

The *Lantern*

STATE UNIVERSITY of
West Georgia

Department of Philosophy Newsletter for Students

Volume 8, Number 2

March 2007

Want to Go to Graduate School?

The prospect of applying for graduate school in philosophy may seem daunting. So, if you think you are interested in graduate school, here are a few things to consider.

Before applying to graduate school you have to make a few decisions about what kind of philosophy you are interested in, whether you are willing to go anywhere to study, or whether you'd prefer to stay close to home, and what you can afford. To help you make some of these decisions, consider the following:

Ask yourself three things:

- 1) what kind of philosophy do you like?
- 2) Should you get a Master's degree or a Doctorate?
- 3) What do you need in order to apply?

1) What kind of philosophy do you like? Generally, graduate programs have a tendency to focus on Continental philosophy, Anglo-American philosophy, or the History of Philosophy. But more specifically, programs can have specializations in certain areas, like ethics, or philosophy of mind, or philosophy and religion, or some other more particular area. The best way to find out what kinds of programs specialize in what you're interested in is to use the Internet. There are specific sites that identify graduate programs in philosophy such as:

http://www.gradschools.com/listings/menus/philosophy_menu.html

<http://www.nyu.edu/gsas/dept/philo/guides/realguide.html>

There are also sites such as <http://www.phds.org/rankings/philosophy/> that will allow you to designate your interests and preferences and then rank philosophy programs for you, helping you to identify what programs might meet your needs. Many professional philosophers, especially of the analytic persuasion, rely on the rankings of graduate programs given in the Philosophical Gourmet (<http://www.philosophicalgourmet.com>) but these rankings are controversial--many other philosophers don't put much stock in them.

Finally, your professors are an excellent resource. We have been to graduate school and have a sense for what schools teach the kinds of things we ourselves are interested in, so be sure to talk with us about your interests!

2) Should you get a Master's degree or a Doctorate? There are not very many programs that give what is called a "terminal" Master's degree. Most often, students get a Master's degree after their first year in a doctoral program. The draw back of going into a terminal Master's degree program is that it's not as likely that you would be able to get assistanceships to help you defer the costs of the degree. The advantage of getting a doctoral degree is that many places provide tuition assistance and offer teaching fellowships or assistanceships to pay for the degree. If you're not sure

Graduate School continued on page 6

In This Issue:

Philosophy Party & Awards

Summer 2007 Courses

Fall 2007 Courses

Philosophical Society

Meeting of the Minds

**Interested in Philosophy?
Join the West Georgia
Philosophical Society**

Interested in Philosophy?

Enjoy open discussions on every imaginable topic? Then you should join the Philo-sophical Society. The Society is a registered student organization that meets every other week for lively discussions of philosophical topics. So far this year the discussion topics have ranged from the problem of evil (if God is all-knowing, -powerful, and -good, why do innocent beings suffer?), to the apparent incompatibility between determinism and the belief in human free will, to the question whether humans are naturally good or bad. Members of the society have also been involved in canned food drives, bake sales, and trivia nights at local restaurants. All students, regardless of their background or experience, are invited to join.

In spring 2007 meetings will be held every other Wednesday at 4:30 pm in TLC 1204. For more information, check out the philosophy bulletin board outside TLC 2254 or the Society's website at <http://www.westga.edu/~philsoc>, or contact Dr. Lane (rlane@westga.edu).

Summer Reading Recommendations

- | | |
|-------------|--|
| Dr. Lane | Richard Mitchell, <i>Less Than Words Can Say</i>
Cheryl Misak, <i>Truth and the End of Inquiry</i> |
| Dr. Alberg | Martha Nussbaum, <i>The Fragility of Goodness</i>
Walker Percy, <i>The Message in the Bottle</i> |
| Dr. Donohoe | Richard Kearney, <i>Modern Movements in European Philosophy</i>
Fyodor Dostoevsky, <i>Crime and Punishment</i> |
| Dr. Tietjen | Bernard Williams, <i>Morality: An Introduction to Ethics.</i>
Robert C. Roberts and W. Jay Wood, <i>Intellectual Virtues: An Essay in Regulative Epistemology</i> |

Philosophy End of the Year Party and Awards Ceremony

Come celebrate the end of another academic year and the achievements of philosophy students. We'll be meeting at The Border at 3:30 pm on April 13, 2007. All philosophy majors are welcome!

We will be presenting the following students with awards:

David Ellis: Gordon Watson Award in Philosophy
Chris Pollard: Burdett and Shirley Wantland Award in Religion
Charles Bauch: Best New Major Award

Upcoming Student Conferences

North Georgia Student Philosophy Conference

Conference dates: April 6-7, 2007

Charles Bauch, Philip Brewer, David Ellis and Timothy Wright presenting.

Annual Georgia Student Philosophy Symposium

Conference date: March 30, 2007

David Ellis presenting

Summer 2007 Courses in Philosophy

Session III: June 4-June 26, 2007

Philosophy 2110-01 Critical Thinking

Dr. Mark Tietjen

MTWRF 10:00 a.m.-12:15 p.m. (HUM 208)

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 learning the fundamentals of logical reasoning and addressing contemporary cultural debates, we will focus on how to argue well and how to identify the fallacies of weak arguments. Students will also have the opportunity to apply skills they learn to their particular major.

Philosophy 2110-02 Critical Thinking

Dr. Mark Tietjen

MTWRF 3:00-5:15 p.m. (HUM 208)

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

Description same as above.

Fall 2007 Courses in Philosophy

Philosophy 2100-01 Introduction to Philosophy

Dr. Janet Donohoe

MWF 10:10-10:50 a.m. (HUM 207)

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, Nietzsche and Camus. Students are exposed to questions of what it means to be a human being, how to live the good life, what we can know, why we are here, whether there is a God, why there is evil in the world, and whether anything at all has meaning. Through the texts we learn not only the way that philosophers attempt to address these questions, but we also learn what it means to engage in philosophical thought and how the process of thinking philosophically can change our understanding of our own existence.

Philosophy 2100-02 Introduction to Philosophy

Dr. Jeremiah Alberg

TR 9:30-10:45 a.m. (HUM 207)

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

In this course we are going to study the two most important philosophers from ancient Greece, Plato and Aristotle. Then we will turn to two very important figures from the Middle Ages, Augustine and St. Thomas Aquinas. We will end with three of the Moderns, Descartes, Rousseau and Kant. We will be reading some of the classics of the Western Tradition including Plato's *Republic* and Augustine's *Confessions*. This course has one overarching goal that determines all in-class and out-of-class assignments – to help you engage philosophically with these texts. To that end, I will assign a question for each class that will require a one page answer. These one page papers will be Pass/Fail. There will be a three page paper in place of the one page paper at the end of each philosopher – again in response to a question. These will be graded in the usual manner. There will be no exams.

Philosophy 2100-03 Introduction to Philosophy

Dr. Jeremiah Alberg

MW 2:00-3:15 a.m. (PAFF 102)

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

Description same as above.

XIDS 2100-03 Postmodernism**Dr. Janet Donohoe****MWF 11:00-11:50 p.m. (HUM 206)**

In this course we will examine postmodernism in its cultural forms, looking at how its chaos arose from the order of modernism, and how it is a visible and influential element in our own society. Discussions will focus on how alterations of the human landscape have affected our understanding of ourselves with respect to others and to our surroundings. Other themes include how popular culture has changed from plot-based fiction and action-driven films to such fractured media as the fiction of Toni Morrison or the bizarre scene of “Bladerunner.” Through discussions of short readings by artists and critics alike, we will work towards our own understanding of postmodernism and how we fit into our postmodern world. We will focus on postmodern architecture, philosophy, literature, film, and social structure.

Philosophy 2110-01 Critical Thinking**Dr. Jeremiah Alberg****MWF 1:00-1:50 p.m. (HUM 207)*****Required for Philosophy Majors. Required for the Minor in Religion. May count for credit in Core Area C.***

It seems a little obvious to say that no one can do your thinking for you, but that insight guides this class. The emphasis of the class is on student activity. A wide variety of exercises are given, both inside and outside the classroom, so that students develop the skills they need for critical thinking. The students learn to identify the conclusion of a piece of reasoning, as well as the reasons given in support of that conclusion. They also learn to make explicit the assumptions of the author. Having learned to identify the conclusion, the reasons, and the structure of an argument, the students are now in a position to make judgments about the validity and soundness of the arguments, as well as constructing some of their own. This is an ideal class for sharpening your studying skills.

Philosophy 2110-02 Critical Thinking**Dr. Mark Tietjen****TR 8:00-9:15 a.m. (HUM 206)*****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 learning the fundamentals of logical reasoning and addressing contemporary cultural debates, we will focus on how to argue well and how to identify the fallacies of weak arguments. Students will also have the opportunity to apply skills they learn to their particular major.

Philosophy 2120-01 Introduction to Ethics**Dr. Robert Lane****MWF 9:00-9:50 a.m. (HUM 207)**

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 3100-01 Ancient and Medieval Philosophy**Dr. Mark Tietjen****TR 11:00 a.m.-12:15 p.m. (HUM 208)**

Alfred North Whitehead famously claimed that all philosophy is a footnote to Plato. In this course students will begin to feel the weight of this claim as we consider Plato and other great thinkers of the ancient and medieval world like Aristotle, Augustine, and Thomas Aquinas. A strong emphasis of this course will involve our making connections between the ideas of these thinkers and those that follow in modern and contemporary philosophy.

Philosophy 3240-01 World Religions

Dr. Mark Tietjen

TR 2:00-3:15 p.m. (PAFF 307)

This course is a comparative study of the beliefs and practices of several world religions such as Hinduism, Buddhism, Judaism, Christianity, and Islam. We will explore not only the history of these faiths and their early doctrinal and communal development but their place in today's world.

Philosophy 4120-01 Professional Ethics

Dr. Robert Lane

MWF 11:00-11:50 a.m. (HUM 205)

This course examines ethical questions that can arise for individuals working in business, the legal professions, and the medical professions. With regard to business, we will examine issues such as corporate social responsibility, the meaning and value of work, employee rights and responsibilities, and diversity and discrimination in the workplace. With regard to the legal professions, we will examine the moral responsibilities of criminal defense attorneys toward their clients. With regard to medicine, we will consider issues such as moral obligations towards patients in permanent comas, physician-assisted dying, the moral status of embryos and stem-cells, and the use of human subjects in medical experimentation. To provide a general theoretical background for these questions, we will also examine ethical theories such as utilitarianism, and Kantianism, and emotivism.

Philosophy 4140-01W Existentialism

Dr. Janet Donohoe

MWF 1:00-1:50 a.m. (HUM 206)

This course examines both atheist and religious existentialism through the texts of major existential thinkers such as Dostoevsky, Nietzsche, Sartre, Camus, DeBeauvoir and Kierkegaard. Students are encouraged to think through the big questions existentialists raise about the meaning of human existence including whether there is any purpose for our existence, how we define ourselves, whether there are any reasons to be moral, and whether human existence is inherently meaningful. We will analyze theories in terms of the ramifications for the way we live our lives.

Philosophy 4300-01W Senior Seminar

Dr. Robert Lane

MWF 2:00-2:50 p.m. (HUM 205)

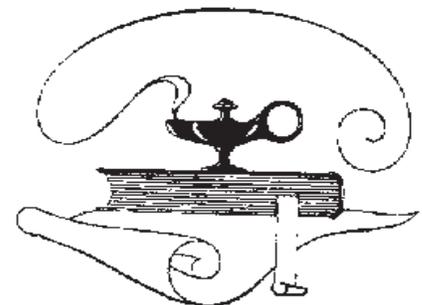
This course serves as a "capstone" to the study of philosophy at UWG. It is required for all philosophy majors graduating in between fall 2007 and summer 2008. The topic of the course will be the work of Charles S. Peirce, the American philosopher and logician who founded the philosophical tradition known as pragmatism. We will consider Peirce's contributions to a number of different areas of philosophy, including metaphysics, epistemology and logic. In addition to mid-term and final exams and a number of short writing assignments, students will be assessed by way of one major writing assignment: the seminar paper, a high-quality philosophical essay which will be suitable for submission to undergraduate philosophy conferences and which will become part of the student's senior portfolio.

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

Philosopher's Wisdom

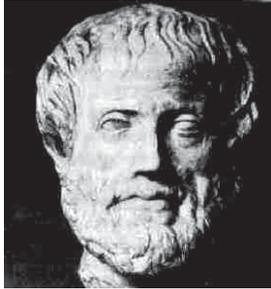
*Many people would sooner die
than think. In fact they do.*

~Bertrand Russell



7th Annual Meeting of the Minds What is the Aim of Human Existence?

Come enjoy the answers proposed by philosophers to this perplexing question.



Thursday April 5, 2007 at 7:00 p.m.
Kathy Cashen Hall (Humanities Building)

Philosophers in attendance will be:

Aristotle played by Charles Bauch
Soren Kierkegaard played by Matthew Lewis
Ludwig Wittgenstein played by Kevin Jones
Hannah Arendt played by Emily Hattaway
Albert Camus played by David Ellis



and Moderated by Raquel Susach



whether you really want a doctorate (it's several more years of study), you can always exit a program after you have received your Master's.

3) What do I need to do in order to apply? It's a good idea to look online at the programs you are interested in. They often have application materials that you can download and print out yourself. Many schools require that applicants have some minimum undergraduate GPA, so it is important that you earn good grades as an undergraduate, especially in your philosophy courses. Most schools require that you take the Graduate Record Exam (GRE) prior to applying. They also often require a writing sample, which for most applicants is the best term paper they have written as undergraduates; you may want to do further work on it with a professor to make it the highest quality written work you can submit. Finally, you will probably be required to submit letters of recommendation, so it is a good idea to talk with professors about writing letters for you while you are still here on campus.

Above all else, don't be afraid to ask questions, either of your professors or of the graduate programs in which you are interested. Good luck!

Department of Philosophy

Department Office: TLC 2255

Telephone: 678-839-4848

Department Office Hours: M-F, 8 am-5 pm

Fax: 678-839-4849

Website: www.westga.edu/~phil/

Faculty Offices

(all offices are located in TLC)

Faculty	Office	Phone
Alberg, Jay	2254	678-839-4738
Donohoe, Janet	2250	678-839-4743
Lane, Robert	2247	678-839-4745
Tietjen, Mark	2249	678-839-6294

Please direct any questions or comments about this newsletter to Dr. Janet Donohoe, 678-839-4743.