Dear Alumni and Friends,

It’s my pleasure to welcome you to the first issue of Sapientia, the annual newsletter of the Philosophy Department at Purdue.

The purpose of Sapientia is to keep its readers abreast of the accomplishments of faculty members and students in the Philosophy Department. Let’s begin with books. This issue includes articles on four, written by Purdue philosophers Dan Kelly, Leonard Harris, Jacqueline Marina, and Christopher Yeomans.

You can also read about the research by Michael Bergmann and Patrick Kain on their $550,000 Templeton-supported project on the issue of Knowing in Religion and Morality, and about another Templeton Grant, which Paul Draper received for a second year of research at the Center for the Philosophy of Religion at the University of Notre Dame.

Hosting conferences is an important way in which a university or an academic unit can advance scholarship. We have had three in the past two years: the 4th Midwest Epistemology Workshop, a UNESCO sponsored African Diaspora Conference, and the Annual Spring Workshop of the Moral Psychology Research Group. In September 2012, we will host a conference on Challenges to Religious and Moral Belief: Disagreement and Evolution, funded by Bergmann and Kain’s Templeton Grant. In 2013, the World Congress of Philosophy will convene in Athens. Our very own William McBride, as President of FISP, is in the midst of organizing the plenary sessions, symposia, and sections of this conference.

Colloquia are an indispensable part of an academic unit’s intellectual life. We have had ten this past year, including the inaugural lecture of the Thomas H. Scholl Endowment Fund for Visiting Philosophers, which was given by Yale University’s Shelly Kagan. This past year was also the first of a three year grant, provided by the Provost’s Office, for Lectures in Ethics, Science, and Policy, which continue the very successful Lectures in Bioethics, founded by graduate students Nicolai Morar and Jonathan Beever and currently organized by Jacob Kuhn and Paul Danyi.

Next year, we will launch several new initiatives—WiPhi (Women Into Philosophy), Philosophy Luncheon, and Philosophy Night—all of which are aimed at getting more undergraduates, particularly women, involved in the study of philosophy. This past year, our undergraduate scholarships (the Clitheroe and Rowe Scholarships) went to Jim Elliott, Michael Lang, and Christian Herring. The department’s Outstanding Senior Award went to James Ma. Congratulations to them all.

We will also place a renewed emphasis on the professionalization of our graduate students, which will involve luncheons, paper presentations, workshops on teaching, strategies for successful publishing, and discussing ways of maximize the chances of getting a job in a tough market. Three graduate students will be funded in 2012-13 through PRF Grants: congratulations to Justin Littaker, Justin Matchulat, and Sophia Stone. I also wish to congratulate Dan Kelly and Chris Yeomans (who introduce their books in this issue) on receiving tenure and promotion to Associate Professors.

Last but not least, I wish to express my gratitude to our donors, whose generous contributions help so much with funding initiatives and activities like the ones mentioned above.

Cheers,

Matthew Stray
Radical skepticism questions not only the rationality of our perceptual beliefs about the physical world around us (a skepticism that is already quite extreme), but also the rationality of our memory beliefs about the recent and distant past, our introspective beliefs about our own thoughts and feelings, and our intuitive a priori beliefs about simple mathematical and logical matters. Perceptual and radical skepticism are not taken very seriously by people in their everyday lives. Moral and, especially, religious skepticism are. Nevertheless, perceptual and radical skepticism are more similar to moral and religious skepticism than one might initially think. In each case, the skeptical challenge is formidable, but in each case a satisfying response is available, even if the response won’t satisfy the committed skeptic.

As part of a multi-year research project, sponsored by the John Templeton Foundation and Purdue University’s Center for Humanistic Studies, I am writing a book tentatively titled Radical, Moral, and Religious Skepticism. The book begins by highlighting ways in which perceptual and radical skepticism are similar to moral and religious skepticism; it concludes by considering ways in which moral and religious skepticism are often thought to differ from perceptual and radical skepticism. The first half of the book focuses on how philosophers have responded to perceptual and radical skepticism and uses insights from such responses in replying to moral and religious skepticism. The main insight I’ll be drawing upon is that, when engaging perceptual and radical skepticism (where we have worries about the gap between our evidence and the truth of the beliefs based on that evidence), it’s important to realize that the justification of our perceptual, memory, introspective, and a priori (mathematical and logical) beliefs does not depend on having good arguments for the truth of these beliefs. Instead, these beliefs (many of them) are noninferentially justified—that is, they are justified in a way that doesn’t depend on making an inference or having an argument. This noninferential anti-skepticism—applied to perceptual, memory, introspective, and a priori beliefs—provides a response to skeptical worries that is sensible and satisfying for those who hold such beliefs, even if it leaves committed skeptics about these matters unmoved.

The same sort of thing can be said on behalf of moral and religious beliefs, where there are similar worries about the gap between the evidence for such beliefs and their truth: in those cases too we can see how the beliefs in question can be justified noninferentially; and in those cases too we can see how, from the perspective of moral and religious believers, noninferential anti-skepticism can be a sensible and satisfying response, even if committed skeptics remain unconvinced.

The second half of the book considers two important reasons for thinking that perceptual and radical skepticism are different from moral and religious skepticism. The first alleged difference has to do with disagreement: it is commonly thought that there is a lot more disagreement in moral and religious belief than there is with perceptual, memory, introspective, and a priori belief. This is sometimes taken to show that the case for moral and religious skepticism is successful whereas the case for radical and perceptual skepticism is not. While granting that there is something to the claim that there is more disagreement in the case of moral and religious belief than in the case of the other beliefs mentioned, I argue that this disagreement doesn’t force us, on pain of irrationality, to moral or religious skepticism.

The second alleged difference has to do with the evolutionary histories of our belief-forming mechanisms. The concern is that evolutionary accounts of the origins of, say, human perceptual beliefs don’t give us a reason to be skeptical of those beliefs whereas evolutionary accounts of our moral or religious beliefs do give us reason to be skeptical of them. Two points seem to support this concern: first, if the perceptual belief-forming mechanisms of our ancestors did not reliably generate true beliefs, then those mechanisms wouldn’t have been adaptive (i.e., advantageous for the purposes of survival and reproduction), in which case those mechanisms wouldn’t have continued to exist in succeeding generations; second, even if the moral or religious belief-forming mechanisms of our ancestors did not reliably produce true beliefs, it would still have been adaptive to have those mechanisms and the beliefs they produced, so they would have continued

---

WHO WROTE THIS?

A: “In philosophy we do not draw conclusions, ‘But it must be like this!’ is not a philosophical proposition. Philosophy only states what everyone admits.”

B: “It looks to us, my friend, as if you mean to imply that passing the time with friends over a drink-provided we behave ourselves—is a considerable contribution to education.”

C: “To be is to be the value of a bound variable.”

D: “Whenever there is a right, the case is one of justice, and not of the virtue of beneficence; and whoever does not place the distinction between justice and morality in generally, where we have now placed it, will be found to make no distinction between them at all, but to merge all morality in justice.”

E: “One would never discover the limits of soul, should one traverse every road so deep a measure does it possess.”

F: “the mind should not multiply entities beyond necessity. What can be done with fewer… is done in vain with more.”

Names listed on page 5 of this issue.
Mike Bergmann on Knowing in Religion and Morality

to appear in later generations. If those two thoughts are right, then it looks like our perceptual beliefs track the facts about our physical environment (i.e., those beliefs are responsive to those facts—we have them because of those facts) whereas our moral and our religious beliefs don’t track the moral and religious facts. This is supposed to make the case for moral and religious skepticism succeed where the case for perceptual skepticism failed. In response to this evolutionary challenge to our moral beliefs, I argue that theists have available a reply that nontheists lack, but that there are also additional adequate responses available to both theists and nontheists. And in response to the evolutionary challenge to our religious beliefs, I argue that evolutionary accounts of them do not show that religious belief is either unreliable or non-truth-tracking.

In short, the book argues, first, that unless we can show that our moral and religious beliefs are reliable, we needn’t be skeptical of all our perceptual or memory beliefs. We needn’t be skeptical of all our moral or religious belief any more than we are of all perceptual or memory beliefs.

Michael Bergmann is Professor of Philosophy at Purdue, where he has been since 1997. He is the author of Justification without Awareness (Oxford, 2006) and teaches courses in epistemology, metaphysics, and philosophy of religion. In the Fall of 2011, he was on leave to work on the monograph described here. In the summer of 2010, he and Patrick Kain (also in the Purdue philosophy department) began work on a three-year $550,000 project entitled Knowing in Religion and Morality, funded by the John Templeton Foundation, with support from Purdue University. The project has four main components: (i) a monograph written by Bergmann, (ii) a 2011 summer seminar led by Bergmann for junior faculty and advanced graduate students, (iii) a 2012 interdisciplinary conference co-organized by Bergmann and Kain, and (iv) a volume co-edited by Bergmann and Kain that collects together the papers from the 2012 conference.

For more information, see: www.knowinginreligionandmorality.com.

An Interview with Paul Draper on the Evidential Problem of Evil

In 2010-11, Paul Draper was the Plantinga Fellow at Notre Dame’s Center for Philosophy of Religion. In 2011-12, he was a Skeptical Theism Fellow at the Center. This year, he resumes his regular teaching duties.

Q: Isn’t it unusual to have two year-long research leaves in a row, especially at the same University?
A: Yes, that is unusual. I am very grateful to Purdue for allowing me to do this. It shows that Purdue is committed to promoting research in the Liberal Arts and in Philosophy in particular. I am also grateful to Notre Dame for giving me a second fellowship. I usually tell people that my strategy was to apply for the second one while still in residence for the first one. That way, it was too awkward for them to say “no.” (Surprisingly, not everyone realizes that this is a joke!)

Q: What project are you working on while at Notre Dame?
A: I’m writing a book on the evidential problem of evil and also six or seven papers on various topics in philosophy of religion and philosophy of science.

Q: What is the evidential problem of evil?
A: There are many practical, moral, and theoretical problems concerning suffering and other evils. Philosophers of religion generally use the term “the problem of evil” to refer to a specific intellectual problem for theists—for those who believe in an all-powerful loving God. The problem is that the horrific suffering and other evils we find in the world appear to give us good reason to believe that theism is false. Philosophers used to think that the problem was a logical one—that what we know about evil can be shown to be logically incompatible with theism. Nowadays, the more common view is that theists face an evidential problem of evil—that what we know about evil is strong evidence against theism even if it is, so far as we can tell, consistent with the truth of theism.

Q: What makes your approach to the problem different from that of other philosophers?
A: A couple things. I don’t evaluate theism in isolation, and I don’t examine what we know about evil in isolation. Instead, I compare theism to an alternative “theory” that I call naturalism, and then argue that naturalism, in spite of being simpler than theism, is able to explain—not just the “data of evil” but the
Paul Draper on the Evidential

data of (both) good and evil—much better than theism, thus creating an evidential problem for theists. By the “data of good and evil,” I mean known facts about pleasure and pain, flourishing and floundering, virtue and vice, and triumph and tragedy. Originally, my plan was to examine even more data, but I couldn’t think of any more alliterations.

Q: In a nutshell, why does naturalism explain the data of good and evil much better than theism?
A: Ah, that’s the $64,000 dollar question—actually more than that, taking into account inflation. Unfortunately, I can’t really squeeze my answer to that question into a nutshell. I will, however, provide a hint at what my answer looks like. Many phenomena that have either positive or negative value are rather easily explained, so long as we assume that naturalism is true—that conscious beings are the products of a blind, morally indifferent physical universe. Suppose, however, that we assume instead that theism is true—that the physical universe is itself the creation of a supernatural loving God who is all-powerful, all-knowing, and perfectly good. That assumption “mystifies” (the opposite of “explains”) those same phenomena. It renders them utterly inexplicable.

Q: You have a “Skeptical Theism Fellowship” next year. What is skeptical theism?
A: The term “skeptical theism” refers to a specific approach to solving the evidential problem of evil. I coined the term in my 1996 paper, “The Skeptical Theist.” I actually thought the term was mildly humorous, a sort of oxymoron. But the term caught on and now it is the standard term used to refer to the position that, even though no one can explain why God allows suffering and other evils, this is no reason to believe that God does not exist because ignorant humans shouldn’t expect to be able to discern what good reasons an all-knowing God might have for causing or allowing evil. Mike Bergmann of my own department and several philosophers at Notre Dame defend this position.

Q: Where does Notre Dame get the money for these fellowships?
A: Some of it comes from private donations and some comes from grants. Part of the reason Notre Dame was willing to give me fellowships in two consecutive years is that the money for them came from different pots. My fellowship next year is supported by a grant from the Templeton Foundation, which gave the Center for Philosophy of Religion 1.7 million dollars to fund research on the problem of evil. That’s a lot of money for a philosophy grant. In fact, one response I heard was, “for that kind of money, they better not just research the problem; they better solve it!”

Q: That’s funny.
A: That wasn’t a question.

Q: Sorry. That’s funny, isn’t it?
A: Yes, it is.

Leonard Harris on Alain Locke

Alain Locke, the preeminent African American philosopher of the first half of the 20th century and one of the founders of pragmatism, published his works in obscure journals. I learned about his life from historians when I first re-published several of his articles in 1983. In 1993, though I knew no more about his life than I knew in 1983, I noticed that no biography of any African American philosopher had been written at the time. My high regard for historians waned. I began publishing short biographical sketches of Locke relying on original documents in his achieves at Howard University.

In 1998 I discovered that librarians at Howard had removed documents from his archives. The image of Locke’s life— as not a philosopher but a cultural critic, as not a homosexual but a bachelor—was to be preserved at the cost of hiding original documents. I decided to write a book-length biography of Alain Locke. Harvard University had kept Charles S. Pierce’s documents hidden because he was an alcoholic, swindler and wife abuser. I did not want a similar attempt of falsifying history to prevail in Locke’s case. Thus, in “Outing Alain L. Locke: Empowering the Silenced,” I revealed the culprits that found being a philosopher and homosexual of African American heritage too disturbing or harmful for an image of
Leonard Harris on Alain Locke

an African American hero.

At the same time F. S. C. Schiller, John Dewey and Horace Kallen were creating their forms of pragmatism, Locke was creating his. The term ‘cultural pluralism,’ as Kallen related throughout his life, originated with Locke. Locke’s version of pragmatism forged a link between the American William James and the ideas of continental philosophers such as Hugo Münsterberg (Locke’s teacher at Harvard and the University of Berlin), F. S. C. Schiller (an advisor to Locke at Oxford and his companion to William James’ Hilbert Lectures at Oxford), Georg Simmel (Locke’s teacher at the University of Berlin) and Christian F. von Ehrenfels (a major influence for Locke’s value theory but considered a misguided philosopher by his Oxford tutors).

Locke created an aesthetic vision and value theory that were the basis for the Harlem Renaissance, an advocacy perspectival aesthetics, cultural pluralism, deep democracy and patriotic cosmopolitanism. He did so while arguing against dogmatism, foundationalism, absolutism and (cultural) uniformitarian universalism.

I felt a special kindred attachment to Locke after I completed his biography. Afterwards, I learned that Locke attended a celebration of John Dewey’s 90th birthday in 1949 at the Waldorf-Astoria Hotel in New York. He sat at a table in a hotel that would not rent him a room. At the celebration, Locke and Sing-nan Fen, a Chinese philosopher “called on Dewey and brought him a bottle of Cordon Bleu.” I thought about all of the classrooms, libraries, conferences and trains he sat in—alone—surrounded by people who considered him inferior. He soldiered on, without the financial reward or acknowledgement he deserved. Therein is where, after twenty-nine years of coming to know his life in more detail than my own, I finally felt that I had personally met Locke.

Leonard Harris joined Purdue University in spring 1991. He is the Executive Director of the Alain Locke Society (AlainLocke.com) and a founding member of the Philosophy Born of Struggle Association (PBOS.com). Recent publications include: Alain L. Locke: Biography of a Philosopher (co-authored with C. Moleworth) and Philosophic Values and World Citizenship: Locke to Obama and Beyond (co-edited with J.A. Carter). Professor Harris regularly teaches undergraduate courses in Social Philosophy and Philosophy Culture and the African American Experience.
Known as the “Father of Modern Theology,” Friedrich D. E. Schleiermacher (1768-1834) not only ranks—along with Augustine, Aquinas, Luther and Calvin—as one of the five most significant theologians of the history of Christian thought, but has also had enormous influence on subsequent German philosophers. Heidegger, for instance, was a dedicated student of his work. Schleiermacher was a four-time dean of the theological faculty of the University of Berlin from 1810 to 1834 and also a member of the philosophy faculty. His sober analysis of past ethical systems in his *Outlines of a Critique of Previous Ethical Systems* (1803), as well as his superb five volumes of Plato translations (1804-1809), merited his election in 1810 to the philosophy section of the Royal Prussian Academy of Sciences in 1810. His philosophical contributions have been amply recognized in Germany; over two thousand titles covering every aspect of his thought have been published there. While the English speaking world has recognized Schleiermacher’s importance for the philosophy of religion, it is only now beginning to grasp the far reaching significance of his thinking for metaphysics, epistemology, ethics and hermeneutics. Recovering his thought and assessing its implications has been made difficult by two factors: first, Schleiermacher did not publish his philosophy lectures (they are available in German through unfinished lecture manuscripts and student notes); second, significant portions of his published works, such as his *Critique of Previous Ethical Systems*, have still not been translated into English. In this short piece I will discuss his importance for philosophy of religion and briefly touch upon his ethics and hermeneutics.

Two important features of Schleiermacher’s thought are his realism and his perspectivalism. These ideas permeate all of his philosophical thought. Insofar as Schleiermacher affirms the existence of the Absolute and acknowledges that what is real is independent of our conceptions of it, he is a metaphysical realist. His realism can be contrasted with contemporary anti-realism in religion, which affirms that all existence claims concerning God should simply be re-understood as commitments to a certain way of life. For Schleiermacher, on the other hand, all religious expressions point past themselves to the “Whence of our active and receptive existence (CF §4.4).” While for Schleiermacher religious expressions are reflective of human experience, they do not merely refer to human ways of being in the world or to human experience, but also point to the transcendent ground of all human experience.

It is, of course, important to keep in mind that this “Whence” is apprehended through human experience. What is revealed is never a proposition mirroring the structure of what is known, but an experience of the transcendent ground. Schleiermacher tells us that revelation does not “operate upon [one] as a cognitive being,” for that “would make the revelation to be originally and essentially *doctrine*” (CF §10.3). Furthermore, this experience is completely different in kind from the experience we have of finite objects in the world. It occurs at the level of the immediate self-consciousness grounding our awareness of both self and world. As such, the original religious experience is never of anything in the world but is, rather given in pure immediacy, at that fleeting moment prior to reflection of the self as distinct from the world. Religious doctrines, beliefs, and practices arise from a culturally conditioned reflection upon this experience, which is always one of finite subjects. Hence the religious experience of other persons may be different from one’s own, and yet just as valid. As Schleiermacher notes: “Each person must be conscious that his religion is only part of the whole, that regarding the same objects that affect him religiously there are views just as pious and, nevertheless, completely different from his own, and that from other elements of religion intuitions and feelings flow, the sense for which he may be completely lacking” (On *Religion*, 27). Hence while Schleiermacher is a metaphysical realist, epistemologically he is a perspectivalist. God is real, but our cognitive access to God is always finite and conditioned. Not only does our state influence how we perceive and how we can be affected, but our historical and cultural standpoint influences the range of how religious experience can be *interpreted* and its significance expressed. Schleiermacher insists that a truly transformative religious experience carries with it *epistemological modesty*. This modesty goes hand in hand with Schleiermacher’s metaphysical realism. What is real is independent of our conceptions of it, which are always limited and partial. The object of true religion is “the great, ever-continuous redemptive work of eternal love,” not our ideas of the real.

Schleiermacher’s philosophical ethics have also had a significant impact on German thought. Here I only briefly discuss only two of his most influential ideas. First, Schleiermacher understood character as grounded in the fundamental power of the soul. How this fundamental power of the soul stands in relation to the Absolute is determinative of character: it is the strength of the God-consciousness that quickens virtue and grounds what he calls the “ensoulment of nature through reason.” This approach allowed Schleiermacher to ground ethics in metaphysics and religion while avoiding heteronomy. It also allowed him to combine the advantages of an ethic of virtue with one affirming the significance of duty.

Second, fundamental to Schleiermacher’s ethics is the insight any ethical system worth its salt must be able to provide an
Schleiermacher’s insights into the historically conditioned character of individuality led him to explore two other related questions. First, in his Dialectic he would work out the problem of how knowledge is possible given the perspectival character of the standpoint of all finite individuals. Second, his influential Hermeneutics explored how, given the situated character of all acts of cognition, mutual understanding among persons and communities is possible. Ever since Schleiermacher’s pioneering work, these two questions have remained absolutely central for Continental philosophy. Schleiermacher’s metaphysics of finitude has had far reaching implications for all fields of philosophy. His thought is especially relevant for our world today, in which culturally diverse groups must learn to understand and appreciate one another in order to share the world’s resources and become good stewards of the planet.

Jacqueline Mariña joined the Department of Philosophy in 1993. Her recent publications include Transformation of the Self (Oxford University Press, 2008) and The Cambridge Companion to Schleiermacher. The former was recently reviewed in the Times Literary Supplement. Professor Mariña teaches 19th Century Philosophy, Existentialism, Philosophy of Kant and Philosophy of Religion.

Jacqueline Mariña

account of the ethical value of the individual. He called the principle of individuation “the greatest principle” of ethics. While Schleiermacher was greatly indebted to Kant’s ethics, his primary criticism of Kant is that he failed to grasp the absolute centrality of personal existence for any adequate moral theory. Kant’s ethics was an attempt to provide a formula for the harmony of wills with one another, but he never gave a convincing answer to the more ultimate question of why one individual should co-exist with another. In order to answer this, the deeper question of why what is irreducibly particular and individual in the person is of ethical value must be answered. In what way is the specificity of the individual—his or her particularity—foundational to morality? Schleiermacher’s answer will involve rethinking the insights of Kantian ethics in light of two fundamental questions: (a) that of the relation of the individual to the community, and (b) the understanding of the relation between individuals in terms of a model of communicative praxis. On Schleiermacher’s account, the other is not an end in the merely negative sense of that which is never to be acted against. It is that, to be sure—the humanity of the other must always be respected. But Schleiermacher wants to stress that the other must become my end in a more positive sense as well. Not, of course, as an end to be effected. The other must become my end in that I must come to value him or her in his or her historically conditioned particularity, that is, insofar as he or she is an individual. I must therefore come to know and value the individuality of the other. Schleiermacher supplements Kant’s understanding of persons as ends in themselves who should not be acted against in virtue of their rationality with the understanding of persons as absolutely valuable also in virtue their individuality. At the heart of Schleiermacher’s ethics is the non-transposable character of individuals and historical communities, each of which has a special character determined by a particular historical development. Individuality cannot be something to be merely overcome or superseded through rationality. It has, rather, a foundational role, for it is the foundation of community.
Chris Yeomans on Hegel’s Theory of Action

“The question cuts so deep, however, that any approach that stands a chance of yielding an answer will look extremely weird. Someone who proposes a non-strange answer shows he didn’t understand this question” (Robert Nozick, *Philosophical Explanations*, p. 116).

In this passage, Nozick was writing about the problem of why there is something rather than nothing, but his characterization is certainly true of the problem of free will as well, and for the same reason: both involve a kind of self-grounding that seems both necessary to, and yet at the limits of, intelligibility. Hegel’s answer to the problem of free will is a weird one and therefore stands half a chance of being true.

It is a striking fact that, on Hegel’s view, the best intuitive example of freedom is neither a moral choice nor a political arrangement but rather the human experience of love and friendship. Unlike the kind of freedom illustrated by standard examples in the contemporary discussion of agency—e.g., deciding whether to assassinate the president, or to save a robbery victim at the cost of being late for one’s meeting, or to get up and leave a room—Hegel’s freedom is more explicitly an inter-subjective form of experience. And unlike theorists who focus on the metaphysical capacity required to make free choices, Hegel is interested in the conceptual structure that defines a quality of our experience that is necessary for freedom. This approach has two consequences. First, the natural and social embeddedness of agency becomes a crucial aspect of Hegel’s theory of the will. Second, not only does Hegel have the standard difficulty of making free agency somehow compatible with our natural and social lives; he has the further difficulty of showing how our natural and social lives enable and support our free agency.

The fundamental insight of Hegel’s philosophy of agency is the thought that self-determination is compatible with, and even constituted by, certain forms of external influence such as education, friendships, and parental influences. This kind of compatibilism is the fundamental driving force behind both Hegel’s practical philosophy and his more abstract discussions in his *Science of Logic*. The main problems for such a view are (i) to give a clear account of the symbiotic relationship between freedom (self-determination) and external determination, and (ii) to provide criteria to distinguish supportive forms of external determination from those forms that undermine self-determination.

In Hegel’s *Logic of Agency: A Transcendental Defense of Free Will*, I attempt to develop an understanding of the basic logical principles that orient Hegel’s more concrete reflections on human agency in its natural and social environment. In particular, I examine Hegel’s response to three different versions of the principle of sufficient reason that have historically seemed to make free will problematic. The first two versions are basic conceptual or methodological principles, whereas the last version has a more explicitly naturalistic bent. According to the first version of the principle, everything has an explanation or ground. Appealing to this thought, one might doubt that any form of self-determination is possible at all, based on the following regress argument: Each choice flows from some principle relating the choice to moral or instrumental reasons. For a choice to be free, the agent must make a further choice about the principle in question. This further choice in turn requires yet another choice about a further principle, and so on *ad infinitum*. According to the second and slightly more robust version, sufficient reasons make what they explain necessary. In light of this version, one might doubt that self-determination is compatible with the necessity of our actions when that necessity seems to involve the denial of the open future of alternate possibilities that is commonly thought to be a necessary condition for free will. Finally, according to the third, naturalistic version interpretation of the principle, every phenomenon must have a cause. It has seemed to many philosophers that one crucial element of the causal relation is an asymmetry according to which the cause is active and the effect is passive. If human actions are caused in this way, then it may seem that agents are ultimately passive with respect to their actions. Even if the agent has some causal powers, if these powers are determined in their expression by causes operating on the agent, then the agent would not have the requisite kind of control over her own action. Furthermore, this causal relation is often understood in terms of a mechanistic system of independent parts interacting in fixed ways. Even if the agent constituted such a system and was therefore a locus of activity in some respects, it has seemed to many philosophers that the agent would still lack the requisite control over her own character. The agent would be like a collection of fixed dispositions that could be turned on and off in the right circumstances, but which the agent herself would play no role in shaping. On each of these fronts, Hegel provides alternative interpretations of the concepts at issue that show them to be mixtures of internal and external determination such that general skepticism about free will does not arise on their basis. Though this conclusion reflects Hegel’s profound engagement with the
Chris Yeomans on Hegel’s Theory of Action

history of modern philosophy and offers genuine philosophical insight into the nature of free will, it obviously remains somewhat negative and falls short of a positive philosophy of action. Thus in my next book, I plan to apply these results to those forms of external influence that Hegel took to be most important for individual free agency—the family, work relations, and law—to show the way in which Hegel’s social and political theory is at the same time a theory of the actual shape of individual free will.

Christopher Yeomans is Associate Professor of Philosophy, having joined the department in 2009. Before coming to Purdue, he taught for four years at Kenyon College. He is the author of Freedom and Reflection: Hegel and the Logic of Agency (Oxford University Press, 2011). Professor Yeomans primarily works in German idealism and the philosophy of action and regularly teaches courses in Ethics, Philosophy of Law and German Philosophy.

Dan Kelly on Disgust

Before I get into the specifics of the book it might help to say a little about how a philosopher might come to write an entire monograph about such a specific, not to mention unusual, topic. Part of what led me to philosophy in the first place was a long standing fascination with what makes people tick, what makes us humans special, and what it all means. In graduate school I refined this into a more concrete research project. In general, my work is located at the intersection of philosophy and the cognitive sciences; it seeks to understand human activity and the human mind within a broadly naturalistic framework, and wrestles with the philosophical ramifications of such an understanding. Put another way, I am interested in the ways in which our minds are continuous with other animals, but also those respects in which we, and our cognitive, emotional and culture using repertoires, are unique – what is it that marks us as distinct creatures in the natural world, and what follows?

Given this orientation, it isn’t surprising, in retrospect, that the recent wave of interdisciplinary research on moral psychology, on the one hand, and emotions, on the other, caught my attention. Sitting enigmatically in the middle of a lot of this work was disgust, an emotion possibly possessed only by humans, that was biologically rooted but also extremely culturally variable, that seemed obviously attuned to the muck and filth of the physical world but which was also being shown to exert powerful, almost subliminal influence over many highfalutin moral judgments. This was in my wheelhouse, not just because it gave an intriguing window into human nature, but also because making sense of everything we were learning about disgust would, I saw, require a range of different theoretical tools. The project provided a perfect opportunity to do important philosophical work, weaving together the conceptual resources of several different approaches to explaining the operation and evolution of human cognition. A richer understanding of the emotion itself, I hoped, would allow for a more informed examination of the more traditionally philosophical questions that the empirical research was raising as well.

Thus was launched a dissertation project, and now Yuck! The Nature and Moral Significance of Disgust is the fruit of that labor. Each of its five chapters can be read as trying to answer a specific question. The first is centered on the basic question, “What is disgust?” There’s a sense in which we all know what disgust is, at least from the inside—it’s that revulsion you experience when you discover you’ve accidentally stepped in a pile of dog doo. But it turns out be a bit more complicated than that when looked at from a third person point of view, as the empirical literature I survey in the first chapter reveals. Disgust is a complex bodily and psychological reaction, whose integrated elements include pieces of behavior—most noticeably that very recognizable grossed out facial expression—specific physiological markers, an affective “feeling” of nausea, and a more sophisticated set of inferential patterns that lead us to naturally think of stuff that triggers our disgust response as offensive, tainted, and contaminating. At the end of this chapter, I introduce a pictorial representation of human’s disgust system. The psychological model provides a way to gather together what we know about the emotion, and show how more specific ideas fit into the bigger
Dan Kelly on Disgust

picture. It also provides a touchstone I return to as I move forward, trotting it out at the end of chapters to incorporate insights worked through within.

Subsequent chapters assume that this initial picture of disgust is on the right track, and build on the model in addressing more specific questions. The second asks whether disgust is uniquely human, unlike similar emotions like anger and fear, which can be found in a range of other animals. I argue that only humans possess disgust, and develop an account of the evolutionary pressures that shaped the emotion to support this claim. In short, disgust was formed when two previously distinct psychological systems, one designed to protect against consuming poisonous foods, and another designed to protect against catching infectious diseases, fused into what we now recognize as this single emotion. This fusion, it appears, didn’t happen in other animals, even our closest primate relatives, so they don’t have disgust in their psychological repertoire. The third chapter addresses the question of why humans are such instinctive emoters: why do we automatically telegraph to others – most noticeably with our facial expressions – when we are disgusted by something, and why are we able to so naturally and empathically able to pick up on it when someone else is disgusted by something? I argue that, contrary to one influential line of thought in the literature on social emotions, humans are natural born emoters, and are sensitive to each other’s disgust, because that is how we learn what to be disgusted by – from our peers, from our parents, from the culture we grow up and live in. I point out that, as an added bonus, my explanation can also shed light on the variation we find in what considered disgusting from one culture to the next.

The fourth chapter tries to say something about how disgust came to be involved in morality. Here I argue that despite the fact that the emotion initially evolved to deal with poisons and parasites, it has also been recruited to play other roles. As humans became more social, disgust was co-opted into the domain of morality, where it accrued auxiliary functions related to the cognition of social norms and the monitoring of group boundaries. Once again, this theory has an added bonus: it allows me to explain many of the puzzling features of so-called moral disgust, namely persistent concerns with “spiritual pollution” and “moral taint”. These can be explained as byproducts of an imperfect fit between the core emotional response shaped by evolutionary problems surrounding food and disease, on the one hand, and those auxiliary social functions on which it has been brought to bear, on the other.

Some ethicists have tried to imbue disgust with a kind of moral authority, arguing that there is an ancient, perhaps non-verbal and supra-rational wisdom in the deliverances of the emotion. My fifth and final chapter asks if those ethicists have been right about this, and answers with an unqualified “no”. I argue that the theory of disgust defended throughout the book provides new and more plausible foundations for skepticism about the idea that disgust deserves some kind of special epistemic credit or moral authority, that the emotion is a trustworthy guide to justifiable moral judgments, or that there is any deep wisdom in repugnance.

Daniel Kelly joined the Philosophy Department in 2007. He did his graduate work at Tufts University and Rutgers University. He teaches courses on Philosophy of Mind, Philosophy of Cognitive Science, Philosophy of Biology, Minds and Morals, Introduction to Philosophy, and Logic. His research interests are at the intersection of the philosophy of mind, cognitive science and moral theory. In addition to his work on disgust he has published papers on moral judgment, social norms, racial cognition, and cross-cultural diversity.

In April 2012, the MORAL PSYCHOLOGY RESEARCH GROUP gathered at Purdue for its annual meeting.

Founded by a small group of philosophers over a grey New Jersey weekend in April 2003, the Moral Psychology Research Group fosters collaborative interdisciplinary research on human mentation and morality. Topics on which the group is working include moral reasoning, character, evaluative diversity, moral emotion, positive psychology, moral rules, the neural correlates of ethical judgment, and the attribution of moral responsibility. This work is everywhere informed by contemporary empirical research in the biological, social and behavioral sciences, and is frequently informed by our own empirical work in such areas as development, culture, social cognition, and brain science. A collaboratively authored volume treating these issues, The Moral Psychology Handbook, appeared with Oxford University Press in June 2010.
As President of the International Federation of Philosophical Societies, FISP – incidentally, the first American ever to occupy that position since FISP was created in 1948 – I am expected also to preside over the quinquennial World Congress of Philosophy, the planning of which is FISP’s single most central task. (The first modern World Congress took place in Paris in 1900, long before FISP came into existence.) Organizing the forthcoming World Congress in Athens (which has never before been the site of a World Congress) began within a year after the last World Congress in Seoul in 2008, with the formation of a Programme Committee, the choice of a theme – “Philosophy as Inquiry and Way of Life” – and deliberations concerning the themes of the four principal Plenary Sessions and the seven Symposia, as well as the 75 Sections, encompassing most imaginable philosophical areas of specialization, for which contributed papers can be submitted. Over the past year, many decisions have had to be made concerning whom to invite for the featured events and as chairs or co-chairs of the Sections. It has been my obligation and privilege to send out invitations, in recent months, to the many distinguished philosophers who are being asked to fill these various roles.

Generally speaking, this enterprise has proved to be a very happy one. A great majority of those whom I have invited have accepted, indicating that they feel honored to have been asked, and most of those who have declined, mainly though not only for health reasons, have been very gracious in their expressions of regret. So we can expect participation by a large number of well-known names (there will also be separate Invited Sessions, at least three and possibly four or five special Endowed lectures, and separate sessions of many of our more than 110 Member Societies in addition to the sessions of the regular sections) from all the continents of the world, reflecting philosophy’s aspiration—and in today’s world, as I see it, its necessity—to be truly global. I hope that many readers of this article will be among the more than 3000 participants whom I expect to attend. For more information, I invite you to visit the Purdue-based FISP website, www.fisp.org and read the discussion of the deliberations concerning the WCP in the Minutes from our most recent Steering Committee meeting, at the tab “fall/winter 2010 Newsletter,” and also the website of the World Congress itself, www.wcp2013.gr.

William McBride, who came to Purdue in 1973, is the Arthur G. Hansen Distinguished Professor of Philosophy. He teaches 200- and 500-level courses in social and political philosophy and 500-level course in existentialism inter alia. He is past President of the North American Society for Social Philosophy. In 2010 Professor McBride won the first silver medal awarded by the Institute of Philosophy of the Russian Academy of Sciences for Outstanding Contribution to Philosophy by a Foreign Philosopher.

The purpose of dialogue between philosophers from Africa and the Americas (North America, Latin America and the Caribbean) around the theme Africa and its Diaspora was to promote intercultural and philosophical exchange between the regions. One important source of recent concerns targeted for conversation was embodied by debates on the disciplinary status of Africana philosophy. Additional dialogue targets included bio-medical ethical injustices, regional imbalances, and the meaning of “liberation” from the standpoint of regional authors. Philosophers from twenty-three countries participated in the conference and discussed the above concerns. The discussions were webcast in English, French, Spanish and Portuguese and are currently available at: wwwcla.purdue.edu/unesco. The conference could be viewed live in six countries through simulcast links. The total number of views from both alainlocke.com and the Purdue-UNESCO website between April 1 and April 21 was 4,721 views. The conference could be followed on Twitter, and radio stations on three continents conducted radio interviews of some of the presenters. In addition, graduate students recorded video interviews during the conference, which, together with the webcasts of the conference debates, are collected at the Philosophy Born of Struggle Archive, located at Purdue’s Black Cultural Center Library.

The dialogues were dominated by debates regarding the ethics of dialogue (which focuses on mutuality, consensus, cross cultural benefits) versus the ethics of liberation (which is about practices intent on establishing justice independent of prior consensus); problems of surreptitiously imposed uniformity in philosophy; competing conceptions of health; preconditions for the possibility of liberation (the viability of the center-periphery distinction); human dignity in...
Leonard Harris on the African Diaspora Conference

the historical context of degradation and self-loathing brought about through oppression.

Conference participants discussed ways to implement some of the ideas discussed at roundtable sessions. Recommendations included: building graduate student and faculty exchange programs; promoting language learning across regions (especially translations), creating teaching resources such as multilingual journals in Africana philosophy. The“White Paper” by Leonard Harris details conference activities and is available at the website www.cla.purdue.edu/unesco.

Jonathan Beever on Purdue’s Lecture Series Ethics, Policy, and Science

The Purdue Bioethics Seminar Series (www.purdue.edu/bioethics) has, for the past six years, brought together Purdue students, scientists, philosophers, and policy-makers in dialogue on central moral issues arising in medicine, biology, biotechnology, and environmental and healthcare policy. Through creating and organizing this series, Nicolae Morar and I have built opportunities for engagement with these important issues on the campus of Purdue University. Supported by 14 sponsors from across the institution, the Series has hosted annually 6-8 internationally-recognized speakers with an average of 100 students and faculty per talk. A database of digital resources on the web provides opportunities for sustained engagement with these topics.

Thanks to a generous grant from the Office of the Provost and Purdue’s recently founded Global Policy Research Institute, (www.purdue.edu/gpri), the Series has now been reorganized as the Purdue Lectures in Ethics, Policy, and Science. This grant supports, for an initial period of three years, two graduate students who will, under the guidance of a faculty committee, select and invite speakers and organize the lectures. The sponsors, recognized on the website for their substantial support essential for the continued success of the project, continue to provide the operating budget for this important and successful project. With the establishment of federal requirements for ethics education for scientists, like those set forth by the National Institutes of Health and the National Science Foundation in their guidelines for responsible conduct in research, the Lectures in Ethics, Policy, and Science will become increasingly important, especially at a university like Purdue whose recognized strengths lie in science, technology, and engineering.

The 2011-2012 program has taken shape as an exciting and diverse series. Evelyn Fox-Keller (Emerita, MIT) has visited, speaking on the nature/nurture distinction. A collaborative talk between Purdue Philosophy professors Daniel Kelly and Mark Bernstein on animal consciousness and talks on animal pain by Bernard Rollin (Colorado State) and Colin Allen (Indiana University) took place in the fall of 2011. Gregory Kaebnick (Hastings Center) visited in spring 2012 to speak on ethical issues in synthetic biology. Also in the spring came Lisa Heinzerling (Georgetown and formerly EPA) to speak on federal policy issues surrounding climate change. Finally, the Lectures have supported a workshop on Moral Psychology, organized by Purdue Philosophy professor Daniel Kelly, by hosting Maria Merritt (Johns Hopkins) who spoke on ethical issues in global public health research. Work on this year’s robust program has attracted new sponsors to the Lectures as well.

Jonathan Beever (www.jonathan.beever.org) entered the Philosophy graduate program in 2006 and is currently finishing his dissertation on the scope of moral considerability for environmental ethics. He has published and spoken on a range of issues related to bioethics including conflicts of interest in medical decision making, privacy of genetic information, and the biosemiotic foundation of moral value. He and Nicolae Morar are the creators and organizers of the Purdue Bioethics Seminar Series.

GRADUATE STUDENT SPOTLIGHT: JUSTIN MATCHULAT

For the summer of 2011, I was given two stipends to attend intensive seminars for graduate students, both of which centered around the thought of Thomas Aquinas. The first was held in Mundelein, Illinois and sponsored by the Lumen Christi Institute at the University of Chicago. This seminar focused on Aquinas and contemporary ethical theory and was directed by Professor Mark Murphy (Georgetown University). I gave a presentation at this seminar on the relationship between practical knowledge and motivation in the thought of Aquinas. The second seminar was held at Princeton and sponsored by the Witherspoon Institute. It focused on themes in the thought of Peter Geach and Aquinas, and investigated these thinkers’ contributions on a wide range of philosophical issues. At Princeton I had the opportunity to learn from Professors John Haldane (University of St. Andrews), E.J. Lowe (University of Durham), Candace Vogler (University of Chicago), and Anthony O’Hear (University of Buckingham).

Justin Matchulat is a fifth year graduate student at Purdue and is working towards his Ph.D. He received his B.A. from Auburn University and his M.A. from The Catholic University of America. At Purdue he has taught Intro to Philosophy, Ethics, Principles of Logic, and this semester he is teaching Critical Thinking. He is currently working on his dissertation which investigates the relationship between practical cognition and moral motivation in the thought of Thomas Aquinas.

Justin Matchulat
Sophia Stone on the XXV World Congress of Philosophy of Law and Social

It was a great privilege to attend the XXV World Congress of Philosophy of Law and Social Philosophy in Frankfurt, Germany this summer. Without the McBride Travel Grant and the generous sponsorship from friends and family, the traveling and lodging costs on a graduate student salary (for me, supporting a family of three) would have made the trip prohibitive. I am grateful to Professor Bill McBride and his wife Angela for setting up the grant that allows me and other Purdue graduate students to present papers at international conferences. The experience and knowledge I came away with was invaluable.

I presented my paper, “Death as Legal Problem in the Age of Medical Science,” in the special working group “Medicine, Law, Eugenics.” (I think our group was misstitled.) I will briefly introduce the argument here.

Medical advancements in science and technology have changed end-of-life issues. In developed nations, the majority of people do not die in the early stages of disease and infection. People are living longer with illness but also experiencing a longer decline towards death. Leon Kass argues that while doctors must be allowed to “let patients die” by withdrawing and withholding extraordinary care, doctors must not be allowed to end a patient’s life. Borrowing from Joel Feinberg, I argue in this paper that choosing death should be a legally permitted interest for the terminally ill patient. My claim is that when a patient is on an irreversible path towards death from disease, death becomes—in at least some circumstances—something that is in her interest. Often doctors and health care workers decide when to withdraw or withdraw extraordinary care in the later stages of a patient’s disease when a patient is unable to make these decisions herself, such practices deny a patient’s interest in her death. Denying a patient’s right to choose death and keeping life and death decisions in the hands of doctors and family members—second-party decision makers—is a harmful injustice for the patient.

At my session, we discussed the issue of a patient’s right to die and the different policies in Austria, the United States and Switzerland. In my paper, I do not argue for an unrestricted right of terminally ill patients to choose death. Instead, I argue that terminally ill patients have such a right only in very limited and special circumstances, essentially defending Oregon’s (and now Washington’s) Death with Dignity Act from a philosophy of law perspective. A lawyer from Switzerland, who was present at my session, argued against my claim that death should be a legal interest as granting such an interest legal protection would create administrative problems for law. He did agree with me, however, that terminally ill patients have the right to determine her own death.

The discussion was helpful for me in figuring out the direction where my paper needs to go—on the shelf, for now. I have a dissertation to write.

Sophia Stone is a Philosophy & Literature PhD candidate entering her fifth year at Purdue University. Her dissertation topic is on Plato’s Metaphysics of Soul. Her area of specialization is Ancient Philosophy with an area of interest in Theoretical and Applied Ethics. At Purdue University, Sophia has taught Ethics, Contemporary Moral Problems, and Global Moral Issues. She has a Master’s degree in Philosophy from the Dominican School of Philosophy and Theology and a Bachelor’s degree in Philosophy from the University of California at Berkeley.

Rockwell Clancy on the Deleuze Conference and the International Phenomenology Symposium

I am grateful to have received a McBride travel grant which allowed me to attend the annual Deleuze Studies conference that met in Copenhagen, Denmark June 27-29, as well as the annual meeting of the International Phenomenology Symposium that took place in Perugia, Italy July 11-15.

In Copenhagen I presented a paper entitled “Deleuze and Guattari’s Account of Opinion: Its Elements, Development, and Political Import,” summarizing the first half of my fifth dissertation chapter. Far from a common sense understanding of opinion, I argue that Deleuze and Guattari’s criticisms of this notion are ultimately directed against an implicit conception of human nature, one that conceives of subjectivity in terms of substance and the relationships between individuals and communities in terms of mutual goals and interests. I argue that the creative activities of philosophy, art, and science that Deleuze and Guattari say struggle against opinion should then be understood as implying a different philosophical anthropology, one that conceives of individuals as unique sets of relations and the relationships between individuals and communities in terms of shared thoughts, perceptions, and affections.

I was invited to Perugia to present “Anti-Oedipal Psychoanalysis: Saving Freud and Lacan from Themselves” as part of a book panel on Philippe Van Haute and Tomas GeySENS’ recently translated The Art of an Impossible Jouissance: Clinical Anthropology of Hysteria in Freud and Lacan. In that paper I argue that Van Haute and GeySENS might be understood as raising criticisms of psychoanalysis similar to those of Deleuze and Guattari in Anti-Oedipus, and then excavating neglected strands in the thought of both Freud and Lacan to
respond to these criticisms. They do so in the following manner: 1. To avoid psychoanalytic’ normative/moral character, Van Haute and Geyskens emphasize a pathoanalytic perspective. 2. In response to an understanding of desire as lack, they turn to Lacan’s account of female jouissance in his later work. 3. As opposed to a psychical understanding of desire, Van Haute and Geyskens identify a dispositional account of hysteria in which the body plays a determining role. 4. They emphasize the specificity of clinical experience for the sake of developing a more general theoretical framework.

Rockwell F. Clancy is currently a Purdue research foundation fellow and fourth-year PhD student completing a dissertation entitled “Gilles Deleuze’s Political Anthropology: From a Critique of Psychoanalysis to the Superiority of Anglo-American Literature” in the philosophy and literature program. He holds BA and MA degrees in philosophy from Fordham University and Katholieke Universiteit Leuven, respectively. Before coming to Purdue, Rockwell worked as a foreign research fellow for the Flemish community from 2007 to 2008. He has published book reviews in Metapsychology Review and the Journal of French and Francophone Philosophy, and has helped organize “Deleuze: Ethics and Politics,” the fourth biennial philosophy and literature conference, as well as “Philosophical Dialogue between Africa and the Americas: Africa and its Diaspora,” a UNESCO-sponsored conference. Since attending Purdue, Rockwell has worked as a teaching assistant for Honor Ethics, Religions of the West, Introduction to the Study of Religion, and Introduction to Jewish Studies, and as an instructor at Ivy Tech Community College teaching Introduction to Philosophy, Introduction to Ethics, and Philosophy of Religion.

Jonathan Beever on Zoösemiotics

I am grateful for the support of the McBride International Travel Fellowship that supported my trip to the University of Tartu in Estonia this past April. Tartu, the historic seat of semiotics, hosted a well-attended international conference on zoösemiotics, a quickly developing field focused on the scope and purpose of semiotics in non-human animals. My doctoral work has focused on issues in applied ethics, especially the question of moral value for environmental ethics. The history of applied ethics has offered up several perspectives on and arguments for a relevant scope of moral value, and yet few theories have had a positive political reaction or results. In my dissertation, I argue that accepting a semiosically-grounded account of meaning as a basic attribute of moral considerableity offers criteria to ground a successful theory of environmental ethics. Such a theory requires us to understand non-human animals as fundamentally semiotic in nature, existing in and interacting with their life-worlds in terms of sign relationships. Over the past few decades, the field of biosemiotics, and zoösemiotics as its subfield, has sought to understand life and the relationships between organisms in terms of sign relations. This biosemiotic tradition began with the work of Estonian biologist Jacob von Uexküll and its development by the American semiotician Thomas Sebeok. The 2011 Zoosemiotics and Animal Representation conference brought together a consensus of major figures in contemporary biosemiotics at the historical seat of this rapidly growing field. My experience in Tartu gave me the insight to further develop a theoretical model of semiotic value in community with these major figures. Presenting what will be part of the third chapter of my dissertation allowed me to bring my research up to date and enter into an international dialogue on these ideas. Furthermore, I was able to network widely, including connecting with Colin Allen, Professor in the Indiana University Department of History and Philosophy of Science, who visited Purdue to give a talk for the Purdue Lectures in Ethics, Policy, and Science (www.purdue.edu/bioethics) in the fall of 2011. This international conference experience and networking opportunity was of significant help in developing my dissertation and further structured my career goals in philosophy.

Rockwell Clancy on the Deleuze Conference and the International Phenomenology Symposium

Jonathan Beever

GRADUATE STUDENT PUBLICATIONS


David Anderson on his Research Appointment at the University of Notre Dame

A one-year research fellowship (funded in part by the Templeton Foundation) was awarded to me from the Center for Philosophy of Religion at the University of Notre Dame. This past year I joined several other philosophers to conduct focused inquiry into the problem of evil and suffering for theistic belief. Many have thought that facts about the various types, degrees, and amounts of suffering we experience count as decisive evidence against the existence of a perfectly loving and all-powerful God. So called ‘skeptical theists’ object, claiming that because of the vast disparity between what we know about reality and what an omniscient God would know, our inability to fathom God’s reasons for permitting suffering should come as no surprise. My research will focus on the viability of skeptical theism as a response to arguments from suffering against theism. Other scholars at the Center will be focusing on the problem of evil as it was considered in early modern thought (particularly in works by G.W. Leibniz, David Hume, and Pierre Bayle), and on how pain and suffering are explained from the perspective of evolutionary biology and cognitive science. Details about the entire project can be found at:

http://philreligion.nd.edu/poe/.

David Anderson received his PhD from Purdue in August 2011. His dissertation is entitled Knowledge and Conviction and was written under the direction of Michael Bergmann. At Purdue, Dave taught Critical Thinking, Logic, Ethics and Intro to Philosophy.

Netty Provost on her Appointment at Indiana University

This year, and I hope for many years to come, I am lucky enough to be a permanent faculty member in the Department of Humanities at Indiana University Kokomo and Director of the Multidisciplinary Major Program.

As the only full time philosophy faculty on campus, my job involves not only teaching a huge range of classes for undergraduate, honors and masters students but also supervising adjuncts, advising philosophy students and managing the administrative side of the philosophy program.

I also have the privilege of creating and directing a new degree program for IU-Kokomo called the ‘Multidisciplinary Major’s Program.’ In it students will be able to create a customized BA program where they can combine multiple academic tracks into an individualized major that suits their academic interests and career goals.

I never thought that I’d end up getting a job only an hour away from Purdue, but I’m very grateful for it since it will let me stay in touch with people in Purdue’s Philosophy Department. I greatly appreciate the courses I was able to take, the contacts and friendships I made, and the teaching experience I gained at Purdue. All of these are invaluable.

Netty Provost has been studying philosophy at Purdue for six years. Her dissertation is entitled An Inquiry into the Phenomenology of Sacred Time In Hinduism. At Purdue, she taught Intro to Philosophy, Ethics, Eastern Religions, and Philosophy of Woman at Purdue, and she taught further courses at other undergraduate institutions.

GRADUATE STUDENT PUBLICATIONS


1st Year Graduate Students in 2011-2012

William Bryan-Askey. BA: University of Portland. Interests: Continental Philosophy


Drew Hillier. BA: St. Louis University. Interests: Medieval Philosophy.

Andrew J. Israelsen. BA: Utah Valley University. MA: Loyola Marymount University. Interests: Kant, Existentialism.
“Fish Cognition and Consciousness”
Colin Allen, Provost’s Professor
Department of History and Philosophy of Science
Indiana University
September 20, 2011

“Animal pain: What is it and why does it matter?”
Bernard Rollin, Professor of Philosophy, Animal Sciences, and Biomedical Sciences
Colorado State University,
September 27, 2011

“Animal Minds”
Mark Bernstein and Dan Kelly
Philosophy Department, Purdue University
November 9, 2011

“Personalized Medicine vs. Spitomics – The Uncertain Future of Genetic Testing”
Arthur Caplan, Emanuel and Robert Hart Professor of Bioethics
University of Pennsylvania Center for Bioethics
March 6, 2012

“Synthetic Life: A New Industrial Revolution?”
Gregory Kaebnick, Editor of the Hastings Center Report
March 28, 2012

“Climate Change at the EPA”
Lisa Heinzerling, Professor of Law
Georgetown University
April 12, 2012

"Global Public Health Research: Questions about Researchers' Responsibilities to Benefit Participants”
Marian Merrit, Assistant Professor at the Johns Hopkins Berman Institute of Bioethics
April 13, 2012

“Informed Consent and Risk: The Intersection Between Human Research and Genetics”
Frederick Grinnell, Professor of Cell Biology in Integrative Biology
Medicine Program at U.T. Southwestern,
April 18, 2012