2023-24 Annual Report to the Department from the GradDirector: A Year of Graduation.

Seattle, 4/21/2024

Good Morning Department! Hey, this is not a test! This is rock and roll! It is time for the annual report from your GradDirector!

First of all, there is good news: the official beer of the graduate program has been found. It is Blood Orange Honey by the Northern Michigan brewery Cheboygan Brewing & Co. As I found out, this beer is also a local favorite in The Peanut Barrell where some of our graduate students just recently received the Papa Joe Burger Award for being one of the most frequent customer groups there. I wonder whether we could win the owners as sponsors of our program? In any case, according to the Cheboygan web-page, this beer consists of "a unique twist on an American-style wheat ale. The addition of honey and blood orange puree results in a medium bodied beer that is very smooth with an exhilarating nose of citrus." Doesn't this - smooth, citrus, unique twist, medium bodied - sound just like a description of our graduate program? Don't be surprised about my answer: It does! And if you - like us US-Germans - wonder how to pronounce its name, Matt Kelley can help out: "shuh-boy-gn." Figure!

On an additional pre-note, the grad program in philosophy would like to send a farewell note to Dean Long who will leave us and begin his Provost career at the University of Oregon starting in June. We wish you all the best there, and we would like to thank you for your support of our graduate program. Students who were assigned to the RAship connected to the Public Philosophy Journal, at least from what I can tell, enjoyed what they learned. The RAships that are associated with the Public Philosophy Journal will stay in place for 24-25; after that we will see.

Here are the highlights of the GradDirector's report for AY 22-23. I’ll cc the Associate Dean on this so that the college can see how well we are working here in philosophy!

A GENERAL

A.0 Dates

Dates to keep in mind: the orientation for new graduate students will take place 8/15, 8/19, 8/20. There are grad school workshops on 8/16, 8/21, and 8/22. We need to work around those dates. I will ask faculty to come in for 30min slots during those days. I hope to change the structure of the orientation sessions this year to focus more on teaching, inclusivity, and practical issues.

A.1 Overall
We had a very good year. I don’t want to lie: the work on the graduate committee was at times a bit boring, but it also came with exciting sparks, due to the task of working on the strategic plan for the department. The document that the college gave us explained in length why it is not a business plan, but I had the uncanny feeling that it was! You might know one of Zizek’s Hegelian jokes:

"Hey, you look like Paul!
"What do you mean? I am Paul!"
"Well, no wonder that you look like him!"

I would like to thank Melissa Arthurton for her administrative support during the last years. Melissa retired in March. Thank you Melissa! You will be missed, and we wish you all the best for your retirement travels! Ben Lampe jumped in, and the cooperation has been very productive. I hope we can keep him. Thank you, Ben!

What did I work on during the last year? of course, I worked on

- a lot of things 😊

Don’t tell me that you expected anything different! Note that the TA and seminar evaluations are now available online. I will send a link to faculty at the end of this semester. Thank you, Stacy, for setting this up [roaring applause in the background]!

Next year, in line with our strategic plan and the main objectives that the graduate students on the graduate committee identified, we will work on

- modifying the program requirements, including rethinking phl 800.
- concrete policies regarding inclusiveness.
- pedagogy and professionalization in connection with TAing in larger lecture classes.

In addition, we must work on and update our placement process.

A.1.1 Marilyn Frye Endowment Fund

Thanks to the initiative of Prof. Esquith and Prof. Richards, we hope to establish a fund in connection with the graduate program.

Background: Prof. Emerita Marilyn Frye (Department of Philosophy, Michigan State University) is widely recognized among philosophers globally as one of the most important figures in the establishment of feminist philosophy as a major area of research, teaching, and community engagement in professional philosophy. She has been a leader among feminist philosophers in reorienting the discipline as a whole around goals of social justice and equality. Frye’s groundbreaking and influential book, The Politics of Reality (1983) has been
translated into multiple languages and is still actively being taught and studied. For her leadership and originality, Prof. Frye was awarded the Distinguished Woman Philosopher Award by the Society for Women in Philosophy in 2001. She was the Phi Beta Kappa Romanell Lecturer in 2007-08; an honor presented to an American philosopher each year in recognition of distinguished achievement and ongoing contribution to the public understanding of philosophy.

At Michigan State University she served as Associate Chair and Director of the Graduate Program in the Department of Philosophy (2000-2005) and as the Associate Dean for Graduate Study in the College of Arts & Letters (2007-2009) In recognition of the way Prof. Frye changed the conversation about feminist teaching and research in the Department of Philosophy and MSU in general, she was made a University Distinguished Professor in 2003. Her research and teaching in the Philosophy Department and the Women’s Studies Program at MSU were instrumental in setting the Department on the course that it is successfully pursuing, one of engaged philosophy committed to a more just and democratic world.

The purpose of the endowment is to encourage and support graduate student engagement with work that advances or significantly deploys, integrates, or references feminist philosophy in the sub-disciplines and associated interdisciplinary areas. Thank you, Steve and Ted, for this fantastic initiative!

A.2. Degrees

We have excellent students in our program; everything looks sharp and in shape. A record number of students have announced that they will graduate this AY (at the end of this summer): Taylor Mills (Ruiz), Gregory Rogel (O’Rourke), Jeramy Neefus (Schwartzman), A.Y. Odedeyi (O’Rourke), and Jessica Martínez-Cruz (Ruiz). As MSU’s president just recently said: "Graduation day is one the best examples of what Spartans accomplish working as a team." Our president is a wise man.

A.3. Seminars

Our seminar offerings & topics have again been quite coherent this year and will also be coherent next year. Personally, I am happy to see so much historical foundation seminars, such as seminars on Aristotle/Plato, Spinoza, and Hegel.

- 2023-24
  - Douglas (800/880), Katz (801), Lotz (820), Rauscher (810), Ruiz (897), Grey (810)
- 2024-25
  - Katz (810/880), ProSeminar
    - Plato and Aristotle on Love, Goodness, and Living a Good Life
    - Hedrick (810/850)
A.4. Graduate Conference

Congratulations to the organizers of the conference, Matt Kelley, Rebecca Pincus and Reese Haller, and all others who were involved in this conference [clapping in the background]! The keynote speaker, Stephen Ferguson, was very good in calling us to step up to the next revolution. Beyond that, I was not sure what was going on. Prof. Ferguson, in contrast to last year’s speaker, did not come from the past; rather, he seemed to be some kind of projectile from the future arriving on our campus. He neither liked Rawls nor Foucault, that much was clear 😊. We ran an extra session with the keynote speaker in connection with my grad seminar, and there was a dinner event in the context of our on-campus recruitment. The papers delivered during the conference stirred questions and were of high quality.

B ADMISSIONS

B.1. Recruitment

We again made an extra effort to recruit new students this year. It became a nail biting process. We had (less successful) on-campus visits in connection with the graduate student conference, but in the end everything turned out well! I'd like to thank faculty for their efforts! Thank you, Laura, for organizing the travel!

B.2. New Graduate Students

I am very impressed by our new graduate students. All current concentrations that we have in the department are represented, and our new students have a sufficient overlap of interests and intellectual background for making it successfully through the plural seminar phase of our program.

- Alex McNamee, f, she, BA (Montana State University)
  - cluster: bioethics and philosophy of medicine,
  - writing sample: “Challenges in Applying the Consciousness Criterion for Ethically Justifiable Organ Harvesting”
- Scott Peyton, m, he, BA (Michigan State University)
- cluster: social-political philosophy
- writing sample: “The Role of Agency in Obscuring and Legitimating Social Domination in the Work of Jürgen Habermas and Charles Mills"
- Sean Cleary, m, he, MA (University of Montana)
  - cluster: environmental philosophy
  - writing sample: “The Existential Challenges of Cyberspace”

--- Alex, Scott, Sean: Welcome to our department!

B.3. Students 24-25 (graduating students are highlighted)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Name</th>
<th>Cluster</th>
<th>Concentration or Certificate (where applicable)</th>
<th>AOS</th>
<th>AOC</th>
<th>Dissertation Topic/Title (drafts)</th>
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**Notes:**
- The table provides information on the social-political backgrounds and areas of study for various individuals.
- The table includes names, their political and social affiliations, and fields of study.
- Some entries are marked as 'tbd' indicating that the information is not yet determined or unavailable.
C AWARDS AND FELLOWSHIPS

Extraordinary Awards

Taylor Mills was honored with the 2024 MSU Outreach and Engagement Award for Community-Engaged Teaching and Learning. In addition to this prestigious award, Taylor was selected for MSU’s Urban Community Engagement Fellows Program (UCEF), a joint initiative of Michigan State University’s Graduate School and the Office of University Outreach and Engagement. Taylor also accomplished the remarkable feat of passing the Michigan Bar Exam to become a licensed attorney. Her dedication to law studies was further recognized when she received the Woman Lawyers of Michigan Foundation Award for Outstanding Female Law Student. Furthermore, Taylor was awarded the prestigious American Bar Association’s LGBT Public Interest Scholarship. Read the full story here: PHL [LINK]. Read also the full story here: CAL [LINK]. Congratulations, Taylor!! These are incredible achievements.

Varg-Sullivan Award

Nic Cottone has won this year’s Varg Sullivan Award for their paper “Addressing the ‘Puzzle’ of Gray Area Sexual Violations” which has been published in Hypatia in volume 38, issue 2. Each year, the College of Arts & Letters presents two Varg-Sullivan Endowed Graduate Awards to graduate students for their outstanding achievement in the arts or letters. Paul Varg and Richard Sullivan are former Deans of the College of Arts & Letters who dedicated their professional lives to excellence in the college. This award endowment was established in their name. Recipients are selected based on best performance or exhibition at a national or international event in the arts and best presentation at a national or international event or best-published article in the letters. Congratulations, Nic!

SCRAM

Peighton Connor has won this year’s “Special College Research Abroad Money” (SCRAM) fellowship to conduct research abroad this summer. Peighton will be interning for the Whale Shark and Oceanic Research Center (WSORC) in Utila, Honduras, as a part of the marine conservation and divemaster program. Interning there will feed into Peighton’s joint degree in Philosophy and Ecology, Evolution, and Animal Behavior (EEB), with a shared focus in animal and environmental studies. Peighton’s research, as they underline in their application, will help “re-imagine what our relations to animals might look like as well as stipulate ways in which to facilitate change in how we engage with the world. [...] At present, the majority of species addressed in animal philosophy are terrestrial.” Congratulations, Peighton! Please make sure that you are not eaten by wale sharks down there! I should note that all I know about those kind of creatures comes from Jaws and Open Water (which I could not finish because my stomach went on strike and it felt, as they say on Iceland, like Gullfoss).
According to Zizek, Jaws is about the big other. Wow! - But what the heck is the "big other?" In any case, let's re-imagine our relations to non-human sea-animals!

**Philosophy Scholars Fellowships**

Unfortunately we only had one Philosophy Scholars Fellowship available this year. Remember: [1] this fellowship improves the ability of our graduate students to come up with high quality papers, [2] leads to a better understanding of the difference between a seminar paper and a journal publication, and [3] strengthens mentoring relationships between faculty and students. Qingxuan Pan is the winner and will work with Robyn Bluhm and Heather Douglas on The Problem of Collective Therapeutic Misconception in Global Clinical Trials: Defining Responsibility Floors and Ideals for Researchers. I am under the impression that this is the longest graduate student paper title I have ever read 😊. In addition, as I mentioned on the graduate committee, Qingxuan taught me a new term: "responsibility floors!" I should mention that the responsibility floor for philosophy scholars fellowship consists of a report to be sent to the GradDirector in fall. Yeap, that's responsibility! Go Spartan!

**Philosophy Scholars Fellowships 2023 update**

Emily LaRosa's paper is in the process of being "workshopped" and became the seed for the EPIP project with an AI lab at OSU. Chase Halsne's article is still under review with a major journal. On a side note, you might find it funny that I said "work-chopped" when I came to this country. As I learned, this word is also used for illegal operations on cars 😊. Do I hear Corinne laughing in the background?

**Summer Scholar Fellowship 2022 Update**

Jonathan Hollingsworth's paper on Pollock, Postone, political economy and automation has been tentatively accepted, with substantial revisions, by Rethinking Marxism. Automated congrats to Jonathan! On a side note, next year's annual report from the GradDirector will be written by A.I. I will just have a beer and watch my computer write the report. That's luxury communism!

**Broader Impact Fellowships**

A Broader Impacts Fellowship has been awarded to Peighton Connor. Applicants can apply for an amount up to $3000. Here is Peighton: "While at WSORC I will be developing community outreach and education skills, coral reef surveying techniques, invasive species monitoring, whale shark population monitoring skills, and conservation skills working within a recognized marine institution. This skill development will operate alongside practice facilitating dialogue with scientists, philosophically analyzing scientific methodologies and pedagogies, and applying my educational training to offer tangible tools for marine education improvements." Wonderful!
McCracken Award

Qingxuan Pan has been awarded the Charles McCracken 1965-1999 Memorial Award for the best seminar paper written during an annual year by a 1st or 2nd year student. Exciting! Qingxuan’s paper title is The Problem of Collective Therapeutic Misconception in Global Clinical Trials: Defining Responsibility Floors and Ideals for Researchers. OMG! There is this term again: "responsibility floors"! The award amount is $250. We give out one award per year.

EPIP Presentations

There were no EPIP presentations this year 😞

Degree Completion Fellowships

Degree Completion Fellowships from the GradSchool have been awarded to Blake Ginsburg and Nic Cottone for 24-25. The award amount is $10,000 and relieves them from one semester of teaching in order to finish their PhD degrees. Forza!

CAL Summer Support Fellowships

Rebecca Pincus, Jessica Martínez-Cruz, Blake Ginsburg, Nic Cottone, and Qingxuan Pan received Summer Support Fellowships from CAL for summer 24. That’s a record high number. Thank you CAL!

Travel Awards

This year we again had a remarkable travel year - although we did not have the same level of funding as last year. Travel Funding Awards have been given to Jonah Branding (York University Graduate Conference on Animal Minds, an interdisciplinary conference on cognitive science and philosophy of mind, Toronto/Canada), Gabi Bussell (The International Summer School in Critical Theory 2024: Social Critique and Economics, Berlin/Germany) [I am jealous! I miss Berlin!!], Reese Haller (Philosophy of the Black Experience Conference, Washington D.C.), Jonathan Hollingsworth and Ashley Krieger (Critical Theory Conference, Rome/Italy) [Hopefully you can detect the "School of Athens" behind the wall of tourists!], Matt Kelley and Emily LaRosa (American Philosophical Association (APA) Pacific Conference, Portland), Jessica Martínez-Cruz (Tepoztlán Institute for Transnational History of the Americas, Morelos/México and Critical Genealogies Workshop, Syracuse), Taylor Mills (Ambientalismos Interseccionales/Intersectional Environmentalisms, Puerto Rico), Qingxuan Pan (Philosophy Graduate Conference, Boston), and Gregory Rogel (7th Public Philosophy Network Conference, Santa Cruz). In addition, Blake Ginsburg will take a Trauma and Self-Care Trauma Certificate Course.
Wow! Perhaps we need a flight tracker page or a Google map for philosophy graduate students giving papers all over the earth? Is that globalization?

I am aware that in most cases our awards cannot cover the entire travel costs, but I distributed everything fairly from the operation fund for the graduate program. It is never enough. BUT: if someone has a sack of gold in their basement, please send it to me, as our graduate students deserve more financial support. In any case, I hope you enjoyed your intellectual engagements at these workshops, courses and conferences! For those of you who go to conferences this spring and summer: Happy travels!

D MILESTONES

Comps

Hooray! Emily LaRosa is right now in the comps process. We wish her success! Earlier (2023) Matt Kelley, Chase Halsne, Blake Ginsburg, and Jonathan Hollingsworth passed comps.

Prospectus

Chase Halsne's dissertation prospectus Towards a materialist theory of language and Matt Kelley's dissertation prospectus History and Critique have been discussed and approved by their committees. Both dissertations are directed by Lotz. Jonathan Hollingsworth successfully finished his prospectus entitled Adorno on Truth (directed by Hedrick).

Dissertations

Will be updated at the end of this summer

Placement

Gregory Rogel has secured a PostDoc at the University of Kentucky, starting in September. Congratulations, Greg!

E INDIVIDUAL HIGHLIGHTS

Cristóbal Arellano

- Cristóbal received one of the department’s EPIP awards for the Summer of 2024 where he will work with the Greater Lansing Food Bank’s Garden Project, collaborating with them on issues related to communication among socioeconomically, ethnically, and linguistically, diverse gardeners. This is also in conjunction with his graduate certificate in community engagement.
- Through the Department of American Indian and Indigenous Studies, Cristóbal has been creating a ‘Native’ MSU website that provides information related
to resources both internal and external to MSU for Indigenous students. The Less Commonly Taught, and Indigenous Languages Mellon Grant has funded this project. Here is the link: https://native.marcom.cal.msu.edu/

- Through the Department of American Indian and Indigenous Studies, Cristóbal has been developing a map in ArcGIS, with the support of the Beal Botanical Gardens, that catalogs the Anishinaabemowin names and uses of the plants, trees, and shrubs on MSU’s campus. The Less Commonly Taught, and Indigenous Languages Mellon Grant has also funded this project.
- He presented at the American Indian and Indigenous Graduate Symposium on research he anticipates integrating into his dissertation prospectus. This is in conjunction with the graduate certificate in Indigenous studies.
- Cristóbal has been appointed treasurer of MSU’s chapter of the Society for the Advancement of Chicanxs/Hispanics & Native Americans in Science (SACNAS). In this role, he has assisted STEM graduate students with workshopping [!!] their projects for conference presentations and fundraising associated with conference travel.

Gabi Bussell

Presentations:
- Accepted into the International Summer School in Critical Theory 2024: Social Critique and Economics, 7/1-7/5/24 at Humboldt University in Berlin.

Peighton Connor

- SCRAM (see above!)
- BIF (see above!)

Nic Cottone

- Degree Completion Fellowship (see above!)
- Summer Support Fellowship (see above!)
- Varg-Sullivan Award (see above!)
- Publications
  - Public phil response piece: “Grief and the Patience Required for Acceptance: Willfulness vs. Willingness” (2023)

Reese Haller
Presentations

• “Messianism or Martyrdom?: Where to Begin with Fred Hampton’s Philosophy of Rainbow Coalition” at the Howard University Philosophy of the Black Experience Conference. Howard University, Washington DC. March 2024.
• “Reading Lukács in the Anthropocene: Objective Mediation and the Category of Nature” at The 61st Meeting of the Society for Phenomenology and Existential Philosophy (SPEP). Toronto Metropolitan University, Toronto, Canada. October 2023.
• “Across the Color Line: Racial Reification and Coalitional Politics in African American Philosophy” invited by the Society for the Advancement of American Philosophy (SAAP) at The 61st Meeting of the Society for Phenomenology and Existential Philosophy (SPEP). Toronto Metropolitan University, Toronto, Canada. October 2023.

Jonathan Hollingsworth

Presentations

• (upcoming) "Two Conceptions of Truth in Adorno." (Critical Theory Conference, Rome)

Matt Kelley

Presentations

• “Foucault’s Three Critiques of History.”
  ▪ The Possibility of Progress. 2024 Fordham University Philosophy Graduate Student Conference. The Bronx, New York. April 2024.

Ashley Krieger

Presentations

• (upcoming) "Love as a Mode of Thinking in Adorno." (Critical Theory Conference, Rome)

Qingxuan Pan
• McCracken Award (see above!)
• Philosophy Summer Scholars Fellowship (see above!)
• Presentations
  o Boston University Philosophy Graduate Conference, "Researching Values and Valuing Research: How to Bridge the Gaps between Ethics and Science"
  o 36th Conference of the European Society for Philosophy of Medicine and Health Care, "Medicine, Healthcare, and the Market"

Forza!
Christian 😊

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"There is a fire that wants to burst forth, and could not care less about what we are doing up here" (Werner Herzog about volcanoes)