

# 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

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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

SUMMER 2017

## Greetings from the Chairperson



Matt McKeon  
Department Chair

Dear Alumni, Alumnae and Friends,

Greetings! Welcome to another edition of *Language, Truth and Gossip*. I am happy to report that a major highlight of academic year 2016-17 was the Philosophy Department's intellectual sponsorship of the MSU Center for Interdisciplinarity (<http://www.cal.msu.edu/msuci>), which will be located in the suite of offices on the west end of the 5th floor in SKH, starting in August. The Center will have a transformative positive impact at MSU and around the world. It will provide support for graduate positions, post-doctoral students, and faculty to pursue collaborative, interdisciplinary approaches to research. The leaders of the future must be able to weave humanities values into scientific endeavors in ways that lead boldly toward new discoveries and enable us to effectively respond to our most difficult global challenges. The Center for Interdisciplinarity will enable Michigan State University to educate the citizen leaders of tomorrow. It is worth mentioning that the Center will serve as a platform for publicizing and enhancing research conducted by philosophy faculty, which is becoming increasingly interdisciplinary. An interim director, appointed from Philosophy faculty, will serve for two years and lay the groundwork for the Center. Afterwards, there will be a national search for the inaugural director. Complementing this initiative is a generous estate gift the Department has received from the Yunck family that will support an endowed Chair in the Philosophy Department, the *Yunck family endowed chair in Interdisciplinarity*.

Another highlight for the 2016-17 academic year is the Department's creation of the Engaged Philosophy Internship Program (EPIP), which aims to enable graduate students to obtain professional experience in a non-academic environment that contributes to their development as philosophical researchers. It is a paid internship at no cost to the partner. Consonant with the department's mission, EPIP assumes that philosophers can engage *as philosophers* in addressing problems and concerns that confront people and communities outside the academy. EPIP seeks to partner with organizations that can provide graduate students with meaningful opportunities to develop their philosophical research skills and their professional networks in ways that could open alternate career paths for them to work as philosophers. The partner commits to doing what it can, consistent with this agreement, to provide the EPIP intern with philosophically relevant internship experiences. The interns commit to supporting the partner's mission and goals through their work. This summer we are funding two 6-week internships, and plan to do so next summer.

Finally, the "Practice Enriching Theory" Workshop was successfully held on 9/30 and 10/01. Keynotes were: Rebecca Kukla, Serene Khader, and Chris Cuomo with faculty responses from Jamie Nelson, Lisa Schwartzman, and Kyle Whyte. The primary aim of the workshop was to consider and contribute to the ways in which philosophy's involvement with complex and urgent social problems contributes not only to understanding and resolving those problems, but also furthers much of philosophy's traditional agenda, both methodologically and substantially. The MSU-graduate-student panel session, "*Workplaces for Engaged Philosophers*," provided an important opportunity for us to reflect on the direction of our graduate program. Worthwhile discussion was generated by the prompts: given your work experiences or goals, in what ways are philosophical skill sets valuable? How do you communicate philosophy to non-academic audiences? For further info about

*Continued on page 8*

# 2016-2017 Philosophy Events on Campus

## SPEAKERS

**SPEAKERS:** **Graham Hubbs** (Idaho), "How We Do Things Together: Remarks on Collective Intentionality"; **Navin K. Rai** (Former World Bank Indigenous Peoples Advisor), "How Global Climate Change Adaptation and Mitigation Financing Aggravate Adverse Impacts on Indigenous Peoples"; **Leanne Betasamosake Simpson** (Dechinta Centre for Research and Learning), "Freedom Sings: Land/Body/Resurgence"; **Eve Tuck** (Ontario Institute for Education Studies, UToronto), "Urban Education and Indigenous Social Thought"; **Ishani Maitra** (UMichigan), "New Words for Old Wrongs"; **Kevin Elliott** (MSU), "Values in Science: How To Throw Out the Bathwater and Keep the Baby"; **Richard A. Lee, Jr.**, (DePaul), "It Depends on What the Meaning of 'Is' Is: The Need for a Peircean-Scottistic Ontology"; **John Grey** (MSU), "Reduction Without Grounding: Explanatory Considerations against the Grounding-Reduction Link"; **Matt Ferkany** (MSU), "Wising Up: Are There Developmental Stages on the Path to Practical Intelligence?"; **Leonard M. Fleck** (MSU), "Just Caring: The Sufficiency Principle and the Needs of the Medically Least Well Off"; **Basarab Nicolescu**, "Transdisciplinarity and the Hidden Third: Reconciling the Sciences and the Humanities"; **Laura Cabrara** (MSU), "Neuroenhancement and the Role of Human Values. How Do They Affect Each Other?"; **Sean A. Valles** (MSU), "Ethics and Evidence in the 'Population Health Framework' Approach to Racism and Other Social Determinants of Health"; **Sean Kelsey** (Notre Dame), "Aristotle's Soul"; **Lori Gallegos De Castillo** (Stony Brook), "Epistemology of the Everyday: Isasi-Diaz's Loving Particularism as a Method for Global Ethics"; **Catherine E. Hundleby** (Windsor), "Ignorance in Epistemology and Argumentation"; **Bill E. Lawson** (Memphis), "A Dialogue on African American Philosophy"; **Mimi Kim** (Cal State, Long Beach), "Calling Out Carceral Feminisms: Women of Color Respond to Gender-Based and State Violence" & "Creative Interventions to Gender-Based Violence"; **Stephanie E. Vasko** (Toolbox Associate, MSU), "Examining Responsible Innovation at the Chemistry/Design Interface"; **Maya J. Goldenberg** (Guelph), "Trust, Credibility, and the Scientific Consensus on Childhood Vaccines"; **Mia Mingus**, "Building Transformative Justice for the Long Haul" & "Transformative Justice 101"; **Keota Fields** (UMass, Dartmouth), "Berkeley and Conceiving"; **Sahotra Sarkar** (Texas), "Interdisciplinary and Transformative Research: Examples and Challenges"; **Emily Katz** (MSU), "Ontological Separation in Aristotle's Metaphysics"; **Heather Douglas** (Waterloo), "Trust and Expertise in Democratic Societies"; **Nikolay Karkov**, "Beyond Humanitas, Toward Anthropos: Decolonizing Marxist Humanism in Eastern Europe."



Emily Katz

## ENDOWED LECTURES\*, WORKSHOPS AND CONFERENCES

Sept. 30- Oct. 1 **First Engaged Philosophy Workshop: Rebecca Kukla**, "Infertility, Epistemic Risk, and Disease Definitions";

Respondents: **Judy Andre**, **Jamie Nelson**. **Chris Cuomo**, "The Natural World as The Foundation of Philosophy"; Respondents: **Todd Hedrick**, **Michael O'Rourke**. **Serene Khader**, "Individualism and Transnational Feminisms"; Respondents: **Lisa Schwartzman**, **Kyle Whyte**. Also **Mladjo Ivanovic**, **Sophia Pavlos**, and **Uanna Spencer**.



Kyle Whyte

Sept. 23

**Jose Medina** (Vanderbilt) "Uses and Misuses of the Imagination and the American Racial Memory"  
*Suter Distinguished Lecture\**

Dec. 5

**7th Annual Proseminar Public Workshop: Ayanna Spencer**, **Bethany Laursen**, and **Kwabena Kenneth Edusei** (MSU Grad Students); **Jamie Lindemann Nelson** organized this workshop based on his Proseminar.

Mar. 17-19

**18th Annual Graduate Student Conference: Women of Color and Philosophy. Faculty Roundtable: Kristie Dotson**, **Elena Ruiz**, and **Xhercis Mendez** (see photo below); **Keynote: Mariana Ortega** (John Carroll); Sandra De Vries (Waterloo); Nii nok Cuma gook Amanda Plain (Waterloo); Youjin Kong (MSU); Maggie Newton (Oregon); Iliana Cueller (California State LA); Open Mic (Mimi Fisher, Host).

Mar. 31

**Gary Ebbs** (Indiana), "Carnap and Quine on Ontology"

*McCracken Distinguished Lecture\**

Fri.-Sat.

Apr. 14-15

530 S. Kedzie

**SEVENTH ANNUAL MSU UNDERGRADUATE STUDENT CONFERENCE**

Featured Participants: **Larry Krasnoff** (College of Charleston), **Keynote Speaker: Kenji Lota** (Washington State); Gabe Catenacci; Paul Howatt; Jared Eckert (Hillsdale); Nicole Schilling; Robert Nebergall; Zach Thornton (MSU); Shelby Engelbrecht; Leon Hister; Aine Keefer (Eastern Michigan); Nanfeng Li; Rosiland Arch; Zachary Drabczyk (Grand Valley State); John Nachazel; Jessa Stegall; Pratek Ramchandani (MSU); Nathan Wikman

Wednesday

May 11

**PHILOSOPHY DEPARTMENT RETREAT**

Michigan Wildlife Conservancy's Bengal Wildlife Center. *See photos below.*

\* **Endowed lectures** are supported by the generous contribution of Steve Holtzman.



Retreat: Group Photo



Michael O'Rourke and Jamie Nelson



Paul Thompson



Michael O'Rourke



Kyle Whyte and Sean Valles



John Gray



Christian Lotz



Xhercis Mendez

# Report on the Philosophy Undergraduate Program

Todd Hedrick

*Director of the Undergraduate Program*

## MAJORS AND MINORS: THE NUMBERS

First, the overall raw numbers:

	2011	2012	2013	2014	2015	2016	2017
<b>PHL majors</b>	68	78	79	58	54	70	62
<b>PHL minors</b>	59	45	47	43	40	56	41
<b>PHL-Law</b>	73	68	76	80	73	74	77
<b>TOTAL</b>	200	191	200	181	167	200	180

These numbers are snapshots of students that the undergraduate advisors (Todd and Amy, Debra in past years) have of students at all levels who have declared for a major or minor in Philosophy—the numbers change, but this is how they looked on 4/27/17. According to these, the major witnessed a notable decline in 2014-15, followed by a spike (along with a seemingly anomalous spike in the traditional minor) in 2016, with 2017 witnessing the minor returning sharply to pre-2016 levels, the major settling in between, and the law minor holding steady at 75-80 students. It is unclear to me what this represents. By another metric, the number of students graduating with a degree in philosophy during FS16, SS17, and US17 (which should be 15, if all goes as planned) is nearly identical to last year, and the number of students with enough credits to be rising seniors set to graduate during the next academic year looks right now to be historically somewhat high (15-20). But it does seem that 2016-17 was not a growth year for the major, overall.

Unfortunately for the department, a full 21 of the 62 majors are not primary majors (19 additional majors, 2 secondary majors). These designations make no difference at all in terms of curriculum (i.e., what students have to do to finish the major), but it does impact the way the upper echelons of the university count our major. I do not anticipate that there is much to do about this—philosophy at MSU, as we know, is often a field that students come to in their second and third years, meaning that it is not their initial major designation, and students migrating to philosophy from other colleges often keep an initial major (which becomes their “primary” one by default).

## DEMOGRAPHICS

	Percentage women	Percentage non-white
<b>Major</b>	23/62 (37%)	15/62 (24%)
<b>Minors</b>	54/118 (46%)	24/118 (20%)

As you can see, there is a significant difference between the major and the minors in terms of gender demographics: within the minors, women constitute nearly half of the students, whereas this number is rather lower within the major (although still notably higher than the 30% [as of 2014] national average). Overall, women represent 43% of the undergraduate cohort, virtually unchanged from last year (44%).

In terms of students of color, there is closer parity between majors and minors—overall, 22% of the student cohort is non-white. This is consistent with previous years: although, since 2012, the department

has increased its percentage of women students from the high 20s/low 30s to low/mid 40s, the percentage of students of color has held steady in the low 20s since this period (and before). Women of color are rare in the major (3/62), somewhat less so in the minors (12/118).



Todd Hedrick

## ADVISING



Amy Lampe

2016-17 was the first year the department had a dedicated academic advisor (Amy Lampe—shared with Theatre) who shared advising duties with myself. Amy tended to handle meetings attending to nuts-and-bolts of University and CAL requirements, myself academic and curricular advising appointments. Hopefully, this arrangement will represent better degree auditing and better progress updates for students, which should reduce attrition. In the future, Lampe will lead efforts to connect students to more robust career advising, alumni connections/outreach, and experiential learning opportunities (centered around the PHL 493 internship).

## PHILOSOPHY CLUB

The Philosophy Club was helmed this year by Zach Thornton (Nicole Schilling, public relations; Josh Schroeder, treasurer). The club started the year well, but the rest of the year was a mixed bag. Events went as planned, but could have been better organized and publicized, as I will point out to next year's leadership group (Nicole Schilling, president; Logan Cross, treasurer).

**Philosophy Tutoring:** Three senior majors (Paul Howatt, fall; John Nachazel, spring; Zach Thornton, both semesters) tutored students Tuesday and Wednesday evenings. While there was a slight decline in the number of students served, feedback on the quality of the tutoring was good/very good. Most of the tutoring was for the 130 and 330 logic courses.

## AWARDS



Prratek  
Ramchandani

This year's award winners:

**Zerby Prize** (best paper): Prratek Ramchandani, “Particular Forms in Aristotle’s Metaphysics: Resolving the Dilemma”

**Benjamin Award** (most promising undergraduate student in an early stage of their studies): Nicole Schilling

Undergraduate Philosophy Conference: For details regarding this well attended conference, see 2016-2017 PHILOSOPHY EVENTS ON CAMPUS.



## 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 doctoral and master's degrees in the past year:

### PHD'S AWARDED (defense date)

- **Esme Murdock** (July 2016), "Ecological Reconciliation: Bridging Humanity and Nature for Justice"
- **John Wallace** (November 2016), "Contestation and Discursive Practice: Issues for Participatory Democracy"
- **Mladjo Ivanovic** (December 2016), "Holding Hands with Death: Ethical Promises and Political Failures of our Humanitarian Present"
- **Zach Piso** (March 2017), "Social-Ecological Systems, Values, and the Science of 'People Management'"
- **Craig Merow** (May 2017), "A Moral Framework for the Practice of Companion Canine Veterinary Medicine"
- **Alex Neitzke** (May 2017), "Health Care Capital: An Account of Health Care Production as a Critique of Health Care Ethics"

### MASTER'S DEGREES AWARDED (defense date)

- **Amelia Martin** (August 2016), "Mapping Rebellions: Liberatory Potentials of the Body"
- **Douglas Ponticos** (March 2017), "Re-embodying Nietzsche in an Age of Nihilism"
- **John Dombrowski** (May 2017), "The Transcendentally Free Power of Choice in Kant's Philosophy"

**Shelbi Nahwilet Meissner**, a fourth-year graduate student, was awarded the *Somers Excellence in Teaching Award* for outstanding performance as an instructor of IAH courses at Michigan State University.

The summer of 2017 marks the inaugural year of the Engaged Philosophy Internship Program, which provides two graduate students with the opportunity to work in a paid internship at a partner organization, employing their philosophical skills in a way that benefits both the organization and the larger community. This summer, **Shelbi Nahwilet Meissner** will be working in Southern California with Avellaka, a tribally run program that provides advocacy and community awareness regarding violence against Indigenous women. **Ayanna De'Vante Spencer** will be working in New York City with Girls with Gender Equity, an organization committed to the physical, psychological, social, and economic development of girls and women.

Our recruitment efforts were a success, and we are excited to welcome four new graduate students into the doctoral program beginning in Fall 2017:

- **Jeffrey Davis**—MA in Philosophy from Eastern Michigan University, and BA in Philosophy and Theatre Arts from Eastern Michigan University. He is interested in social epistemology, ethical theory, feminist philosophy, philosophy of race, and moral psychology.
- **Charles Hayes**—MA in Environmental Philosophy (with a graduate certificate in Natural Resource Conflict Resolution) from University of Montana; MLitt in Theology, Imagination, and the Arts from University of St. Andrews; and BA from Eastern University in Philosophy and Theology. He is interested in environmental ethics and policy, climate change, and environmental aesthetics.
- **Kathleen Lowenstein**—MA in Ethics and Applied Philosophy and BA in Philosophy from University of North Carolina at Charlotte. She is interested in the philosophy and ethics of mental health and illness; critical philosophy of race; and feminist philosophy.
- **AY Yomi-Odedeyi**—MA in Philosophy University of Washington and BA in Philosophy from the University of Waterloo. She is interested in Black feminist epistemology, feminist and queer theory, social and political theories of justice and liberation, and critical race theory.

And finally, congratulations are in order for the following students who have received tenure-track jobs in the last year:

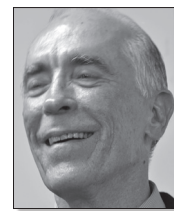
- **Mark Balawnder**, Delta College, Instructor, Tenure Track
- **Alex Neitzke**, Adelphi University, Assistant Professor, Tenure Track
- **Samantha Noll**, Washington State University, School of Politics, Philosophy, and Public Affairs, Assistant Professor, Tenure Track



Alex Neitzke (see above) and Leonard Fleck (Center for Ethics and Humanities in the Life Sciences)

## Center for Ethics and Humanities in the Life Sciences

Tom Tomlinson, *Director*



Tom Tomlinson  
*Director*

This last year all the Center for Ethics faculty have been investing enormous time and energy to developing materials and activities for the radically new curriculum the College of Human Medicine launched in Fall 2016, "Shared Discovery", which eliminates the courses the Center had created and taught for many years.

Two people especially critical in this were **Libby Bogdan-Lovis**, and **Karen Kelly-Blake**. Despite this commitment, each of them continued with other responsibilities and research projects. Libby Bogdan-Lovis continued to manage the Center's Brown Bag webinar series and other outreach initiatives. Additionally, she's a member of the research team for a Science and Society at State (S3) funded project "Coworker Stigma Towards Lactating Mothers in the Workplace."

As part of a multi-institutional research project examining medical workforce policy to increase diversity in medicine, Karen Kelly-Blake presented preliminary findings entitled "Danger Talk: The Covert Costs of Racial/Ethnic Concordance in the Medical Workforce" at the National Association for African American Studies and Affiliates.

In addition to her clinical ethics consultation work, **Devan Stahl** is working on two empirical projects, one

developing a model with Sparrow NICU providers on how best to secure informed consent for common procedures, and one gathering information on patient preference predictors for older persons with dementia. Dr. Stahl has presented a number of talks inside and outside the university, on topics including disenchantment in medicine, transhumanism, patients who hope for miracles, disability accommodations in medical school, the impact of faith for persons with autism, and treating children with Trisomy 18. She has also published papers on the right not to know one's medical prognosis, art and medicine, and the meaning of the image of God within bioethics and disability theology.

**Laura Cabrera** published a commentary in *AJOB Neuroscience* regarding external pressure as a key objection against neurosurgery for imprisoned psychopaths, and a perspective article on reframing human enhancement in *Frontiers Sociology*. She has a chapter on environmental neuroethics to be published in the book *Neuroethics: Anticipating the Future*, with Oxford University Press. In addition to a number of local presentations, she has presented at numerous international events. These include a workshop "From Algorithmic States to Algorithmic Brains" held in Galway, Ireland on her work related to neuroenhancement and values; and at the

13th World Congress of the International Association of Bioethics in Edinburgh (a panel on environmental neuroethics).

Finally she co-organized together with Philosophy colleague **Robyn Bluhm** the workshop "Pharmacological and Neurosurgical Psychiatric Interventions: Through the Looking Glass" as part of our S3 grant, and was involved in the Neuroscience Fair leading a booth on "Neuroethics goes to the movies!"

**Tom Tomlinson** continues work on a project with UM colleagues looking at biobank donors' "non-welfare interests" in what later happens with their donations. He assists Dr. Stahl with the clinical ethics services the Center provides to Sparrow Hospital and in development of methods for providing teleconferenced ethics consultations. He is beginning a project looking at ways to improve informed consent for participation in clinical trials that investigate ways to manage or prevent immune reactions to transplanted organs, and is developing a book proposal tentatively titled "The Lure of Immortality." He has announced his intention to step down as Director no later than June 30, 2018.

## Shelbi Nahwilet Meissner Wins Somers Excellence in Teaching Award



Shelbi Nahwilet (nah-wee-let) Meissner is a third year Ph.D. student in the Department of Philosophy, as well as a graduate affiliate of American Indian Indigenous Studies at MSU. She received her undergraduate degrees in philosophy, linguistics, and English from New Mexico State University. Shelbi's doctoral research concerns the relationships between Indigenous languages and Indigenous epistemologies, with special attention the implications of these relationships for Indigenous language revitalization programming and curricula. She is currently studying her ancestral language, Luiseño, through a revitalization program at California State University. In addition to being a self-proclaimed language nerd, Shelbi is passionate about youth activism and co-creating Indigenous feminist pedagogies.

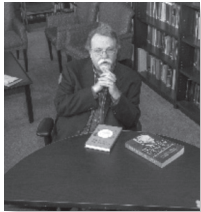
### [Some Student Comments:]

- Shelbi Meissner is an excellent TA who promotes discussion and makes me willing to participate in discussion. She's open and friendly, making it easy to talk to her, she's also very empathetic which in a sensitive course like this is a necessity.
- Shelbi Meissner has gone above and beyond to help her students and to make sure they understood the materials and also understand why they got the grades they got and how to be prepared for classes. She's an excellent teacher that I've had a wonderful time learning from.
- I would nominate Shelbi Meissner because she really relates to her students she is teaching. The environment in her classroom is relaxed but also focused. She takes her time to make sure each student is being successful and is getting the best grade they deserve."

Quoted from the Somers Excellence in Teaching page: <http://cisah.msu.edu/teachingawards/some/>

## SPECIAL REPORTS OF FOUR FACULTY MEMBERS

### Paul Thompson Receives Two Major Honors



As reported in the May Philosophy Department Newsletter, Paul Thompson was honored by Michigan State University as a recipient of the William J. Beal Outstanding Faculty Award on Feb. 7, 2017. This is MSU's highest level of recognition for career accomplishments, and Paul expressed his gratitude to his colleagues who took

great pains to assemble the nomination packet that was reviewed by the awards committee. He believes he would not have received this honor but for the support of those who wrote in behalf of his nomination. Paul especially thanks Michael O'Rourke for herculean efforts on Paul's behalf. The other award Paul got last year was "Book of the Year" from the North American Society for Social Philosophy. Previous winners of this award include Amartya Sen, James Sterba and Martha Nussbaum.

### John H. McClendon III: A Special Feature



John H. McClendon III



Maya McClendon (38 inch vertical)

On a personal note, I proudly announce that Maya McClendon, my youngest granddaughter, graduates from Arizona State

University with a major in psychology. As a Division 1 volleyball player, Maya finished her athletic career surpassing 1,000 kills. Maya's future plans include becoming a physician.

#### Publications:

- In July, 2017, the forthcoming release of *Philosophy of Religion and the African American Experience: Conversations with My Christian Friends* with Brill Academic Publishers.
- "Race" to the Finish Line: African Americans, Sports and the 'Color-Line' in Naomi Zack, Editor, *The Oxford Handbook of Philosophy and Race* (Oxford University, 2017).
- "Notes on Consciencism: The Epistemological Break and the Notion of Nkrumaism in *Disentangling Consciencism: Essays on Kwame Nkrumah's Philosophy*," Martin Ajei, Editor, (Lexington Books, 2016).
- "On the Dialectical Evolution of Malcolm X's Anti-Capitalist Critique: Interrogating His Political Philosophy of Black Nationalism co-authored with Stephen Ferguson in *Malcolm X: From Political Eschatology to Religious Revolutionary*" in Dustin J. Byrd and Seyed Javad, Editors, (Brill, 2016).

#### Papers presented at Professional Conferences & Invited Lectures

- "African American Studies: The Problem of Philosophical Definition" American Philosophical Association Eastern Division, Radical Philosophers Association (January 5)
- "The Capitalist State and the Political Economy of Democracy" Keynote Address at the 11th African American Intellectual Symposium, "2016 Presidential Election Make America White Again" Martin Luther King/Gunner Myrdal Lectures Series, Fresno State University (April 20)

### Catherine Kendig on Her First Year at MSU



Joining the department has been the catalyst for a year of incredible learning, teaching, and research. I've been so welcomed and so supported in my transition to MSU. The encouragement, support and guidance of so many of the faculty and the inspiring passion of the students has been simply amazing.

With it, I've been able to do so much. After

some wonderful student presentations and stimulating discussions on various topics within philosophy of science, metaphysics, AI, and neuroprosthetics in my two classes in the Fall semester at MSU, I made a temporary move to the Center for Philosophy of Science at the University of Pittsburgh as Visiting Research Fellow at for the Spring Term. Whilst there I participated in the academic life of the Center under the directorship of Edouard Machery by sitting in on a class given by Eva Jablonka on the extended evolutionary synthesis, attending the fellows' reading groups, and Center workshops on Pluralism and Pragmatism. I was also invited to give a talk on my research towards a practice-based metaphysics for homology as part of the Colloquium series and even made a short 5-minute fellows YouTube video. Being a Center Fellow was an incredible opportunity and I'm so glad MSU made that possible.

Opportunities this year have seemed to multiply. In May, I was in the UK to give a talk for the University of Cambridge Philosophy of Science seminar series. In June-July I spent as a Visiting Researcher at the Institut für Philosophie at Leibniz Universität Hannover. Whilst in Germany I attended two workshops—one on "Progress in Science and Society with Philip Kitcher" and the other, "Inclusion and Exclusion in Philosophy" in Hannover. In addition, I was one of the keynote speakers for the Workshop "Can Biological Practice Inform Metaphysics" at the University of Cologne, and I was invited to give a talk as part of the Institut für Philosophie colloquium series in Hannover. In July I will be travelling to Sao Paulo, Brazil to take part in the International Society for History, Philosophy and Social Studies of Biology where I will present two papers—one on Rob Wilson's new book *The Eugenic Mind Project* and critical race theory and another on individuation and sortals in taxonomy. In between, I've been running, rambling, punting, and exploring with my fiancé, Thomas Reydon.

### Matt Ferkany on his Return to Full Time in Philosophy



Things have been going well since my return to Philosophy. I am delighted to be teaching regular sections of 340 and 440 and to return to teaching 342 this Fall. While as of this August my position will be transferred completely from Education to Philosophy, I continue to pursue various projects in moral education. This Spring I participated in a book symposium

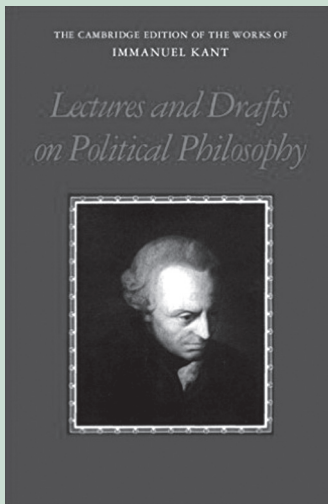
that is being published as a special issue in *Theory and Research in Education*, circulated a paper on practical intelligence and its

*Continued on page 8*



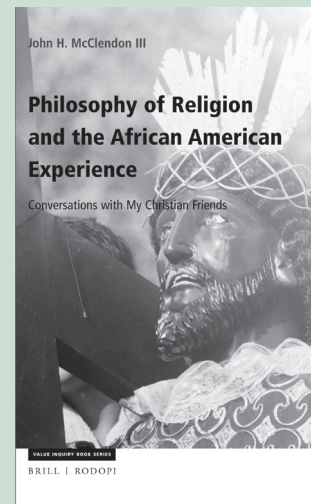
## BOOKS BY MEMBERS OF THE PHILOSOPHY DEPARTMENT

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



Frederick Rauscher  
(Editor and Translator)

"This book is the first translation into English of the Reflections which Kant wrote whilst formulating his ideas in political philosophy: the preparatory drafts for Theory and Practice, Toward Perpetual Peace, the Doctrine of Right, and Conflict of the Faculties; and the only surviving student transcription of his course on Natural Right. Through these texts one can trace the development of his political thought, from his first exposure to Rousseau in the mid-1760s through to his last musings in the late 1790s after his final system of Right was published. The material covers such topics as the central role of freedom, the social contract, the nature of sovereignty, the means for achieving international peace, property rights in relation to the very possibility of human agency, the general prohibition of rebellion, and Kant's philosophical defense of the French Revolution." (From the Cambridge Press Website)



John H. McClendon III

"Most white philosophers of religion generally presume that philosophy of religion is based on what is a false universality; whereby the white/Western experience is paradigmatic of humanity at-large. The fact remains that Howard Thurman, James H. Cone and William R. Jones, among others, have produced a substantial amount of theological work quite worthy of consideration by philosophers of religion. Yet this corpus of thought is not reflected in the scholarly literature that constitutes the main body of philosophy of religion. Neglect and ignorance of African American Studies is widespread in the academy. By including chapters on Thurman, Cone and Jones, African Americans and Christianity functions as a corrective to this scholarly lacuna." (From the Brill Website)

*Greetings from  
the Office Staff*



Trish Miller



Joy Franks

Trish Miller is the Department Secretary, anchoring the Graduate and Undergraduate programs. 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*

the workshop check out: <http://www.philosophy.msu.edu/events/biennial-engaged-philosophy-workshop/>.

This event, sponsored by the Philosophy Department with generous support from Steve Holtzman and Paul Schuele, introduced what we plan to be a series of biennial workshops that uphold the Department's long-established tradition of pursuing philosophy that contributes to the understanding and resolution of significant social and political problems, in areas such as health care practice, environmental policy, response to global inequities, and gender, racial, ethnic and indigenous justice. The series will deepen connections between scholars working in these and related areas, enhancing the quality and impact of these ideas.

We continue to make awards from the Hall-Hanna and Win Wilkinson fund that serve to enhance both the professionalization of our graduate students and the co-curricular dimensions of our undergraduate program. Development funds are vital in support of the research activities of our graduate and undergraduate students. The alumni page on our website <http://www.philosophy.msu.edu/alumni/> has links that make possible direct contributions to our various development funds.

I wish you a healthy and productive new year, and I hope that you enjoy the rest of this issue of *LTG*.

Sincerely,

Matt McKeon, Chair

## Matt Ferkany on his Return to Full Time in Philosophy *Continued from page 6*

development, and applied for and won a CAL Summer Faculty Fellowship. That project concerns the nature of moral intuitions and how they can be educated and refined and will involve both philosophical and interdisciplinary empirical research. I am incredibly grateful to Philosophy for welcoming me back into the fold. I'm having a great time with a great group of colleagues.

### 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-Hannah 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.

A newsletter for alumni(ae) and friends  
of the MSU Department of Philosophy  
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