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PHILOSOPHY at the Graduate Center

Philosophy Program, The Graduate Center, CUNY
365 Fifth Avenue, New York, NY 10016
Room 7113
Phone: 212-817-8615

Executive Officer: Iakovos Vasiliou
Director of Graduate Studies: John Greenwood
Director of Admissions: Stephen Neale
Director of Placement: Jesse Prinz
Assistant Program Officer: Natile Clarke

Connect with Us on the Web

Department Website
web.gc.cuny.edu/philosophy
Philosophy Commons
philosophy.commons.gc.cuny.edu
Facebook
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Twitter
@CUNY_Philosophy

Newsletter by: Marilynn Johnson
Photos by: Tony Cheng, Marilynn Johnson, Arina Pismenny, Carolyn Plunkett
Dear Colleagues, Students, Alumni, and Friends

This year we welcomed our two new Distinguished Professors to our faculty. Catherine Wilson joined us in the fall semester, and David Papineau visited in the spring semester. Both made active contributions to the intellectual life of the program beyond their immediate teaching duties, and we look forward to welcoming them back next year.

We had a very demanding but ultimately very successful admissions season. In the fall we will welcome nine fully funded PhD students and three MA students. The success of our recruitment was due to the extremely hard work of our Admissions Committee, which included Professors Michael Devitt and Sibyl Schwarzenbach, and students Amanda Bryant and Derek Skillings. Professor Stephen Neale chaired the Committee with vision and perseverance. Thanks to the Committee for all their good work, and to all the faculty and students who contributed their time (and accommodations) in helping to make this happen.

Our Colloquium Series continued this year with a rich variety of speakers, including Susan Schneider, Ted Honderich, Sarah Buss, Deirdre Wilson, Shamik Dasgupta, Peter Unger, David Lahti, Max Tegmar, Barry Smith, Dominic McIver-Lopes, Jonathan Schaffer, Sarah Broadie, Kristin Gjesdal, Charles Mills, Mark Wilson, Eric Brown, Laurie Paul, Miranda Fricker, Lisa Miracchi, John Huss, and our own Michael Devitt and Lisa Warenks.

Louise Antony delivered the first Jonathan Adler Memorial Lecture, Russell Marcus, a CUNY alumnus, delivered the Jerrold Katz Lecture, David Papineau delivered the Dean Kolich Lecture on Prospectives Day, and Seyla Benhabib delivered the Marx Wartofsky Lecture. This year Myrto Mylopoulos delivered our first Alumni Day talk in December, which was a resounding success. Thanks to Laura Kane, Barbara Montero, Carolyn Plunkett and Cosim Said for making this possible. We will repeat the exercise in the fall when our Alumni Day speaker will be Professor Robert B. Talisse of Vanderbilt University.

Nine students completed their PhDs this year, on topics as diverse as "What the Tortoise Said to Kripke: The Adoption Problem and the Epistemology of Logic," "The Theoretical and Psychological Foundations of Care in Environmental Ethics," and "Three Cases of Human Exceptionalism: Genius, Saint, Monster."

Four of our students, Joshua Keton, Arina Pismenny, Carolyn Plunkett and Denise Vigani were successful in attaining GC Dissertation Fellowships for 2015-2016. Denise was also successful in attaining a prestigious Mellon/ACLS Dissertation Completion Fellowship.

Our long-serving Assistant Program Officer (APO) Rosemarie Iannuzzi retired from the philosophy program after twenty-seven years of dedicated service. After an extensive search in January, we were delighted to be able to offer the APO position to Natlile Clarke, our former College Assistant, who has amply demonstrated her qualifications for the position and her ability to tame the monster that is CUNYFirst. Please join me in welcoming Natlile to her new position, and I hope you will be able to join us for Rosemarie’s retirement celebration in the early fall.

I know you will all join me in welcoming Iakovos back as Executive Officer next year, although perhaps none more enthusiastically than myself!

I hope you will continue to follow the Program’s activities on the GC Philosophy website and on our Commons site.

John Greenwood
Acting Executive Officer, Director of Graduate Studies, Professor of Philosophy & Psychology
The Interdisciplinary Concentration in Cognitive Science, though run by a philosophy faculty member, encompasses in addition to Philosophy the Programs in Computer Science, Psychology, Linguistics, and the neuroscience side of Biological Sciences. We apply for grants in an interdisciplinary context, and are awaiting word on an especially exciting grant that would support an exchange program in Europe. A highlight of the Concentration is our weekly speaker series, drawing on speakers in these fields. This year we’ve been especially fortunate to have, in addition to faculty and graduate students from CUNY, a number of scholars from other universities, ranging from Liz Camp at Rutgers and Karen Lewis at Columbia to Cecelia Heyes of Oxford and Zoltán Dienes of Sussex, as well as visiting scholars from NYU and faculty and graduate students from Japan. Plans are in the works for the fall series. Talks are Friday afternoons, 1-3, followed by drinks at a neighborhood pub; they’re been well attended by CUNY graduate students and others from NYU, Columbia, and other nearby universities. We continue to have many graduate students, both from philosophy and other programs, do the necessary interdisciplinary coursework to qualify for the Concentration.
Committee for Interdisciplinary Science Studies

The Committee on Interdisciplinary Science Studies has had an exciting year, focusing on the theme of natural kinds. Our annual seminar for faculty and advanced graduate students includes members of multiple fields, including philosophy, psychology, English, anthropology and sociology. All are pursuing research projects related to how allegedly natural classifications influence culture and social practices. We held a conference on natural kinds in the Winter, with leading in developmental psychology, psychiatry, women's studies, and philosophy of science. The year will conclude with a day-long workshop, in which members of this year's seminar will present their research. The workshop will be called Natural Divisions? The Impact of Classification Schemes on Culture and Society, and it will be held on May 15 in room 5307. Topics will include concepts of disability, criminal typology and literature, categories and care, the grotesque, challenges to essentialism in the classroom, sciences of emotion in Weimar era film, and perceptions of race and skin tone. Details will be posted soon on the Science Studies web site (sciencestudies.gc.cuny.edu) and all are welcome to attend.

Science Studies Committee, 2014-15
Professor Jesse Prinz, Director

Saul Kripke Center

This year the Graduate Center was given a fifteen-year loan of Professor Kripke's collected materials, which the Center staff has been working on identifying, inventorying, and preserving. To that end, we continue the work of digitizing recordings of Professor Kripke's lectures from the past several decades. Kripke Fellows and other PhD students have been transcribing Professor Kripke's lectures—some from the 70s and others from the 00s—on identity of objects across time, and some of his unpublished, hand-written technical work has been transcribed into a digital format for eventual publication. In November, the Provost's Office hosted a party in celebration of the loan of the archive. Philosophers from throughout the New York area were in attendance when Professor Kripke presented a version of his recently published satirical paper "Yet Another Dogma of Empiricism" (Philosophy and Phenomenological Research (2014)). He also published a paper, "The Road to Gödel", in an anthology dedicated to themes from his work, Naming, Necessity, and More: Explorations in the Philosophical Work of Saul Kripke (ed. Jonathan Berg, Palgrave (2014)). He has a two forthcoming papers with Nous: "Quantified Modality and Essentialism" and "Quantified Modal Logic and Quine's Critique: Some Further Observations". To keep up with the Kripke Center, follow us on Twitter @KripkeCenter or check our website: kripkecenter.commons.gc.cuny.edu.

Saul Kripke Center, 2014-15
Dr. Rosemary Twomey, Director

The Center for Global Ethics and Politics held six colloquia this year, including talks by Diana Meyers of the University of Connecticut on "Victims of Trafficking, Reproductive Rights, and Asylum,"Neil Walker of the University of Edinburgh on "Containing Global Politics: The Limits of Global Law," John Dryzek of the University of Canberra on "Democratic Agents of Justice," Robert Talisse of Vanderbilt University on "Epistemic Democracy for the Real World," Nadia Urbinati of Columbia University whose topic was "On the Meaning of the 'Crisis of Democracy'," and Brooke Ackerly of Vanderbilt University on "The Intersection of Global Economic, Environmental, and Gender Justice." We also initiated research projects on the role of empathy in transnational politics, and on interpreting human rights norms for United States contexts. We received able help in these various activities from Matthew Rachar (Research Assistant, Philosophy), Paul Celentano (Research Assistant, Political Science), and John McMahon (Center Assistant).

Prof. Carol Gould, Director, Center for Global Ethics and Politics at the Ralph Bunche Institute
Student

Lauren Alpert will present "How Should Embodied Mind Theorists Account for Interpersonal Kinesthetic Diversity?" at the University of Western Ontario Graduate Conference, May 2015.

Jesse Atencio presented "Psychological Continuity Theory" at the Long Island Philosophical Society Conference, April 18, 2015 and will present "Hume, Naturalism, and Intelligent Design" at the Princeton-Penn-Columbia History of Philosophy Grad Conference May 2, 2015.


Amanda Bryant will present "Keep the Chickens Cooped: The Methodological Inadequacy of 'Free Range' Metaphysics" at the Canadian Philosophical Association Annual Congress May 31, 2015.


Highlights

Joshua Keton was appointed Managing Editor of the Journal of Social Philosophy and was awarded a Dissertation Year Fellowship for 2015-2016.

Javier Gomez Levin’s "Frontalparietal Networks Involved in Categorization and Item Working Memory" was published in NeuroImage 2015.

Antonella Mallozzi will present "Conceivability, Possibility, and Modal Upgrading" at the Second PLM Master Class with David Chalmers at Stockholm University June 7-8, 2015.

Kate Pendoley presented "Meaning and Metaphor: Beyond Propositions" at the New York Philosophy of Language Workshop at New York University on February 9, 2015.

Carolyn Plunkett’s "Selecting the Right Tool for the Job" (with Caplan & Levin) was published in the American Journal of Bioethics, April 2015 and she was awarded a 2015-2016 Dissertation Year Fellowship.

Arina Pismenny’s "Érotisme et valeur" (with de Sousa) will appear in Dictionnaire et Valeurs, Paris: Editions d’Ithaque and she was awarded a Dissertation Year Fellowship for 2015-2016.

Jules Salomone presented "The Value of Money and the Ethics of Monetary Exchange" at the NYU-Columbia Grad Conference on March 26, 2015 and at the CUNY SPP group on November 10, 2014.

Cosim Sayid will present "Greenberg’s Moral Impact Theory of Law" at the Cambridge University Doctoral Workshop in Legal Theory on June 17, 2015.


Shawn Simpson will present "Communication Between Groups and Collective Entities" at the International Society for the History, Philosophy, and Social Studies of Biology (ISHPSSB) 2015 in Montreal.

Joanna Smolenski’s "Don’t Edit the Germ Line" (with Lanphier, Urnov, Haecker, & Werner) was published in Nature.

Rebecca Traynor was awarded the SWIP – Analytic Graduate Student Prize for her paper "Accurate Representation is Accurate Distortion", which she presented at NYU on April 20, 2015.

Denise Vigani was awarded a Mellon/ACLS Dissertation Completion Fellowship for 2015-2016.

Jennifer Ware presented "A Moral Evaluation of Humor: the Insufficiency of Good Intentions" at SWIPshop at the CUNY Graduate Center on April 30, 2015.
Highlights


Rachel McKinney was named Postdoctoral Associate, Department of Linguistics & Philosophy at Massachusetts Institute of Technology.


Gary Ostertag will present "Propositions and the logical form of predication" at the LOGOS conference on Unity and Individuation of Structured Propositions, Barcelona, June 22-14 and his edited volume on Stephen Schiffer, Meanings and Other Things, is forthcoming with Oxford University Press, Fall 2015.

Andres Paez was the keynote speaker at the II Latin American Conference on Legal Epistemology "Reputation in Law: An Epistemological Approach" in Lima, Peru, September 2014.

Rosamond Rhodes was awarded a $1,050,000 NIH Grant for "Research Ethics Education in the Balkans and Black Sea Countries" and her "Good and Not So Good Medical Ethics" was published in the Journal of Medical Ethics, 2015; 41(1):71-4.

James Snyder Promoted to Associate Professor and Honors Program Director at Marist College.

Eeva Kittay presenting "The Dark Side of Free Will" at TEDxChemungRiver


For a complete list of student, alumni, & faculty accomplishments see the online version of this newsletter.
Interview with Alumna Myrto Mylopoulos

CUNY Graduate Center Alumna Myrto Mylopoulos presented "Intentions and Action Awareness" at the Philosophy Colloquium on our First Alumni Day on December 4, 2014. Alumni were encouraged to attend the event and dinner. Mylopoulos completed her dissertation, "The Nature of Agentive Awareness", September 2013 under the supervision of Prof. David Rosenthal.

What are you up to these days?

I’m eating too much cheese a post-doctoral researcher at the Institute Jean Nicod in Paris, France. It’s an interdisciplinary cognitive science research institute made up of philosophers, neuroscientists, linguists, and psychologists. Overall, it’s been a really wonderful experience—I feel incredibly fortunate to be here. I guess post-docs are still not all that common in philosophy, but I can’t recommend them highly enough. They give you a chance to get a head start on your research program before taking on the full responsibilities and duties of a faculty position. Speaking of—smooth segue—starting this summer, I’ll be Assistant Professor of Philosophy and Cognitive Science at Carleton University in Ottawa, Canada, which I’m very excited about! If anyone is ever in Ottawa and wants to meet up and talk philosophy/go skating, please be in touch!

What are your future projects?

My work is primarily focused on consciousness and action control—the nature of each and how they relate. My dissertation, which I did under the supervision of David Rosenthal, dealt with the experience of agency: what are the psychological mechanisms underlying the awareness of oneself as performing an action, and what is the nature of this awareness. Now I’m taking a step back and looking at what it is to have agentive control in the first place and what role, if any, consciousness plays in helping us acquire or exercise it. I also have plans to develop and expand my dissertation into a manuscript that I hope someone will want to publish someday as a book or, if not, that I can display on my coffee table and use as a riveting conversation piece for visitors.

What advice would you give to students on the job market?

I don’t know if people have heard, but the job market can be a little stressful. So maybe the most important piece of advice I have to offer, and apologies if this is too obvious, is to have a strong support network. I mean deliberately go out and establish one (fellow grad students, advisor, other faculty members, family, pets), if you don’t have one already, for the purposes of getting through this period. (And, of course, draw from the program’s own Placement Services.) I think it’s especially important to have people with whom you can edit your CV, writing sample, research statement, teaching statement, and sample syllabi. I found this kind of support extremely valuable.

What is your fondest memory from your time at the GC?

How to pick just one?! No, really, I can’t pick just one. I guess in general, when I think back to my time at the GC, some of my fondest memories involve my lovely fellow grad students from whom I learned a lot, and spent some very good times with. I think GC philosophy students are often somewhat special in their ability to juggle coursework, research, dissertating, a lot of teaching, the craziness of living in NYC, and CUNY’s various “quirks” (*ahem*), while also putting effort into ensuring that there is a positive departmental climate, and being social and supportive of one another. (Sorry—there’s something in my eye.) Some of my other fondest memories involve Friday afternoons at David Rosenthal’s excellent and long-running Cognitive Science Speaker Series. I learned so much from going to these talks and chatting with David, the speakers, and other attendees afterwards over a drink... sometimes several. It was actually one of the things that attracted me to CUNY, and it far exceeded every expectation I had of what it would offer as a rewarding/learning experience over the years.
Pragmatics & Game Theory Conference

On Tuesday and Wednesday October 13-14, 2014 Professors Stephen Neale and Rohit Parikh hosted the CUNY Pragmatics Workshop: Relevance, Games, & Communication at the Graduate Center. The conference was funded by a CUNY Collaborative Research Grant (CIRG #2033) awarded to Professors Neale & Parikh, with additional support from the Program in Philosophy and the John H Kornblith Fund. The conference brought together philosophers, economists, and computer scientists working on studies of communication, and especially those that can be modeled within a game-theoretic framework. A number of speakers from around the world and the Graduate Center presented at the conference including, Rohit Parikh (GC CUNY), Anton Benz (ZAS, Berlin), Peter Godfrey-Smith (GC CUNY), Prashant Parikh (CUNY), Ariel Rubenstein (Tel Aviv/NYU), Daniel Harris (Hunter CUNY), and Larry Horn (Yale). Deirdre Wilson, visiting the Graduate Center from UCL/CSMN, presented the keynote talk, which also served as the department colloquium. In addition to these presentations by world-renowned scholars, the workshop also allowed a number of students from the Graduate Center an opportunity to present their work. From computer science the following graduate students presented: Ignacio Ojea (Columbia), Todd Stambaugh (CUNY), Cagil Tasdemir (CUNY); from philosophy the following graduate students presented: Elmar Unnsteinsson (CUNY), Marilynn Johnson (CUNY), Jesse Rappaport (CUNY).

Graduate Admissions

We are pleased to welcome an outstanding incoming class of PhD students for Fall 2015. Due to the generous support of the Provost's Office, we have, for the first time, provided full fellowships to all incoming PhD students, nine in all, five women and four men. (We had around 200 applicants for nine places.) We had a terrific prospects' day on Wednesday April 3, which included a colloquium talk by our own David Papineau followed by a wine and cheese reception and a dinner for the prospectives attended by current students and faculty. As ever, current students played a vital role housing and hosting visiting prospectives, welcoming them to the Graduate Center, and introducing them to local watering holes. I extend my thanks to them, to the other members of the Admissions Committee (Michael Devitt, Sibyl Schwarzenbach, Amanda Bryant and Derek Skillings). Acting EO, John Greenwood, and Les Gribben in the Admissions Office. A team effort all around.

Professor Stephen Neale

Director of Graduate Admissions, 2014-15
PhD Completions

Ben Abelson
“Persons as Self-Consciously Concerned Beings”  
(Advisor: Prod. John Greenwood)

Paul Cummins
“Saving Moral Realism: Against Blackburn’s Projectivism.”  
(Advisor: Prof. Steven Cahn)

Rachel Fedock
“The Theoretical and Psychological Foundations of Care in  
Environmental Ethics”  
(Advisor: Prof. Sibyl Schwarzenbach)

Geoffrey Holtzman
“Plurality & Arationality: Individual Differences and  
Dimensions of Dispute”  
(Advisor: Prof. Jesse Prinz)

Elmar Unnsteinsson
“Representation without Thought: Confusion, Reference  
and Communication”  
(Advisor: Prof. Stephen Neale)

Mary Clare McKinley
“Three Cases of Human Exceptionalism: Genius, Saint,  
Monster”  
(Advisor: Prof. Nickolas Pappas)

Romina Pedro
“What the Tortoise Said to Kripke: The Adoption Problem  
and the Epistemology of Logic”  
(Advisor: Prof. Michael Devitt)

Kathleen Ryan
“Locke’s ‘God’ Problem: Predicting God and Liberty Amid  
The Secularizing Effect of ‘Uneasiness’”  
(Advisor: Prof. Stefan Baumrin)

Katherine Tullmann
“Problems, Puzzles, and Paradoxes for a Moral Psychology  
of Fiction”  
(Advisor: Prof. Jesse Prinz)

Elmar Unnsteinsson celebrating a successful defense  
with champagne in the department lounge on April 22, 2015.

Faculty Books

Steven Cahn
Happiness and Goodness  
Columbia University Press

Steven Cahn
Political Philosophy, 3rd Edition  
Oxford University Press

John Greenwood
A Conceptual History of Psychology  
Cambridge University Press

John Kleinig
On Loyalty and Loyalties  
Oxford University Press

Arnold Koslow
The Road to Universal Logic  
Birkhäuser

Peter Simpson
The Great Ethics of Aristotle  
Transaction

For a complete list of student, alumni, & faculty  
accomplishments see the online version of this newsletter.
This year, Philosophy Department Social Media Fellow Marilynn Johnson has continued to manage a number of initiatives with support from the Provost’s Office as a part of a project to enrich the department’s communications outreach, online, & social media presence. The Commons Site was created in Fall 2012 and since that time has received 93,259 page views, from all over the world (see bottom right). Also hosted on the CUNY Commons are numerous student and faculty websites, the Saul Kripke Center website, and the Graduate Conference website. In addition, the department now has active Facebook and Twitter accounts with 458 friends and 1,236 followers, respectively. These were created with the aim of creating stronger connections between current students and especially alumni of the department. Alumni and students are encouraged to add our social media accounts and let us know when they publish so we can share this on our Twitter feed. Keep an eye out for the newsletter survey spring of next year to be included in our next department newsletter!
Donate

Events like those featured in this newsletter are made possible through generous donations made by alumni, faculty, students, and friends of the department. We ask that you continue to give and keep the CUNY philosophy community thriving. To make a donation send a check to “PUG Fund” c/o Iakovos Vasiliou to the address listed above.

Thank you for your contribution to the continued success of our program.