

# Sophia

News and Events from the Department of Philosophy

THE UNIVERSITY OF  
**MEMPHIS**  
Dreamers. Thinkers. Doers.

## From the Chair



I am very happy to present to you the first edition of *Sophia*, a newsletter from the Department of Philosophy at the University of Memphis. In it you will read about the various changes that have taken place in recent years and the exciting things we are doing. The department is thriving, with 80 undergraduate majors, 30 graduate students, and several new faculty members. Our students and faculty are excellent scholars and amazing people. They are a great source of pride for the department and the university. Our commitment

to philosophical pluralism and to diversity has established our reputation as one of the best places to receive a well-rounded philosophical education in an inclusive and supportive environment. Our students and faculty reflect these commitments and I am continually amazed by the things they do to promote a collegial and inclusive atmosphere. I think the articles in this newsletter will reveal what many of you already know about our department: it is exceptional!

Over the past few years there have been some major changes in our faculty. Dr. Sarah Clark Miller (Ph.D. from SUNY Stony Brook in 2003), whose research is in ethics, feminist theory, and social and political philosophy, joined the faculty in 2003 as an Assistant Professor. She has quickly established herself as an exceptional teacher, receiving a nomination for the university's prestigious teaching award. She has also established herself as a leading researcher in her field. In 2006 she received a visiting faculty fellowship at the University of Toronto Centre for Ethics.

In 2005, we hired three Assistant Professors. Each is a rising star in their respective field and has shown themselves to be invaluable to the department. Dr. Kas Saghafi received his Ph.D. from DePaul University in 2002. His research is in 20<sup>th</sup>-century continental philosophy. His book *Apparitions—Of Derrida's Other* is forthcoming from Fordham University Press. Dr. Pleshette DeArmitt received her Ph.D. from DePaul University in 2006. Her research areas include 20<sup>th</sup>-century continental philosophy, feminist philosophy and philosophy and psychoanalysis. She is the co-editor of *Sarah Koffman's Corpus* published by SUNY Press in 2008. Dr. Remy Debes received his Ph.D. from the University of

Michigan in 2006. His research is in ethics, the history of ethics, and moral psychology. He has articles forthcoming in *Philosophical Studies*, *Synthese*, *The Routledge Guide to the Eighteenth Century*, and *Noûs*.

In 2005 we were also very fortunate to recruit Dr. Bill Lawson (Ph.D., University of North Carolina) to our department. Dr. Lawson was previously a Full Professor at Michigan State. He is now our Distinguished Professor of Philosophy. His work in African-American philosophy and in social and political philosophy made him an ideal candidate, and his arrival has significantly enhanced our standing within the philosophical community.

In the Spring of 2008 we hired Dr. Stephan Blatti (D.Phil., University of Oxford), and in the Spring of 2009 we hired Dr. Kelly Arenson (Ph.D., Emory University). Please see our New Faculty Spotlight to read about Dr. Blatti and Dr. Arenson.

In addition to these new arrivals, the department has seen several faculty departures over the past few years. In 2007, Dr. David Henderson took a position at the University of Nebraska. In 2008, Dr. Leonard Lawlor took a position at Pennsylvania State University. Dr. Robert Bernasconi has also joined the philosophy department at Pennsylvania State University. And after 40 years of service, Dr. Nancy Simco retired from the University of Memphis. She has, in her own words, "gone to the dogs!" Through the years each of them made significant contributions to the education of our undergraduates and graduate students and served the department and the university in exemplary ways. They will be missed.

As you can see, there have been many changes, but our commitment to our students and to the pursuit of the examined life remain the same. I hope that you enjoy reading about the activities and accomplishments of the Department of Philosophy. We are very proud of our alums, and would very much like to hear from you. I encourage you to share with us news about what you are doing now, and let us know if you would like to be involved in supporting your Department of Philosophy. Please visit our web site, [www.memphis.edu/philosophy](http://www.memphis.edu/philosophy), regularly to keep up with department news and events.

Cordially,

Dr. Deborah Tollefsen

Department Chair



Chris Spindel, right, hosted the retirement party celebrating Nancy Simco's forty years of service to the Department of Philosophy.

## Simco Retires

### Department Establishes Simco Lecture Series

The Department of Philosophy celebrated Dr. Nancy Simco's many years of service to the department and university at a retirement party held in her honor in September 2008. Chris Spindel graciously hosted the festive event at her home. Friends and former colleagues from across the university gathered to toast Nancy and to wish her well in her retirement. Speakers praised Nancy's leadership, vision, and mettle. In her retirement, she is enjoying working with Memphis Area Golden Retriever Rescue and attending dog shows with her golden retrievers.

Over the years, Nancy filled several important posts at the university, including Chair of the Department of Philosophy. During her 19 years of leadership, the department developed a national and international reputation and is now widely known as having exceptional undergraduate and graduate philosophy programs.

The faculty of the Department of Philosophy has established the *Nancy Simco Lecture Series* to honor Nancy's service to the University of Memphis, the Department of Philosophy and to the profession of philosophy. The series, which will begin in 2010, aims to make a significant and lasting contribution to the life of the department in her name and to continue her legacy by building on the intellectual life she so dedicatedly cultivated over the years. The fund will provide the resources to bring some of the most distinguished thinkers from this country and abroad to the University of Memphis. Students and faculty from across the university and members of the local community will benefit from the opportunity to interact with scholars who are defining the philosophical landscape in the 21<sup>st</sup>-century. The Simco Lectures will be published in *The Southern Journal of Philosophy*.

The department invites you to join us in honoring Dr. Nancy Simco by contributing to the Nancy Simco Lecture Series Fund. Checks should be made payable to the University of Memphis Foundation and mailed to the Department of Philosophy, University of Memphis, 327 Clement Hall, Memphis, TN 38152. Please indicate "Nancy Simco Lecture Series Fund" on the memo. Contributions may also be made online: <http://www.memphis.edu/philosophy/support.php>. When making a donation online, please indicate that you wish your donation to be directed to the Department of Philosophy's Nancy Simco Lecture Series Fund.



Robert Bernasconi, despite his busy schedule, always welcomed students and colleagues to his office with a smile.

## Bernasconi to Bi-Locate

Dr. Robert Bernasconi joined the University of Memphis in 1988 as the Lillian and Morrie Moss Chair of Excellence in Philosophy, just as the department was about to launch its new Ph.D. program. Robert's presence in the department quickly helped catapult the program to a position of prominence in the field of continental philosophy in North America. At the same time, he was one of the most persuasive spokespersons in support of the department's commitment to philosophical pluralism, in which students build upon a solid foundation in the history of philosophy and are conversant in both the continental and analytical traditions in 20<sup>th</sup>-century philosophy. He served as a tireless and effective recruiter for the department, as a dedicated mentor for graduate students, and as an active and visible representative of the department within the university and the wider Memphis community. He also became known for his love of the city of Memphis in general and Memphis music in particular. It was never clear whether his prolific productivity (over 150 articles, 300 talks, and 15 books during his twenty-year tenure) was a result of or in spite of the many hours he spent working on manuscripts and listening to music at the same time in various venues in Memphis, some of which had special reading lights installed at the tables where he often came to work.

During his time in Memphis, Robert's work remained anchored in the continental tradition, but his topical interest shifted to the questions in race theory and the history of the concept of race—a field in which he has established himself as one of the world's leading authorities. He also led the department's efforts to improve its gender and racial diversity, again with a degree of success that has brought the department national and international recognition. His tireless dedication to the department is reflected in comments from Dr. Nancy Simco: "He was the consummate team player, involved in every aspect of the life of the department and constantly promoting its welfare. No matter how much he had to do, he was never too busy to help a student or colleague. It is inconceivable that anyone else on the planet could have done as much for this department's programs as he has. He really is a legend in his own time!"

We are grateful and proud that we were able to count Robert as a colleague and friend in our department for over two decades. Even as he joins the faculty of Pennsylvania State University his decision to "bi-locate"—to live part-time in both Memphis and State College—ensures that this relationship will continue. In addition, Robert will be giving an annual Bernasconi lecture at the University of Memphis. Be sure to check the department's website to find out more about this event.

# New Faculty Spotlight

## Dr. Stephan Blatti



Dr. Stephan Blatti was born in Chicago and received his B.A. in Philosophy from Ohio State University in 1997. He pursued his B.Phil at the University of Oxford where he was awarded Oxford's first full scholarship for an international graduate student in philosophy. After the B.Phil, he spent two years teaching at The Lawrenceville School, outside of Princeton, NJ; there he met another teacher, Caroline, whom he would eventually marry. They returned to England so that Caroline could pursue her M.A. (English Literature) at University College London and Stephan could pursue his D.Phil at the University of Oxford. While still completing his dissertation (*Animalism and its Implications*), Stephan served one year as a Visiting Lecturer in the Department of Philosophy at the University of North Carolina, Chapel Hill, and two years as Managing Editor of the *Journal of the History of Philosophy* and Adjunct Professor of Philosophy at Duke University. He joined our faculty in 2008.

Stephan's research is in metaphysics and philosophy of mind. He is currently working on several papers and an entry on "animalism" for the *Stanford Encyclopedia of Philosophy*. He also serves as Editor of *The Southern Journal of Philosophy* and the webmaster for the department.

## Dr. Kelly Arenson



Dr. Kelly Arenson joins the department this fall. Her research and teaching is focused on the history of ancient ethics and philosophy, particularly the development of the notion of pleasure in the Platonic Academy and in Epicureanism. In connection with her interest in hedonism and anti-hedonism in antiquity, she is also interested in ancient moral psychology, particularly the conflict between rational and irrational (or non-rational) elements in the soul, and pleasure's place in that conflict.

Her other interests include philosophy of the body (in ancient, modern, and contemporary contexts, including 20<sup>th</sup>-century continental thought), philosophy of science (a topic which she investigated for three years as an undergraduate research assistant at Boston College), and the relationship between morality and politics in legal theory and political philosophy.

In 2008-09, Kelly held an Andrew W. Mellon Foundation/American Council of Learned Societies (ACLS) Dissertation Completion Fellowship.

Kelly spent her formative years in Kansas City and Southern California. In Boston, she studied philosophy and German, focusing mainly on Heidegger and his later works on language and poetry, but also on Greek philosophy and literature. In graduate school at Emory she became increasingly interested in ancient philosophy, and writing on Epicurus' and Plato's theories of pleasure, under the direction of Dr. Steven Strange. She received her Ph.D. this last spring.

For fun, Kelly enjoys cooking (and, of course, eating), hiking, exploring new restaurants, and traveling with her husband, Michael.

# Faculty News

## Faculty Research

As usual, our faculty are extremely productive! Here are just a few things they have been doing. Dr. Deborah Tollefsen and University of Memphis colleagues Dr. Richard Dale (Psychology), Dr. Roger Kreuz (Psychology), and Dr. Andrew Olney (Psychology) have received a three year, \$670,000 grant from the National Science Foundation to study the dynamics of human interaction in small task groups. Dr. Robert Bernasconi delivered the 49<sup>th</sup> Annual Hurst Lecture, entitled "The Policing of Race Mixing and the Birth of Biopower," at American University in April 2009. Dr. Kas Saghafi's book *Apparitions—Of Derivida's Other* will be published with Fordham University Press in 2009. Dr. Mary Beth Mader gave the Linda Singer Memorial Lecture at Miami University in the Spring of 2009. Dr. Timothy Roche was invited to contribute an article in the *Cambridge Companion to Aristotle's Nicomachean Ethics*. Dr. Sarah Clark Miller received an American Postdoctoral Research Leave Fellowship from the American Association of University Women Educational Foundation in 2006-07. She also received a visiting faculty fellowship at the University of Toronto Centre for Ethics in 2006-07. Dr. Remy Debes recently presented a paper at a conference in Oxford, UK in honor of the 250<sup>th</sup> Anniversary of Adam Smith's *Theory of Moral Sentiments*. Dr. Pleshette DeArmitt co-edited a volume entitled *Sarah Kofman's Corpus* which was published by SUNY press in 2008. Dr. John Tienson and his colleagues Dr. George Graham and Dr. Terry Horgan received a contract from Oxford University Press for their book *The Phenomenal Mind*. Dr. Stephan Blatti has been invited to contribute an article on material constitution for the *Continuum Companion to Metaphysics*. Dr. Gene James' "Karma and Evil: A Critical Analysis" is forthcoming in the *Southwest Philosophy Review*. Dr. Hoke Robinson's "Kant, Ginsberg, and Empirical Concepts" is forthcoming in the *Southwest Philosophy Review*.



## Distinguished Teaching Award

Congratulations to Dr. Remy Debes who was honored at the University's annual Faculty Convocation in April with an Alumni Association Distinguished Teaching Award, the University's highest teaching honor. The award recognizes outstanding teaching at the undergraduate and graduate levels.

## Visiting Professors

In addition to Professors László Tengelyi and Alexander Schnell, who will be visiting us this year through the Erasmus Mundus EuroPhilosophie Program (see article on page 5), we welcome Professor Yun Chen from East China Normal University, who is being sponsored for a year here by the Chinese government through the China Scholarship Council (CSC). Professor Chen will also be collaborating closely with the Confucius Institute at the University of Memphis.



## Future Philosophers

Department of Philosophy members have been productive in many ways. Over the past five years, eleven babies have been born to department faculty, staff and students. The philosophy department family is growing!

# Undergraduate News

In the Fall of 2008, Dr. Remy Debes assumed the roles of Director of Undergraduate Advising and Advisor to The Philosophy Circle, the undergraduate philosophy club. The Philosophy Circle has been very active. Dr. Debes has done a fabulous job coordinating undergraduate events. The real credit, however, goes to the students and especially the president of the Philosophy Circle, Adam Field. During his two years, the Circle initiated two new efforts. One was a major faculty panel discussion related to a crucial theme of the 2008 presidential election: the war in Iraq. Three faculty members, two outside of philosophy, met with students and interested members of the public to discuss their views on the war less than two weeks before election day. The second initiative was to take a more central role in the department's longstanding tradition of Friday afternoon talks, by sponsoring one speaker in each of the Fall and Spring terms. These talks include a special coffee hour beforehand between the speaker and the undergraduates. No other faculty or graduate students are allowed. Also, the Circle takes on the role of promoting the event, introducing the speaker, moderating the talk, and hosting the reception. Most exciting, the Circle has made it its goal to invite speakers for these talks from *outside* the university, thus enhancing the overall intellectual life of the university. Impressive! Beginning this fall, Dr. Kelly Arenson will advise the Undergraduate Circle, and Mollie Owens will serve as president.

The 2009 Undergraduate Midsouth Philosophy Conference was held in April, with 110 participants representing 70 universities across the nation as well as Spain, Canada, Nigeria and Germany. The keynote address, "Martin Luther King, Jr. and Malcolm X on Being, Knowing, and the Dignity of Persons," was given by Dr. Randall Auxier (Southern Illinois University).

# Undergraduate Alumni Spotlight



Chad Newsom received his B.A. in Philosophy in 2006. He was introduced to some philosophy in high school and after taking Dr. Tim Roche's Introduction to Philosophy Honors course and Dr. Gene James' Introduction to Logic course, Brad was hooked. When asked to describe his experience as an undergraduate major in our department, he replied: "My experience with philosophy at U of M was excellent. I really enjoyed the wide variety of interesting and intellectually rigorous classes available to undergrads. I found almost all of the professors to be very available outside of class and willing to meet for discussion. Even

though I was just an undergraduate, the professors seemed to genuinely care about me as a student."

Chad also emphasized the writing skills he learned as a Philosophy major. "Beyond the content of the courses themselves, perhaps the most important skill I learned was how to write clearly and concisely. The skills I learned as a writer have proven extremely beneficial."

After graduating from the University of Memphis in 2006, Chad received an M.A. in Cinema Studies from the Savannah College of Art and Design. He is now pursuing a Ph.D. in English with a concentration in Film and Media Studies at the University of Florida.

# Undergraduate Student Spotlight



In the fall of 2006, Mollie Owens, a first-year student in Dr. Tim Roche's introductory philosophy course, became captivated by the wonder of thinking. It was Plato's *Euthyphro*, a short Socratic dialogue on the nature of piety or the holy, which first attracted her to Greek philosophy. Her passion for the wisdom found in classical philosophy only deepened as she read more Platonic texts. And read she did! She has reread Plato's *Apology*, which recounts the trial of Socrates, over a dozen times, each time taking pleasure not only in the content (the defense Socrates mounts for himself), but also in the style (Socrates' razor sharp sense of irony). She then knew she was hooked and began to pursue a major in philosophy and became an active member of the undergraduate Philosophy Circle. Last year, Mollie played a pivotal role in making last year's Undergraduate Midsouth Philosophy Conference a huge success. As a junior, she challenged herself to explore classical legal and political philosophy in a course with Dr. Harvey Lomax in Political Science and to examine Aristotle's notion of *eudaimonia* (happiness or well-being) in Dr. Roche's graduate seminar in classical philosophy. And yet, Mollie's appetite for Greek thought has not been satiated. In the spring 2009 semester, Mollie studied abroad in Thessaloniki, Greece, where she pondered the relationship between the Platonic forms and the material world under the illumination of the Greek sun. She rejoins us this fall as the president of the Philosophy Circle.

# Ida B. Wells Conference



Brad Stone led the Opening Session of the 2008 Ida B. Wells Conference.

The Ida B. Wells Conference is organized by the Ida B. Wells Association, founded seven years ago by University of Memphis graduate students to promote discussion of philosophical issues arising from the African-American experience and to provide a context in which to mentor undergraduates. In this spirit, Professors Lucius Outlaw (Vanderbilt University) and Donna Marcano (Trinity College) were invited for the inaugural conference in 2007 to share their expertise and experiences with a new generation of Memphis students and a select group of African-American undergraduates drawn from around the country. In 2008 the opening session of the Ida B. Wells conference was led by Dr. Brad Stone (Loyola Marymount University), with a keynote address by Dr. David Marriott (University of California - Santa Cruz). The 2009 conference, to be held October 30-31, will have Dr. Sybol Anderson (St. Mary's College) and Dr. Kristie Dotson (Michigan State University) as keynote speakers. This year's conference will be available via podcast.

# Graduate Program News



Maia Nahele Huff-Owen,  
Bornblum Scholar

There are a number of exciting things happening in our graduate programs. In Fall 2008, Dr. Tim Roche began to serve as our new graduate coordinator. His attention to detail has served this position well. We were very fortunate this fall to receive a large endowment for our graduate program from Mr. Bert Bornblum, a longtime friend and benefactor. The Bornblum Scholars Fund provides the resources to offer highly competitive stipends to exceptional graduate students. Maia Nahele Huff-Owen, a second-year Ph.D. student, was named the first Bornblum Scholar in 2008. She received her B.A. in Classics and Liberal Arts from St. John's College. Maia's interests currently lie

in 20<sup>th</sup>-century continental thought, including the phenomenologies of Husserl and Heidegger, hermeneutics, and the intersection of ancient Greek philosophy with the continental tradition. Other recent interests include philosophy of the body and the history of ethical philosophy. The department is thrilled to have her here and very grateful for Mr. Bornblum's continued support.

The 2009 University of Memphis Philosophy Graduate Student Conference was held in February. The topic of the conference was *The Sacred and the Secular: Philosophy and Religion in the 21st Century*. Professor John D. Caputo (Syracuse University) served as the keynote speaker. Speakers included Dan Miller (Syracuse University), Greg Stoutenburg (Boston University), Elizabeth Suergiu (Boston College), Todd Kesselman (New School for Social Research), Peter Woodford (Stanford University), David Tkach (University of Ottawa), and James Aycock (Emory University).

# Graduate Alumni Spotlight



Dr. Kathryn Gines received her Ph.D. in 2003 and her M.A. in Philosophy in 2001. She specialized in continental philosophy, Africana philosophy, and philosophy of race and gender theory. Her dissertation was entitled, *From Political Space to Political Agency: Arendt, Sartre, and Fanon on Race and Revolutionary Violence*. After receiving her Ph.D., Dr. Gines held a postdoctoral fellowship at the University of Memphis during the 2003-04 academic year, followed by a year at Emory University as a postdoctoral researcher and then went to Vanderbilt University as an Assistant Professor. In 2008-09 she served as Philosophy and Africana Research Center

Postdoctoral Fellow at Pennsylvania State University and in Fall 2009 she joins their faculty as Assistant Professor in Philosophy. Professor Gines has published articles on race thinking in Arendt's work, questions of assimilation, and sex and sexuality in contemporary hip-hop, and she currently is working on two monographs entitled *Rethinking France: Racism, Colonialism, and Violence* and *Hannah Arendt and the "Negro Question."* Dr. Gines is the founding director of the Collegium of Black Women Philosophers, organized in 2007. The Collegium received excellent press coverage in *The Philadelphia Inquirer* and in *The Chronicle of Higher Education* during its inaugural conference in the spring of 2007.

# Graduate Student Spotlight



Kristin Sue Gissberg is a fourth-year Ph.D. student. She comes to us from the New School for Social Research in New York City where she pursued a Masters Degree in Philosophy. Kristin was drawn to our program because of its strength in 20<sup>th</sup>-century philosophy, feminism, and philosophical pluralism. Her research interests include 19<sup>th</sup>- and 20<sup>th</sup>-century philosophy, especially Hegel, psychoanalysis, and feminism. In July 2008 Kristin

participated in the Collegium Phaenomenologicum, a three week intensive philosophy seminar involving scholars from around the world. Selection for this seminar is highly competitive and is based on academic performance and recommendations. In 2009 Kristin was awarded the DAAD Intensive Language Summer Course grant to study in an eight-week intensive language course. She was also awarded the Erasmus Mundus EuroPhilosophie Fellowship. Kristin defended her dissertation proposal, on Hegel and the emotions, in the spring of 2009. She intends to pursue an academic position in philosophy. In addition to her interests in philosophy she also practices yoga, enjoys surfing, and rescues animals.

# Erasmus Mundus



Daniel Wiwenes, visit-  
ing student 2008-09

The Department of Philosophy at the University of Memphis is honored to be the only department in the United States invited by the European Union to participate in the Erasmus Mundus EuroPhilosophie Program, a Master's program comprised of a consortium of seven EU universities and three "third-country" partners from non-EU countries. The program provides students and scholars from EU universities the opportunity to study philosophy at the University of Memphis. In the fall of 2008 three students, Philip Zymner (Germany), Daniel Wiwenes (Luxembourg), and Nicolas Arens (France), studied with us. Maya Mincheva (Bulgaria-Toulouse), Fabio Bruschi (Italy-Toulouse), and Till Grohmann (Germany-Paris Sorbonne, Paris IV) will be studying with us in 2009. In addition, we will have visiting professors joining us for the 2009-10 academic year. László Tengelyi, Professor of Philosophy at the Bergische Universität in Wuppertal, Germany, will be visiting with us in the fall. Professor Tengelyi's primary areas of research include ancient philosophy, Kant and German idealism, and German and French phenomenology. Professor Alexander Schnell, Lecturer at the University of Paris- Sorbonne and co-coordinator of the Erasmus Mundus Europhilosophie Program, will visit in the spring. Professor Schnell's areas of interests include classical German philosophy (especially Kant, Fichte, and Schelling) and German and French phenomenology with a special interest in the philosophy of subjectivity and in the issue of temporality.

The program also provides our graduate students and faculty the opportunity to travel as visiting scholars to philosophy departments within the consortium. University of Memphis Ph.D. student Kristin Gissberg is on a two-year fellowship, and Professor Tom Nenon will travel as a visiting professor in 2010.



From left, Dr. John Tienson, Professor, Dr. Bill Lawson, Distinguished Professor, Dr. Sarah Clark Miller, Assistant Professor and recipient of the College of Arts and Sciences Early Career Research Award, Dr. Tim Roche, Associate Professor, and Ms. Connie Diffie, Dean's Outstanding Administrative Associate Award recipient.

## Faculty List

Kelly Arenson, Assistant Professor, ancient philosophy, history of hedonism, ethics, philosophy of the body

Stephan Blatti, Assistant Professor & Editor, *The Southern Journal of Philosophy*, metaphysics, philosophy of mind

Pleshette DeArmitt, Assistant Professor, feminist theory, psychoanalysis, contemporary continental philosophy

Remy Debes, Assistant Professor & Undergraduate Advisor, ethics, moral psychology, philosophy of emotion, Scottish Enlightenment, Hume, Adam Smith

Gene James, Professor, value theory, applied ethics, American philosophy, philosophy of religion

Bill Lawson, Distinguished Professor, African-American philosophy, social and political philosophy

Mary Beth Mader, Associate Professor & Graduate Admissions Director, 20th-century continental philosophy, feminist theory, ethics

Sarah Clark Miller, Assistant Professor & Graduate Placement Director, ethical theory, feminist philosophy, social and political philosophy, history of moral philosophy, applied ethics

Thomas Nenon, Professor & Vice Provost, Husserl, Heidegger, Kant and German idealism, hermeneutics, philosophy of the social sciences

Hoke Robinson, Professor, Kant, rationalism, history of modern philosophy

Timothy Roche, Associate Professor & Graduate Studies Coordinator, Greek philosophy, theoretical ethics, social and political philosophy

Kas Saghafi, Assistant Professor, contemporary continental philosophy, aesthetics, phenomenology

John Tienson, Professor, philosophy of mind, metaphysics, philosophy of language, British empiricists

Deborah Tollefsen, Associate Professor & Department Chair, philosophy of mind, epistemology, social ontology

## Awards and Grants 2008-2009

- Stephan Blatti, Course Redesign Summer Fellowship
- Pleshette DeArmitt, Faculty Research Grant
- Remy Debes, Alumni Association Distinguished Teaching Award
- Connie Diffie, Dean's Outstanding Administrative Associate Award
- Adam Field, Dean's Outstanding Undergraduate Philosophy Student Award
- Kristin Gissberg, DAAD Intensive Language Summer Course
- Kristin Gissberg, Erasmus Mundus Euro-Philosophie Fellowship
- Tim Golden, College of Arts and Sciences Travel Enrichment Award
- Tim Golden, Summer Research Fellowship, Kierkegaard Library
- Clifton Granby, Graduate Student Meritorious Teaching Award
- Samaiyah Jones-Scott, Departmental Service Award
- Matt Lexow, Departmental Service Award
- Matthew Ludlow, Dean's Outstanding Undergraduate Student Award
- Sarah Clark Miller, College of Arts and Sciences Early Career Research Award
- Mollie Owens, Carroll Bowman Scholarship
- Philosophy Department, Squire Foundation Grant (Philosophical Horizons)
- Philosophy Department, Tennessee Board of Regents Access and Diversity Grant (Philosophical Horizons)
- Deborah Tollefsen, Course Redesign Summer Fellowship
- Deborah Tollefsen, National Science Foundation Grant

# Spindel Conference

Now in its twenty-eighth year, the Spindel Conference, the Department of Philosophy's premier annual event, has established itself as one of the most distinguished philosophical conferences in the nation. Each year the conference selects a group of experts on a special topic in philosophy for an intensive and enjoyable three-day symposium. The papers and commentaries of the conference are published in the annual Spindel Supplement to *The Southern Journal of Philosophy*. Spindel Supplements are widely regarded as containing cutting-edge scholarly papers on specific philosophical issues and are used worldwide by scholars for their research and as texts for graduate courses.

Dr. Bill E. Lawson, Distinguish Professor of Philosophy, was host for the 2008 conference, *Race, Racism and Liberalism in the 21<sup>st</sup> Century*. Distinguished scholars of African-American philosophy, race theory, and feminist theory attended. The conference provided a rare opportunity for presentations and discussions focusing on emerging and pressing issues about the future of race talk and racism. Specific topics included a reconceptualization of racial categories in light of complex socio-cultural identities, a restructuring of liberal theory to account for race, and an analysis of the impact of race, class and disability in natural disaster scenarios. Presenters included Drs. Howard McGary (Rutgers University), Paul Taylor (Temple University), Kathryn T. Gines (Penn State University), Naomi Zack (University of Oregon), Linda Martin Alcoff (Syracuse University), Bernard Boxill (University of North Carolina), Charles Mills (Northwestern University), and Tommy Shelby (Harvard University).

Under the direction of Dr. Mary Beth Mader, this year's Spindel Conference, *The Sexes of Evolution: Continental Philosophy, Feminist Philosophy, and Evolutionary Theory*, will take place September 24-26, 2009. Committed speakers include Drs. Claire Colebrook (Penn State University), Penelope Deutscher (Northwestern University), Paola Marrati (Johns Hopkins University), Ladelle McWhorter (University of Richmond), Kelly Oliver (Vanderbilt University), and Luciana Parisi (Goldsmith's, University of London).

## In Memoriam — Lisa Andrews



Lisa Andrews, administrator to the Department of Philosophy for twenty years, passed away in 2007. She is remembered fondly for her empathy and her dedication to the department. Dr. Hoke Robinson, department chair from 1986-89, recalls Lisa's "calm competence and diligence" as being instrumental to the development of the Ph.D. program and the filling of the newly established Moss Chair of Excellence. Dr. Nancy Simco, department chair from 1989-2007, remembers her as "an incredibly kind and fair person. Adding this quality to her intelligence, patience, persistence,

attention to detail, and just plain common sense made her a truly exceptional Department Administrator." Lisa was recognized with many service awards, including the Dean's Clerical Award in 1993. She found great joy and success as a competitive dog trainer and handler. In 2005 Lisa began to experience physical difficulties that went undiagnosed. After extensive research on her part, medical tests confirmed that she had ALS (Amyotrophic Lateral Sclerosis, also known as Lou Gehrig's Disease). In recognition of her life and her service to the department, memorial donations can be made either to The ALS Association, Tennessee Chapter, PO Box 40244, Nashville, TN, 37204-0244, or to Take the Lead, PO Box 6353, Watertown, NY 13601.

# Philosophical Horizons



Photo of Michael Burroughs courtesy of *The Commercial Appeal*/Jim Weber

In keeping with the department's commitment to diversity, both within our department and within the profession, we have launched a new initiative to introduce the history and practice of philosophy to Memphis children, particularly those who are socio-economically disadvantaged, and to those schools that are the least likely to have the resources to implement Philosophy for Children (P4C) into their curriculum. During the 2008-09 academic year three philosophy graduate students, Michael Burroughs, Matt Lexow, and Clifton Granby, led a discussion group with 8<sup>th</sup>-grade students at Hickory Ridge Middle School. During

the 2009-10 academic year we will continue this discussion group, led by Cigdem Yazici and Matt Lexow, and will also offer an Introduction to Philosophy course at Booker T. Washington High School taught by Michael Burroughs. We will continue to add schools in the next few years. Our program received a grant from the Squire Foundation to fund a conference on Philosophy for Children September 11-12, 2009. The conference, *Keeping the Child in Mind: A Conference About Philosophy for Children*, will feature a keynote lecture by Gareth Matthews, Professor of Philosophy (emeritus) at the University of Massachusetts/Amherst. He is the author of many articles and several books on ancient, medieval, and early modern philosophy. He is also the author of many articles and three books on philosophy and childhood: *Philosophy and the Young Child* (1980), *Dialogues with Children* (1984), and *The Philosophy of Childhood* (1994). Other participants include Drs. Thomas Wartenberg (Mount Holyoke College), Rafael Rondon (Ph.D., University of Oklahoma), Jana Mohr Lone (University of Washington), David Kennedy (Montclair State University) and our own Michael Burroughs. Our program has also received a Tennessee Board of Regents Access and Diversity grant which will provide the resources to bring the students participating in our program to campus each year for a culminating experience. In April 2010 middle school and high school students in our program will come to campus to see a performance of Plato's *Apology* by Emmy-award winner Yannis Simonides, and enjoy lunch with Mr. Simonides after the performance.

## Recent Ph.D. Placements

- Janae Sholtz (2009) Southwestern University, Visiting Asst. Professor
- Bryan Bannon (2008) Oglethorpe University, Visiting Asst. Professor (present appointment); Miami University of Ohio, Visiting Asst. Professor (initial appointment)
- David Scott (2008) Coppin State University, Asst. Professor, English
- Kristie Dotson (2007) Michigan State University, Asst. Professor, (present appointment); Purdue University, Asst. Professor (initial appointment)
- Erinn Gilson (2007) Wittenberg University, Visiting Asst. Professor
- David Gougelet (2007) American University, Visiting Asst. Professor
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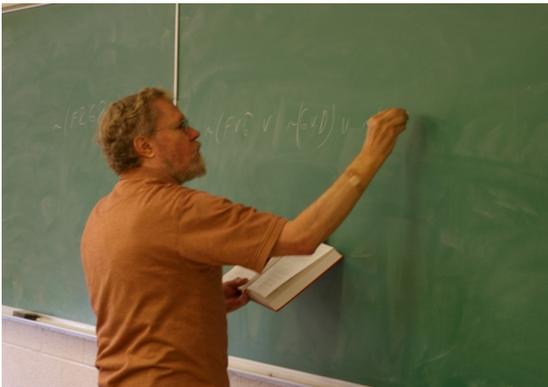
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