Letter from the Chair

Holiday greetings from the GW Department of Philosophy! This has been a very busy but exciting semester. We offered several new undergraduate courses for the first time this fall: The Meaning of Mind (taught by Tad Zawidzki), Introduction to Existentialism (taught by Michael Sigrist and Cameron Bassiri), and Philosophies of Disability (taught by Megan Davis). We will be offering four more new courses this spring: The Philosophy of Human Rights (taught by Paul Churchill), Philosophy of the Environment (taught by Michèle Friend) and two graduate seminars: Biomedical Ethics (taught by David DeGrazia) and Cognitive Science and Public Policy (taught by Tad Zawidzki). There has been a lot of enthusiasm on the part of both faculty and students for our expanding curriculum, and record numbers of students are enrolling in our courses. Our current students especially appreciated the opportunity to hear how their philosophy majors benefitted our alumni panelists in their careers at our inaugural Philosophy Alumni conference in September; we only wish their parents had also been present to hear the perennial question, “What can you possibly do with a philosophy major?” so decisively answered!

Fall department activities have also included our October 2012 Elton Lecture by Robert Audi (described below), some terrific brown bag seminars by full and part-time faculty based on their current research, reading groups, Philosophy Club events, a new graduate student works-in-progress seminar, and a special department dinner in honor of University Professor of Philosophy Peter Caws who will be retiring at the end of this semester. We are currently undertaking a national search for an Assistant Professor of Philosophy specializing in Ethics and the History of Modern Philosophy and look forward to welcoming a new colleague to our department next fall. We will be sure to tell you about our new hire in the Spring 2013 Newsletter.

We have several new part-time faculty who have joined us this fall and they have quickly become integrated into the intellectual and social life of the department. Our department continues to enjoy the reputation of being a very warm, friendly, and hospitable place and we regularly receive kudos from other GW faculty and from the GW administration on the positive atmosphere and important contributions we make to the University as a whole though our teaching, research, and service.

This December, we say goodbye to our wonderful executive aide of the past two and a half years, Lindsey Petersen, who has accepted a position with the Embassy of Kuwait helping Kuwaiti students who are studying in the U.S. adjust to American life and our University system. We are in the process of hiring a replacement for the irreplaceable Lindsey and we wish her well in her new position.

We hope you enjoy this fall newsletter and look forward to hearing from more of you in the future. It was great to see so many of you return to campus for our conference in September; quite a few of the participants said it was their first time back since graduation and everyone enjoyed reconnecting with faculty, meeting philosophy alumni from different classes, and becoming acquainted with some of our current students. We hope we can entice more of you to campus more regularly to attend department events and hope that you consider joining us for the Thacher or Goutman lectures this spring.

We wish you a happy new year and we’ll be back in touch in 2013!

Gail Weiss
GW Philosophy Alumni Conference

The department was thrilled to welcome back many of our alumni at our first Philosophy Alumni Conference during GW’s Alumni Weekend in late September. The event was a huge success! Participants enjoyed five terrific panels that showcased the many different career paths taken by our alumni and we celebrated together at the end of the day over a glass of wine and GW’s new “buff and blue” cocktails at the CCAS Dean Peg Barratt’s reception in the Smith Hall Art Gallery. For those who couldn’t make it, we hope you can join us for the next one. We received excellent feedback from those who came and look forward to hosting another alumni conference in the next few years. The full program appears below. Please be sure to check out the many pictures of alumni, faculty and current students that were taken during the course of the day!

Friday, September 28th

9:30-9:45 a.m. Welcome by CCAS Dean Peg Barratt and Department Chair Gail Weiss

9:45-10:45 a.m. Session 1: Special Friends of the Department: Chaired by Professor William Griffith
Beth Loker BA ’69, Michael Thacher BA ’70

10:55-12:10 p.m. Session 2: The Next Generation of Philosophers: Chaired by Professor Tadeusz Zawidzki
Amanda Huminski BA ’09, Cameron Bassiri BA ’06, Jason Fisette BA ’04, Ndidi Nwaneri MA ’09

1:15-2:15 p.m. Session 3: Our Legal Team: Chaired by Professor Jeff Brand
Max Utzschneider BA ’09, Ananda Joy Norris BA ’97, John Hanson BA ’67 JD ’70

2:15-3:15 p.m. Session 4: Creative Careers for Philosophers: Chaired by Professor R. Paul Churchill
Marin Randall Burnett MA ’07, Clyde “Bo” Davis BA ’97, Nikole Yinger BA ’06,

3:30-5:00 p.m. Session 5: Our Colleagues: Chaired by University Professor Peter Caws
Brook Sadler BA ’93, Rachel Singpurwalla BA ’93, Mark Alfino BA ’81

5:30-7:00 p.m. Columbian College Cocktail Reception Smith Hall Art Gallery
Hosted by CCAS Dean Peg Barratt

Saturday, September 29th

9:30-10:45 a.m. University Professor Peter Caws: “Left, right, and center: the shifting ground of 21st-century politics”

ABSTRACT: This lecture took a good-humored look at the current political scene from a philosophical point of view, asking how the contrast between left and right has changed over time and how some of the markers of these positions now play out in relation to one another. The old ideal of a loyal opposition curbing the excesses of the ruling party and cooperating in bringing policy back towards a stable center is in danger of succumbing to intractable ideological conflicts. How seriously should we take these conflicts and how can they be defused? Philosophy suggests that we should all be a little less sure of how right we are, and a little more ready to embrace one another’s worries and uncertainties.
Elton Lecture
On Friday, October 26th, Dr. Robert Audi gave the annual Elton Lecture titled: “The New Intuitionism: Metaethical Underpinnings of Common-Sense Morality.” Dr. Audi is currently John A. O’Brien Professor of Philosophy at the University of Notre Dame. His research interests center on ethics, political philosophy, epistemology (including religious epistemology), and philosophy of mind and action, and his teaching and public lectures range over these and other areas. Below is the abstract for the talk:

What are the leading kinds of theories in ethics? Must a good ethical theory be top-down, attempting to determine what is right by deriving it from a master principle or a paradigm of good character? Can any view in ethics provide grounds for genuine moral knowledge? And how is moral knowledge possible given the diversity of human experience and culture and the ethical disagreements we actually encounter? This lecture presents an ethical view that is designed to answer these questions by integrating a theory of knowledge, a Kantian standard of conduct, and a common-sense conception of moral obligation.

Announcing the Sophia Lecture in Philosophy

With special appreciation for the generosity of alumna, Brook Sadler (BA ’93), the Department of Philosophy is excited to announce the creation of The Sophia Lecture in Philosophy – an annual lecture slated to begin during the 2013-2014 academic year. The lecture aims to highlight the work of a female or minority philosopher considered early to mid-career. We very much look forward to announcing the 2013-2014 lecture speaker in the months ahead!

Interested alumni and friends of the Department may contribute to the future success of The Sophia Lecture in Philosophy by making a gift online to GW or via a check payable to The George Washington University. Please be sure to note The Sophia Lecture in Philosophy in either the online giving comments field or within your check's memo line. Checks should mailed to The George Washington University / 2100 M St. NW (Suite 310) / Washington D.C. 20052. Many thanks!

Thacher Lecture
This spring, Professor Kristin Andrews, associate professor in the Department of Philosophy, and director of the Cognitive Science Program at York University, in Toronto will be delivering the annual Thacher Lecture. Professor Andrews recently wrote a book titled: Do Apes Read Minds? Toward a New Folk Psychology. Please stay tuned for the details of the talk.

Goutman Lecture
Distinguished Professor of Philosophy and American Studies and Chair of Emory University’s Department of Philosophy, John Stuhr, will be giving the Spring 2013 Goutman Lecture this April. His talk will be based on his recent research on William James, who is also the main focus of one of this spring’s Philosophy Proseminars for our junior and senior majors. Stay tuned for further information on this event.

Faculty News

Jeff Brand (Associate Professor) is on leave in 2012-13 as a visiting scholar in the Department of Bioethics, National Institutes of Health. In December, he visited McMaster University (Ontario) to give a lecture and participate in a graduate seminar that is studying his monograph, Limits of Legality: The Ethics of Lawless Judging (Oxford 2010).

Peter Caws (University Professor) has resigned his university professorship as of January 15, 2013. He is therefore coming to the end of his last regular course offered in that capacity, and getting ready to leave his office on the 7th floor of Gelman. He will retain a less burdensome connection with the university, and a small office on the Mount Vernon campus, under the rather more awkward title of University Professor of Philosophy Emeritus in Residence with the University Honors Program, and expects to teach one honors seminar each fall semester as long as practicable. His chapter “Pragmatic Immortality and the Insignificance of My Own Death” has appeared (as promised in the last newsletter) in Nate Hinerman and Julia Apollonia Glahn, eds., The Presence of the Dead in Our Lives. (Rodopi, 2012). Two chapters are in press in other collections: “How Many Languages, How Many Translations?” in Transmissibility and Cultural Transfer: Dimensions of Translation in the Humanities, co-edited by Stephanie Schwerter and Jennifer K. Dick (Ibidem-Verlag, 2012), and “Sartre’s Theory of Groups” in Sartre: Key Concepts, co-edited by Jack Reynolds and Steven Churchill (Acumen, 2013).
Faculty News

Since the last newsletter, Robert Paul Churchill (Professor) has continued research for his book Women in the Crossfire with the assistance of a University Honors Program Research Assistant Sarah D. Carson. In October, Paul presented a section of his book as a paper “The Horror of Honor Killings: Standing up for Potential Victims” at the 28th annual conference of Concerned Philosophers for Peace at Mercer University, Macon, Georgia. He has also recently designed a new Dean’s Seminar, “The Philosophy of Human Rights” to be offered as a regular PHIL offering in future semesters. Over the summer Paul participated as a member of the board in the Banaa Scholars Summer Summit, organized and facilitated by Banaa.org: Empowering Sudanese Peacemakers.

During the summer, David DeGrazia (Professor) devoted most of his work time to research on the ethics of gun ownership with the help of a grant from the University Facilitating Fund. He also began two new positions on July 1. Here in the department he has served as the new Director of the master’s program in Philosophy and Social Policy. For the Presidential Commission for the Study of Bioethical Issues, Prof. DeGrazia has been working one day a week as Senior Advisor to the commission staff. In particular, he was hired to work on a report on the ethics of involving children in research on medical countermeasures—with particular attention to the possibility of testing an anthrax vaccine on children for the benefit of future children in the event of an anthrax attack or outbreak. His assignment with the Presidential Commission will run through the end of the year. Meanwhile, this fall he is teaching Ethics: Theory and Applications as well as the Proseminar in Philosophy. Professor DeGrazia has also, this semester, finalized a paper, “Moral Enhancement, Freedom, and What We (Should) Value in Moral Behavior,” which has been accepted by The Journal of Medical Ethics and will be published with commentaries by four scholars. A second paper, “What is Suffering and What Kinds of Beings Can Suffer,” requires final edits and will be published in an anthology next year. A third paper, “On the Ethics of Handgun Ownership,” is in the process of revision and will be further revised after receiving feedback from audiences at the National Institutes of Health and George Mason University. Professor DeGrazia plans to submit the article to a journal early next term and then develop companion articles on the ethics of gun control and the carrying of guns. As a final note, this is DeGrazia’s final year as a full-time employee of George Washington University. As of July 1, 2013, he will begin a position as senior research scholar in the Department of Bioethics at the National Institites of Health while remaining on

Faculty Spotlight

Michèle Friend (Assistant Professor) went to Brazil in early summer of 2012. She gave a presentation on homo economicus and homo ecologicus at the International Society for Ecological Economics meeting in Rio. This meeting immediately preceded the less academic and more politically high profile Rio +20 conference. While in Brazil Michèle also presented a paper on three conceptions of proof in mathematics to the Pontifical Catholic University in Rio which has a very strong logic department. She also gave a version of the same talk at the Universidade Federal do Rio Grande do Norte in Natal, in the northeast of Brazil. Later in the summer, Michèle went to Europe to attend a conference in Cambridge on the foundations of mathematics, and present the three conceptions paper to the Logic Colloquium which took place in Manchester this year.

Michèle says “the most exciting conference at which I presented was in Hungary on the logical foundations of relativity theory. This is a project headed by Hajnal Andréka and István Németi. They have made some formal mathematical systems from which we can derive the ‘laws’ of the relativity theories, and derive all the predictions which are standard in the theories: for example, that nothing can travel faster than light, that clocks slow down when they are less influenced by gravity, that spaceships get ‘shorter’ in the direction of travel, as they travel close to the speed of light and the twin paradox: that a twin sent from earth and travelling fast, will return to earth younger than his, or her, twin left on earth. This is not a new project, Poincaré went some way towards it, as did Ax and Goldblatt; however, their work was far from complete, and they presupposed Minkowski space-time. The Hungarian project is complete – in the sense of deriving all of the standard theories of relativity, and in the sense of making new predictions. They also derive several space-time models, including Minkowski space-time.” At the conference Michèle presented a paper on the epistemological significance of the project. This fall at George Washington University, Michèle organized a reading group working through the 1300 page book written by Andréka, Madarász and Németi on special relativity.
the GW faculty, splitting his time 60/40 between the two institutions. He likes to think of this arrangement as “the best of both worlds.”

**Peter Fristedt (Professorial Lecturer)** presented a paper entitled “Self-Constiution and Self-Knowledge” at the Society for Phenomenology and Existential Philosophy (SPEP) conference in November. An article length version of that paper is currently out under review. After teaching Intro to Philosophy this fall semester he will be returning to GW in the spring to teach Ethics: Theory and Applications. He hopes to find time to work on two research projects: one on the normativity of tradition and the other on the notion of biological self-understanding.

**Andrea Pedeferri (Professorial Lecturer)** will publish in late 2013 a book on logic with the Italian publisher Carocci Editore. The book will feature a chapter on logical pluralism, a topic he is currently working on in collaboration with Dr. Michele Friend. During the summer he gave a talk at the Logic Colloquium 2012 (in Manchester, UK) on the notion of ‘originality’.

**Mark Ralkowski (Assistant Professor)** recently joined the Faculty in Residence program at GW and is living on the Mt. Vernon campus. This past fall he participated in two conferences: (i) the International Plato Society’s conference on Plato’s Moral Psychology, which was held at the University of Michigan in Ann Arbor, and (ii) a conference on philosophy’s “therapeutic promise”, which was held at the University of Witwatersrand in Johannesburg, South Africa. Professor Ralkowski also gave a talk on Heidegger entitled “The History that We Are” as part of the University Honors Program’s Food for Thought series, as well as a brown bag presentation on a work in progress entitled “Heidegger’s Platonic Critique of Modernity.” As the semester ends, Professor Ralkowski hopes to finish two articles that are due near the beginning of the year: one on Heidegger’s philosophy of education, and another on Plato and Alcibiades.

**Nick Tebben (Lecturer)** spent the past summer in Germany studying metaphysics with Barry Stroud and Saul Kripke (among others) at the Bamberg University summer program in philosophy. On October 3rd, Nick presented a paper called “Inferentialism and Communication” at a conference on the Philosophy of the Social Sciences, hosted by the Universidad Nacional de Educación a Distancia in Madrid, Spain. A paper that he co-wrote (with Jon Waterman) called “Epistemic Freeriders” was accepted by the 2012 Northern New England Philosophy Conference. Nick is scheduled to defend his dissertation, “Epistemic Rights”, on December 13th at the Johns Hopkins University.

This past fall, **Gail Weiss (Professor and Chair)** presented three invited papers. Her keynote address to the International Merleau-Ponty Circle hosted by Fordham University in New York City in September was entitled: “The Silent Communation of Self and Other: Merleau-Ponty’s Intersubjective Ontology.” In October she presented “Birthing Responsibility: Resources from 20th Century French Thought for the Moral Significance of Natality” at Middlebury College, and in November she gave a paper entitled, “Horizons of Translation” as part of a panel devoted to Donald A. Landes’ new 2012 translation of Maurice Merleau-Ponty’s *Phenomenology of Perception*. She also really enjoyed organizing and hosting our first Philosophy Alumni conference in September! Gail published two book chapters this fall: “Beauvoir and Merleau-Ponty: Philosophers of Ambiguity” in *Beauvoir Engages Philosophy: Essays on Beauvoir’s Dialogue with Western Thought*. Eds. Shannon Mussett and William A. Willkerson. (SUNY Press, 2012, 171-190) and “Birthing Responsibility: On the Moral Significance of Natality” in *Coming to Life: Philosophies of Pregnancy, Childbirth, and Mothering*. Eds. Sarah LaChance Adams and Caroline Lundquist. (Fordham U. Press, 2012, 109-119). In addition to serving as the Diversity Advocate on the department’s search committee for our new position in Ethics and Modern Philosophy, Gail is also Chair of the CCAS Dean of Arts and Sciences search committee.

Since the last newsletter, **Tadeusz Zawidzki (Associate Professor)**, has had two papers that were in press officially appear: “Phenomenology and the extended mind,” in the International Journal of Machine Consciousness, and “Unlikely allies: Embodied social cognition and the intentional stance,” in Phenomenology and Cognitive Science. His current book project, *Mindshaping: A New Framework for Understanding Human Social Cognition*, is at the “proof” stage with MIT press, and will appear in April or May 2013. Professor Zawidzki has also been invited to take part in a colloquium, The Liberty Fund’s “Liberty & Equality Colloquium” in Tucson, AZ (January 17-20, 2013), and to present a paper at a conference, the “Minds in Common: Second Aarhus-Paris Conference on Coordination and Common Ground” at the Institut Jean-Nicod in Paris (June 25-26, 2013). On the teaching front, Professor Zawidzki is currently teaching the first section of his new course, The Meaning of Mind, as a Dean’s Seminar, and will teach his first seminar for the MA in Philosophy and Public Policy, Cognitive Science and Public Policy, in Spring 2013. In addition to his continuing duties as Faculty Guide for Potomac Residence Hall, member of the Honors Advisory Council, and member of the CCAS Research Advisory Council, Professor Zawidzki is also chairing the Philosophy Department’s current job search in Ethics and Modern Philosophy.
Faculty Profile
Professor of Philosophy Mark Ralkowski
The GW Philosophy Club students have chosen Professor Mark Ralkowski as the subject for the fall 2012 Faculty Profile section of this newsletter. Below, Professor Ralkowski responds to questions posed by the Philosophy Club.

Where are you from originally? Where did you grow up?
Seattle, Washington.

Did you always want to do philosophy? When did you start 'philosophizing'?
I wanted to do philosophy the moment I took my first philosophy class, an ethics seminar, during my freshman year in college. It's hard to know when I first started philosophizing, but I remember thinking at age five that snow skiing was a lot more interesting than Sunday school. And, in hindsight, that seems like an early sign of wisdom.

Do you have a best (or worst) memory (or teacher) from graduate school?
My worst memory from graduate school is from grading seventy papers in one night. I still wince when I think back on that.

What is your favorite place you've visited (and why)? Where would you like to visit (and why)?
Thoreau once said that, "in wildness is the preservation of the world." That has always resonated with me; I would only add that there is no wilderness like African wilderness. Which is why I am always anxious to get back. Next up is a three-week camping trip from Kenya to Victoria Falls.

How did you end up at GW?
Via the best luck I have ever had.

What are you working on currently? Why are you working on this?
I am writing two articles, one on Heidegger's philosophy of education, and one on Plato and Alcibiades. The Heidegger article is for an encyclopedia of educational theory. The Plato piece is for a special edition of a journal that is focusing on the therapeutic promise of philosophy.

Who is your least favorite philosopher(s) and why?
There was once a professor of literature at Princeton who gave his students a course evaluation on which he asked, first, "what was your least favorite book to read this semester?" And, second, "what personality flaw in you explains why you didn't like that book?"

We heard through the grapevine that you're a fan of Plato and Martin Heidegger. Do you like one more than the other? How have they impacted your (personal, intellectual) development?
They say that, the night before he died, Plato dreamt that he was a swan and was darting from tree to tree, trying to avoid being captured by hunters. In the ancient world, Plato's followers took this to be an illustration of our relationship with Plato: try as we may to capture him, we will always fail. The most we can hope to find as we look into his texts are reflections of ourselves staring back at us. I love this elusive Plato—especially what he can teach us about the art and difficulty of genuine interpretation—and I am very impatient with interpreters who pretend to have "captured" him once and for all.

Heidegger was a disgusting man—as Plato would say, he was "outstandingly bad"—but, as a philosopher, he moved mountains. When you follow his argument in Being and Time, it's literally awe-inspiring. And it makes lots of other philosophy seem behind the times. I don't think I could ever "like" Heidegger more than Plato, given his personal shortcomings and his unforgivable politics in the 1930's. But as Simon Critchley sometimes says, he remains the philosopher of the 20th century.

If you were in charge of the world for one day, then what would you do first and why?
I would change the rules that force you to take your shoes off as you go through airport security.

What is your favorite (and why): (a) composer or piece of music? (b) movie? (c) video game? (d) literary work? (e) work of art or artist?
Favorite composer: Charles Mingus; favorite piece of music: “Solo Dancer” from Mingus' Black Saint and the Sinner Lady (because it contains more joy than Schiller's “Ode to Joy”); favorite movie: Summer Interlude (because it says important things about the relationship between love, memory, and getting older); I haven't played video games for a long time; favorite book: Knut Hamsun's Mysteries (because it gives voice to what Hamsun called “the whisper of the blood”); favorite artist: Edvard Munch (because of the things he sees in human psychology).

Do you have any advice for the aspiring philosophers at GW or elsewhere?
Quoting Heidegger quoting Nietzsche quoting Pindar: “Become what you are.”
Student News

This year three students were awarded the Thacher-Reynolds Fellowship. Below is a profile of the three students and their projects.

Landon Elkind is a senior pursuing a dual degree in math and philosophy. His Thacher-Reynolds project aims at clarifying the thorny subject of propositional functions in Bertrand Russell’s Principia Mathematica. Briefly and intuitively, a propositional function is what one arrives at by varying a term in a proposition, e.g. producing ‘x is red,’ from ‘Odysseus’ hair is red.’ The project involves sifting through a sizable secondary literature on the issue and arriving at a tentative hypothesis as to what propositional function means for Russell. Landon reports: “So far so good! The project is exciting and enjoyable.” He hopes to attend graduate school in philosophy to continue working on Russell as well as related subjects in logic, language, and foundations of mathematics.

Katie Hurrelbrink is a senior majoring in philosophy and one of this year’s Thacher-Reynolds scholars. Her fellowship research concerns epistemological issues surrounding wine expertise, specifically whether taste in wine constitutes a genuine body of knowledge; whether wine experts can justify a special claim to knowledge of a wine’s taste; and whether their knowledge can be transmitted to non-experts.

Practically speaking, this amounts to asking whether the expert can tell the layperson that a wine tastes like blackberries and pepper when the layperson tastes no such thing, and even if so, whether this transfer of knowledge from expert to layperson sincerely enhances the layperson’s perception of the wine. In addition to her philosophical pursuits, Katie manages the tutoring program that sends GW students to School Without Walls and works as a legal intern at Joan Wilbon and Associates. Following graduation, Katie hopes to spend some time working and then apply to law school.

Iaan Reynolds is a senior philosophy major and a Thacher-Reynolds scholar. His fellowship research looks at the relationship between ontology and ethics in Heidegger. Although Heidegger never wrote an ethics, Iaan’s research will attempt to ground our relations to others securely in the ‘fundamental ontology’ Heidegger gives in Being and Time and other works. This requires an examination of Heidegger’s writings on technology, poetry, and freedom as well as a discussion of important works of fiction as they relate to Heidegger, including Kafka, Hamsun, Dostoyevsky and Camus.

In addition to his studies, Iaan is the head coach of a nationally competitive high school speech and debate team in Maryland. He also listens to an above-average amount of music and will host a weekly radio show through GW Radio next semester. After graduation, he will be teaching secondary mathematics in Durham, North Carolina through Teach For America.

Tommy Davis is the President of GW Veterans, a Washington Chapter of SVA (Student Veterans of America). He originally became a philosophy major in 2002 while attending Montgomery College in Rockville, MD. After a few years of college he joined the Army and served on active duty from 2005 to 2011. During his time in the Army he deployed to Port au Prince, Haiti for the earthquake relief and later to Afghanistan for OEF. During his final deployment he began the application process for GWU. Shortly after returning from deployment and returning to civilian life he began his first semester at GWU in the Fall of 2011. He became an active member of GW Veterans and was elected President at the end of the Spring 2012 semester. Since then GW Veterans has expanded their role in university and student life, working with GW First Chapter on their selection of War and the Athletics Department for the military appreciation themed Colonials Invasion. As President, Tommy spends much of his time going to meetings, conferences, and other events with various civilian
and federal organizations to speak about issues concerning student veterans. Recently Tommy was invited to the White House for a round table discussion about current problems that student veterans face and possible solutions that could be implemented to alleviate these problems and improve the quality of life and education for student veterans.

GW Veterans mission is to serve on behalf of veterans and military dependent family members who are students at The George Washington University. GW Veterans works to foster a supportive environment for veteran students, on and off campus. GW Veterans represents over 1000 student veterans and military dependent students and those who support them in the GW community.

Graduate Student Spotlight

Olwen Jaffe, first year student in the Philosophy and Social Policy program, interned for the Presidential Commission for the Study of Bioethical Issues (PCSBI) this fall. PCSBI serves as an advisory commission to the President and seeks to ensure practices and policies on bioethical issues related to bio-medicine, science, and technology are ethically sound and socially responsible. Her internship primarily focused on research for a forthcoming report on the ethics of pediatric medical countermeasures (the report will be available at www.bioethics.gov when it is released).

At PCSBI, Olwen had the good fortune to work with leading experts in law, medicine, and philosophy, including Dr. DeGrazia, and gained invaluable insight and skills that she looks forward to building on as she continues her studies in ethics and health policy.

Olwen came to program with a background in health advocacy and bioethics and maintains a presence on Ethics Illustrated, a bioethics blog produced by Bioethics International, a nonprofit organization committed to empowering health, science, and biotechnology professionals and organizations to make responsible decisions (www.bioethicsinternational.org/blog).

Student Spotlight

Sam James, Class of 2013

Earlier this year, I replied to a Philosophy Department email looking for a volunteer assistant coach at The School Without Walls. The G Street high school had decided to participate in the Washington area’s first Ethics Bowl competition being run through American University. A relatively new form of competitive public speech, “Ethics Bowl” pits two teams against each other to argue and exchange opinions regarding a judgment or course of action in response to the selected topic. Students are encouraged to make use of ethical theories as well as relevant examples to persuade moderators towards their side. The underlying goal of this competition is to expose teens to ethical theories at an early age and teach them to form coherent arguments.

In my role, I get to teach a miniaturized intro to ethics course a couple of times per week under the supervision of Ms. Kerry Sylvia of the DC Public Schools System and moderate some friendly practice debates. It has been amazing to watch these bright kids grasp college level concepts and run with them. At the December 1st Ethics Bowl they actually took home the first place prize, in the very first year of competition! I look forward to working with the school in the remainder of my time at GW, and hope other students continue to keep this program alive in the future.
Alumni Spotlight

John Hanson (BA ’67, JD ’70) was recently named as one of Washington’s best environmental litigators in the survey published recently in the Washington Post. John is a Principal in the Washington, D.C. office of Beveridge & Diamond, P.C., where he focuses his practice on civil trial and appellate litigation and environmental law. John also recently spoke on a panel at our Alumni conference.

Danielle Fleury (MA, ’08) is a Program Specialist, Family Nutrition Programs, US Department of Agriculture, in Boston. As a Program Specialist with the US Department of Agriculture Food and Nutrition Service, I oversee states’ administration of federally funded nutrition assistance and education programs that help low-income individuals access a healthful diet. I conduct reviews to ensure that states are in compliance with federal regulations, and also disseminate policy guidance in order to help states improve access to services and enhance program quality.

Nolen Gertz (BA ‘03) successfully defended his dissertation (“On the Possibility of Just Combatants”) this past June at the New School for Social Research. Shortly thereafter he got a tenure-track position at Delta College in Michigan. Nolen says “Having recently started at Delta, and having recently moved to Bay City, I’ve enjoyed getting to know the “Mitten” with the help of my students’ suggestions.”

Graduate Student Spotlight

Kaitlin Sullivan (MA ’14) is currently finishing up a fellowship at the Women’s Campaign Fund, where she worked to get more women elected to public office during the 2012 election cycle. Next semester Kaitlin will begin an externship with Facebook’s Public Policy team, working on issues around the intersections of technology, privacy, and policy.

Chelsea Harry (BA, ’03) is currently ABD in Philosophy at Duquesne University. In March 2013, Chelsea will defend her dissertation entitled, “Time (Chronos) in Aristotle’s Natural Philosophy and of its Place in Early Naturphilosophie (1750-1800)”. In Spring 2012, Chelsea was hired for a tenure-track position in the Philosophy Department at Southern Connecticut State University in New Haven, CT where she is currently an Assistant Professor.

Elizabeth W. McBride (BA, ’85) is a partner at the law firm Page, Scrantom, Sprouse, Tucker & Ford, P.C. where she practices in the area of domestic relations. Elizabeth is married to Gil McBride, GW, BA ’84, MA ’88. They live just outside of Gil’s hometown of Columbus, Georgia where they have four children ages 19, 18, 9 and 6 years.

Recent graduate Grant Babcock (MA, ’12) has published his first peer-reviewed journal article. The paper, “Libertarianism, Feminism, and Nonviolence: A Synthesis” is a revised version of an essay he wrote on Gene Sharp’s The Politics of Nonviolent Action during an independent study of Sharp with Professor Churchill. Drawing on the work of Sharp as well as Murray Rothbard, Roderick Long, Charles Johnson, Wendy McElroy, and bell hooks, the paper establishes historical links among the intellectual traditions of feminism, nonviolent action, and libertarianism and explores what a nonviolent, libertarian resistance to patriarchy might look like. The paper is available for download on libertarianpapers.org.
The department gratefully acknowledges the following individuals who made donations during the past fiscal year:

Mr. Christopher Fritz, CCAS BA ’12
Mr. Thomas M. Goutman, CCAS BA ’76
Ms. Maryanna L. Kieffer, CCAS MA ’73
Dr. Walter Tsong Lee, M.D., CCAS BA ’96
Ms. Harriett J. Lemley, GWSB BBA ’63
Ms. Elizabeth St. J. Loker, CCAS BA ’69
Ms. Elizabeth Ann Methodios CCAS BA ’12
Mr. Randall K. Packer, CCAS BA ’90
Mr. Michael Thacher, CCAS BA ’70

Donations
July 1, 2011 - June 30, 2012
The department would like to congratulate the following individuals who graduated in Fall of 2012:

Diego Uribe
Sierra Schellenberg
Roman Zhitnik

Recent Graduates

The department wishes to give a special thanks to Brook Sadler (BA ’93) for her generous support of our new Sophia Lecture!

Giving to the Department

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Credits

This issue of the GW Department of Philosophy Newsletter was edited by Lindsey Petersen, with assistance from Professor Weiss. The design of the newsletter was created by Julia Louie.