Meet Dr. John Garner!

As a new professor in the Philosophy Program, I’ve been asked to contribute an autobiography to the Lantern. I am not accustomed to speaking about my past, but I will offer a snippet of where I come from. If there is a theme here, it would perhaps have to do with the importance of intellectual companionship. With that, I begin!

If you’ve ever gone down to the beaches of Northwest Florida, you’ve probably failed to notice the little speck of a town just past the Florida line called Bonifay. It’s the nearest landmark to the woody bottom where I grew up. My grandfather and father were loggers there. I drove the tractor planting pine trees starting as a kid. We raised cows and goats and watermelons. We fished and hunted and ate everything, even squirrels. My mother, an ambitious young professional in my childhood, had practically raised her three brothers in Bonifay. Later I worked for them, laying carpet or delivering ice, usually misbehaving with my cousins on long delivery adventures. My mom always took us to church, and she fed me well so I could play football like dad. And he not only logged; he is a pilot and taught me to fly by sixteen.

I mention my family and my town because I am not really separate from them, even though I became a bit separate after leaving. Camping out on the night of “Y2K,” my buddy and I decided to try out the state university in the fall of 2001 instead of going to the local junior college. Indeed, we went off to the capital city, made new kinds of friends from places like Miami, New York, and China, and learned a lot at college, but the truth is really this: At the state school we met people who were different, and we talked deeply with them, and they challenged our beliefs to the core (just as we challenged them). Yet college was also about uncertainty. I changed majors to Religion and was unsure about what to do next. But there were other, more frightening realities. In the middle of morning calculus class my second week on campus, several folks seemed concerned. Pretty soon we were watching the Twin Towers fall on TV, and at that moment we wondered--very selfishly I now realize--whether we’d all be drafted. There was no draft and we graduated. But we would finish college still uncertain about who we should be.
Philosophy Honors Society

The Georgia Iota chapter of Phi Sigma Tau is West Georgia’s philosophical link to the world of honor societies. The chapter consists of students who have demonstrated outstanding academic achievement and a sincere interest in philosophy. Founded to recognize and reward philosophical scholarship, the chapter provides both an academic and a social environment for its members.

Criteria for Membership:

- a 3.0 overall GPA,
- the completion of at least two philosophy courses,
- a GPA higher than 3.0 in all Philosophy courses taken,
- the completion of 45 hours of coursework.

For more information, go to http://www.westga.edu/~pst or contact Dr. Riker (wriker@westga.edu).

With many questions still open, my friend and I decided to take jobs as teaching assistants in an old factory town in France. We learned French, met friends and girlfriends, and learned we would go to grad schools in the US the next fall. Above all I learned how to learn there, just as I was staring my PhD. Yet beloved France would still break my heart: After my first year at school back in the US, my amoureuse would end our long-distance relationship. She said, “Ton vrai amour, c’est Hegel [Your true love is 19th century German philosopher Hegel].” My tears on the flight home provoked an old Egyptian lady to comfort me, saying she had a vision that true love would come. I was unsure. But in any case I focused on my studies, and I met many true philosophers and truth-seekers at Villanova University.

I should add that my studies were connected intimately with my life by this point. My graduate work argued that Plato’s vision of the good life is valuable today, especially in the way it privileges intellectual community (through truth-seeking) but also allows a place for the very human, individual pleasures that result from the pursuit of virtue (inevitably incomplete). A philosopher once said the good life is lived “with passion but never from passion,” and I argued something similar. I have also worked a great deal on recent Francophone philosophy, translating works by thinkers like Giorgio Agamben and Cornelius Castoriadis. The latter virulently defends establishing an “autonomous society,” i.e. a society that is lucidly self-critical, with individuals inquiring constantly, always setting up new institutions to help themselves continue inquiring into “what is good?”

In any case, during this time I really did come to true love, meeting my beautiful and compassionate wife Carly. She studied psychology and exhibited enormous care for others combined with intellectual rigor. Since our first meeting in Rittenhouse Square we have had the deepest and most enduring conversation I will ever know. In 2014 I proposed to her in the same spot where we met in 2008, and we were married that fall. While we have spent two years commuting, we are incredibly happy to have learned of last month that she will work for Wounded Warriors/Emory and I will join the permanent faculty of UWG this fall.

In the end, we believe we have found a place simultaneously not so different from “back home” but also one with great intellectual collegiality. We are excited to get started on this exploration with you at our side!
Session I: May 9-May 25

Phil 2020-01 Critical Thinking  Dr. Riker  MTWRF 1:00-4:25 p.m. (Pafford 308)
Should we regard non-human animals as "persons"? What does religion tell us about our relationship to animals? Do we have good reason to deny that some animals have natural rights? Is it moral to keep animals in zoos? In this class you will learn to recognize and evaluate different kinds of arguments. You will then apply these skills to assessment of philosophical arguments that deal with our relationships with other animals.

Session III: June 6-June 30

Phil 2010-01 Introduction to Philosophy  Dr. Riker  MTWRF 12:30-2:45 p.m. (Pafford 305)
In this course we will consider several central questions in philosophy. There are good prudential reasons for obeying the law—is there also a moral duty to obey it? Do we ever have a moral duty to break the law? Can we be free or responsible for our actions in a deterministic universe? Does "knowledge" require certainty, that is, that we cannot be wrong? Can we prove that God exists? If God is all-good, all-knowing, and all-powerful, then why does evil exist? Philosophers aren't the only people who ask these questions, so as we consider answers to these questions, we will think about what is means to take a "philosophical" approach to a problem. Required for philosophy majors. May count for credit in Core Area C2.

Phil 2130-01E Introduction to World Religions  Dr. Kellison  This course is 100% online
This course revolves around two central questions: how has the world shaped religion(s), and how have religions shaped the world? As we move through an introductory survey of some of the world's major religious traditions, including indigenous religious traditions, Hinduism, Buddhism, Judaism, Christianity, Islam, and selected new religious movements, we will pay special attention to the ways in which these traditions have been shaped by historical, political, and geographical changes in the world—and will also consider how these traditions and their communities have influenced these changes. Over the course of the semester, we will seek both to understand the significance and relevance of religion in world history and to begin to grapple with some of the important philosophical questions addressed within religious communities as well as by those who study them. This course will be taught fully online.

Session IV: July 5-July 29

Phil 2030-01E Introduction to Ethics  Dr. Lane  This course is 100% online
Everyone has beliefs about morality, and to some extent we all agree about what actions are right and wrong; for example, we all agree that murder is wrong and that helping those less fortunate than us is right. But there are many moral questions about which people disagree: abortion immoral? what about physician-assisted suicide? is it wrong to spend money on expensive cars and homes when people in other parts of the world are dying from malnutrition? do non-human animals have rights? This course will enable you critically to evaluate your own beliefs about concrete ethical issues like these. We'll also be dealing with more theoretical questions, such as: where does morality come from? (God? society? or somewhere else?); what makes an ethical argument good or bad?; and what general rules or principles ought we to live by? No prior experience in philosophy is necessary, so if you want to start thinking critically about morality, this course is a great place to begin. Required for all philosophy majors and minors. Counts toward the minor in religion.

Fall 2016 Course Descriptions

Phil 2010-01 Introduction to Philosophy  Staff  MWF 10:10-11:00 a.m. (Pafford 204)
A historically framed introduction to philosophy, high-lighting major developments that have defined Western philosophical inquiry. Required for the major in Philosophy.

Phil 2010-02 Introduction to Philosophy  Staff  MW 3:30-4:45 p.m. (Pafford 109)
Same as above.

Phil 2010-03 Introduction to Philosophy  Staff  MW 2:00-3:15 p.m. (Pafford 109)
Same as above.

Phil 2010-04 Introduction to Philosophy  Staff  TR 9:30-10:45 a.m. (Biology 150)
Same as above.

Phil 2010-05 Introduction to Philosophy  Staff  TR 12:30-1:45 p.m. (Callaway 205)
Same as above.

Phil 2010-06 Introduction to Philosophy  Dr. Hookom  MW 11:00 a.m. -12:15 p.m. (Pafford 110)
Same as above.

Phil 2010-07 Introduction to Philosophy  Dr. Hookom  MW 12:30-1:15 p.m. (Pafford 306)
Same as above.

Phil 2020-01 Critical Thinking  Dr. Garner  MW 2:00-3:15 p.m. (TLC 1116)
This course provides an introduction to logical reasoning and critical thinking. We will focus on the analysis of arguments, deductive and non-deductive reasoning, informal fallacies, and the uses of language. Just as importantly we will engage in an "open dialogue" concerning controversial ethical and socio-economic questions. This course also has many practical benefits. Every day we are met with a barrage of radio and television commercials, appeals by friends, speeches by politicians, and lectures in the college classroom. In many of these situations we are asked to accept a claim about what we ought to believe or do. But do we have good reasons for being persuaded of something, for thinking the way we do, or for believing what we believe? This course is about learning to reason better, to be self-questioning, to make better arguments, and to evaluate the arguments of others. Required for philosophy majors. May count for credit in Core Area B1.

Phil 2020-02 Critical Thinking  Dr. Lundeen  TR 2:00-3:15 p.m. (Pafford 206)
An investigation of logical fallacies and patterns of valid reasoning in primarily oral by also written discourse. Required for the major in Philosophy.

Phil 2020-03 Critical Thinking  Staff  TR 3:30-4:45 p.m. (Pafford 206)
Same as above.

Phil 2020-04 Critical Thinking  Dr. Lundeen  TR 12:30-1:45 p.m. (Pafford 112)
Same as above.
Phil 2030-01  Introduction to Ethics  Dr. Riker  MWF 10:10-11:00 a.m. (Pafford 208)
Helping starving people in other places could reduce our standard of living. Are we morally obligated to do it anyway? One function of criminal punishment is to say something about who we are and what we expect from others. What do we say when our government executes someone? We can enhance our human capacities through genetic manipulation or the implantation of computers under our skin. Would it be a good idea to do this? Should parents be able to modify their children? These and other contemporary moral problems will be discussed in this class. We will also examine the source and nature of morality itself. Does it come from God? If not, then where does it come from? Wherever morality comes from, what is it really about? Is it about increasing human happiness and health? Is it about doing the right thing, regardless of the consequences? Is it about following the right rules or being the right kind of person? Who counts, morally speaking? Humans, animals, plants, ecosystems? Required for philosophy majors. May count for credit in Core Area C2.

Phil 2030-02  Introduction to Ethics  Dr. Lane  TR 9:30-10:45 a.m. (Pafford 206)
Everyone has beliefs about morality, and to some extent we all agree about what actions are right and wrong; for example, we all agree that murder is wrong and that helping those less fortunate than us is right. But there are many moral questions about which people disagree: is abortion immoral? what about physician-assisted suicide? is it wrong to spend money on expensive cars and homes when people in other parts of the world are dying from malnutrition? do non-human animals have rights? This course will enable you critically to evaluate your own beliefs about concrete ethical issues like these. We'll also be dealing with more theoretical questions, such as: where does morality come from? (God? society? or somewhere else?); what makes an ethical argument good or bad?; and what general rules or principles ought we to live by? No prior experience in philosophy is necessary, so if you want to start thinking critically about morality, this course is a great place to begin. Required for all philosophy majors and minors. Counts toward the minor in religion.

Phil 2130-01  Introduction to World Religions  Staff  TR 11:00 a.m. -12:15 p.m. (Pafford 306)
A comparative study of the beliefs and practices of several world religions such as Hinduism, Buddhism, Judaism, Christianity, and Islam. This course not only explores the history of these faiths and their early doctrinal and communal development, but their place in today's world.

Phil 2130-02  Introduction to World Religions  Staff  TR 2:00-3:15 p.m. (Pafford 204)
Same as above.

Phil 3100-01  Ancient and Medieval Philosophy  Dr. Garner  MWF 11:15 a.m.-12:05 p.m. (Humanities 208)
Ancient philosophy, starting with the Greeks, decisively influenced the Western intellectual tradition. It influenced science and the philosophy of science in both its rationalist and empiricist versions. It impacted the religious-philosophical traditions, which defined themselves through their adoptions of, oppositions to, and/or modifications of Greek thought. Finally, it developed into the philosophical branches of ontology, epistemology, and ethics that have been studied ever since. In this course, we will begin by reading Plato and Aristotle to see how basic questions in science, religion, and ethics are raised by their works. Then we will explore competing "life philosophies" (e.g. Epicureanism, Stoicism, Skepticism, and Augustine) prevalent the early B.C.E. era when the great Western religions were in decisive stages of development. Finally, we will learn how Medieval thinkers in Islam, Judaism, and Christianity (e.g. Avicenna, Al-Ghazālī, Maimonides, and Aquinas) influenced one another, yielding surprising agreements and disagreements in theology; natural philosophy, ethics, epistemology, and metaphysics. Required for philosophy majors.

Phil 4100-01W  Phenomenology  Dr. Donohoe  MWF 1:25-2:15 p.m. (Humanities 205)
Phenomenology is a philosophical movement of the twentieth century that focuses on descriptive investigations of the ways in which the world appears to consciousness. In this course we will examine the development of the phenomenological method through primary texts of major phenomenologists including Husserl, Heidegger, Merleau-Ponty, Levinas, Derrida, and Ricoeur. We will address such issues as how the phenomenological method attempts to overcome the subject/object dichotomy, and how it lays the groundwork for such contemporary movements as hermeneutics and deconstruction.

Phil 4110-01W  Philosophy of Law  Dr. Riker  MWF 2:30-3:20 p.m. (Humanities 208)
This course covers some current problems in the fields of philosophy of law and legal theory. We will consider the nature of the law's normative force, and whether civil disobedience can be morally justified. We will examine some problems associated with the nature of law and legal reasoning. We will spend some time on the legality (or not) of humanitarian intervention. And we will investigate some problems associated with traditional doctrinal areas of law, such as criminal law.

Phil 4150-01W  Analytic Philosophy  Dr. Lane  TR 11:00 a.m. -12:15 p.m. (Humanities 205)
This course is an historical overview of analytic philosophy, the most widespread and influential movement among Anglo-American philosophers during the 20th century. We will consider how the most important members of this tradition, including Gottlob Frege, Bertrand Russell, Ludwig Wittgenstein, A. J. Ayer, and W. V. O. Quine, attempted to answer questions within metaphysics, epistemology, meta-ethics, and the philosophy of language.

Phil 4230-01W  Philosophy of Religion  Dr. Garner  MWF 10:10-11:00 a.m. (Humanities 208)
Philosophy of religion is the study of the human condition insofar as it relates to faith; or it is the study of the meaning or essence of religion, religious thinking, or religious practices. Unlike Sunday School or a theology class, which usually take scripture, tradition, or mystical experience as basic authorities, a course on the philosophy of religion examines arguments for the plausibility, truth, or meaning of religious claims. Believers and non-believers, theists and atheists, scientists, priests, and psychologists may all engage in the philosophy of religion. Questions considered include the prospect of a God; hopes for an afterlife or eternal identity; the possibility of miracles; political uses and abuses of religion; and religion's cultural, anthropological, or evolutionary significance. This course focuses primarily on the Western tradition, but the class should interest anyone wondering about human attempts to stretch knowledge beyond the ordinary, about the relationship between faith, science, and the unknown; about the limits of knowledge and the right or lack thereof to have faith; or, finally, about the significance of human ideas regarding the world into which we have been "thrown."

Phil 4300-01W  Senior Seminar: Human Identity  Dr. Lane  TR 2:00-3:15 p.m. (Pafford 309)
This course serves as a "capstone" to the study of philosophy at UWG. This year, our topic is different conceptions of human identity and their implications for selected issues within bioethics. We will read and discuss David DeGrazia's Human Identity and Bioethics (2005). Students will develop, research, and execute a rigorous philosophical argument relating to one or more issues dealt with in that book. They will also develop the skills of leading class discussion and presenting an academic paper. Required for all philosophy majors. All philosophy majors planning to graduate before December 2016 should register for this section of Senior Seminar.
Registration is nearly here!

Remember: If you are a philosophy major, you must meet with an advisor before you will be able to register for classes. If you have completed 61 or more hours, you should meet with your faculty advisor in Philosophy. If you have not yet completed 61 hours, then you should meet with someone in the Advising Center. The registration schedule is posted below. Be sure to meet with your advisor before your time to register.

**Summer/Fall 2016 On-Time Registration Dates for CURRENTLY* enrolled students:**
- Current Seniors & all Graduate level students – March 28
- Current Juniors ss# ending in 50-99 – March 29
- Current Juniors ss# ending in 00-49 – March 30
- Current Sophomores ss# ending 50-99 – March 31
- Current Sophomores ss# ending 00-49 – April 1
- Current Freshmen ss# ending 00-49 – April 4
- Current Freshmen ss# ending 50-99 – April 5
- Open Registration** – Begins April 11, 2016

*Currently enrolled students are those taking courses in the current term, Spring 2016.
**Students that are currently serving a one term suspension, are readmitted, or are admitted as a transient must wait until Open Registration to register.

Philosophy Program Awards Gathering!

**Friday, April 15**
**3:00–4:30 p.m.**
**at Palladino’s Pizza**

This year the Philosophy Program’s Awards Ceremony and End-of-Year Gathering will take place at Palladino’s Pizza (342 Maple St, Carrollton, GA 30117). We will meet on April 15 from 3:00–4:30 p.m. All philosophy majors are invited to attend.

At the gathering we will bring the year to a close and recognize several of our majors for their outstanding work in philosophy. The Gordon Watson Award honors our most outstanding major. The Wantland Scholarship is given to the most outstanding major in the Religion Track. We will honor the top major in the Pre-Law Track with the Outstanding Pre-Law Student Award. We will recognize our Best New Major. The Philosophical Society will award the Best Essay Prize to the winner of its essay contest. Phi Sigma Tau will officially induct its newest members. And more.

The Philosophy Program will provide pizza and soft drinks for attendees. If you would like to join us, please RSVP directly with Dr. Riker (wriker@westga.edu) by April 13 so that what we can let Palladino’s know approximately how many people to expect.

**Interested in Philosophy?**

Enjoy open discussions on every imaginable topic? Then you should join the West Georgia Philosophical Society. The Society is a registered student organization that meets every other week for lively discussions of philosophical topics. In the past, discussion topics have ranged from the role of technology in our lives, to the apparent incompatibility between determinism and the belief in human free will, to the question of whether humans are naturally good or bad. All students, regardless of background or experience, are invited to join. Our remaining meetings this semester are in TLC 2237 from 10–10:50 am on the following Wednesdays: Mar. 2, Mar. 23, Apr. 6, and Apr. 20. Also, please join us for a special event on Weds., Mar. 9, from 5–6 pm in Humanities 205, when Dr. John Garner will make a research presentation to the group.

If you would like more information about the Society’s meetings or other activities, check out our Facebook page at https://www.facebook.com/groups/136625026403394/.
Looking for something to read this summer?

Your professors recommend these books.

**Professor Donohoe**  


**Professor Garner**  

Plato, *Statesman*

**Professor Kellison**  


**Professor Lane**  


**Professor Riker**  


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16th Annual  
**Meeting of the Minds**  
Famous Philosophers Discuss the Question  
**How Can We Attain Happiness?**

![Epictetus](image1)  
Epictetus played by Evan Williams

![Albert Camus](image2)  
Albert Camus played by Connor Pierce

![Al-Ghazali](image3)  
Al-Ghazali played by Alex Clark

![Simone DeBeauvoir](image4)  
Simone DeBeauvoir played by Christie Poth

![Friedrich Nietzsche](image5)  
Friedrich Nietzsche played by Aaron Weddle

![Martha Nussbaum](image6)  
Martha Nussbaum played by Charlette Woodall

Moderated by Daniel Stanfield

**When:** Tuesday, March 22, 2016  
**7:00 p.m.**  
**Where:** Kathy Cashen Auditorium