow graduate students for putting up with me in classes and for being great friends. Thanks to the world's greatest administrative assistant, Amy, for help with items too numerous to list. It was a very good (five) year(s).

William Rowley

I have an article accepted at *Episteme*. Its title is "Evidence of Evidence and Testimonial Reductionism."

Ph.D. Graduate Admissions Fall 2012

John Komdat (University of Iowa)
Jarod Sickler (Biola University)
Jannai Shields (Texas A&M University)

M.A.'s Awarded 2011-12

Sommer Hodson
Henrik Lemos
William Rowley
Curtis Sharp

Ph.D.'s Awarded 2011-12

Rodmon King

“Semantics and Mental Representation in Aristotle's *Peri Hermeneias*”

(Professor Deborah Modrak, Advisor)

Kevin McCain

“Inference to the Best Explanation and the External World: A Defense of the Explanationist Response to Skepticism”

(Professor Earl Conee and Richard Feldman, Co-Advisors)

Allen Plug

“Epistemic Justification and Truth-Conduciveness”

(Professor Richard Feldman, Advisor)

Andrew Wake

“Material Objects and Regions”

(Professors David Braun, University of Buffalo and former UR Philosophy faculty member and Alyssa Ney, Co-Advisors)



UNDERGRADUATE ALUMNI NEWS

Jay McCrensky (BA 1970)

I am in my second term teaching Judaism in the Department of Philosophy and Religious Studies at St. Mary's College of Maryland, the public honors college of the University of Maryland System. My dissertation for my PhD completed just over a year ago, "The Concept of Receiving in Contemporary Kabbalah," is a contrast of the Kabbalah Centre and Jewish Renewal schools of contemporary Kabbalah. Numerous papers are in the works on the *Zohar* and the concept of receiving in early Kabbalah.

I love teaching college and have two books in publication: a scholarly book based on my dissertation and a contemporary Kabbalah book titled *Receiving Holiness: Understanding Judaism through Kabbalah*.

I believe Kabbalah study should be an integral part of the philosophy curriculum and would love to discuss this with anyone interested. Shoot me an email to jmccrensky@aol.com.

GRADUATE ALUMNI NEWS

Andrei Buckareff (PhD 2005)

Along with some other folks, I helped start the Society for Philosophy of Agency, a group devoted to the philosophical study of action and agency. We held our first group session at the Pacific Division Meeting of the APA in Seattle in April. The event was a success. We are expanding to the Central Division next year and are planning a conference for summer of 2013. Anyone interested in joining can send an email to philosophyofagency@gmail.com. Membership is free.

Otherwise, I presented a paper on agent-causation at the Conference for Responsibility,

Agency, and Persons II at the University of San Francisco in September 2011 and also in the main program of the Pacific APA. I also gave comments on a paper by Baron Reed at the 2012 SOFIA conference on Epistemic Agency in Huatulco, Oaxaca, México and I read a paper on divine action for a colloquium in the Department of Philosophy at William Patterson University in New Jersey.

Charles E. Cardwell (PhD 1972)

Pellissippi State added two new faculty in philosophy this year. This doubled our full-time people to four and that makes it feel like a department. We can now do things like having regular klatches.

I ventured into political philosophy with a paper ("Preserving Equality") at the 43rd annual meetings of the Tennessee Philosophy Association. I am now in my seventh year as Secretary of that organization. I also published a "pedagogical" piece, THE POSITION PAPER (NISOD Innovation Abstracts XXXIV #9).

I'm looking forward to teaching intro to ethics in Paris this summer under the auspices of the Tennessee Consortium for International Studies. Oh, and I am being promoted to full professor... only 30 years later than my plan, but not too bad considering that I spent 25 years out of academia.

Eileen Daly (MA 2000)

As the UR Philosophy Subject Librarian, I've once again had a wonderful year working with the best department on campus. After finishing my studies in the early twenty-naughts as a permanent ABD, I attended Syracuse University and earned an MLIS (Masters of Library and Information Science), and was hired by UR as a cataloger in 2005. In 2006, Shirley Ricker ceded her Philosophy Liaison duties to me because UR acquired nearly all of the Colgate Rochester Crozier Divinity School library, and she was also the Theology librarian (and swamped).

Since then, I've been working with faculty, students and writing classes, and enjoying every minute of it. Part of my duties include working

with the head of our Collection Development department (think spreadsheets and budgets), but also investigating the latest tech trends and purchasing books for our Popular Reading collection, so I have truly become a "jack of all trades and master of none."

Loretta M. Kopelman (PhD 1966)

Hello everyone:

Georgetown University continues to be a good academic home for me. I enjoy being a faculty affiliate with its Kennedy Institute of Ethics and teach in its intensive Bioethics Course. I especially like teaching in the first and second year required ethics courses at Georgetown University School of Medicine. I will always have ties to the School of Medicine at East Carolina University, where I am Professor Emeritus.

There are many challenges for me in serving as a Member of the Ethics Advisory Panel of the Adolescent Medicine Trials Network for HIV/AIDS Interventions at NIH and with being a Consultant to the Pediatric Ethics Subcommittee of the Pediatric Advisory Committee of the FDA; it is a committee which reviews and advises on controversial research proposals involving children. I am also an active member of the Joint Colloquium held by Bioethics Center at NIH and the philosophy departments of George Washington and Georgetown University. I still serve on many editorial boards and on the Ethics Committee of Inova Fairfax Hospital.

Arthur and I are well and enjoying family, friends, travel and the DC area. I am also part of an active group of painters. Best wishes.

Richard Legum (PhD 1981)

After a brief 28-year hiatus from academia, I returned to professing Philosophy last September. My one term appointment as an Assistant Professor at Kingsborough Community College has been extended through the end fall semester of 2012. (I am thankful

that enough of my former professors were alive for me to be able to produce the required number of letters of recommendation, I certainly wish more of them were around. While I do not know what it is like to be a bat, I know what it is like to be Rip van Winkle).

It was challenging teaching courses from scratch (All of my notes from teaching and my education have been decaying in various landfills throughout the US). But, as the song says, I got by with a little help from my friends. Special thanks to my former professors Bob Holmes, Ed Wierenga, and Rich Feldman and to my former fellow graduate students Michael Losonsky and Ken Ferguson for their bootstrapping assistance. Also, special thank to Al Gore for inventing the internet that helped me reconnect with my past.

I have been teaching Ethics, Logic, History of Modern Philosophy, and History of Ancient Philosophy. The teaching load is heavy for academia (five courses per semester). I am having a very enjoyable and rewarding experience, even though teaching at a community college is rather different than teaching at a four year institution. This summer, I am hoping to have some time to spend on publications. So far, I have discovered that I can still teach and grade. The question of whether I can still publish is an open question.

James Lesher (PhD 1967)

Apart from working on my tennis backhand and tending my roses (which in North Carolina bloom prolifically from April through December), I have spent most of my free time working on a book on the influence of Heraclitus on modern British and American poetry. In connection with this project I presented a paper on 'Three Poetic Uses of Heraclitus' River Simile: MacNeice, Collier, and Pacheco' at the Ancient Philosophy Workshop held at University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill (in November, 2011). I also participated in an Author-Meets-Critics Panel on John Palmer's Parmenides and Presocratic Philosophy at the Eastern Division APA Meetings (December, 2011).

I continue to teach at UNC-Chapel Hill with my main appointment in the Department of Philosophy and an Adjunct appointment in Classics. Partly in memory of Lewis White Beck I offered a course this past semester entitled 'Continental Philosophy from Kant to Sartre, Beauvoir, and Camus'. As Churchill is supposed to have replied when asked how he enjoyed his trip to Bombay: 'I am delighted to have done this, since I now know that I will never need to do it again.'

Todd R. Long (PhD 2004)

This past year my paper, "Mentalist Evidentialism Vindicated (and a Super-Blooper Epistemic Design Problem for Proper Function Justification)" was published in *Philosophical Studies*. I also returned to work on the conditions for moral responsibility, presenting three papers: "Epistemic Conditions for Moral Responsibility and Information Manipulation" (at The Bowling Green Workshop in Applied Ethics: Manipulation), "Information Manipulation and Moral Responsibility" (at University of Nevada, Las Vegas), and "Moral Responsibility, Information Manipulation, and Divine Justice" (at Society of Christian Philosophers 2012 Mountain-Pacific meeting in Santa Barbara, CA).

Ronald P. Loui (PhD 1987)

Have been working at Cypcorp in Austin, where PhD's in philosophy (of logic) tell java programmers what to do. Serious ontological engineering here. In August, will rejoin academia at U Illinois Springfield at bottom of totem pole (untenued).

It is the rare CS dept that is in a liberal arts college.

Raymond Martin (PhD 1968)

My first full year of retirement! It's been sweet. Winters are spent in Florida, summers in Nova Scotia. So far as philosophy is concerned, in May I gave a talk at Union College and in January participated in a day long symposium at Georgetown University. Otherwise I wrote a few

articles and a few book reviews. I aspire to write some fiction but, not counting my philosophy articles, have yet to complete anything.

Gary Merrill (PhD 1974)

This past year was punctuated by several significant family medical episodes, though somewhat oddly my own health has only improved. Everything has turned out well (even, one might argue, miraculously well), but it was a distracting time. Largely as a consequence of this, I lost steam in doing anything that might be regarded as "professional" work except for refereeing a couple of papers in the area of formal ontology and delivering a couple of talks in roughly the same area (the most recent being the opening talk at an international meeting of the Phenotype Ontology Research Coordination Network held at the National Evolutionary Synthesis Center in Durham). Otherwise my time until recently was split between being involved in (or at times subjected to) a major house renovation and attempting to reacquire skills with the tuba. A disproportionate amount of time has been spent with the tuba, owing partly to the substantial loss of skill over a decade of not touching it, and partly because I enjoy it so much. I now play in two community bands (one, with the tuba and the other, using a compensating euphonium to play the bass trombone part), and I am slowly getting back to the point where I was years ago in terms of skill.

Matt McCormack (PhD 1995)

I'm getting promoted to full professor at California State University, Sacramento this year. And my book *Atheism and the Case Against Christ* is coming out with Prometheus Press in July. My article on atheism is now up at the Internet Encyclopedia of Philosophy, and my chapter "The Salem Witch Trials and the Evidence for the Resurrection," recently came out in *The End of Christianity*, Prometheus Press, 2011, ed. John Loftus.

Jeffrie Murphy (PhD 1966)

In early 2012 Oxford University Press published my fourth (and, given my age, surely

my last) collection of essays: PUNISHMENT AND THE MORAL EMOTIONS--ESSAYS IN LAW, MORALITY, AND RELIGION. The material in some of these essays formed the basis of the Stanton Lectures that I was invited by the Divinity Faculty to deliver at Cambridge in 2010. A combination of some health problems and the closure of Heathrow Airport due to volcanic ash from Iceland forced me to give these lectures by video conference. I was initially skeptical of this format (as I tend to be skeptical of all technology) but was pleasantly surprised at how well it worked in allowing for a rich discussion.

Joseph B. ("Josh") Stulberg (PhD 1975)

This, quite wonderfully, has been a year of travel connected to scholarship.

Internationally, I traveled to Beijing as a participant in an invitation-only conference whose subject was the theory, practice and pedagogy of cross-cultural negotiation; taught a seminar on mediation theory and practice to law students in Berlin and a comparable course, in Bilbao, Spain to EU-based students matriculating in a European Master Degree Program in Transnational Trade Law and Finance; and delivered the keynote address on designing/implementing court-annexed mediation programs to an International Congress of Judicial Officers in Recife, Brazil.

I have been awarded a 2012 Ikerbasque Research Fellowship; this is a competitive fellowship (akin in spirit to a Fulbright) that is funded jointly by the EU/Basque Regional Governments. I will spend the Fall 2012 semester at the University of Deusto Law School in Bilbao, Spain conducting a comparative study of EU member nation national laws that have been adopted to implement the EU directive for using mediation to resolve transnational commercial disputes.

Domestically, this year marks the 30th anniversary of the publication of a widely-anthologized "debate" between myself and Professor Lawrence Susskind on mediator neutrality and accountability, and two law

schools hosted conferences that centered on our “revisiting that dialogue.”

My scholarship for the past 18 months basically addresses themes that were examined at these multiple events.

Personally, our family continues to enjoy good health with my wife, Midge, retiring from University development work, children Gita (September 2010) and Michael (June 2012) marrying wonderful partners, and all others moving forward.

James Van Cleve (PhD 1974)

I’ve been enjoying a fellowship year at the National Humanities Center in North Carolina, working on a book on Thomas Reid (Problems from Reid). Things have been going splendidly up until recently, when “final trimester” panic started to set in. It’s been nice to catch up with Gary Merrill and Peter van Inwagen, each of whom spend some time in these parts.

Gregory Wheeler (PhD 2002)

I spent half of 2011 in Lisbon and the other half in Berlin at the Max Planck Institute for Human Development, where I began collaborating with Konstantinos Katsikopoulos on the mathematical underpinnings of bounded rationality; our goal is to pull together the disparate mathematical results on cognitive heuristics and put them under a single framework that Richard Scheines and I have been developing, called CCC, which is coming out in Mind.

In the autumn we spent a week in Ponta Delgado, on Sao Miguel Island in the Azores, where I hosted a workshop sponsored by the European Science Foundation. From there I went to Bucharest, the Max Planck Castle in Ringberg, Lund and Copenhagen, and later to the US for a talk at Columbia and then on to Carnegie Mellon to speak at a conference commemorating Horacio Arlo-Costa. Indeed, Paul Pederson, Jeff Helzner, Vince Hendricks

and I are editing a book in honor of Horacio that we hope to have out by early next year.

This year? As I write we are preparing to leave Lisbon to return to Berlin for the spring and summer, and from Berlin we will go to Pittsburgh, where I will spend the next academic year as a Visiting Associate Professor in the Philosophy Department at Carnegie Mellon. Finally, I joined the new editorial board of *Synthese* in January 2012.

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