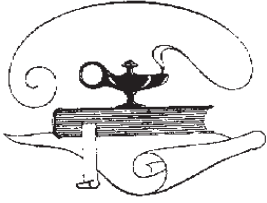


# The Lantern



Philosophy Newsletter for Students

Volume 16, Number 1

Fall 2014

## Procrastinating About Term Papers? Time for Thinking

Recently in the *New York Times*, Anna Della Subin suggested that perhaps the most popular saint would be St. Expeditus, the patron saint of procrastinators. Apparently, St. Expeditus can help you get your term papers written on time if you treat him right.

Although Expeditus was martyred in 303 C.E., there is a sense that he is needed today more than ever. The 21<sup>st</sup> Century has been marked by what philosopher David Harvey calls the time-space compression. This is the sense that everything moves more quickly due to technology that allows us to communicate instantly, receive things we have mail-ordered over night, travel to the other side of the world in mere hours and share our lives immediately with loved ones near and far via Snapchat and Instagram. The rush of life makes procrastination that much more difficult to deal with, however. When everything is expected immediately, there isn't time for procrastination. And yet, with all things at our fingertips all the time on our smart phones and other gadgets, procrastination is that much more of a problem. Who wouldn't rather look at pictures of cats on the Internet or watch YouTube videos of our favorite band than write that term paper? Can St. Expeditus save us?

In her *New York Times* article, Subin notes that humans spent a total of 140 million hours watching the YouTube video of "Gangnam Style" two billion times during which time we could have built at least four more pyramids at Giza. So, the question is why do we irrationally engage in such time-wasting endeavors? Or, is it truly such a waste of time or is our social pressure to be constantly productive more the fault here? After all, whatever we spend our time doing could be considered to be procrastination from anything else we could be doing, couldn't it? So why should procrastination be laden with guilt and self-loathing? (*continued on p. 2*)

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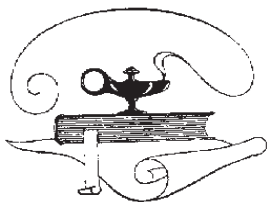
## PHILOSOPHY HONORS SOCIETY

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 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](mailto:wriker@westga.edu)) if you are interested in applying for membership.



(continued from p. 1)

Subin suggests that procrastination first became noted as a mental illness in the 1950s when it was listed in the America Psychiatric Association's *Diagnostic and Statistical Manual of Mental Disorders*. Procrastination since then and due to the increasing time-space compression could arguably be an epidemic—particularly amongst college students. And particularly in our capitalist society with its constant push for expansion, productivity and increased profit. So perhaps as culture expects us more and more to have our gadgets with us that allow us to work, we can think of procrastination as our own act of resistance against the demands to hurry, to produce more, to think less.

Certainly one of your philosophy professors is not advocating that you put off that reading or writing that term paper. Let me be clear. Perhaps treating St. Expeditus well means allowing yourself the leisure to spend time thinking so that your term paper is easier to write, so that the reading is easier to understand, and the writing is clearer. As Subin notes, idleness can lead to true creativity. So, let's put down the phone, and take up...well, nothing at all for a moment except thinking.

## PHILOSOPHER'S WISDOM

“If it should turn out to be true that knowledge (in the modern sense of know-how) and thought have parted company for good, then we would indeed become the helpless slaves, not so much of our machines as of our know-how, thoughtless creatures at the mercy of every gadget which is technically possible, no matter how murderous it is.”

~Hannah Arendt  
*The Human Condition*

## SPRING 2015 COURSE DESCRIPTIONS



- Phil 2010-01 Introduction to Philosophy** **Dr. Janet Donohoe** **MWF 10:00-10:52 a.m. Anth 2**  
 This course takes an historical look at major philosophical questions through the primary texts of such important philosophers as Plato, Aristotle, Boethius, Descartes, Nietzsche, Camus, and Arendt. 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 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** **Dr. John Garner** **MW 3:30-4:50 p.m. TLC 1200**  
 Philosophy as a Greek term means *love of wisdom*. While there has been much debate about the meaning of philosophy as an ongoing practice and an academic discipline, nearly all scholars regard it as critical inquiry into the most important of life's questions. One of the best ways to be initiated into philosophy is to undertake a guided study of the significant figures, ideas, and events which have constituted the tradition of philosophy. In this course, we will engage in an "open dialogue" with the Western tradition about topics such as the nature of value, knowledge, truth, and selfhood. Our aim is not only to develop an understanding of various historical responses to such questions but also to help students become critical thinkers. The specific learning outcomes are reflected in the choice of readings, and these readings have been selected for the purposes, in general, of exposing students to a diverse range of views on the major branches of philosophy: *ontology* (the study of what is or of what is real, as opposed to what is merely apparent); *epistemology* (the study of what is knowable, the limits of knowing, and how we know); and *practical philosophy* (the study of value, aesthetics, and politics). We will also aim to build skills in reading, logic and critical thinking, argument assessment, and cordial but serious discussion. Required for philosophy majors. May count for credit in Core Area C2.
- Phil 2010-03 Introduction to Philosophy** **Dr. John Garner** **TR 11:00 a.m.-12:20 p.m. Anth 2**  
 Same as above. Required for philosophy majors. May count for credit in Core Area C2.
- Phil 2010-04 Introduction to Philosophy** **Dr. Shoni Rancher** **TR 12:30-1:50 p.m. TLC 1200**  
 Required for philosophy majors. May count for credit in Core Area C2.
- Phil 2010-05 Introduction to Philosophy** **Dr. John Garner** **TR 2:00-3:20 p.m. TLC 1200**  
 Same as above. Required for philosophy majors. May count for credit in Core Area C2.
- Phil 2020-01 Critical Thinking** **Dr. John Garner** **MW 2:00-3:20 p.m. TLC 1116**  
 This course provides an introduction to logical reasoning and critical thinking. We will focus on the nature and analysis of arguments, deductive and non-deductive reasoning, informal fallacies, and the uses of language. This course has many practical benefits. Every day we are met with a barrage of radio and television commercials, appeals by friends and families, speeches by politicians, and lectures in the college classroom. In many of these situations, we are asked to accept some claim about what we ought or ought not to believe (e.g., either endorse or reject a plan to increase taxes) or what we ought to do or refrain from doing (e.g., to smoke or not to smoke). Sometimes when people attempt to persuade us to believe something or to buy their product, their reasons are good; other times they are not. We may be convinced that truth is on our side and that we can prove it, but can we? Do we have good reasons for thinking the way we do? This course is about learning to reason well, to make good arguments, and to evaluate the arguments of others. Your own education and life are enhanced by your ability to think critically. Required for philosophy majors. May count for credit in Core Area B1.
- Phil 2020-02 Critical Thinking** **TBA** **MW 3:30-4:50 p.m. Paff 305**  
 Required for philosophy majors. May count for credit in Core Area B1.
- Phil 2020-03 Critical Thinking** **TBA** **MW 5:30-6:50 p.m. Paff 308**  
 Required for philosophy majors. May count for credit in Core Area B1.
- Phil 2020-04 Critical Thinking** **Dr. Mark Tietjen** **TR 9:30-10:50 a.m. Paff 110**  
 This course addresses the basics of how to think critically and how to evaluate arguments. Students will learn to identify both well known argument forms and well known fallacies in reasoning. They will explore the importance of clear definitions, the role of emotion in argumentation, and how critical thinking skills might be useful in analyzing contemporary issues in politics, science, and religion. Students will apply skills they learn to philosophical texts and also to their particular major fields of study. Required for philosophy majors. May count for credit in Core Area B1.
- Phil 2020-06 Critical Thinking** **Dr. Walter Riker** **TR 12:30-1:50 p.m. Paff 305**  
 Do we mistreat animals when we eat them or use them in experiments? Many philosophers argue that we do. In this class, students will learn to recognize and evaluate different kinds of arguments, and will then apply these skills to assessment of philosophical arguments for and against different uses of animals. This course satisfies the Oral Communication part of Core Area B, so students will discuss these issues both formally and informally. Required for philosophy majors. May count for credit in Core Area B1.
- Phil 2020-07 Critical Thinking** **Dr. Walter Riker** **TR 2:00-3:20 p.m. Anth 7**  
 Same as above. Required for philosophy majors. May count for credit in Core Area B1.



## SPRING 2015 COURSE DESCRIPTIONS

**Phil 2020-08 Critical Thinking** **Dr. Shoni Rancher** **TR 3:30-4:50 p.m. Paff 302**  
Required for philosophy majors. May count for credit in Core Area B1.

**Phil 2030-01 Introduction to Ethics** **Dr. Rosemary Kellison** **TR 11:00 a.m.-12:20 p.m. Hum 312**  
This course serves as an introduction to ethics: philosophical thinking about the question of how humans ought to live. In this course we will engage with ethics on several different levels. We will think about practical moral problems, such as abortion, capital punishment, animal rights, and poverty. To enable critical examination of our own and others' positions on such moral problems, we will explore various theoretical approaches to ethics, learning the different ways in which individuals and communities justify their moral arguments. Finally, we will consider broader, more theoretical questions regarding the nature and origin of morality itself. Required for philosophy majors and minors. May count for credit in Core Area C2.

**Phil 2030-25H Introduction to Ethics—Honors** **Dr. Robert Lane** **MWF 10:00-10:52 a.m. Paff 309**  
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 philosophy majors and minors. May count for credit in Core Area C2.

**Phil 2130-01 Introduction to World Religions** **Dr. Rosemary Kellison** **TR 9:30-10:50 a.m. TLC 1200**  
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. May count for credit in Core Area E4.

**Phil 3110-01 Modern Philosophy** **Dr. Walter Riker** **TR 9:30-10:50 a.m. Hum 229**  
This course in the history of Western philosophy examines the metaphysical and epistemological theories of influential 17<sup>th</sup> and 18<sup>th</sup> century philosophers. We will examine work by Rene Descartes (1596-1650), John Locke (1632-1704), David Hume (1711-1776), and Immanuel Kant (1724-1804), among others. We will also examine work in Feminist Philosophy that responds to or challenges the modern philosophers and their influence on contemporary thought in the West.

**Phil 3120-01 American Philosophy** **Dr. Robert Lane** **MWF 11:00-11:52 a.m. Paff 308**  
What is truth? What is the best way for me to form beliefs about the world? Is absolute certainty possible, or must we be satisfied with beliefs that are not certain? What is philosophy, and what is its relationship with science? This course tackles those questions and others by examining how they were treated by the thinkers who founded pragmatism, America's distinctive philosophical tradition. In particular, we will study the works of three classical American pragmatists: Charles Peirce, William James, and John Dewey. We will also study the ideas of the late 20th-century "neo-pragmatist" Richard Rorty.

**Phil 3220-01 Christian Thought** **Dr. Mark Tietjen** **TR 2:00-3:20 p.m. Paff 110**  
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 theologians both classical and contemporary. Attention will also be given to the practical implications of Christian Thought for human existence.

**Phil 4220-01 Hermeneutics** **Dr. Janet Donohoe** **MWF 11:00-11:52 p.m. Boyd 304**  
Hermeneutics is the philosophical discipline investigating the process of textual interpretation. How do we know how to interpret what we read? Is the meaning of a text what the author intended? How would we know what an author intended? Should we understand a text within a historical context? This course addresses the development of the hermeneutic tradition through the primary texts of such influential philosophers as Friedrich Schleiermacher, Martin Heidegger, Hans-Georg Gadamer, and Paul Ricoeur.

**Phil 4240-01 Philosophy of Friendship and Love** **Dr. Janet Donohoe** **MWF 1:00-1:52 p.m. Paff 112**  
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.



## Registration is Nearly Here!

Remember, if you are a philosophy major, you are required to meet with your advisor before you will be able to register for classes next spring. You may have already heard from your advisor, but if you haven't, you may want to swing by his or her office to see if you can sign up for a time for advising. The registration schedule is listed below, so be sure to meet with your advisor before your time to register.

### On-Time Registration Dates for Currently Enrolled Students\*:

Current Seniors & Grad-level students – October 27  
 Current Juniors ss# ending in 00-49 – October 28  
 Current Juniors ss# ending in 50-99 – October 29  
 Current Sophomores ss# ending 00-49 – October 30  
 Current Sophomores ss# ending 50-99 – October 31  
 Current Freshmen ss# ending 50-99 – November 3  
 Current Freshmen ss# ending 00-49 – November 4

\*Currently enrolled students are those taking courses in the current term - fall 2014

### Open Registration\*\* Begins November 10, 2014; Ends January 11, 2015

(Students that are currently serving a one term suspension, are readmitted, or are admitted as a transient must wait until Open Registration to register.)

\*\*Registration will be closed during each fee payment processing period. Check the Registrar's announcements regularly for more details.

### INTERESTED IN PHILOSOPHY?

#### Join the West Georgia Philosophical Society

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. Meetings are typically held every other Wednesday at 1 p.m. in TLC 2237. If you would like more information about the Society's meetings or other activities, or to be added to the Society's email list, email Society President Daniel Aldrich at uwgphilosophy@gmail.com or check out our Facebook page at <https://www.facebook.com/groups/136625026403394/>.

## Meeting of Minds Organizational Meeting

Each Spring the Philosophy Program presents the Meeting of the Minds. This public event is a panel conversation between roughly six students posing as well-known philosophers discussing a pre-determined topic of the students' choice. Students prepare the discussion by writing a monologue of a philosopher's position and then rehearsing a scripted discussion. The discussion will take place sometime in late March or early April of 2015. In an effort to get a jump start on this year's production, Dr. Donohoe is calling a planning meeting to take place on Friday, December 5<sup>th</sup> at 1:00pm

If you are interested in participating in the Meeting of the Minds this year either as a philosopher or as a director, please notify Dr. Donohoe at [jdonohoe@westga.edu](mailto:jdonohoe@westga.edu).



"What do you mean it's wrong? In Ethics we learnt that the truth is always subjective!?"