

# News from the Chair

This past May, I was elected to my second term as Department Chair (AKA my last term). I appreciate the support of my colleagues in making the administrative tasks of the position manageable on my worst days and a joy on my best ones!

One very pleasant task is putting this newsletter together every summer for fall publication. It gives me an opportunity to interface with alumni and with former faculty. In particular, I would like to thank Dr. George Claghorn who continues to provide information on alumni that predate most members of our department. Dr. Claghorn reminded us that the department will be celebrating its 50th Anniver-

sary in 2016, so please watch for information as we plan ahead for this milestone.

Inside this newsletter you will find information reflecting the vibrant life and growth in our department: we welcome yet another new faculty member, Dr. Steven James, this coming fall; our faculty maintain robust scholarly agendas; a number of faculty have travelled internationally to present at conferences and to scope out possible international experiences to offer our students.

Yet another mark of a vibrant department is the quality of our students. As always, very talented and deserving students were awarded with the Claghorn Prize and the Streveler Research Prize,

both named in honor of former faculty and supported by generous alumni donations. It was a very busy year for the philosophy club, and you will find some pictures highlighting some of their activities. Finally, we welcomed a number of new members to Phi Sigma Tau, the Philosophy Honors Society.

Finally, just a quick update on a couple of developments in my own life. In July my paper "Hospitality and Hope: Self and Other in the work of Derrida and Piaget" was published in the *Journal of Political Theology*. On a personal note, two of my children were married this past academic year and my first grandchild is due in October. Life is good!

## Philosophy Department

### Faculty and Staff

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Dr. Dan Forbes 332 A

Dr. Tim Golden 106

Dr. Frank Hoffman 108 E

Dr. Steven James 332 D

Dr. Dean Johnson 332 A

Dr. Matthew Pierlott 332 D

Dr. Ruth Porritt 108B

Dr. Simon Ruchti 108 D

Dr. Helen Schroepfer, Chair 108 A

Dr. Cassie Striblen 332 B

Ms. Rose Sykes, Department Secretary 108

Dr. Larry Udell 332 C

Dr. Joan Woolfrey 108 C

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News Items!

*Dr. Steven James  
Joins Philosophy Department!*



Steven James joins the faculty of West Chester University this fall as Assistant Professor of Philosophy, focusing on courses in Analytic Epistemology and Philosophy of Mind. Steven comes to us fresh off completing his Ph.D. in Philosophy at the University of Texas at Aus-

tin. His aptly titled dissertation "A Generative Theory of Remembering" combined philosophical and psychological work to develop a novel epistemic theory of remembering.

Steven grew up in Trinidad, Colorado. He then moved to Boulder, Colorado to complete his B.A. at the University of Colorado where he majored in Philosophy and Psychology. In his down time, Steven enjoys hiking, making things, music, and hanging out with his cat.

*Interdisciplinary Association for Philosophy and Religious Studies (IAPRS) Conference Held at West Chester*

The annual IAPRS conference was held here at West Chester April 11-12. This PASSHE-based organization invites paper submissions from all of the schools in the State System and moves from location to location. As the then-president of the organization, Dr. Larry Udell was responsible for organizing this particular conference. The keynote speaker was Dr. Arnold Farr from the University of Kentucky who spoke on "The Persistence of One-Dimensional Thinking and the Ongoing Relevance of Herbert Marcuse."

Twenty-nine faculty and students from seven different State System schools presented papers at the conference.

On October 31, the following students were inducted into the Philosophy Honors Society, Phi Sigma Tau:

*Sixteen Students Inducted into Phi Sigma Tau*

- Austin Brauns
- Zachary Brown
- Joshua Cutts
- Dan DalMonte
- Elijah Daubenspeck
- Oscar de Paz
- Tim Ebersole
- Alexis Gurman
- Steven Guthrie
- Brittany Hirsch
- Christopher Ketcham
- Carl-Frederick Korsnes
- Mitchell Nunes
- Virlen Reyes
- Michael Stein
- Lauren Swanson



Keynote Speaker Samantha Noll (far left) with inductees



**Dr . Cassie Striblen in Greece , Summer 2014 (see story page 4).**



**Dr. Frank Hoffman in the West Lake area of Hangzhou (see story page 4).**



*Sabrina MisirHiralall* presented on the philosophy of Mirabai, a Hindu saint and poet in Dr. Dean Johnson's PHI 390 Women and Religion class. She also presented *The Powerful Yet Poised Divine Mother: Durga Devi Maa* during a campus-wide lecture and danced the sacred *Mahishaasura Mardini Stotram* in Kuchipudi dance style.

### *9th Annual Graduate Student Philosophy Conference Held in March*

The annual Graduate Student Philosophy conference was held on Saturday, March 8 in Phillips Memorial Hall. The keynote speaker was Dr. Sarah Clark Miller from Penn State University, Director of their Rock Ethics Institute and Associate Professor in the Department of Philosophy. Dr. Miller spoke on "Dignity in Relation." Conference presenters included a number of students from West Chester, students from Duquesne, the University of Georgia, the University of Memphis, and Kent State University.



**Philosophy Club** enjoying a lively conversation

## News from current department members

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### Ruth Porritt

Dr. Porritt presented on "Reconsidering Conscience" during the 15<sup>th</sup> International Conference on Ethics Across the Curriculum. For the Philosophy Department Dr. Porritt prepared a CAPC proposal for an upcoming "Internship in Philosophy" course, which will enhance students' employment preparations. The course will provide students with the opportunity to work outside the regular classroom environment in order to do field placement learning in organizational settings which reflect their interests. For the Honors College she chaired the search for the new Administrative Assistant and worked with other Honors College faculty to develop updated Bylaws as well as Standing Rules and Procedures. During the fall

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### Frank Hoffman

Dr. Frank Hoffman published "Knowledge and Ethics in Early Buddhism" in *Fo Jiao Yu Dang Dai Wen Huan Jian She Xue Shu Yan Tao Hui Lun Wen Jui* ("The Collected Papers of "Buddhism and Contemporary Cultural Construction" Conference, (Xi'an: Northwest University Press, Xi Bei Da Xue Chu Ban She, 2013). He served as guest editor of *ASIAN PHILOSOPHY* journal's November 2013 Special Issue on Popular Buddhism. He reviewed Christian K. Wedemeyer's *Making sense of Tantric Buddhism: history, semiology, and transgression in the Indian traditions* in *CHOICE* July 2013. He presented "The Relevance of Buddhist Texts to Contemporary Concerns" to the Association for Core Texts and Courses

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### Joan Woolfrey

First of all—who moves in the wintertime, during one of the most brutal winters on record in PA!? We're happily settled in now, though, in West Chester, closer to school, and have put all the drama behind us.

After shepherding the Peace & Conflict Studies program for the last six years, as promised to Fred Struckmeyer before his retirement, I have passed those duties into the steady and capable hands of our charming new colleague Dr. Dean Johnson. Last year, I was also interim director of Women's & Gender Studies, and have transferred those duties to the equally steady and capable newly-elected, Dr. Lisa Ruchti (Sociology). And, with talk of that program becoming a *department*, she might be in *for quite a ride!*

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### Matt Pierlott

Dr. Matthew Pierlott has continued to teach PHI 180: Introduction to Ethics for the department. He enjoys trying to entice students to engage in philosophical thinking and helping them wrestle with theoretical and applied issues in ethics and oppression. He and Dr. Forbes have made some progress on developing original writings to supplement the edited collection they organized for the department, and he is hoping to make substantial progress this coming year in that effort. Matt has also continued to enjoy teaching the Honors Capstone course for the Honors Program, as well the Theology and Science team-taught course with Dr. Tony Nicastro of the Physics Department, originally created by Tony and Dr. Struckmeyer.

Recently, Matt presented a paper, "Indeterminism and Freedom" at

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### Dan Forbes

Dr. Forbes taught a course on Philosophies of the Infinite in Fall 2013. While not as loooooong a course as its title would suggest, the class studied a wide swathe of the history of thought about the infinite and its paradoxes, from Aristotle to Nicholas of Cusa to Spinoza to Hegel to Graham Priest. It was challenging for everyone to take it all in, including Dr. Forbes! (By the way, if you would like to look at an accessible and entertaining introduction to the philosophy and mathematics of the infinite, Dr. Forbes recommends a book that the class read, *Infinity and the Mind* by Rudy Rucker. There's some math in it but there are also cartoons, rather uncommon for a book that delves into both philosophy and mathematics!)

Dr. Forbes continues to teach his

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### Cassie Striblen

This past year, Dr. Striblen taught her usual array of courses but added PHI 355 Political Philosophy. In February her book *Group Responsibility: A Narrative Account* was published in hardback by Palgrave Macmillan. At the Hannah Arendt Circle Conference in New York City in March, Dr. Striblen gave a paper titled "Arendt, Feminism and Work-Life Balance." In June, she visited Athens, Greece, to view the Acropolis, the ancient Agora, and the Oracle at Delphi. (See picture, p. 3.) It was an awe-inspiring, invigorating trip and she hopes to bring students to Greece in the future.

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## Larry Udell

Dr. Udell spent his summer traveling to Ohio and continuing work on his Rawls and employment project. He spent a week at the John Rawls Library in Brattleboro, VT and represented the department at an interesting workshop on the Intercollegiate Ethics Bowl. Dr. Udell has expressed an interest in developing an ethics bowl team from WCU, and even has visions of winning a national championship at this competition.

On another note, Dr. Udell and Dr. Chris Stangl from the WCU political science department have developed and are ready to present a proposal for a new undergraduate program in Philosophy, Politics, and Economics. This program was pioneered by Oxford University. The *Wikipedia* article notes that it has produced Tony Abbott, the current Prime Minister of

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## Dean Johnson

Dr. Dean Johnson was recently appointed as Director of the Peace and Conflict Studies program. In that role, Dr. Johnson has worked closely with Dr. Woolfrey and the program GA on reorganizing and updating the P&CS web page. He also continued his work this year with the SpiritHouse Project and the "Breaking the Silence Against Modern Day Lynching." Breaking the Silence is a campaign that seeks to educate and eradicate the slow genocide of black and brown people through extrajudicial killings. The work has encouraged the creation of the student group Peace by Peace--a student-led group that focuses on the fostering of peace and justice work and collective building across campus. Dr. Johnson was also able to connect the program capstone, taught by Professor Subar, with the work of Daniel Hunter who is authoring an organizing manual

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## Tim Golden

Dr. Golden's areas of specialization are 19<sup>th</sup> and 20<sup>th</sup> Century Continental Philosophy, African-American Philosophy/Critical Race Theory, and Philosophy of Religion/Philosophical Theology. Dr. Golden is working on 2 authored books and 1 edited book. His authored books are *Subjectivity, Transcendence, and the Problem of Onto-Theology* (under contract, Palgrave Macmillan), and *And the Word as Made Flesh: Frederick Douglass and the Philosophy of Religion* (under contract, Lexington Books). His edited book is titled *Racism and Resistance: Essays on Derrick Bell* (under contract, SUNY Press).

In addition to his philosophical research, Dr. Golden has been de-

(Continued on page 9)

## Simon Ruchti

This past year, Simon Ruchti has been steadily working on a textbook and reader for women's and gender studies courses. She recently submitted an article on her work as a feminist advisor to fraternities. She presented at several conferences, including the Diversity in Philosophy Conference, at the University of Dayton, and the National Women's Studies Association Conference, in Cincinnati, OH. She also developed a course on queer theory, cross-listed in both Philosophy and Women's and Gender Studies. Simon finished her first year on the university-wide curriculum committee, CAPC, and the College of Arts and Sciences Recruitment Committee. She has also continued her service to the Women's and Gender Studies Steering Committee, the

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## Meet our Excellent Adjunct Team!

### Ethics Instructors:

**Vincent Beaver**, PhD Temple University

**Margaret Betz**, PhD Temple University

**Patrick Denehy**, PhD (ABD) Temple University

**Kate Eltringham**, PhD (ABD) Villanova. Kate also taught a section of Ancient Philosophy for us in the spring.

**Jina Fast**, PhD Temple University

**Ed Pollitt**, MA WCU. Ed also developed a course for us on Animal Ethics.

**Barb Tournier**, MBe (Bioethics) University of Pennsylvania. Barb is our expert in Medical Ethics.

### Religious Studies Instructors:

**Nicholas DiDonato**, PhD (ABD) Boston University

**Eduardo Hernandez**, PhD student Temple University.

**Paul Harris**, MA University of Essex (UK). Paul teaches Creating Meaning and Introduction to Philosophy

**Rob Main**, PhD Temple University. Rob teaches a range of courses: Introduction to Philosophy, Creating Meaning, Introduction to Meaning, and American Philosophies.

**Charlotte Moore**, MA WCU, currently enrolled in Temple University's PhD in Religion Program. Charlotte teaches Introduction to Ethics, Religion in the U.S., Religions of the West, and developed a course for us on New Religious Movements.

**John Zak**, PhD (ABD) Catholic University of America. John teaches Introduction to Philosophy.

### Peace and Conflict Studies Instructors:

**David Headman**, MTS Harvard Divinity School

**Rebecca Subar**, MPA Harvard University

## Alumni News

**Pete Moyer, BA 1990.** Currently I am Vice President of Sales for Orpak USA since 2005, a subsidiary of Orpak Systems based in Tel-Aviv Israel. Orpak is a leader in Fuel and Fleet Management Systems around the world with more than 20,000 gas stations and 5,000,000 vehicles using our systems. I am also a Toastmaster since 2003 and in 2012 and 2013 I was District Governor for District 66 which covers the greater part of Virginia. I was responsible for 2400 members and 120 clubs with 35 members in my executive committee. We were President's Distinguished in Education (highest honor), Select Distinguished (second highest honor) in growing new clubs. As a passion I am giving seminars at colleges, with topics including: ATTACK Method

to "Get the Interview," The Top Six Things to Do to "Get the Offer," Networking and Negotiating your way to Your Dream Job. I am working on a book, "Never go a day in your life without a job!" For fun I love to ski in the winter and kayak in the summer. I volunteer as a kayak guide in False Cape State Park in Virginia which is located between the Atlantic Ocean and the Back Bay. I reside in Virginia Beach with my wonderful wife and two amazing daughters.



**Michael Jones, MA 1995.** I'm looking forward to a very exciting year beginning September 1<sup>st</sup>. I'm still at Liberty University, where I teach introductory courses on philosophy and theology and upper-level courses on ethics and comparative philosophy. However, this coming year will see a big change: I've been awarded another Fulbright and am going to spend the school year teaching at the University of Bucharest and working on translating Lucian Blaga's last book into English. The title, translated, will be "The Historical Being." Laura will be accompanying me and will be researching her EdD dissertation on the challenges of integrating Romania's large Roma minority into the public school system. It's been quite a while since we were last in Romania, so we are greatly looking forward to this. I led a group of students on a humanitarian mission in Bosnia this spring, which was a great experience, but Romania is "where my heart is," as they say.

**Dr. Steve Nichols, MA 1998.** Ph.D., Westminster Theological Seminary, has been appointed President of Reformation Theological Seminary in Sanford, Florida. He is married to Heidi, and they have three children. Formerly, he was professor at the Lancaster Bible College, Lancaster, Pa. He is the author or editor of eight books, plus DVDs, and speaks frequently in churches and conferences.

**Russell Waltz, MA 2004.** After earning my Ph.D. in philosophy from the University of Kansas, I accepted a tenure-track professorship at Miami Dade College in Miami, FL. My research focuses on the intersection of social and political philosophy and the philosophy of mass media. At MDC, I teach political philosophy, critical thinking, ethics, and the introduction to philosophy.

**Cristina Utti, MA 2005**  
Cristina is teaching English in the Philadelphia School District, writing a novel, and finishing up an MFA in Creative Writing.

**Donovan Irvan, MA 2009.**  
Donovan is preparing to complete his preliminary exams in philosophy for the interdisciplinary program in Philosophy and Literature at Purdue University, having satisfied all course requirements last year. He recently won a three year scholarship to study philosophy each summer at the University of Paris X - Nanterre as part of the Partner University Fund. The scholarship includes summer travel to France as well as collo-

quium at Purdue during the regular academic year. The first summer session, a "Theoretical Toolkit" introduced students to methodological approaches across the Analytic/Continental spectrum, with special focus on logic, structuralism, and phenomenology. As always, he continues to write literary fiction and has presented his work at Purdue, and most recently at Duquesne University.

**Brian Jones, MA 2009.** After graduation in 2009, I completed a second master's degree in Psychoanalytic Psychotherapy. Over the past four years, I have taught a range of Philosophy and Psychology courses at Massachusetts Bay Community College and Salem

State University. In 2013, I was nominated for the Salem State University Martin Luther King Peace Award for my work and research with individuals experiencing homelessness. In 2014, I was the recipient of the Massachusetts Bay Community College "Making a Difference in the Community Award." It was awarded for my contributions to the development of social science research and community building within the college and continued publication on homelessness. In addition to my teaching career, I am a practicing Psychoanalytic Psychotherapist in Framingham, Massachusetts. My psychological work has been published in noted psychoanalytic journals. In addition, I am a contributing author to the DxSummit for mental health diagnostic standards and alternatives. In September, I will be moving to the United Kingdom to teach Psychoanalysis and

develop a private practice in psychotherapy. As a Psychoanalytic Lecturer, I will specialize in Lacanian and British schools of Psychoanalysis. I am forever grateful for the education I received from West Chester's Philosophy Department. The faculty made it possible for me, as a first-generation college student, to transcend far beyond my expected capabilities.

**Gabrielle Aruta, MA 2010.**

Things are going really well for me professionally and while my day job is not properly related to philosophy, my ethics training is utilized every day in the auction business in so many various ways. I think it really says something about the value of an ethics degree that I beat out scores of other candidates who have masters from Christies' program in the Art business. I'm also still commit-

ted to being a life-long learner. In the fall I will be taking the course for ethics training for appraisers at NYU so I can be recognized by the IRS to consult on insurance appraisals. I'm also headed to the Netherlands University of Tillburg to take a 10 day graduate course on the philosophy of tragedy with Simon Critchley.

**Dan Dalmonte, MA 2013.** I will be beginning a doctoral program at Temple in the fall. I also have a novel out called *The Realm of Possibility*.

*Three recent MA grads to begin PhD work at Temple!*



West Chester's MA program will be well-represented in the new group of students pursuing a PhD in Philosophy at Temple University this Fall. We wish the very best to **Josh Cutts, Dan Dalmonte, and Jason Keyser.**

***New Alumni!***



**B.A. in Philosophy**

Stephen Decker  
 Wesley Emel  
 Carl Korsnes  
 Shelby Martin  
 Dan Merola  
 Mitch Nunes  
 Jordan Porr  
 Virlen Reyes  
 Raz Robinson  
 Lauren Swanson  
 Julius Taliaferro

**B.A. in Religious Studies**

Kristen Martin

**M.A. in Philosophy**

Josh Cutts  
 Elijah Daubenspeck  
 Timothy Ebersole  
 Jose Marti  
 Wilfredo Melendez

## Faculty News (cont'd)

*(Hoffman, Continued from page 4)*

(ACTC), April 11, 2014, annual meeting, Los Angeles Airport Hilton, CA. Other presentations included: the Oriental Club of Philadelphia, Symposium, April 13, 2014, Paper Presentation: "Questions of Knowledge and Justification in the Angulimalasutta", Shanghai Jiaotong University; paper presentation "Environmental Philosophy: Reflections on Karma, Texts, and Silence", May 28, 2014, Wuhan University; paper presentation "Publishing in Western Philosophical Journals", School of Philosophy, Wuhan University, June 13, 2014; Peking University, Critic, "Beijing Roundtable on Analytic Philosophy, International Society for Comparative Studies of Chinese and Western Philosophy, co-sponsored and hosted at Peking University by the Center for Comparative Philosophy, Institute of Foreign Philosophy, and the Center for Analytic Philosophy, June 28, 2014, the University for International Business and Economics, Department of International Relations, paper presentation, "Globalization, Poverty, and Volunteerism", July 7, 2014. He mentored undergraduate students Jeffrey Holmes and Reginald Smith to form a Buddhism panel at the Undergraduate Conference of the Greater Philadelphia Asian Studies Consortium meeting at St. Joseph's University, March 22, 2014.

*(Forbes, Continued from page 4)*

customary slate of courses in Introduction to Philosophy, Introduction to Ethics, History of Modern Philosophy, and History of Ancient Philosophy. He recently changed his course in the History of Modern Philosophy to incorporate readings from women philosophers from the 17th and 18th centuries, including Princess Elisabeth of Bohemia, Anne Conway, Lady Damaris Cudworth Masham, and Mary Astell. He also included some other fascinating but often neglected thinkers such as Nicolas Malebranche and Thomas Reid. In Fall 2014 Dr. Forbes is teaching the Graduate Proseminar, a course focused on helping new graduate students transition into the challenges of graduate coursework and research.

Dr. Forbes pitched in as chair of the Philosophy Department search committee again, helping the department to select its newest tenure-track faculty member, Dr. Steven James, a specialist in Analytic Epistemology. Dr. James will take over the graduate course in Epistemology taught in the past by Dr. Forbes.

Dr. Forbes presented a paper (co-written with Dr. Pierlott) entitled "Theistic Metaphysics and Naturalism" at the Interdisciplinary Association for Philosophy and Religious Studies conference held at WCU in April 2014. The paper argues a pedagogical point that the ethical theories of Divine Command Theory and Natural Law Theory when taught to introductory-level students are better framed as metaethical theories than normative theo-

ries, since fallibilism cannot be eliminated from interpretations of commandments of the divine will.

Dr. Forbes recently reviewed an excellent anthology edited by David Cunniff entitled *The Cambridge Companion to Descartes' Meditations*. He enthusiastically recommends it if you are interested in developing a deeper understanding of the *Meditations*. He continues to study Spinoza and think about the metaphysical foundations of ethics.

*(Porritt, Continued from page 4)*

semester she facilitated a new course, "The Creative Intersections Between Ethics and Aesthetics," which culminated in the students' own film designs to address ethical issues. Dr. Porritt continues to serve on the Art Ability Committee for Bryn Mawr Rehab.

*(Udell, Continued from page 5)*

Australia, David Cameron, the current Prime Minister of the United Kingdom, and Ed Miliband, the current Leader of the Opposition in Britain. Students in the program would major in either philosophy or political science, minor in the other, and take a number of courses in economics.

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*(Pierlott, Continued from page 4)*

the Journal of Interdisciplinary Studies' 2014 International Symposium, which brought scientists, philosophers and theologians together to respond to the provocative issues of indeterminacy and divine providence. In the paper, Matt argued that models of agency construed in terms of event-causal relations will ultimately problematize the notion of freedom under assumptions of either indeterminacy or determinacy.

Finally, Matt joined Dr. Joan Woolfrey and their NSF grant team to develop a new grant to further their research on ethics training in online virtual formats. Their hopes for the new project include designing a web-based game app that allows young users to apply scientific concepts to construct "biospheres" in competition and cooperation with other gamers, while confronting the moral dimensions of their game choices with in-game conse-

*(Johnson, Continued from page 5)*

which will compliment Michelle Alexander's book, *The New Jim Crow*. Alexander will be taking the book with her on speaking tours to assist people in their organizing efforts

*(Rucht, Continued from page 5)*

LGBTQA Advocacy Committee, and the Women's Center. She currently advises two fraternities on campus, Sigma Phi Epsilon and Delta Chi.

*(Golden, Continued from page 5)*

veloping his interdisciplinary scholarship in philosophy and law. This fall, he will be presenting a paper at the UCLA School of Law Symposium in Critical Race Studies. The paper explores how the Christian dimension of white privilege is inscribed in U.S. Supreme Court jurisprudence through the recent Supreme Court decision in *Hobby Lobby v. Burwell*. Dr. Golden also presented a paper at the University of Pittsburgh School of Law Symposium on Derrick Bell. His paper, entitled "Beyond Naturalized Jurisprudence: Racial Realism as Normativity," argues that Bell's Racial Realism (RR) is an improvement on traditional American Legal Realism (ALR). Whereas ALR is simply a descriptive thesis about judicial decision-making, Dr. Golden argues that Bell's RR adds a normative dimension to ALR that is essential in the struggle for racial and social justice.

Dr. Golden will also be giving the annual Ethics Lecture at Villanova University this fall. His lecture is titled "Let us Make god: Onto-Theology and the Political." The lecture will discuss the moral and political deficiencies of the philosophical conception of God in the Aristotelian, Scholastic, and Analytic philosophical traditions. Specifically, the lecture will point to the ethical and political dangers of these philosophical conceptions of God as it relates to both subjectivity and transcendence.

In the spring of 2014, Dr. Golden taught 2 sections of PHI 100 (Creating Meaning) and one section of PHI 101 (Introduction to Philosophy). This fall (2014), Dr. Golden will be teaching Creating Meaning (PHI 100), Ideas of the

Bible (PHI 349), and a graduate seminar on Immanuel Kant. Dr. Golden also served on the thesis committees of 2 of our fine graduate students, Josh Cutts, and Tim Ebersole, who both successfully defended their theses this summer. Congratulations to both Josh and Tim on a job well done! Dr. Golden looks forward to the annual Frederick Douglass Philosophy Conference this fall.

*(Woolfrey, Continued from page 4)*

For now, my inbox has never been quieter! even while I've traded all of that for the grad coordinator position.

With the NSF grant wrapped up (and two, maybe three, publications likely out of that work), Dr. Matt Pierlott and I (along with Seth Kahn in English) were crazy enough to sign on to another grant proposal; this one a \$3 million project in collaboration with educational technology experts at Iowa State for the development of an informal gaming, science and ethics platform. On the milder side, since the end of the term, I have submitted a paper for review that I gave at the Eastern Society for Women in Philosophy conference in April on hope as a virtue and am immersed in shaping a paper for my annual trek to the North American Society for Social Philosophy conference in July: on human dignity and moral character.

Recently, I learned that my sabbatical request for Spring 2015 was approved. Happy Day! I've got such plans!!! mainly, a book proposal that melds my work for Women's & Gender Studies with philosophy. Can't wait.

# 2014 Award Winners

**Claghorn Prize: Josh  
Cutts**



I entered the M.A. program in Philosophy at West Chester University in the fall of 2012 after completing my undergraduate degree in Individualized Studies (Philosophy/ Anthropology/Religious Studies) at Albright College in Reading, PA. While my customized program of study at Albright afforded me the opportunity to develop my interdisciplinary academic interests, the wide net I had cast prevented me from taking enough Philosophy courses to have a thorough understanding of its imposing history. Once I had determined - (rather late in my undergraduate career) - that Philosophy was to be my life's pursuit, West Chester emerged as an opportune place for me to "fill the gaps" within my philosophical understanding. Here at West Chester, I have not only been able to expand my breadth and depth of philosophical knowledge, but I have also been given the opportunity to develop my own philosophical identity. I am primarily interested in 19th and 20th century Continental Philosophy, especially in the areas of Critical Theory and Poststructuralism. In general, I am fascinated by theories of social change, by philosophies that promote action and social justice. My master's thesis, "The 'Editorial' Rejection of Capitalist Oppression," serves as the culmination of my studies to date: in my thesis, I argue that the economic system of capitalism operates as a subject-forming force in our society, and that its insidious influence modifies subjectivity to the extent that we lose sight of possibilities for authenticity as selves and as communities. I will be developing this project, and others pertaining to societal change in my future study at Temple University, where I will be starting as a Ph.D. candidate this coming fall. I cannot say enough about how wonderful my experience at West Chester University has been. I am forever indebted to the outstanding faculty of the Department of Philosophy, and am most grateful for their expertise, guidance, and support.

**Streveler Research  
Prize: Mitchell Comfort**



Unlike the vast majority of people, who are generally content to ask *what* a given piece of language means, literary theorists and philosophers of language have long grappled with the question of *how* it means. In other words, how can a correct description of a text's meaning be distinguished from a misinterpretation? Many texts seem to lend themselves to an apparently inexhaustible diversity of readings, suggesting one of two equally unsatisfying conclusions: either some texts (particularly "literary" texts) can rightly be said to mean literally anything, or else there must exist identifiable criteria according to which the correctness of an interpretation can be measured. The first conclusion is unsatisfying because it threatens to render genuinely successful communication impossible by replacing a consistent and universally accessible "public" language with a relativistic, incommensurable multiplicity of idiosyncratic "private" languages. The second conclusion is unsatisfying because it appears to diminish the significance of personal experience by placing arbitrary restrictions on the activity of interpretation. The aim of this paper is to demonstrate that language use is a collaboratively defined, spontaneously self-regulating activity, and that the picture of language as something that can be said to exist independently of its users is nothing more than a descriptively useful abstraction. A correct interpretation is one that conforms to the rules of the language game that is currently being played, and the confusion described above is a consequence of our tendency to take those rules for granted without evaluating them or making them explicit.

# *Thank you!*

*Heartfelt thanks go out to all those who have contributed over the years to these two funds. Our recognition of these individuals is made possible by your very generous support! A special note of thanks to the anonymous donor who made a substantial contribution to the Streveler Fund this past year. To date, we have been able to award 18 excellent students with prizes from the Claghorn fund and the Streveler Research fund. If you would like to make a contribution to either of these, please contact Helen Schroepfer at 610-436-1004.*



**Upcoming Events!! Mark  
Your Calendars!**

Check our website for further information on the following:

**Graduate Student Philosophy Conference**— An annual spring conference hosted by our graduate philosophy students.

**GPPC**— The Greater Philadelphia Philosophy Consortium offers a wide array of lectures and conferences each year.

**IAPRS**— The Interdisciplinary Association for Philosophy and Religious Studies hosts an annual spring conference. Papers by alumni are welcome at this conference! Please check our website for more information as we will post the call for papers.

**Frederick Douglass Philosophy Conference**— Watch for updates on our website.

**Career Workshop**—This coming spring we will again be conducting a career workshop for our current students. We would like to set up a panel of alumni to discuss their own varied career paths, tips for successful interviews, and other suggestions for our students as they look toward their future. If you would like to participate in this panel discussion, please contact Helen Schroepfer at [hschroepfer@wcupa.edu](mailto:hschroepfer@wcupa.edu) or at 610-436-1004.



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