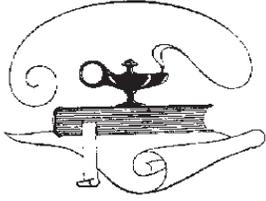


# The Lantern



Philosophy Newsletter for Students

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## Philosophical Counselors: Making Philosophy Even More Relevant?

When students wonder what they can do with a philosophy degree, their professors often tell them that they can do anything they want. The philosophy degree is great preparation for all kinds of careers that involve problem solving, critical thinking, clear argumentation, excellent communication skills, and the ability to think through complex issues. So, the kinds of careers

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that immediately come to mind are careers in law, medicine, b u s i n e s s , publishing, and politics. One of

the things that doesn't always come up, but will perhaps come up more frequently in the future, is a career as a counselor. That's right, philosophical counseling is on the rise and is quickly becoming a career option for those with a philosophy degree.

Recently *The Washington Post* published an article about philosophical counselors claiming that there are roughly 300 of them across the United States and in 20 other countries who are certified. The certifying agency is the American Philosophical Practitioners Association. There are another 600 such counselors who are not certified, but still practice, according to Lou Marinoff, author of *Plato, Not Prozac! Applying Eternal Wisdom to Everyday Problems*.

Apparently, philosophical counselors can earn an average of \$80 an hour for a session.

What, we might wonder, does a philosophical counselor have to offer? Consider the kinds of issues that many people deal with in their everyday lives. Not serious, clinical psychological issues, but issues such as struggling with a divorce, or financial concerns, or chronic illness, or the death of a loved one. These kinds of human concerns are not new and many philosophers from the past can help people think through how to cope with these issues. Dr. Patricia Anne Murphy is a doctor, not of medicine, but of philosophy. She helps people with these issues by drawing upon the life of Immanuel Kant and taking her clients for brisk walks through her neighborhood. Kant thought that a walk was soothing and helped with the clarity of one's thinking. *(continued, page 2)*

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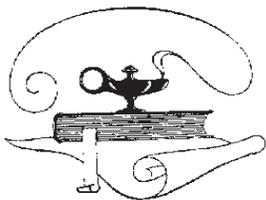
## PHILOSOPHY HONORS SOCIETY

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,
- ◆ the completion of 45 hours of coursework.

For more information, visit [www.westga.edu/~pst](http://www.westga.edu/~pst) or contact Dr. Lane at [rlane@westga.edu](mailto:rlane@westga.edu) if you are interested in applying for membership.



(Counselors, continued from page 1)

*The Washington Post* describes these counselors as very intellectual life coaches with in-depth knowledge of Sartre and existentialism, Heidegger and phenomenological explorations into being, Kierkegaard and despair. Marinoff, in response to someone's grief over losing a job, suggests "read the Chinese Philosopher Lao Tzu, founder of Taoism, who taught that every loss comes bundled with gain, for they are inseparable manifestations of yin and yang. In other words, instead of focusing on the loss, focus on the gain: Losing a job, you have just gained an opportunity to develop a latent talent and to enter a more suitable career path."

Of course, this approach to counseling has its critics. Dr. Elliot Cohen from Brown University argues that philosophical counseling should not be a separate discipline, but that philosophy should be incorporated into more mainstream therapy. "Marinoff is dead-ending philosophical counseling by creating an elite group that can only focus on an elite part of the population and limiting the contributions they can make" he claims.

Whether you think philosophical counseling is wise or not, it can help raise the profile of philosophy and provide a possible return to the public philosophers of Ancient Greece. As Sean Holland with a PhD from MIT says, "I found that philosophy is actually back as a respected profession. We are trained problem-solvers and, in a way, we can launch a return to an old set of skills that are very much needed today."

(Information for this article provided by *The Washington Post* at [www.washingtonpost.com/lifestyle/style/2011/08/18](http://www.washingtonpost.com/lifestyle/style/2011/08/18))

## PHILOSOPHER'S WISDOM

"The point of philosophy is to start with something so simple as not to seem worth stating and to end with something so paradoxical that no one will believe it."

~ Bertrand Russell

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**SPRING 2012 COURSE DESCRIPTIONS**
**Phil 2010-01 Introduction to Philosophy**  
**MWF 10:00-10:50 a.m. TLC 1200**
**Dr. Janet Donohoe**

This course takes an historical look at major philosophical questions through the primary texts of such important philosophers as Plato, Aristotle, Boethius, Descartes, Nietzsche, and Camus among others. 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. Required for philosophy majors. May count for credit in Core Area C2.

**Phil 2010-02 Introduction to Philosophy**  
**MW 2:00-3:15 p.m. TLC 1200**
**TBA**

Required for philosophy majors. May count for credit in Core Area C2.

**Phil 2010-03 Introduction to Philosophy**  
**MW 3:30-4:45 p.m. TLC 1200**
**TBA**

Required for philosophy majors. May count for credit in Core Area C2.

**Phil 2010-04 Introduction to Philosophy**  
**TR 11:00-12:15 p.m. TLC 1200**
**Dr. Thomas Brommage**

This course will survey some of the most important figures in Western philosophy, from the ancient Greeks all the way through the 19<sup>th</sup> century. Emphasis will be placed on understanding each thinker within historical context. The student will develop an understanding of the historical tradition of Western philosophy, as well as a grasp of the basics of each figured covered. The course will trace the dialogue concerning epistemological and metaphysical problems through the ancient, medieval and modern periods, theories of ethics (including virtue ethics, deontology and utilitarianism). Required for philosophy majors. May count for credit in Core Area C2.

**Phil 2010-05 Introduction to Philosophy**  
**TR 2:00-3:15 p.m. TLC 1301**
**Dr. Thomas Brommage**

Same as above.

**Phil 2010-06 Introduction to Philosophy**  
**TR 3:30-4:45 p.m. TLC 1200**
**Dr. Thomas Brommage**

Same as above.

**Phil 2020-01 Critical Thinking**  
**MWF 11:00-11:50 a.m. Paff 109**
**Dr. Walter Riker**

In this course students learn to recognize and evaluate several different kinds of arguments. Students practice their developing skills by analyzing several influential contemporary arguments for and against different uses of animals (e.g., for food, research, entertainment, and companionship). This course satisfies the Oral Communication component of the Core Curriculum, so students will discuss these issues in both formal and informal settings. Required for philosophy majors. May count for credit in Core Area B1. Required for philosophy majors. May count for credit in Core Area B1.

**Phil 2020-02 Critical Thinking**  
**MW 3:30-4:45 p.m. Paff 109**
**Dr. Thomas Brommage**

This course is designed to strengthen students' skills in reasoning about problems and issues of everyday life by helping them to distinguish between good and bad arguments. Students work to achieve these goals through studying the structure of inductive arguments, rhetorical fallacies, and the connection between logic and belief. The second half of this course will stress information literacy, developing critical thinking skills necessary for each. Topics will include television and print media reports, advertising, maps and the internet. Throughout the course, the student will develop the skills necessary to become a better consumer of information. Required for philosophy majors. May count for credit in Core Area B1.

**Phil 2020-03 Critical Thinking**  
**TR 9:30-10:45 a.m. Paff 109**
**TBA**

Required for philosophy majors. May count for credit in Core Area B1.

**Phil 2030-01 Introduction to Ethics**  
**TR 12:30-1:45 p.m. TLC 1200**
**Dr. Robert Lane**

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. May count for credit in Core Area C2.

**Phil 2030-02 Introduction to Ethics**  
**TR 2:00-3:15 p.m. TLC 1200**  
Same as above.

**Dr. Robert Lane**

**Phil 2130-25H Introduction to World Religions**  
**TR 9:30-10:45 a.m. TLC 1204**

**Dr. Mark Tietjen**

This course is a comparative study of the beliefs and practices of several world religions such as Hinduism, Buddhism, Judaism, Christianity, and Islam. Students will explore the history of these faiths, their early doctrinal and communal development, and their place in today's world. We will also explore in depth a story shared by three world religions, Abraham's binding of his son, and the theological and philosophical problems this story generates for those particular religions and religious belief more broadly. May count for credit in Core Area E4.

**Phil 3110-01 Modern Philosophy**  
**MW 2:00-3:15 p.m. Paff 109**

**Dr. Walter Riker**

In this course in the history of philosophy, we will examine the metaphysical and epistemological theories of influential 17th and 18th-century philosophers. We will focus on works by Descartes, Locke, Hume and Kant, and draw on works by Leibniz, Berkeley and others where appropriate.

**Phil 3160-01 Philosophy in Literature and Film**  
**MWF 11:00-11:50 a.m. Paff 308**

**Dr. Janet Donohoe**

Literature and film are often the most fruitful genres for thinking about philosophical themes. Through analysis of these media we can begin to address philosophical questions outside of straightforward philosophical treatises. This semester this course will address the themes of knowledge and tradition in philosophical and literary texts as well as in film. We will attempt to grasp how authors understand the relation of tradition to what we know and how we know it. We ask these questions in an effort to come to a deeper understanding of ourselves as human beings and our own relationship to our traditions

**Phil 3220-01 Christian Thought**  
**TR 11:00 a.m.-12:15 p.m. HUM 134**

**Dr. Mark Tietjen**

This course examines the central doctrines and themes of Christian Thought, including God, the church, sin, and love. Students will be introduced to a wide range of primary texts from both classical and contemporary theologians. Attention will also be given to the practical implications of Christian Thought for human existence.

**Phil 4110-01 Philosophy of Law**  
**MWF 10:00-10:50 a.m. Paff 109**

**Dr. Walter Riker**

In this course, we will examine central problems in philosophy of law. We will focus first on the nature of law and legal reasoning. We will then deal with problems in traditional doctrinal areas of law, including property, tort, criminal law, contracts and constitutional law.

**Phil 4160-01 Symbolic Logic**  
**TR 9:30-10:45 a.m. Paff 308**

**Dr. Robert Lane**

An introduction to the application of symbolic methods to reasoning, covering sentential logic and predicate logic. Students will learn how to translate ordinary language sentences and arguments into the notation of symbolic logic, determine the truth value of compound sentences, distinguish among various valid and invalid argument forms, and demonstrate whether an argument in symbolic form is valid or invalid. Because Symbolic Logic enhances one's abilities in skills necessary for the LSAT, philosophy majors in the Pre-Law track are strongly encouraged to take this course.

**Phil 4240-01W Philosophy of Friendship and Love**  
**MWF 1:00-1:50 p.m. Paff 308**

**Dr. Janet Donohoe**

The aim of this course is to examine critically a variety of theories of friendship and love through examining important primary philosophical texts; to explore what it means to love and how such notions of love and friendship have changed through the centuries; to grasp the value and meaning of friendship and love as social and personal elements; to recognize the historical nature of definitions and questions of friendship and love. We will also be addressing questions of the relationship between love, friendship, sex, and sexuality.



## Focus on Alumni: Jared Bissell, JD

### How My Philosophy Degree Helped in Law School

At the outset of law school, the vast majority of students would say they feel woefully underprepared (the other ones are just lying). And that's mostly because, quite frankly, you are.

The major hurdle a new law student faces is thus: law school classes aren't in the same format as undergraduate classes. In most undergraduate classes, the professor lectures and expects the audience merely to sit and be open receptors of the information. The lectures are often about the overarching subject matter as a whole, or a chronological analysis of events in order to get at the theme of the class. There might be a question posed here and there, but it's usually a one-way conversation.

In law school, it's a method created by Christopher Langdell, the dean of Harvard law school, in 1890. It's called the casebook method, where professors choose the most illustrative examples of a particular area of law, and from those examples attempt to extract the general legal rule at hand. Generally, this is coupled with the Socratic Method, so a student is required to carry on a dialogue while the professor asks open ended questions about matter at hand. In order to succeed one must have a deep understanding of the facts of a case, the relevant legal issues the case addresses, the holding of the Court in this particular instance, and the reasoning behind such a holding.

Although it's rare to find a comparison to the case method of learning in the undergraduate experience, an undergrad can get a taste of what it's like to be in law school by experiencing the Socratic method of instruction in action in a philosophy course. It's not like a student and a teacher can get into a lengthy debate about the year when Hitler invaded Poland (it was in 1939) or how many electrons are in Einsteinium (99). Those things are set in stone, and there's only one correct answer. But, in philosophy classes, the material is often open to interpretation, and that gives the philosophy student more of a chance to freely exchange ideas with their professors than other majors. This exchange between student and professor generally gives a philosophy student a firmer footing insofar as speaking with

*(continued, page 6)*

## INTERESTED IN PHILOSOPHY?

### Join the West Georgia Philosophical Society

Interested in philosophy? Enjoy open discussions on every imaginable topic? Then you should join the 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 whether man is 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 Fall 2011, meetings are being held every other Wednesday at 5:00pm in the Philosophy conference room on the second floor of TLC (2237). Check out the Society's website at <http://www.westga.edu/~philsoc>, or contact Dr. Riker ([wriker@westga.edu](mailto:wriker@westga.edu)) for more information or to be added to the Society's email list.

## Upcoming Undergraduate Conferences

Remember, if you are interested in submitting something to one of these conferences, your philosophy professors are always willing to help you clean up one of your term papers to make it appropriate. Talk to us!

### Biennial Joint Meeting of the North Carolina Philosophical Society and the South Carolina Society for Philosophy

Elon University, Elon, North Carolina; Conference dates: February 24-25, 2012;  
Submission deadline: January 4, 2012.

### Fourth Annual Southeast Philosophy Congress

Clayton State University; Conference dates: February 17-18, 2012;  
Submission deadline: January 31, 2012.

### 13th Annual Southern Appalachian Undergraduate Philosophy Conference

University of North Carolina at Asheville; Conference dates: November 12, 2011;  
Submission deadline: September 30, 2011.

### 6th Annual SIUE Undergraduate Philosophy Conference

Conference dates: November 4-5, 2011; Submission deadline: September 30, 2011.

*(Alumni, continued from page 5)*

professors, and helps to eliminate that sense of awe so often felt by new law students.

Additionally, and perhaps more importantly, as a philosophy major, we are taught more HOW to think than WHAT to think. Philosophy is all about asking questions, and it's the questions we can't answer that are the most important. If we are simply given answers, all one gains is a small fact. However, if there's a question a student cannot answer, the student will then look for their own answer. That way, when the answer is discovered, it'll be precious to them. The harder the question, the harder the students hunt. The harder the hunt, they learn. If there's an impossible question posed (as is often done in philosophy classes), then the learning is immeasurable.

While no student, philosophy or otherwise, is ever completely prepared for the rigors and challenges of law school at the outset, a philosophy major has a number of

experiences and tools at their disposal that put them on better footing than others to accept the challenges that lie ahead.

If law school is a student's ultimate destination, choosing to be a philosophy major is a strong first step in the right direction.

