
Friends of Philosophy

NEWSLETTER

FALL EDITION

OCTOBER 2004

Dear Friends of Philosophy,

The Department of Philosophy continues to evolve in the face of recent and upcoming departures and arrivals. Last year the Department lost three faculty colleagues. Howard Pospel's retirement took place last May. Charles Siewert left us to become Full Professor of Philosophy at the University of California, Riverside. Jennifer Uleman departed to become Assistant Professor of Philosophy at SUNY Purchase. The loss of these three fine scholars, teachers and friends has left our faculty depleted and in need of replenishment. Happily, help is on the way. We are searching for a new senior professor this year, and the College of Arts and Sciences has granted permission to conduct two additional searches in each of the following two years. Our tenured/tenure track faculty now number eight; in three years that number will be thirteen – the largest number of faculty we have ever had. The College and University have committed the resources necessary to allow us to grow and further improve – and we are grateful for the support we have received and been promised for the future.

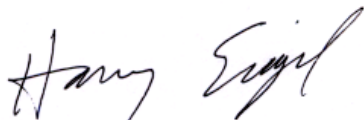
This has been a period of sustained transition and renewal. Through all this change, we have worked hard to provide the best education in philosophy that we can. Our students are flourishing at both the undergraduate and graduate levels. Several of our recent PhD students have taken faculty positions elsewhere (details on our web site, www.miami.edu/phi); our undergraduate students continue to be accepted to law, medicine, PhD and other programs, and to embark upon a wide range of career paths, after graduating with B.A. and B.S. degrees with a major in philosophy. (One of our recent graduates, Rajdeep Singh Jolly, reports on his time during and after his stay at UM elsewhere in this Newsletter.) Our faculty members are not only fine teachers, but productive, internationally-recognized scholars as well. The Department of Philosophy is one of which its Friends, and the UM community, can be proud.

As always, the department will host many colloquia, lectures, dialogues and speakers on a variety of topics this year, to which you are invited and always welcome. Of particular interest to our Friends is the Dialogue on "Quantum Mechanics and the Prospects for Immortality" led by Professor Peter Lewis, on November 17, 2004. News about these upcoming events can be found elsewhere in this Newsletter and on the accompanying flyers. Please join us for philosophical conversation as often as you can.

As you may know, the University of Miami is in the midst of a major fund-raising campaign, "Momentum," which we hope will benefit this Department along with the rest of the University community. Accordingly, we hope you will take this opportunity to renew your membership in Friends of Philosophy. As our department evolves and grows, we become better able to teach and contribute to scholarship in philosophy, and also to bring our subject to the larger Miami-Dade/South Florida community. We are committed to doing so, but how effectively we can fulfill the promise of Friends of Philosophy depends upon your support. Please help us make our department strong, and our community more philosophically alive. (*Please note:* In this and future issues of this Newsletter we will list our generous members and contributors. If you wish to contribute but do *not* want your name listed, please let me know. You can contact me at (305) 284-5411, or by email at hsiegel@miami.edu; the department office number is (305) 284-4757.)

We are always happy to hear from you and to receive your comments and suggestions for future activities. Please feel free to contact me at any time.

The Department of Philosophy greatly appreciates your interest and support. Thank you!



Harvey Siegel
Professor and Chair
Department of Philosophy

UNIVERSITY OF
Miami
COLLEGE OF ARTS AND SCIENCES

DEPARTMENT NEWS

Farewell Howard! Last May, Professor Howard Pospesel officially retired from the University after 39 years on the faculty. Howard was devoted to making UM a better place, and his career was characterized by hard work, dedication to students and colleagues, service to the Department, College, and University, and unfailing integrity.

Howard has been for many years our resident logician. While he also taught courses in ethics, epistemology, philosophy of science, philosophy of language, a range of courses in the history of philosophy, and other philosophical subjects, logic was (and still is) his chief love. Howard's passion for logic, and high standards of clarity and logical rigor, manifested themselves in everything he did at UM. Not only did he teach logic to hundreds (if not thousands) of students; he also supervised M.A. theses/PhD dissertations in logic and served as a general "logic check" device for generations of students and colleagues. His ability to spot a flaw in an argument's logic is legendary. No matter how brilliant or famous a visiting speaker was, if there was a problem with the logic, Howard would find it and make it clear to the speaker (and the rest of us) by demonstrating the fallacy or inventing the telling counter-example. Faculty colleagues often shared drafts of their papers with Howard before submitting them for publication so that they might avoid the discovery of logical flaws after their manuscripts appeared in print; I have benefited from Howard's logical acuity more often than I care to admit! He is the author of four highly successful logic texts, all published by Prentice-Hall: *Propositional Logic*; *Predicate Logic*; *Premises and Conclusions: Symbolic Logic for Legal Analysis* (with Robert E. Rhodes Jr.); and *Arguments* (with David Marans). These texts are famous and widely used in the profession. When I go to conferences and people discover that I'm from UM, it is not unusual for people to say: "Miami? Isn't that where Howard Pospesel teaches? I've been using his textbooks for years; they're the best!" Like all his students, Howard's logic students liked and respected him enormously: he still gets beeped and waved at when driving on US 1 by former students who recognize his "Logik" license plate!

Howard served the University with unusual dedication and distinction. While he served in a wide variety of capacities, he is most well known and respected for his decades of service on the College's and Faculty Senate's Academic Standards committees. He fought tirelessly to improve the quality of students at UM, arguing effectively with administrators who were happy to accept large numbers of weak students in order to generate additional tuition revenue. Howard led the fight, over many years, to increase gradually the quality of students admitted to the university. We now have the best undergraduate students we have ever had, thanks in considerable part to the pressure to increase standards that Howard and his committees brought to bear. Howard also worked tirelessly out of a deep concern for equity: he fought for integrating Miami-Dade county public schools; and at UM, for improving the pay, benefits and rights of lecturers, for a living wage for service workers, and for mainstreaming student-athletes. In 1989 Howard's service to the University was recognized by the Faculty Senate when he was selected to receive the James W. McLamore Outstanding Service Award, UM's highest honor for service to the University. Howard was the first UM faculty member to receive this prestigious award.

Howard was a terrific teacher, scholar, and department member. He was, and is, also our friend. We will miss him, and his keen sense of irony and mischievous sense of humor – and I personally will miss the wise counsel of my "senior advisor" – as he and Carmen prepare to move north to their retirement home in Eustis, Florida later this year. Good luck, Howard – and thanks for all you've done for Philosophy at UM! -- HS

Gift to Further Aesthetics

A generous gift to the Department of Philosophy from Mr. Gonzalo Parodi will be used to further research, teaching, and public discussion of aesthetics. The gift creates an annual research account for Dr. Amie Thomasson, who will serve as the *Parodi Senior Scholar in Aesthetics*. In addition, the gift will fund the *Annual Parodi Lecture in Aesthetics*. The first Annual Parodi Lecture will be given by the distinguished philosopher and art critic Arthur Danto. The lecture will take place at the Lowe Art Museum on the UM campus on Sunday, December 5th; details are listed elsewhere in this newsletter. We are extremely grateful to Mr. Parodi for his generous gift in support of the missions of the Department and the Friends of Philosophy.

UNDERGRADUATE PROGRAM NEWS

It's all change in the undergraduate program this year! Unfortunately (for us!), Dr. Charles Siewert left the department to take a job at the University of California, Riverside, so Dr. Peter Lewis has taken over as Director of Undergraduate Studies. What's more, all the officers of the Philosophy Club graduated in May. However, the club was left in the capable hands of Dom Vitiello and Peter Gauthier, and a highly rational and philosophically defensible procedure for the selection of new officers is currently underway. Dom and Peter have already organized two events this year. The first was a discussion on skepticism, which was finally held on September 21 after an unplanned delay due to Hurricane Frances. ("Who knew that was coming?" A. Skeptic.) The second was a panel discussion on consciousness from philosophical, biological and psychological perspectives, co-hosted with "Solutions" interdisciplinary forum and Beta Beta Beta, the national biology honor society. That was held on October 7, and over 80 students and faculty were present. Our own Dr. Simon Evnine spoke, along with Dr. David Wilson of Biology and Dr. Roderick Gillis of Psychology. The Philosophy Club has also been contacted by 20th Century Fox, who are interested in conducting a test screening of "I ♥ Huckabees" for an audience of philosophers! So look out for that, along with many other forthcoming philosophical attractions.

GRADUATE PROGRAM NEWS

New Director of Graduate Studies

Dr. Amie Thomasson has taken over the job of Director of Graduate Studies, as of Summer 2004. Please join the department in thanking Dr. Risto Hilpinen for his fine service as DGS!

Congratulations and welcome to our new graduate students!

We are very pleased to have with us three new graduate students who entered the Ph.D. program in August 2004:

Andrew Fyfe finally joins us with a BA in philosophy from The Evergreen State College in Olympia, Washington, after a year long delay due to his deployment to Iraq. His interests in philosophy include epistemology, pragmatism and philosophy of language.

Huaping Lu joins the department with an MA in philosophy from Peking University in Beijing, China. She has previously focused on moral philosophy, political philosophy and Greek philosophy (Plato and Aristotle), and is also developing interests in epistemology and philosophy of language.

Meggan Payne did her undergraduate work at Bellevue Community College in Bellevue, WA and Washington State University in Pullman, WA. She has a Master's degree in Philosophy from Western Michigan University. She plans to specialize in philosophy of logic and philosophy of language.

New System



The Graduate Program is also pleased to announce that its new system of requirements for the Ph.D. is now in place. The new requirements involve covering breadth of study requirements by taking 500-level courses in core areas of philosophy and its history, and replacing the old set of individual qualifying examinations with a single more in-depth qualifier in the student's intended dissertation area (broadly construed), to be taken in the student's sixth semester.

The new system is designed to enable students to make more timely progress through the program, and to help them prepare to write their dissertations, without sacrificing the breadth necessary to be effective teachers.

Second Annual Graduate Student Conference

The First Annual U.M. Graduate Student Conference in Epistemology held last January was a complete success. Participants and observers, many of whom were forming their first impression of the University of Miami, praised the conference as one of the best of its kind in the nation. For example, Eric Swanson, a graduate presenter from MIT, noted via e-mail that "You guys have the best conference around" and also stated that our conference was much better than the Harvard/MIT conference that he himself helps organize. The Second Annual U.M. Graduate Student Conference in Epistemology, to be held January 15-16, 2005, will continue this tradition of excellence. The Keynote Address will be given by Dr. John Hawthorne (Rutgers University) and an endnote address will be given by Dr. Keith Lehrer (University of Arizona). Former UM graduate students Dr. A.J. Kreider and Dr. Melissa Bergeron will also present papers, and graduate students from around the world have submitted papers to be considered for inclusion in the conference program. The conference will be sponsored by the University of Miami Department of Philosophy and the College of Arts and Sciences. Thanks to current graduate students Shane Oakley and Jeremy Morris for organizing this spectacular event.

Awards

Dr. Bernardo Cantens (Ph.D. 1999, now a philosophy faculty member at Barry University) has been awarded his 2nd APA prize, this time winning the first ever APA Prize in Latin American Thought. The prize was awarded for a paper entitled "Francisco De Vitoria's, O.P. Just Intervention Theory and The Iraq War." The essay will be presented at the annual Eastern Division meeting of the APA and published in the APA Newsletter on Hispanic/Latino Issues in Philosophy. Congratulations Dr. Cantens!

Liz Giles and **Nenad Popovic** (graduate students in our department), participated in the Stanford/Illinois Summer Institute in Philosophy of Education. The institute was sponsored by the Spencer Foundation, which provided for all expenses and a stipend. The Summer Institute brings together distinguished faculty and promising graduate students for an intensive philosophical experience.

2004 Ph.D. Graduates:

Kiriake Xeroheмона
Melissa Bergeron

2004 M.A. Graduate

Dan Yadgar

-

Recent Job Placements:

Congratulations to

Shirong Luo,

who is now Assistant Professor at Mount Holyoke College.

This semester he is teaching Comparative Ethics: East and West, and Introduction to Ancient Chinese Philosophy

Kiriake Xeroheмона

is now working as a full-time Lecturer at Florida International University. Congratulations Kiriake!

-

New Appointments:

Mike Veber

East Carolina University

Michael Shaffer

Southern Connecticut State University

Ruben Rabinsky

University of Miami

Yvette Pearson

Old Dominion University

Recent Presentations

Jeremy Morris presented a paper "A Priori Justification and Metajustification" in October at the 2004 International Symposium on A Priori Knowledge in Contemporary Epistemology held at University of Sherbrooke, Quebec, Canada. He also presented a paper "The Puzzle of Non-Being" at 2003 meeting of the Florida Philosophical Association held at Eckerd College St. Petersburg, Florida.

Shane Oakley presented a paper entitled "Defending Lewis's Local Miracle Compatibilism" at the University of Texas graduate student conference "Personhood, Will, and Identity" in April, and has a paper (co-written with U.M. alumnus Michael Shaffer) coming out in the September issue of *Philosophical Psychology*.

ALUMNI UPDATE



When chatty strangers and inquisitive elders discover that I majored in philosophy at the University of Miami, some give an approving nod and proceed to wax parapsychological or sing the praises of yoga. Others give a disapproving frown and confidently dismiss philosophy as useless. To borrow from law, approving mystics commit misdemeanors by representing their pursuits as philosophy. Philosophy is a rational method of addressing issues that do not admit of empirical resolution. Its practitioners may treat mystical propositions as objects of *philosophical* study, but only if such treatment is devoted to systematic and fair examination of all arguments for and against such propositions. Philosophers may also advance propositions about mystical propositions, but such advancement counts as philosophy only if it is supported by minimally good reasons. To be sure, I only quarrel with approving mystics who fail to abide by the philosophical method. While such mystics arouse mild irritation for representing their pursuits as philosophy, disapproving skeptics arouse outright alarm. To borrow from law, disapproving skeptics commit felonies by doubting the utility of philosophy. Being felonious, disapproving skepticism demands more attention.

When someone denies the utility of philosophy, they self-defeatingly corner or contradict themselves. Denying the utility of philosophy is arguably akin to saying that philosophy is impractical or a huge waste of time; it is arguably akin to saying that one should neither examine arguments nor support propositions with minimally good reasons. If disapproving skeptics are pressed to justify their belief in the uselessness of philosophy, consistency demands that they refrain from indulging in philosophy—in other words, consistency demands that they refrain from supporting their belief with minimally good reasons. When pressed, a principled skeptic should remain silent. Alas, disapproving skeptics do not corner themselves like this; they generally contradict themselves. When pressed, they generally say that philosophy lacks utility because it is impractical or a huge waste of time. By doing so, they offer reasons for their belief; however, by offering reasons for their belief, they self-contradictorily indulge in philosophy, the very enterprise at which they so contemptuously sneeze. Even if I forgive the disapproving skeptic for contradicting himself, I must address his claim that philosophy lacks utility. To this end, I will devote the rest of this essay to explaining how useful philosophy has been to me.

My undergraduate studies in philosophy at the University of Miami were inherently interesting, encompassing ancient philosophy, modern philosophy, symbolic logic, ethics, philosophy of law, metaphysics, philosophy of biology, and philosophy of education. My studies stimulated interest in other disciplines and led to the adoption of a healthily critical disposition toward almost everything. My studies also empowered me to approach problems creatively and from multiple angles, to analyze competing arguments, to penetrate dense prose, and to articulate complex ideas, among other things. All of the skills and habits of mind that I developed at the University of Miami's Philosophy Department are useful—and indispensable—in professional contexts and also for citizenship.

I am nowadays undertaking legal study at William & Mary Law School. Like philosophy, legal study and law practice demand analytic acuity and reward open-mindedness. Happily, my exposure to philosophy eased the transition from college to law school. As well, philosophy plays an im-

portant role in my extracurricular life. In my spare time, I read, write, think, and argue about a variety of subjects: the ideal society, the ethics of procreation, the (non)existence of God, the sources and scope of human rights, the sources and scope of moral obligation, the nature of optimism and pessimism, and then some. Many of these issues crossed my mind during an internship last summer with the South Asia Human Rights Documentation Centre in New Delhi, where I learned and wrote about state-sponsored terrorism, child labor, and the methods by which states circumvent their international obligations, among other things. These subjects raise a host of important questions that admit of philosophical engagement and resolution: May states violate the human rights of a few individuals to secure the majority from terrorism? Should we oppose child labor when such labor is a crucial source of income for desperate families? How do we reconcile international legal norms with diverse cultural norms?

As a human being, I regard myself as having a choice between substantially retiring from the world and substantially engaging with the world. Having chosen the latter course, I hope to use my ever-developing philosophical skills for the *use* and benefit of people for whom advocacy and concern are wanting. If all goes as planned, philosophy will be useful not only to me but also to others. This should give disapproving skeptics pause.

Rajdeep Singh Jolly (BA '03) is a magna cum laude graduate of the University of Miami's Philosophy Department.

ALUMNI UPDATE FORM

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NEWS : _____

Please send to: Department of Philosophy, PO BOX 248054, Coral Gables, FL 33124-4670

FRIENDS OF PHILOSOPHY 2003-2004* HONOR ROLL

INNER CIRCLE

(\$1000 and up)

Louis J. Appignani Foundation
Gonzalo Parodi
Jane Mary Zwerner

PARTNERS

(\$5
\$99

Dawn M. Moreau

00 -
9)

SUSTAINING

(\$100 - \$499)

Bernardo J. Cantens
Carl Cohen
David A. Coulson
Judith E. Crowell
William Fay Durham
Patricia L. Erwin
Lawrence M. Fishman
C. Dean Furman
Joseph George Frantin
Christian Davis Furman
John T. Granrose
Kenneth W. Goodman
Alicia Juarrero
Georgie C. Labadie
Adrian Lechter
Vicente Medina
Billie M. Robinette
Scott J. Siegel
Arthur Sokoloff
Ernest Sosa
Kurt J. Sturm
Billy Yeh

FRIENDS

(up to \$99)

Charlotte Winslow-Shea
Shanti T. Persad-Maharaj
Mark Weinstein
Orly Z. Anconina
Vivette Danon Castro
Lewis D. Chazan
Helen Louise Kilby
Walter Kraslow
David L. McNaron
Paul B. Rosencrantz
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Ramon J. Santos
Alfredo Triff
Bruce Kenneth Bartoo
John Joseph Nania
Margaret Louise Nania
Esther A. Nepomechie
Herbert C. Quay
Susi L. Seiler
David Paul Stevens
David L. Wilson

*Special Appreciation is extended to
those who have provided for the
Department of Philosophy in their
estate plans with bequests for
endowments or gifts.*

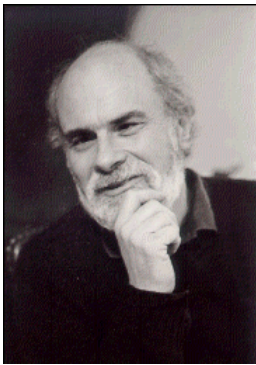
Jane Mary Zwerner

*Dedicated to supporting the philosophy
program at the University of Miami*

* 6/1/2003—5/31/2004

The Department of Philosophy is proud to present
**The first annual Parodi Lecture
in Aesthetics**

**“Art Criticism
after the End of Art”**



Dr. Arthur Danto

**Johnsonian Professor of Philosophy, Emeritus
Columbia University**

Sunday, December 5

Low Art Museum Beaux Arts Gallery

1:00 - 3:00 P.M.

Professor Danto has been with Columbia since 1951, a professor since 1966. He has been the recipient of many fellowships and grants including two Guggenheims, ACLS, and Fulbright. Professor Danto has served as Vice-President and President of the American Philosophical Association, as well as President of the American Society for Aesthetics. He is the author of numerous books, including *Nietzsche as Philosopher*, *Mysticism and Morality*, *The Transfiguration of the Commonplace*, *Narration and Knowledge*, *Connections to the World: The Basic Concepts of Philosophy*, and *Encounters and Reflections: Art in the Historical Present*, a collection of art criticism which won the National Book Critics Circle Prize for Criticism, 1990. His most recent book is *Embodied Meanings: Critical Essays and Aesthetic Meditations*. Art critic for *The Nation*, he has also published numerous articles in other journals. In addition, he is an editor of the *Journal of Philosophy* and consulting editor for various other publications.



Bring a friend. A Reception will follow

* **From the north:** take I-95 south to U.S. 1 (South Dixie Highway). Take a right on Stanford Drive and proceed directly into the University of Miami campus. The Lowe is located on the right hand side of Stanford Drive. **From the south:** take U.S. 1 (South Dixie Highway) north to Stanford Drive. Take a left on Stanford Drive and proceed directly into the University of Miami campus.

FOR MORE INFO VISIT US ON THE WEB : <http://www.miami.edu/phi>

FRIENDS OF PHILOSOPHY

DIALOGUE

Quantum Mechanics and the Prospects for Immortality

Dr. Peter Lewis
University of Miami

Wednesday, November 17
Learning Center, Room 140
7:30 – 9:00 PM

Have you ever wished that you could live forever? Some recent research in the foundations of quantum mechanics suggests that you might get your wish -- in a way. The research suggests that there is a sense in which every physical possibility actually occurs, and since it's physically possible that you will escape any particular risk of death, it seems to follow that you will live forever. But is this a hopeful conclusion? The original formulator of this argument didn't think so. Our discussion will cover the desirability as well as the possibility of immortality.



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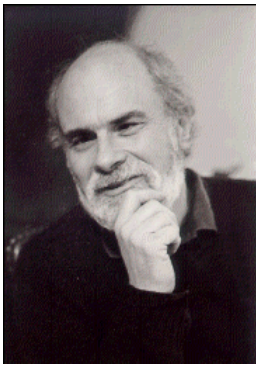
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FALL 2004
COLLOQUIUM SERIES

November 3
Thomas Pogge

(Columbia University)

November 4-5
David Wiggins
(Oxford)

November 12
Alan Goldman
(College of William and Mary)

December 10
Gerald Doppelt
(University of California, San Diego)

SPRING 2005
COLLOQUIUM SERIES

January 28
Keith Lehrer
(University
of Arizona)

February 10
Colin McGinn
(Rutgers
University)

February 11
Stephen Neale
(Rutgers
University)

March 3
Catherine Womack
(Bridgewater
State College)

March 31-April 1
David Papineau
(University of
London)

April
Date TBA
John Horby
(University of
Maryland)

1st Annual Parodi Lecture
In Aesthetics

with

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