

# LANGUAGE truth & GOSSIP

**A newsletter for alumni, alumnae,  
and friends of the  
MSU Department of Philosophy**

*Language, Truth & Gossip* is published annually by the Department of Philosophy, Michigan State University, 368 Farm Lane, 503 South Kedzie Hall, East Lansing, MI 48824

## Editor

JAMES ROPER

## Department Chair

MATT MCKEON

## Associate Chair and Graduate Director

LISA SCHWARTZMAN

## Director of Undergraduate Studies

DEBRA NAILS

Please visit the Department of Philosophy online at [www.philosophy.msu.edu](http://www.philosophy.msu.edu). Send your news to Joy Franks at [franksj@msu.edu](mailto:franksj@msu.edu).

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FACULTY NOTES  
& ACTIVITIES

MICHIGAN STATE  
UNIVERSITY

GRADUATE NEWS  
UNDERGRADUATE NEWS

SPRING 2014

## Greetings from the Chairperson

Dear Alumni and Friends,

Greetings! It is my pleasure to provide you with a snapshot of the state of the Department and to let you know what we have been up to during another busy year.

MSU's Department of Philosophy is internationally distinctive for its research and teaching emphasis on Engaged Philosophy, which is the application of philosophical methods to real world issues, such as global poverty, animal welfare, and climate change. The Department's theme is "Philosophy Engaged," which is instantiated by its research and doctoral concentrations in bioethics and philosophy of healthcare, environmental philosophy and ethics, and social and political philosophy.

Graduate students in philosophy and other fields regularly work with faculty on projects in these areas. Highly productive research goes on in traditional disciplinary areas of philosophy: epistemology, the philosophy of science, several areas of continental thought, logical theory, and the history of philosophy, with special richness in ancient, early modern, and 18th and 19th century philosophy. Research efforts in the areas of graduate specializations and concentrations use philosophical methods, resources, and elements of traditional areas of philosophy to engage philosophical reflection with the problems and resources of other disciplines, and grapple with pressing problems, both theoretical and practical, in social life.

Our research and doctoral concentration in environmental philosophy and ethics, instituted in 2010, continues to develop as the result of the interdisciplinary research and outreach efforts of faculty, the addition of affiliated faculty, and the recruitment of strong graduate students. For details and recent news, check out <http://environment.philosophy.msu.edu/>. MSU is an institutional member of The Consortium for Socially Relevant Philosophy of/in Science and Engineering (SRPoiSE), which is an international consortium that sponsors high-quality philosophical work related to science and engineering that contributes to public welfare and collective well-being. Several of our environmental philosophers are active players. The Philosophy Department will host the annual SRPoiSE conference in spring of 2015.

The Department continues its strong tradition of teaching. Debra Nails was the recipient of the 2013-14 Paul Varg alumni Award for Faculty. The Varg Award is presented annually to a veteran professor or associate professor who demonstrates the highest quality of overall academic achievement. Christian Lotz received the 2013-14 Fintz Award for teaching excellence in IAH. Also, two graduate students, Eian Kantor and Erik Jenson, were acknowledged by CAL for their work as teaching assistants in IAH.

Three graduate students began their programs in fall of 2013, and we have admitted four with funding for this fall. We have 58 majors, 43 philosophy minors, and 80 philosophy and law minors. This year we made awards from the Hall-Hanna Scholarship totaling \$2,850 to support five graduate students to travel to conferences in order to present their work. Last summer the Department awarded two fellowships to graduate students, funded by a generous donation from Joe Slaughter, in order to work closely with a faculty member to revise and polish a paper for publication. Both papers were accepted for publication in good peer-reviewed journals. Two Slaughter Fellowships were awarded for this summer. The Hall-Hanna and Slaughter funding is a critical element in our efforts to professionalize our graduate students and enhance their placement chances. The graduate-student productivity data for the 2013-14 academic year is impressive: 18 publications (peer-reviewed articles, chapters, and book reviews), 9 forthcoming publications, 6 papers submitted for publication, 13 instances of participation in grant work, and 80 conference



Matt McKeon  
Department Chair

*Continued on page 6*

# 2013-2014 Philosophy Events on Campus

MSU philosophers hosted an unusual array of events that brought important scholars to campus and involved colleagues and students from other departments and the region.

## SPEAKERS

**Jace Weaver** (University of Georgia, Inst. of Native American Studies), "Religion and the Red Atlantic" (Sept. 27). **Diana Meyers** (Loyola University, Chicago), "The Feminist Debate Over the Values in Autonomy Theory" (Sept. 27). **Nicolae Morar** (Penn State), "From Science to Environmental Value: An Argument for a Critical Understanding of the Normative Role of Biodiversity" (Oct. 11). **Sandra Harding** (UCLA), Nov. 4-12. **Ian McDonald** (U. of Montreal), "How Soon Is Now?" (Nov. 15). **John Corvino** (Wayne State), "The Meaning of (Gay) Marriage" (Feb. 14). **Jacqueline Sullivan** (U. of Western Ontario), "Experimentation and Construct Stabilization in Neuroscience" (Mar. 14). **Sandra Harding** (UCLA), Mar. 20-28. **Clark Wolff** (Iowa State), "Climate Change, Intergenerational Justice, and Development" (Apr. 11). **Denise James** (U. of Dayton), "Cultivating Radical Habits in the Age of Online Petitions and 140 Word Arguments or Reading Angela Davis as a Pragmatist" (Apr. 18).



John Corvino



Jacqueline Sullivan



Denise James

(History, U. of Chicago), and **Tony Smith** (Iowa State)

**Ronald Suter Distinguished Guest Lecture**  
**Martin Benjamin Distinguished Guest Lecture**

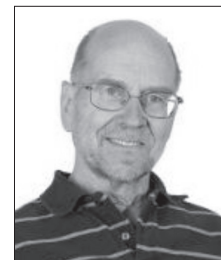
Fri.  
Oct. 18

**Kenneth Sayre**—University of Notre Dame  
Title: "Plato's Anticipation of Aristotle's Doctrine of the Mean"

**Charles McCracken Distinguished Guest Lecture**

Fri. & Sat.  
Mar. 21 & 22

**Graduate Conference**  
Keynote Speaker: **David Schweickart**—Loyola University of Chicago



David Schweickart

Sat.  
April 5

**Undergraduate Conference**  
Keynote Speaker: **Lorraine Code**—York University (Toronto)



Adam Liter and Lorraine Code

## ENDOWED LECTURES, WORKSHOPS, AND CONFERENCES

Fri. & Sat.  
Oct. 4 & 5 **Workshop in Social and Political Thought**, MSU Philosophy Department  
Global Ethics and Capitalism: Rethinking Critical Theory. Speakers included **Carol C. Gould** (Hunter College, CUNY Graduate Center), **Moishe Postone**

## Ancient Philosophy Circle



Since 2007, MSU's Ancient Philosophy Circle has provided a venue for reading works in progress—distributed in advance—in any area of ancient philosophy and its reception. Meetings are held monthly in Okemos, where all are welcome. Speakers in the past year included **Dan Herrick**, Calvin College, "Making Sense of Priority in Aristotle's *Metaphysics*"; **Nathan Sawatzky**, University of Notre Dame, "*Anagke* and *chreia* in Plato's *Republic*"; **Phil Meade**, "Music and Geometry in the Pythagorean Life," **Jeremy Kirby**, Albion College, "Essence and Contradiction"; as well as papers by locals **Terry Echterling**, **Erik Jenkins**, **Emily Katz**, **Jason Mask**, **Chet McLeskey**, and **Debra Nails**.

# Activities of the MSU Undergraduates in Philosophy

Debra Nails, *Director of the Undergraduate Program*

The year's Philosophy Club highlights were conversations with **Ken Sayre** of the University of Notre Dame and **Sandra Harding** of UCLA. **Josh Sietsema** headed the club, and **Skyler Campbell** represented the undergraduates at Committee of the Whole meetings. With funding from the College of Arts and Letters Alumni Fund, and the Department, students planned and carried out the *Fourth Annual Undergraduate Conference* with keynote speaker **Lorraine Code** of York University. Professor **Tamra Frei**, with help from **Chandi Guntupalli** and **Elly Fisher**, convened a Code reading group in advance of the conference. MSU's graduating seniors, led by **Jenny Carmichael**, refereed submitted papers, provided philosophical feedback for all submissions, chaired sessions, and acted



Josh Sietsema

as commentators for visiting students, one of whom had traveled nineteen hours on a bus from Hamilton College (NY) in order to give his paper on "Mathematical Infinity and the Presocratic *Apeiron*."

Undergraduate students took on new responsibilities this year. In addition to offering tutoring to their peers (internships in philosophy) as in the past, **Willy Penn** and Jenny Carmichael served as lab instructors for Professor **Emily Katz**'s survey course in Ancient Greek Philosophy. This experiment in hands-on philosophy enabled students who volunteered for the weekly labs to engage in philosophy in new ways *over cookies*. A great success!



Debra Nails

## OUR UNDERGRADUATES IN THE NEWS

**Jenny Carmichael** presented "Spinoza and Anomalous Monism," written with a CAL Undergraduate Research Initiative grant, at the Texas A&M Early Modern Philosophy Initiative—a three-day, all-expenses-paid conference for prospective PhD students. An avid bicyclist, with her second major in engineering and her mathematics minor, Jenny will spend the summer working for Trek in Wisconsin while doing research for her senior thesis.



Jenny Carmichael

**Timmy Matsamak** won the 2014 Zerby



Timmy Matsamak

Prize for the best undergraduate essay in philosophy with his "Art as Philosophy in Plato's Symposium." Timmy presented his paper at the Fourth Annual Undergraduate Conference. Timmy too will spend the summer doing research for his senior thesis.

**Olivia Jamrog** won the 2014 Martin Benjamin-Bruce L. Miller Award that goes to the most promising student at an early stage in the philosophy major. Olivia, a student athlete, will spend the summer in Connecticut training for crew competitions.



Olivia Jamrog

## NEWS FROM THE GRADUATE DIRECTOR

Lisa Schwartzman, *Director of the Graduate Program*



Lisa Schwartzman

Congratulations are in order for a number of our graduate students who have completed their doctorates in the past year:

- **Shannon Proctor** (June 2013), "The Habitual Body and the Possibility of Becoming New: A Phenomenological Approach to Thinking about Feminist Transformation"
- **Ari Schick** (August 2013), "Lessons for the Future? Prophecy and Policy in Speculative Bioethics"
- **Anthony Givhan** (December 2013), "The Role of Values in Theory Choice: Debating Biological Race"
- **Danielle Lake** (March 2014), "Working With: Expanding and Integrating the Pragmatic Method for a Wicked World"

Additionally, two of our current graduate students were awarded the Somers Excellence in Teaching Award for outstanding performance as an instructor of IAH courses at Michigan State University: **Erik Jensen**, and **Eian Kantor**.

Our recruitment efforts were a success, and we are excited to welcome four students into the doctoral program beginning in Fall 2014:

- **Julia Gibson** – M.A. in Philosophy (University of Colorado), B.A. in Philosophy and Russian (William Smith College)
- **Ben Kenoyer** – M.A. in Practical Philosophy and Applied Ethics (University of North Texas), B.S. in Philosophy and Social Science (Portland State University)
- **Youjin Kong** – M.A. in Philosophy (Seoul National University), B.A. in Philosophy and Communications (Seoul National University)
- **Shelbi Meissner** – B.A. in Philosophy, English, and Linguistics (New Mexico State University)



## SOME FACULTY NEWS (*random order*)



**Jamie Lindemann Nelson:** is pleased to let friends of the department know that after many decades trying to accept her male gender assignment with some semblance of grace, she has withdrawn her cooperation from that project and will henceforth live as a woman; she's also pleased to return to full-time status in the department after 3 ½ years as Graduate Associate

Dean in CAL. (There is no causal connection between these events.) Forthcoming publications include papers on gender transition in the *Hastings Center Report* and the *Routledge Companion to Bioethics*; 2014 publications include papers on proxy decisionmaking, Jane Austen, metaethics, and assisted reproduction.



**Lisa H. Schwartzman:** In the fall, Lisa Schwartzman completed her term as Chair of the Association for Feminist Ethics and Social Theory. She recently co-edited a special issue of *Journal of Social Philosophy* on "Gender, Implicit Bias, and Philosophical Methodology," which included her essay, "Intuition, Thought Experiments, and Philosophical Method:

Feminism and Experimental Philosophy." Another paper, "Feminism, Method, and Rawlsian Abstraction," was published in *Feminist Interpretations of John Rawls* (Penn State Press). In the summer of 2013, Schwartzman presented a paper at the North American Society for Social Philosophy, "Appetites, Disorder, and Desire" and developed a new course, "Women, Food, and the Environment."

### Debra Nails

Some academic highlights since the last LT&G have been work for the AAUP's Committee A—Academic Freedom and Tenure; setting up the Book Review Office for the *Journal of the History of Philosophy*; and planning a Spinoza-Leibniz Workshop with John Grey, funded with prize money from the Paul Varg Award for Outstanding Teaching and Scholarly Achievement. It was fascinating to visit Brazil—birds, Iguaçu Falls, the architecture of Brasília—for the *Conferência Da Área Latino-Americana Da International Plato Society* (Brasília University and UNESCO), where I gave a plenary paper, "Five Platonic Characters." The pleasures of wine, artichokes, and great conversation characterized the triennial meeting of the International Plato Society in Pisa, Italy, where I climbed the tower and presented "The Naturalized Epistemology of the *Symposium*," before an excursion to Rome to visit Bruno on the Campo de Fiori.



**Hilde Lindemann** has just published a book with Oxford University Press, called *Holding and Letting Go: The Social Practice of Personal Identities*, in which she demonstrates the moral importance of the work of expressing our identities and recognizing those of other people—a practice that spans a human lifetime and continues after the person has died. She became Chair of the APA's Committee on the Status of Women in

July 2014, as well as the Co-Coordinator of the International Network on Feminist Approaches to Bioethics. She was the Austen J. Fagothey



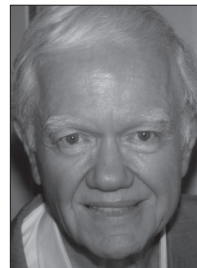
Distinguished Visiting Professor in the philosophy department at Santa Clara University during their Winter Quarter, 2014.



**John H. McClelland III:** Recently appointed Consulting Editor to the new *Journal of the American Philosophical Association*, he has published "On the Dialectical Relationship of Philosophy to African American Studies: A Materialist Assessment on *The Black Scholar* and Its Intellectual Legacy," "Dr. Cornelius Golightly (1917-1976): The Life of an Academic and Public Intellectual," "William R. Jones

and Philosophical Theology: Transgressing and Transforming the Conventional Boundaries of Black Liberation Theology" (with Ms. Brittany O'Neal), and "Dr. William Ronald Jones (July 17, 1933–July 13, 2012): On the Legacy of the Late 'Dean' of Contemporary African American Philosophers," and gave three professional presentations.

**Fred Rauscher** used his sabbatical to write *Naturalism and Realism in Kant's Ethics*, which will be published by Cambridge University Press. The book argues that Kant can be interpreted as a metaphysical but not methodological naturalist in ethics and that he is an idealist because he allows for no moral value or moral standards independent of the experience of actual rational beings. Rauscher also continues to present papers in Brazil after his 2012 Fulbright stint teaching at the Federal University of Santa Catarina when he and his family endured the harsh 65 degree Brazilian winter.

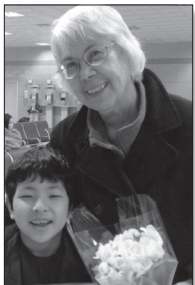


**James E. Roper:** Though recovering from a serious auto accident, he still managed four presentations (two published on-line): "Can a Large Corporation be Socially Responsible?" at the 19th Annual International Conference Promoting Business Ethics, October 18, at DePaul University, Chicago; "Corporations and the Citizens United Supreme Court Decision," at the 23rd Annual International Conference of the APPE, February 28th; "Adam Smith's Micro-Macro Argument and Its Effect on Liberal Societies," April 4th, at the MPSA International Conference; and "Ethics and the 'Professionalization' of the U.S. Military," at the U.S. Army Command and General Staff College, Ft. Leavenworth, KA, May 8th.



**Christian Lotz** was a full time DAAD visiting professor at the Brandenburg-Technical University Cottbus nearby Berlin in Germany during summer 2013 and taught four classes there. He recently published "The Transcendental Force of Money. Social Synthesis in Marx," *Rethinking Marxism*, 26/1, 2014, 130-139; "Capitalist Schematization. Political Economy, Exchange, and Objecthood in Adorno," *Zeitschrift für Kritische Theorie*, 36/37, 2013, 110-123; "Reification through Commodity Form or Technology? From Honneth back to Heidegger and Marx," *Rethinking Marxism*, 25/2, 2013, 184-200; and three reviews of recent publications in Marx scholarship; web: christianlotz.wordpress.com.

## Some Emeriti/Emeritae Faculty News (random order) .....



**Judy Andre:** I've been learning a lot and doing a lot; learning especially through travel (Japan and South Korea) and conferences (most recently, a Notre Dame meeting on "Virtue and Its Development," that brought together philosophers and developmental psychologists. What they've learned about infants is astonishing and encouraging; we appear to be "pro-social" from the moment we're born). I'm writing and presenting, too, on a variety of virtues, most

interestingly perhaps on virtue and aging. Eventually this will be a book for Rowman and Littlefield, tentatively titled *Worldly Virtue*. I have also the constant pleasure of watching our graduates find their ways in the world.

**Martin Benjamin:** My wife and I retired in 2004 and moved to Oakland, California to become "hands-on" grandparents. Over the years we've enjoyed many visits from former colleagues and students. Since 2007 I've enjoyed teaching one course a semester at nearby Mills College, a liberal arts college for women. Classes are small and the students bright, serious, and engaged. I've also



Martin and Ronna Benjamin

done some research and writing, including (with Joy Curtis) *Ethics in Nursing: Cases, Principles, and Reasoning*, 4th edition (Oxford, 2010); "Responding to Marx (Groucho, not Karl) on Obligations to Posterity," APA (2013); and "Conscience," *Encyclopedia of Bioethics*, 4th edition. (Macmillan, 2014).

**Richard Hall:** Prudy and I are happily retired in Hiram, Ohio. Or rather, partially retired. Hiram College often calls on us to teach a course. Last spring it called on us to jointly teach a course in a weekend program it has. We did a course called "What Is Science?", with me doing philosophy and history of science, and Prudy some actual science. The year before, I had to step in to complete an ethics course, when a grad adjunct (replacing a prof on sabbatical) was fired 2/3's of the way through the semester. That was a new experience! Other than that, I'm doing lots of reading, some writing, and generally enjoying retirement.

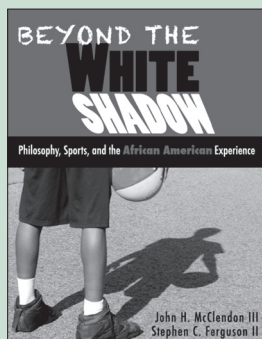


**Barbara Abbott:** More and more music (and tennis) are taking over from academic pursuits (although I am currently co-editing a volume on reference for Oxford).

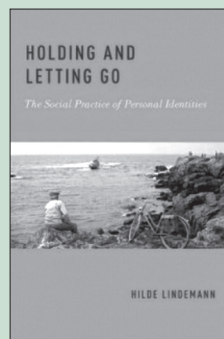


## BOOKS BY MEMBERS OF THE PHILOSOPHY DEPARTMENT

(Since the last *Language, Truth, and Gossip*)



**John H. McClendon III**  
(with **Stephen C. Ferguson II**)  
(Photo in "Faculty News")  
2012 Kendall Hunt Publishing



**Hilde Lindemann**  
(Photo in "Faculty News")  
(Oxford University Press, 2014)

*Greetings from  
the Office Staff*



Trish Miller



Joy Franks

Trish Miller is the new Department Secretary, anchoring the Graduate and Undergraduate programs. This was a return of sorts for Trish. As an undergraduate at MSU, she had studied philosophy under former chair Richard Peterson. Joy Franks continues her excellent work as Office Manager.

## Greetings from the Chairperson *continued from page 1*

presentations. Given current budget realities, generous support from alumni and friends is critical to placing our graduate students, thereby diversifying the profession and promoting *Engaged Philosophy*.

Due to the generosity of Carolyn White and Betina Henig, last year we created the Win Wilkinson Memorial Scholarship fund to support graduate and undergraduate students. This fund, along with the Hall-Hanna fund, supports both graduate and undergraduate travel to conferences. We continue to look for effective ways of enhancing the co-curricular dimension of our undergraduate program. During spring we hosted our second annual undergraduate conference. Lorraine Code was the keynote. Twenty papers were submitted. All were subjected to blind review by a minimum of three undergraduates enrolled in the capstone course, and vetted by an organizing committee of students. Five papers were selected each of which had a formal MSU undergraduate commentator. The capstone students were further involved as session chairs, time-keepers, furniture movers, and chauffeurs. By all estimates the conference was a resounding success.

There is increased pressure on the Department to seek outside revenue to support its operations and the promotion of philosophy among students and the public-at-large. We are able to point to impressive grant activity (particularly among our environmental philosophers), and our summer online courses as ways that we have made headway in generating

revenue. Development funds will continue be crucial to our efforts to enhance both the graduate and undergraduate student experiences, and sustain the intellectual life of the department. In order to streamline the process of making a gift to the Department, we have developed an alumni page on our web site at <http://www.philosophy.msu.edu/alumni/>. There you'll find links that make possible direct contributions to our various development funds.

Once again we've brought in major philosophers (Kenneth Sayre, Carol Gould, Moishe Postone, and Tony Smith) through the Benjamin, McCracken, and Suter Endowed Lectures, so generously supported by our former graduate, Steve Holtzman. Sandra Harding made two week-long visits to campus as part of her last year in our two-year arrangement with her through the College's Distinguished Affiliated Faculty program. Sandra (UCLA), a distinguished feminist philosopher of science and technology, really added to department life through her work with students and faculty.

I wish you a healthy and productive new year, and I hope that you enjoy the rest of this issue of LT&G.

Sincerely,  
Matt McKeon, Chair

### SCHOLARSHIPS AND SUPPORT

As the Department continues to face budget cuts, fundraising remains priority. We thank those who have contributed in the past, whether to special scholarship funds like the Hall-Hanna or Win Wilkinson funds or to the Department in general. If you are interested in learning more about how you can help, please contact Bridget Paff, Director of Development for the College, at 517-353-4725 or via email at [paff@msu.edu](mailto:paff@msu.edu). To make a gift, please write your check to Michigan State University and mail it to Philosophy, 368 Farm Lane, 503 South Kedzie Hall, Michigan State University, East Lansing, MI 48824-1032 and indicate AE07 Dept. of Philosophy. If you would like to donate to the Win Wilkinson Memorial Scholarship Fund, just specify that. To donate to the Hall Hannah Endowment, write AE076 on the memo line.

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