



Introducing Dr. Robert Lane

In fall 2002, the Philosophy Program welcomed a new faculty member. Robert Lane (Ph.D., University of Miami, 1998) is a Visiting Assistant Professor of Philosophy for 2002-03. In his first semester at UWG, Lane is teaching in two of his areas of specialization: ethics and American philosophy. "I'm really lucky to be teaching such a great line-up in my very first semester: Introduction to Ethics, Professional Ethics, and American Philosophy," says Lane. "All three courses are really interesting."



Of those three courses, Intro to Ethics is most likely to challenge students' fundamental beliefs. "We get to examine some of the most basic questions about morality: What makes an action right or wrong? Where exactly does morality come from? Is it the same as God's will? Or does morality simply depend on what people in a given society believe to be right and wrong?" Students in Intro to Ethics also get to discuss more concrete moral problems. "This semester, we're tackling the morality of abortion, human cloning and homosexuality. The cloning debate I find especially interesting—it's an example of a moral question that really can't be answered until you have an understanding of material from reproductive science and genetics. It's a nice illustration of how philosophical thinking doesn't have to take place in a vacuum but can instead draw on the results of other areas of inquiry, like the sciences."

Lane's other courses also cover some intriguing philosophical territory. "The Professional Ethics course centers around the concept of a moral dilemma: a situation in which you have to choose between competing values, and you *have to* sacrifice one value or the other. Sometimes, an individual working in a given profession will have to choose between the values of ordinary morality and the values promoted by his or her profession. For example, is it ever moral for a businessperson to sacrifice honesty in order to increase profits?" According to Lane, Professional Ethics is a great course for both philosophy majors and non-majors. "Our discussions range over a number of different occupations, and the questions we tackle are relevant to practically anyone, no matter what particular career plans he or she might have."

American Philosophy is another course Lane loves to teach. "My dissertation concerned Charles Peirce, and he's the first philosopher we study in this course." Peirce founded pragmatism, a wide-ranging movement whose members attempted to tie philosophical theorizing to concrete experience and human action. Pragmatism, says Lane, is the only philo-

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sophical tradition to have originated wholly in the United States. “We’re studying philosophers typically referred to as the ‘classical American pragmatists’: Peirce, William James, John Dewey, and George Herbert Mead, plus a contemporary pragmatist, Richard Rorty. Pragmatism itself has changed a lot since the 19th century, when it was founded by Peirce. His version of pragmatism is based on realism, the view that there is a real world that is independent of what you, or I, or any specific group of people think about it. But Rorty’s pragmatism is very different—at one point he even says that there is no such thing as ‘the way the world is’! It’s fascinating to me how pragmatism evolved so much from Peirce to Rorty, so it’s fun to be able to help students trace that evolution.”

Lane’s philosophy of teaching incorporates an idea emphasized by Peirce: *fallibilism*. “Fallibilism is the view that any of your beliefs could potentially be wrong. This isn’t to say that they *are* wrong. Peirce thought—and I agree with him on this—that it is undeniable that a great many of our beliefs are in fact true. Nonetheless, there is always the possibility that an individual is mistaken about any given particular belief. On the other hand, we are capable of supporting our beliefs with arguments and evidence. As a philosopher, I’m *obligated* to try to support my beliefs in that way.” All of this feeds into Lane’s view of the role of the philosophy professor. “As I see it, I have three obligations toward my students: first, to convey to them that none of their beliefs — no matter how sacred — are immune from error; second, to help them develop the ability to articulate and evaluate reasons for and against various beliefs; and finally, to guide them through the use of that ability in the examination of their own specific philosophical beliefs. That examination may or may not cause them to change their beliefs — but it definitely requires them to support their views in a rational way.”

Dr. Lane will be putting this fallibilistic approach to teaching into practice in spring semester, when he teaches Introduction to Ethics, Professional Ethics and Political Philosophy.

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Department of Philosophy

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Philosophy Faculty Offices

(all offices are located in Humanities)

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Philosophical Birthdays

August 20, 1886 Paul Tillich,
German Theologian

August 27, 551 BCE Confucius,
Chinese Philosopher

September 10, 1839 Charles Peirce
American Philosopher

September 26, 1889
Martin Heidegger,
German Philosopher

October 4, 1931 Richard Rorty,
American Philosopher

October 4, 1182 St. Francis of
Assisi, Italian Monk, Founder
of the Franciscan Order

Spring 2003 Courses in Philosophy

Philosophy 2100-02 Introduction to Philosophy
MW 7:00-8:15 p.m. (HUM 227)

Dr. Joel Auble

Required for Philosophy Majors. Required for the Minor in Religion. May count for credit in Core Area C.

Using Christian's text, this course is an excellent introduction to the subject matter and methods of philosophy. A synoptic approach to doing philosophy is taken, which means that information from all relevant areas is to some extent considered when attempting to make headway on any philosophical problem. Freedom/determinism, ethics, philosophy of religion, metaphysics, and epistemology are among the areas covered.

Text: James L. Christian, *Philosophy—An Introduction to the Art of Wondering*, 7th edition, Harcourt Brace Publishers

Philosophy 2100-03 Introduction to Philosophy
TR 10:00-11:15 a.m. (Newnan)

Dr. Joel Auble

Required for Philosophy Majors. Required for the Minor in Religion. May count for credit in Core Area C.

Using Christian's text, this course is an excellent introduction to the subject matter and methods of philosophy. A synoptic approach to doing philosophy is taken, which means that information from all relevant areas is to some extent considered when attempting to make headway on any philosophical problem. Freedom/determinism, ethics, philosophy of religion, metaphysics, and epistemology are among the areas covered.

Text: James L. Christian, *Philosophy—An Introduction to the Art of Wondering*, 7th edition, Harcourt Brace Publishers

Philosophy 2100-04 Introduction to Philosophy
TR 11:00 a.m.-12:15 p.m. (HUM 227)

Dr. Jennifer Manlowe

Required for Philosophy Majors. Required for the Minor in Religion. May count for credit in Core Area C.

An historically framed introduction to philosophy, highlighting major developments that have defined Western philosophical inquiry. This course takes a look at major philosophical questions through the primary texts of such important philosophers as Plato, Descartes, Nietzsche, King and Foucault. Some important questions that we will begin to explore (and write about) include: What is the good life? What can I know? What is the value of values? And what are the limits of truth?

Philosophy 2100H-01 Introduction to Philosophy
MWF 9:00-9:50 a.m. (Honor's House)

Dr. Janet Donohoe

Required for Philosophy Majors. Required for the Minor in Religion. May count for credit in Core Area C.

This course takes an historical look at major philosophical questions through the primary texts of such important philosophers as Plato, Aristotle, Boethius, Descartes, Kant, Camus and Foucault. Students are exposed to questions of what it means to be a human being, how to live the good life, what we can know, and why we are here.

Philosophy 2110-01 Critical Thinking
MWF 9:00-9:50 a.m. (HUM 229)

Dr. Joel Auble

Required for Philosophy Majors. Required for the Minor in Religion. May count for credit in Core Area C.

This course addresses the basics of how to think critically and how to evaluate arguments. By looking at the fundamentals of logic, and addressing contemporary cultural debates, we will focus on how to argue well and how to identify the fallacies of weak arguments.

Philosophy 2120-01 Introduction to Ethics
MWF 9:00-9:50 a.m. (HUM 230)

Dr. Robert Lane

Required for Philosophy Majors. Required for the minor in Religion. May count for credit in Core Area C.

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 human cloning? homosexuality? is it wrong to spend money on expensive cars and homes when people in other parts of the world are dying from malnutrition? 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.

Philosophy 3100W-01 Ancient and Medieval Philosophy
MWF 11:00-11:50 a.m. (HUM 229)

Dr. Janet Donohoe

This course focuses on major texts from important thinkers from the Ancient and Medieval periods of history. We will look carefully at the epistemological, metaphysical, ethical, and ontological theories of such philosophers as Plato, Aristotle, Augustine, Avicenna, and Ockham. We will see how Ancient thought gets translated into Christian language and how fundamental ideas change through historical periods. We will focus primarily on questions of how these thinkers understand a cause of the universe, how they address issues of living the good life, how they think we can have knowledge of a higher realm, or God, and what this means for human existence.

Philosophy 3150-01 Existentialism
MWF 1:00-1:50 p.m. (HUM 229)

Dr. Joel Auble

An examination of the historical development and representative themes of existentialism, beginning with Kierkegaard and Nietzsche and continuing through Sartre.

Text(s) and requirement(s) for this course may be obtained by contacting Dr. Joel Auble.

Philosophy 3220-01 Biblical Hermeneutics
TR 2:00-3:15 p.m. (HUM 229)

Dr. Jennifer Manlowe

This course is a philosophical consideration of the nature of religion. Our aim is to explore major questions in the philosophy of religion. By the end of this semester, each student will be able to: highlight four major developments that have shaped the philosophical inquiry of religion; Identify the religio-philosophical perspectives of major religious traditions; Answer such questions for ourselves that include: What is religion? What is the relationship between matters of reason and matters of religion? What makes something religious? Does one need to experience faith or god(s) to be religious?

Philosophy 3240-01 World Religions
TR 3:30-4:45 p.m. (HUM 229)

Dr. Jennifer Manlowe

This course will investigate what thinking about “religion” entails today. The focus will be on how religion is thought, both in the broad sense of how it is estimated and why, and in the narrow sense of what the structure or method of such thinking is and where the place of religion in thinking is taken to be. The course will be an exercise in careful, critical, yet sympathetic reading. Part of students’ task will be to relate the readings and what is discussed in class to pertinent issues in particular religious traditions. Intense, thoughtful student participation is presumed.

Philosophy 4115-01 Political Philosophy
MWF 2:00-2:50 p.m. (HUM 229)

Dr. Robert Lane

An examination of significant themes in political philosophy, highlighting the way in which major concepts of political thought have evolved from ancient Greece to contemporary western society. By critically examining the works of classical and modern political theorists (such as Plato, Aristotle, Hobbes, Locke, Mill, Rawls and Nozick), we will explore such topics as the nature of the state, the justification of political authority, and distributive justice.

Philosophy 4120-01 Professional Ethics
MWF 12:00-12:50 p.m. (HUM 229)

Dr. Robert Lane

Is it a violation of my right to privacy when my job requires that I be tested for drugs? What should I do if I know that my employer is making an unsafe product? Are there ever circumstances in which doctors should lie to their patients? Do corporations have any responsibilities beyond making a profit for their shareholders? This course will seek to answer such questions. We’ll examine issues that affect workers and professionals across various occupations, issues such as: lying and deception; privacy and confidentiality; whistleblowing; and social responsibility and justice. Our examination of these issues will draw on case studies from a number of different professions, including medicine, law, and business. We may also look at ethical questions that arise for individuals in specific professions, such as education (for example, what moral obligations does a college professor have as an educator? as a researcher?)

Note: Philosophy 2100 is a prerequisite for courses Philosophy 3100 through 4385, except Philosophy 4120.

Focus on a Student: Rasheeda Ali

Life is full of questions. I can recall explaining to my friends why I was reading many books by authors with one-word names: Plato, Epictetus, Epicurus, Aquinas, and Aristotle. The common question seemed to be “Who wants to read that old stuff written by dead men?” I just shrugged and replied it’s interesting. Deep down I wondered why very few people study philosophy. I originally chose to minor in philosophy studies because I uncovered many truths in those century-old texts. Everything I needed to know in undergraduate studies, I learned in Philosophy.

I began my exploration with the Critical Thinking course. Little did I know that deductive reasoning and symbolic logic would enhance everyday decision making skills. I incorporated these skills into my writing as a budding journalist, meeting the goal of writing succinctly and objectively. Likewise, the Philosophy and Literature course allowed me to dissect the ways in which philosophical texts were written, such as Dostoevsky’s *Crime and Punishment*. I also gained exposure to Cornel West’s philosophy on politics written in *Race Matters*.

Courses in Religion soon followed. These offered a rare opportunity to discover the underlying characteristics of all faiths—a concept of the Omnipresent or God. With the philosophical primer to study all of the world’s different understandings of God, I find that I have strengthened my own faith. I have also found that I can have more effective interfaith conversations without emotional convictions getting in the way. In these times, it is most important to understand the human condition through philosophy.

“Everything I needed to know in undergraduate studies, I learned in Philosophy.”

Minor studies in philosophy, at the very least, can significantly contribute to better LSAT scores. The Law School Admissions Test is designed to assess intellectual capacity via Logical Reasoning, Analytical Reasoning, Reading Comprehension, and Writing. Aspiring lawyers can expect to determine an argument’s fallacy, strengthen/weaken the argument, or find the correct answer through an unrelated parallel analogy. In the Analytical Reasoning section of the test, deductive reasoning comes into play. Critical Thinking’s *Modus Ponens* and *Modus Tollens* are key to combating an LSAT test taker’s fear—logic games. Just remember, If P, then Q never equals if Q, then P!

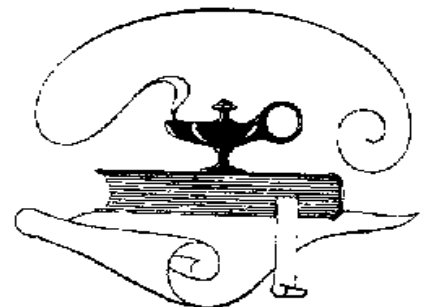
Studies in philosophy also contributed to undergraduate extracurricular activities that are more than my resume builders, but rather a tradition of priceless community involvement. Studies of beliefs regarding God, existence, conduct, and our human relation to the universe answer all questions, and can help better direct your ambition. As a graduate of the State University of West Georgia with philosophy under my belt, I will be a better prepared, human-rights attorney. Philosophy influenced me to evolve.

“Let no one put off studying philosophy when he/she is young, nor when old grow weary of its study. For no one is too young or too past his prime to achieve the health of his soul”- Epicurus (341-271 B.C.E.)

---Rasheeda A. Ali ‘02
Philosophy Minor

The Philosophical Society at West Georgia

The Philosophical Society of West Georgia is a group of students and faculty who gather every other week for philosophical discussion and social interaction. Meetings involve an open discussion of a philosophical topic previously agreed upon. Students can also present work they have completed, or work in progress, to the group to get feedback from their peers and from faculty. It is a good opportunity to get to know other students interested in philosophy and to interact with faculty in a relaxed and informal atmosphere. All students, regardless of philosophical background, are invited to attend. This semester the society meets on Wednesdays at 1:00 pm in Humanities 211. Next semester the philosophical society will be hosting a meeting of the minds colloquium where students will be representing some of the major philosophers in a debate on a philosophical topic of general interest. Keep an eye on the philosophy bulletin board, outside Humanities 154, for meeting dates, times, and place. If you have any questions or want more information about the philosophical society, contact either Dr. Janet Donohoe, Humanities 148, 770-838-3012, email jdonohoe@westga.edu, or Dr. Jennifer Manlowe, Humanities 147, 770-838-3038, email jmanlowe@westga.edu



“Who’s Still Afraid of Human Cloning?” Philosophy Program Sponsors Speaker on Campus

Since 1997, when scientists announced the birth of Dolly the sheep (the first cloned mammal), the controversy surrounding the morality of cloning human beings has continued unabated. Most politicians, theologians and ethicists maintain that the reproductive cloning of human beings would be deeply morally wrong. Gregory Pence is one of the few participants in the cloning debate who argues *in favor of* reproductive human cloning. On Monday October 28, Dr. Pence comes to UWG to make a case for his pro-cloning position, in a lecture entitled “Who’s Still Afraid of Human Cloning?”

Dr. Pence is Professor of Philosophy in the Schools of Medicine and Arts/Humanities at the University of Alabama at Birmingham, where he has taught and written about bioethics for more than 20 years. He has testified before Congress on the moral controversy surrounding human cloning, and he is the author of several books, including *Who’s Afraid of Human Cloning*, *Re-creating Medicine*, *Designer Food*, *Classic Cases in Medical Ethics: Accounts of Cases That Have Shaped Medical Ethics*, and the forthcoming *Brave New Bioethics*. He has also edited several important collections of articles, including *Flesh of My Flesh: The Ethics of Cloning Humans*, *The Ethics of Food*, and *Classic Works in Medical Ethics: Core Philosophical Readings*.

All Philosophy Students are invited and encouraged to attend Dr. Pence’s lecture. Dr. Pence is also prepared to answer any questions that students would like to pose.

Dr. Pence’s presentation will run from 12pm to 1pm on Monday, October 28, in Bonner Lecture Hall (A & B). Bring your lunch (and an open mind!) and join us for what’s sure to be stimulating discussion. For further information, contact Dr. Robert Lane, Humanities 150. 770-838-3039, rlane@westga.edu

Philosopher’s Wisdom

*“I sit with Shakespeare
and he winces not. Across
the color line I walk arm in
arm with Balzac and
Dumas, where smiling men
and welcoming women
glide in gilded halls.
From out of the caves of
evening that swing be-
tween the stron-limbed
earth and the tracery of the
stars, I summon Aristotle
and Aurelius and what
soul I will, they come all
graciously with no scorn or
condescension. So, wed
with Truth, I dwell above
the veil.”*

--W.E.B. DuBois

The Philosophy Major

The philosophy major is designed to give students a solid foundation in the history of philosophy with opportunities to explore a variety of courses and special programs. All philosophy majors complete the following requirements:

- 42 hours of Core Areas A, B, C, D, and E
- 18 hours of Core Area F
 - PHIL 2100—Introduction to Philosophy
 - PHIL 2110—Critical Thinking
 - PHIL 2120—Introduction to Ethics
 - Additional Humanities Course
 - Foreign Language 2001/2002
- 24 hours of Upper-Division Major Courses
 - PHIL 3100—Ancient and Medieval Philosophy
 - PHIL 3110—Modern Philosophy
 - PHIL 4385—Special Topics
(e.g. Feminist Theories, Political Philosophy)

Students may also earn a minor in Religious Studies by completing the following courses:

- PHIL 3200—Biblical Studies
- PHIL 3210—Christian Theology
- PHIL 3220—Biblical Hermeneutics
- PHIL 3230—Philosophy of Religion
- PHIL 3240—World Religions

For more information about either the philosophy major or the religious studies minor, please stop by the English and Philosophy Department office at Humanities 154 where the administrative staff will be happy to give you more information. The philosophy faculty members are also available to talk with you about the options. Feel free to set up an appointment with any one of them by calling 770-836-6848.

Please direct any questions or comments about this newsletter to Dr. Janet Donohoe, 770-838-3012.

