FALL 2018 NEWSLETTER

RUTGERS PHILOSOPHY DEPARTMENT

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DIFFERENCES: REMEMBERING PETER KIVY

Aaron Meskin (University of Leeds)

I met Peter in the early 1990s when I started my PhD at Rutgers. I didn't really know about philosophical aesthetics before I moved to New Brunswick, and I certainly didn't see it as a live career option. Peter's seminars, and those wonderful aesthetics reading groups in the basement of Davison Hall, introduced me to a field that would come to be the focus of my intellectual life. (Peter's tutorial-style method of teaching, which required us to regularly read out short writing assignments, was incredibly helpful. He told us that when we were in the profession we would occasionally find that we had to produce a decent piece of writing at very short notice and that his class would be good practice. He was right, and it was.) If it hadn't been for Peter's generosity, and the example he provided, I would have likely left the profession after an ill-fated attempt to work in another area. He was always supportive.

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DIFFERENCES: REMEMBERING PETER KIVY

Aaron Meskin (University of Leeds)

There were some limitations to our academic relationship, of course. I remember sometime during my time at Rutgers seeing an advertisement for a conference focused on faculty/student collaboration. Jokingly, I asked Peter whether we might collaborate. He was not keen. "I've never collaborated with anyone on anything up until this point, and I'm not going to start now." Strictly speaking that wasn't true. His first published article, "Stimulus Context and Satiation," in the *Journal of Comparative and Physiological Psychology*, was co-authored with two others. But that was published while Peter was still an undergraduate at Michigan. And as far as I know he never again co-authored a paper in 60 years. He was a profoundly independent thinker.

In any case, our relationship continued after I defended my PhD. Peter was loyal to his students, and he inspired loyalty in us. We met pretty regularly—he'd come and give another great talk in Lubbock or Leeds, or we'd see each other at an American Society for Aesthetics meeting where he regularly arranged dinners with his former students. Or we'd get together, with his wife Joan of course, in New York or Santa Fe or London. He always had new work and a bit of advice.

I know that it's tempting to focus on Peter's contribution to the philosophy of music. His research shaped the field. (I found *Music Alone* especially memorable, but I know that Peter was particularly proud of his book on opera, *Osmin's Rage*.) His scholarly work on the history of aesthetics was also groundbreaking. Where would our understanding of the development of aesthetics be without *The Seventh Sense* and the rest of Peter's work on Hutcheson, Hume, Reid and others? Not very far along, I venture. And his recent publications in the philosophy of literature have reinvigorated debates about literature's cognitive value, reading, and form/content unity. I love teaching that work—and the responses to it—in my philosophy of literature courses. If you haven't read Peter's work, I strongly recommend doing so. The clarity of his arguments and his lucid style make it an ideal introduction to aesthetics.

But it was Peter's emphasis on the importance of paying philosophical attention to the *differences* between various art forms, as he discussed in his 50th Anniversary Presidential Address to the American Society of Aesthetics, and his 1997 CUP monograph, *Philosophies of Arts*, that made the biggest impact on me. As he put it in his address: *But I do urge, and indeed predict that progress in the philosophy of art in the immediate future is to be made not by theorizing in the grand manner, but by careful and imaginative philosophical scrutiny of the individual arts and their individual problems, seen as somewhat unique, individual problems and not necessarily as instances of common problems of some monolithic thing called "ART."*

Of course this sort of approach was just how Peter had worked throughout his career. He did do some work that might be characterized as 'theorizing in the grand manner', especially early on in his career. His first monograph was about aesthetic concepts, and there are two great articles on aesthetic emotivism.

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DIFFERENCES: REMEMBERING PETER KIVY

Aaron Meskin (University of Leeds)

There is the award-winning 2015 monograph, *De Gustibus: Arguing about Taste and Why We Do It?* But most of his non-historical work involved careful and imaginative scrutiny of the individual arts of music and literature and the distinctive problems they raise. And he made a hell of a lot of progress over the course of a couple dozen books and many dozen articles. The work was original and, for many of us, exemplary.

I think Peter's prediction has largely been proven to be correct. Significant progress in the philosophy of art has in recent years been made by careful scrutiny of the individual problems raised by film, poetry, dance, music, street art, comics, and videogames (among other things). Yes, even comics and videogames. Peter didn't entirely approve, but he didn't entirely disapprove either.

In fact, I'd go a bit further than Peter. The differences between the arts are not the only differences to which philosophical aesthetics should attend. Thankfully, we are beginning to attend to those differences. But, of course, Peter did not think that philosophers of art should only pursue differences. He warns, in the epilogue to *Philosophies of Arts*, that it would be a serious mistake if the pursuit of differences "should become the monolith that the pursuit of sameness has been since the Enlightenment." He's right, and thankfully it hasn't. Work on sameness—most notably the definition of art—has been reinvigorated over the last few years.

We were very different. The oboe is not really my thing, and I don't care so much for Manhattans. I prefer rap music to the Western classical tradition. (Thankfully, he never heard me say that.) I'll probably never be able to tell a joke like him, and I'm certain that I'll never write that many great books. Who will? But despite our differences, there were important areas of sameness. We shared a love of the philosophy of art, of the community of philosophical aesthetics and of the arts. I'll miss being able to talk about those things with him. I'll miss finding out about his new work. I'll miss his advice and his sense of humor. I'll miss him.

Coda: Peter asked me a few years ago to be his literary executor. I never thought I'd be called on to do that job so soon. In that role I have twice delivered a short unpublished paper by Peter entitled "The Case of (Digital) Wagner". It's a lovely and topical piece which discusses a proposed—and quite controversial—"digital" staging of Wagner's "Ring" cycle using sampled instruments. I hope to arrange its publication in the near future. Just now I'm in process of finishing the final edits on a book which Peter was working on just before he passed away. *Once Upon a Time: Eight Essays in the Philosophy of Literature* focuses on such topics as the interpretation of literature, the legitimate pleasure we take in acquiring knowledge from literature, the pleasure we take in being told a story, and immoral jokes. It's a great book—and really approachable for the non-specialist. I look forward to its publication by Rowman & Littlefield International sometime in late 2019. And I've been working with Peter's family and Rutgers' University Archives to ensure the preservation and possible donation of his papers. More news on that front soon, I hope.

An earlier version of this remembrance was published on the Aesthetics for Birds blog and the American Society for Aesthetics Newsletter.

On October 26th the Rutgers Philosophy Department hosted a conference in honor of Peter Kivy (1934-2017), who spent 48 years of his 49-year career at Rutgers. Kivy worked primarily in the philosophy of aesthetics, and in the philosophy of music in particular.

The conference included talks by Christy Mag Uidhir (Houston), Jenefer Robinson (Cincinnati), Jerrold Levinson (Maryland), and David Davies (McGill). Additionally, Aaron Meskin (Leeds) introduced and read Peter Kivy's unpublished "The Case of (Digital) Wagner". There was also time for remembrances from Peter's friends and colleagues.

PHILOSOPHY DEPARTMENT EVENTS

Rutgers Lectures. The week of October 15th, Robert Stalnaker (MIT) delivered the 2018 Rutgers Lectures in Philosophy. Stalnaker's three-part lecture series was entitled "A Quinean Foundation for Modal Logic", and featured talks on the logic of propositions, predicates, properties, and relations. The annual Rutgers Lectures in Philosophy are co-sponsored by Oxford University Press, and bring to New Jersey some of the world's greatest living philosophers to present original work. The lecturers also hold workshops with faculty and graduate students, and meet with undergraduates.

Sanders Lecture. Every year, the Rutgers Center for Philosophy of Religion hosts the Sanders Lecture, with the help of the Marc Sanders Foundation. This lecture is given by a distinguished philosopher of religion on the topic of their choosing. This year, on September 20th, John Hawthorne delivered a lecture entitled "Fine Tuning Arguments for the Existence of God". In addition to giving the Sanders lecture, Hawthorne was a visiting professor at Rutgers for the first half of Fall term, during which time he gave several lectures in the metaphysics seminar on causation and laws of nature (co-taught by Jonathan Schaffer and Ted Sider), and participated in a number of other seminars and reading groups.

Perceptual Capacities and Psychophysics Conference. The Perceptual Capacities and Psychophysics Conference took place October 26th-27th. This two-day conference was hosted by Susanna Schellenberg, and featured talks from Casey O'Callaghan (Washington University St. Louis), Michael Rescorla (UCLA), Lisa Scott (University of Florida), Jacob Beck (York University), Justin Halberda (Johns Hopkins Unibersity), Paul Pietroski (Rutgers), and Nico Orlandi (UCSC).

Summer Institute for Diversity in Philosophy. The 21st Summer Institute for Diversity in Philosophy (SIDP) took place in July 2018. 18 undergraduates participated in the institute, which for the past 21 years has been directed by Howard McGary (Rutgers). A number of philosophers including Kevin Richardson (North Carolina State University), Jorge Garcia (Boston College), Sarah Worth (Furman University), Paul Pietroski (Rutgers), Tom Cavanaugh (UCF), Douglas Husak (Rutgers), Macalester Bell (Bryn Mawr), Alex Guerrero (Rutgers), and Ernie Lepore (Rutgers) gave talks at the SIDP. In addition to these talks, there were panels on the APA, and on graduate school applications, as well a session on external funding options in graduate school, and a session on the structure of the profession of academic philosophy. The 2019 SIDP will be directed by Alex Guerrero. Applications for the 2019 institute are now open, and the deadline is April 22nd.

NEW YORK MAP OPPRESSION AND RESISTANCE CONFERENCE: WHAT PHILOSOPHY COULD BE

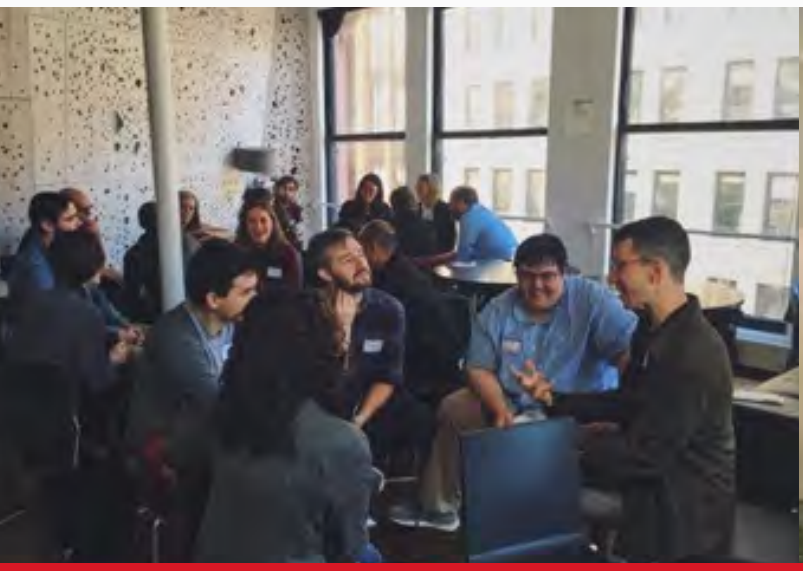
By Carolina Flores

Minorities and Philosophy is an international student-run organization that aims to examine and address issues of minority participation in academic philosophy. Currently, MAP has 121 chapters throughout the world, running reading groups, discussion sessions, talks, and advice workshops, and building and sustaining community among members of under-represented groups in philosophy.

We have a MAP chapter at Rutgers, and our chapter has teamed up with other MAP chapters in the New York area to organize bigger, more impactful events. This is an ongoing collaboration – we organized a series of talks last Spring and will host another this Spring. But the undoubted centerpiece of this collaboration was the Oppression and Resistance Conference, a two-day conference held this October on oppression and how to resist it inside and outside the academy. The conference was a huge success, with an audience of around 80 philosophers keen to make the profession more inclusive and supportive.

The first day was focused on action. We had workshops on MAP, the labor movement in academia, and teaching outside university classrooms, all capped by a panel on combining activism and academic work (with Kate Ritchie, Lori Gruen, Linda Alcoff, and Briana Toole). On the second day, the focus shifted to doing philosophy on oppression and resistance – with a keynote talk by José Medina on epistemic injustice and epistemic activism through visual media and six talks on topics such as the transformative potential of protesting, solidarity in queer communities, and resisting a duty to resist oppression.

In addition to wonderful talks and inspiring workshops, the conference modeled some of what philosophy could (and should) be: an inclusive and warm space filled with lively and enthusiastic debate among people who have traditionally been excluded from academic philosophy, and where work that engages with the social world and seeks to change it is cherished.



CLIMATE COMMITTEE UPDATE

By Savannah Kincaid

Our graduate student climate committee had a busy fall semester! We ran our 2nd annual beginning of the year climate workshop, hosted by the Rutgers Center for Social Justice. This workshop gave our community the opportunity to reflect on the past year, to talk more about identity-related concerns, and to work more on developing tools to identify and address bias.

In order to better support graduate students, we have now successfully implemented a faculty-graduate student mentorship program. Each entering graduate student will be paired with a mentor, whom they can consult for general advice regarding the program and balancing life with work in philosophy. We couldn't have done this without the help of our faculty, so many thanks are in order!

We also ran a professionalization workshop for graduate students, where anyone could come with questions regarding topics like giving talks, publishing, and more. And we started creating an open-access departmental calendar, with the aim of making the department schedule more transparent for everyone (including visiting students).

We've also continued our efforts to support undergraduates, especially those from historically underrepresented backgrounds in our field. To that end, we are now entering our second year of our graduate student mentorship program, which has been a great success. We have 14 graduate students mentors and a total of 15 undergraduate students who plan to apply for graduate school in philosophy within the next couple of years. We also had planned to host our regular Women in Philosophy Dinner, but we're rescheduling to the spring due to inclement weather, so keep an eye out for that date.

Faculty Accomplishments

Martha Bolton published "Leibniz's Theory of Knowledge" in the *Oxford Handbook for Leibniz*, ed. Maria Rosa Antognazza (2018). She also presented "Mary Shepherd's Use of Two Hundred Years of British Philosophy" at the NYU Conference on Issues in Modern Philosophy: Philosophy's Uses in its History.

Frances Egan presented "The Role of Representation in Computational Models" as a keynote lecture at the Biannual Conference of the German Cognitive Science Society, which took place at the Technical University Darmstadt (September 2018).

Frances Kamm gave the Jean Hampton Lecture keynote at the Workshop in Normative Ethics (WINE) at the University of Arizona (January 2019).

Matt McGrath published "The Evidence in Evidentialism" in *Believing in Accord with Evidence* (Springer, 2018). He also published "Defeating Pragmatic Encroachment?" in *Synthese* (2018), as well as "Pragmatic Encroachment: Its Problems are Your Problems" in *Normativity: Epistemic and Practical* (OUP, 2018). McGrath gave the keynote lecture for the International Colloquium in Analytic Philosophy, which took place in Santa Maria, Brazil (November 2018).

Ted Sider published "Asymmetric Personal Identity" in *The Journal of the American Philosophical Association* (2018).

Dean Zimmerman published "Ever Better Situations and the Failure of Expression Principles" in *Faith and Philosophy* (October 2018).

(Participants at the Perceptual Capacities Conference pictured left)

UNDERGRADUATE NEWS

The Rutgers Philosophy Club meets every Thursday at 6pm in room 109 in the College Ave Student Center. This year, the philosophy club is organized by Mike Fellner (president), Jackie Kwon (vice-president and secretary), and Adam Palumbo (treasurer).

"Philosophy Club meetings have all the marvelousness you've come to expect from the lecturers at Rutgers, but there's no writing, no required reading, and no grading. It's usually a dip into what people in the department have been thinking about or have worked on, adjusted so any of us can fully understand the content -- even if we haven't studied the topic yet. Going consistently is an easy, free, and fun way to dabble in many different philosophical conversations (except maybe the days we do games or puzzles), pizza included." -Daniel Cappel, RU Philosophy undergraduate

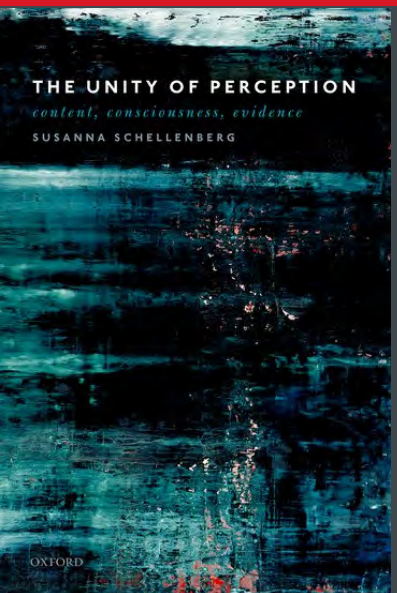
The philosophy club hosts weekly speakers whose talks treat varied philosophical issues and topics. The following events took place in Fall 2018:

- Justin Kalef, "What is Philosophy?"
- Doug Husak on Drug Prohibitions as Proxy Crimes
- Matt McGrath on Theory of Knowledge
- Azzan Yadin-Israel on Language and Being in Heraclitus
- Frank Wu on Blame and Social Justice
- Kalef's puzzle extravaganza
- Karen Bennett on Metaphysics

Faculty Accomplishments

Holly Smith published "The Morality of Creating and Eliminating Duties" with David Black in *Philosophical Studies* (2018). She also presented "The Morality of Creating and Eliminating Duties" to the Stanford Philosophy Department (November 2018).

Paul Pietroski published "Limiting Semantic Types" in *Language, Syntax and the Natural Sciences*, ed. R. Martin and A. Gallego (Cambridge, 2018). He also published "Semantic Typology and Composition" in *The Science of Meaning*, ed. B. Rabern and D. Ball (OUP, 2018), and he is one among multiple authors of "Individuals and Non-Individuals in Cognition and Semantics: the Mass/Count Distinction and Quantity Representation" which was published in *Glossa* (2018). Pietroski also gave two presentations at the Institute for Logic, Language, and Computation: "Confronting Existential Angst" and "Meanings and Minds: Most, Mass, and maybe More". He presented "Generative Grammar at the Speed of 90" at a conference for Noam Chomsky's 90th birthday, which took place at the University of Arizona.



Susanna Schellenberg published *The Unity of Perception* (OUP, 2018). In this book she presents an account of perception according to which perception is constituted by the employment of perceptual capacities, capacities which work to discriminate and single out particulars in the subject's environment. From this foundation she develops an empirically informed account of the phenomenological and epistemological role of perception, one which explains how perception justifies our beliefs, yields knowledge, and brings about conscious mental states, while remaining sensitive to scientific accounts of the relationship between informational inputs and our mental representations.
Schellenberg also received the 2018 Mellon New Directions Fellowship, which is designed to assist faculty members in the humanities who seek to acquire systematic training outside their own areas of special interest. She plans to use this fellowship to study neuroscience for the next couple of years.

NEW FACULTY SPOTLIGHT

Brian Leftow

Brian Leftow is the William P. Alston chair for the Philosophy of Religion, and the director for the Rutgers Center for the Philosophy of Religion. He specializes in medieval philosophy, metaphysics, and philosophy of religion.

Why did you choose to become a philosopher? I went to a school whose philosophy department wholly coincided with one man. If I hadn't liked him, I'd be doing something else. But I did- and he was obviously having a lot of fun earning his living. Then I took a class on Whitehead, of all people, and at one point, I suddenly understood something about a view of his for the first time. It felt great. I wasn't tempted to hold that view, then or later, but the sheer "getting it" was a rush. I wanted more of that. After a while, it occurred me: "I'm kind of good at this. Wouldn't it be nice to have fun for a living?"

Of the articles you've published, which one is your favorite and why? In "A Latin Trinity," I explain the Christian doctrine of the Trinity on the analogy of a chorus line made up of a single time-traveling Rockette. I like it because I explain the Christian doctrine of the Trinity on the analogy of a chorus line made up of a single time-traveling Rockette.

Can you briefly explain some of the ideas/themes in your work, and why these ideas/themes are important? I've written a lot on the nature of God. I could sum it up as "Your God's too small!" Think God is in time? Too small. He's beyond that. Think God has no say in what's necessarily true? Too small. It's necessary because He makes it so. Think God is contingent? Way, way too small. Whether this matters at all depends on whether there really is a God. If there is not, I've enjoyed myself but have been wasting the time of the five people (on average, they say) who have read any given bit of it. If there is, what could be more important than figuring out what He's like and what (if anything) He wants of us?

What most excites you about being at Rutgers? The grad students, the chance to create a new center for my field (not every Center is a center, but I hope ours will be), and living six minutes from the nearest jazz venue.

What are your non-philosophical interests or hobbies? Jazz. The NFL. I used to play the drums, and might try to get back to that. In England, the houses almost all share walls or are just a few feet apart, and drum practice is anti-social behavior. I also read a lot of history.

Graduate Student Accomplishments

Ben Bronner published "A Stronger Doctrine of Double Effect" in *The Australasian Journal of Philosophy* (forthcoming).

Laura Callahan published "Moral Reasons Not to Breastfeed: A Response to Woollard and Porter" in *The Journal of Medical Ethics* (September 2018). She also presented "Grounding the Normativity of Epistemic Rationality: Responsivism" at the Johns Hopkins Graduate Conference (November 2018). Her essay "On the Supposed Responsibility to Breastfeed from Moral Concerns" received an honorable mention for the 2018 Sanders Public Philosophy Award.

Eddy Chen published "Quantum Mechanics in a Time-Asymmetric Universe: On the Nature of the Initial Quantum State" in *The British Journal for the Philosophy of Science* (forthcoming). He also presented "Times Arrow in a Quantum Universe" at the Philosophy of Science Association Biennial Meeting in Seattle Washington.

Carolina Flores was hired as an organizer for MAP (Minorities and Philosophy) International.

Chis Frugé presented "Against the Collective Responsibility of Groups" at the 2018 Social Ontology Conference at Tufts University.

Fall 2018 Department Events

October 11	**Jill North** gave the first Break It Down Lecture of the semester, entitled "The Direction of Time".
October 18	**Christopher Willard-Kyle** gave the first grad talk of the semester, entitled "Against the Doctrine of Infallibility".
October 25	**John Broome** (Oxford) delivered a colloquium talk entitled "Reason".
November 1	**Daniel Rubio** gave the second grad talk of the semester, entitled "Presentist Counterpart Theory".
November 8	**Verónica Gómez** gave the third grad talk of the semester, entitled "Naturalness by Law".
November 15	**Martha Bolton** delivered the second Break It Down lecture of the semester, "A Look at Mary Shepherd's Philosophy"
November 29	**Quayshawn Spencer** (U Penn) delivered a colloquium talk entitled "A Radical Solution to the Race Problem".
December 6	**Eddy Chen** gave the final grad talk of the semester, entitled "Nomic Vagueness".

First Year Cohort

Interview Questions

1. Where did you receive your degree(s) before coming to Rutgers?
2. What areas of philosophy are you interested in?
3. If you were stranded on a desert island, which philosophy paper or book would you most like to have with you?
4. What are your non-philosophical interests or hobbies?

Ronny Fernandez

1. Bergen Community College and University of Maryland Baltimore County
2. Metaethics and formal epistemology
3. *Good and Real* by Gary Drescher
4. I play guitar.

Lauren Richardson

1. University of Chicago
2. Philosophy of language, epistemology, meta-ethics
3. *The Gay Science*, Nietzsche
4. Hiking/general outdoors things, yoga, baking, road trips, reading (novels!)

Andrew Rubner

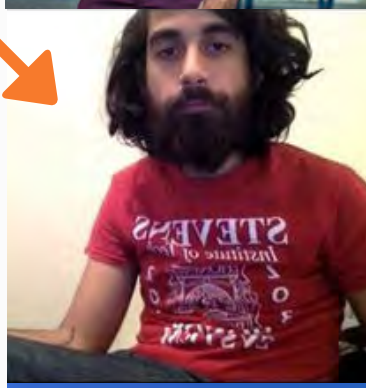
1. Brooklyn College, CUNY -- BA in Philosophy
2. Philosophy of Language; Philosophical Logic; Philosophy of Mind
3. *Word and Object* by W.V.O Quine
4. I love playing Animal Crossing (it's very frustrating when I get caught up reading philosophy and don't check the game for a while and everyone has left my village because I wasn't interacting with the game properly).

Lauren Lyons

1. I went to Sewanee: The University of the South.
2. I'm interested in applied ethics, philosophy of law, and social philosophy.
3. Something long... like Rawls, *A Theory of Justice*
4. I enjoy traveling-for-cheap, music (especially disco and funk), libraries, good beer, dogs, dancing, cooking, watching films... gallivanting around New York.

Chris Copan

1. I attended Bethel College for my B.A. in Philosophy and Northern Illinois University for my M.A. in Philosophy
2. Epistemology, Political Epistemology, Philosophy of Race, Philosophy of Religion.
3. Hmm, let's go with Du Bois' *The Souls of Black Folk*.
4. Reading fiction and historical biographies; playing video games with my little brother; working out, albeit inconsistently; playing the four or five songs I know how to play on acoustic guitar.



Graduate Student Accomplishments

Cameron Domenico Kirk-Giannini published "Uniformly Motivated" in Linguistics and Philosophy (2018). He and Ernie Lepore edited the forthcoming OUP volume entitled *The Structure of Truth: Donald Davidson's 1970 Locke Lectures*.

Ting An Lin presented "Immigrant Spouses in Taiwan: What are the Threats to their Human Rights?" at the Human Rights Feminist and Gender-Philosophical Perspectives Cooperative Symposium in Vienna.

Olivia Odoffin presented "A Productivity Argument for Emotion" at the Australasian Society for Philosophy and Psychology (December 2018).

Daniel Rubio published "Infinity in Ethics" with Peter Vallentyne in a recently revised edition of the Routledge Encyclopedia of Philosophy. He also presented "Ideological Innocence" at the 40th Anniversary Society of Christian Philosophers Conference, which took place at Calvin College.

Andrew Rubner presented "Knowledge of Universals and the A Priori: A Defense of the A Priori—A Posteriori Distinction" at the Eastern APA in January.

Dee Payton made the document you are presently reading. Thanks to everyone who contributed photos or text!

UNDERGRADUATE NEWS CONTINUED . . .

In Fall 2018, **Phi Sigma Tau** held a reading group on Fridays from 11am to noon in the Philosophy Department flex space, something which they hope to continue to organize in Spring 2019. Members of Phi Sigma Tau also took part in the Rutgers Big Chill 5k Walk/Run for charity on December 1st, and the chapter also held an end of the year dinner at Veganized on December 11th. Phi Sigma Tau has also begun preparations for the Rutgers-Columbia Undergraduate Philosophy Conference that will take place April 6th.

Areté is the undergraduate philosophy journal of Rutgers University. The journal was founded to recognize original philosophical thought at the undergraduate level, and this year Areté received 36 submissions, which is more than has been received by Areté for the past 3 years. Three papers were selected for publication.

(Members of Rutgers Phi Sigma Tau pictured right and below)

Letter from the chair

This year, I've been struck by how interdependent we are; by how little we — philosophy faculty and graduate students — can get done as educators and scholars without a lot of help.

Replacing both our lead administrator and undergraduate administrator at once last year gave me a chance to stare into the abyss.... What would happen were there not highly competent people in those positions? The work of the department would grind to a halt, scheduling of classes would be messed up, undergraduate questions would go unanswered, some undergraduates wouldn't even graduate, grants would be lost, graduate students wouldn't be paid. None of those dire events occurred; the batons were passed; but you could see how fragile we are, and how little most of us professors know about the nuts and bolts of the department and the university.

Thank goodness we now have a full, smoothly functioning, and highly professional team. Charlene Jones, Mercedes Diaz, and Jessica Koza are not only making everything work; they together ensure that our floor of the Gateway building is a peaceful and pleasant place, a bit of calm in the storm of central New Jersey. And I'm happy to report that Mercedes's heroic efforts to keep us on course during a difficult transition have been properly recognized! She will receive the 2017-2018 SAS Staff Excellence Recognition Award for distinguished service excellence. This honor is certainly well-deserved.

We couldn't maintain our strength as a department, were it not for the commitment of Rutgers' president and a whole army of administrators. They are enabling us to replace the faculty we have inevitably lost in recent years. It has been a joy to look around the room during our colloquia and see our four newest faces — Frances Kamm, Karen Bennett, Matt McGrath, and Brian Leftow, each of them a terrific scholar and a real boon to the department. I can't say enough good things about our dean of humanities, Michelle Stephens, who made all this hiring possible, and who is right now working hard on our behalf to recruit more world-class philosophers — with any luck, two more this next year, in fact!

The webs of dependence and reliance are intellectual too. Students and teachers learn from one another, and the really great teachers leave an impact that lasts a lifetime. One can see these connections in the rest of this newsletter. Aaron Meskin writes of all he learned from his teacher, Peter Kivy; and now Aaron is editing Peter's last book, and helping us to move Peter's papers into special collections at Rutgers' library. Paul Pietroski spoke at his old teacher's 90th birthday conference (Noam somebody-or-other, I think he taught at MIT). Current students collaborate with current professors: David Black and Holly Smith were co-authors, Nico Kirk-Giannini and Ernie Lepore co-edited a book on Donald Davidson. And our current graduate students, through MAP and in other ways, are reaching out to undergraduates who want to join the next generation of philosophers.

Academic philosophy has been a lonely business for some. But it needn't be; and, at its best, it isn't. And I like to think that Rutgers represents philosophy at its best!

Cheers,
Dean

Would you like to donate to Rutgers Philosophy? Go to philosophy.rutgers.edu/giving