RUTGERS
School of Arts and Sciences

Spring 2015 - Fall 2015

DEPARTMENT OF PHILOSOPHY

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Did you know that over a hundred philosophers from around the world visited the Rutgers Philosophy Department for colloquia, conferences, etc. during this past year?

Faculty Update: Meet Our New Faculty Members

Meet Our New Faculty Members!

In May 2015, two brilliant philosophers joined our department: Ted Sider (as Rutgers's first Andrew W. Mellon Chair in Philosophy) and Jill North (as an Associate Professor).

Ted Sider received his PhD in Philosophy from the University of Massachusetts, Amherst, in 1993. Since earning his doctorate, Ted has written numerous influential articles in metaphysics (his primary research area) as well as four books, which include Writing the Book of the World (2011), Logic for Philosophy (2010), Riddles of Existence: A Guided Tour of Metaphysics (2005, with Earl Conee), and Four Dimensionalism: An Ontology of Persistence and Time (2001). Ted was a member of Rutgers philosophy department from 2004-2007 and returns to us after sharing his talents with New York University and Cornell University. Finally, Ted's most recent accomplishments include being numbered among the group of renowned philosophers to be invited to give the prestigious John Locke Lectures at Oxford University. Ted is scheduled to give the 2016 John Locke Lectures in Oxford's Trinity Term (April-June).

Jill North received her PhD from our own department in 2004. After being awarded the acclaimed Bersoff Postdoctoral Fellowship at New York University, Jill went on to spend several years at Yale University and Cornell University. Over those years, Jill authored a number of important papers in the philosophy of physics (her primary area of research), including her ingenious paper "The 'Structure' of Physics: A Case Study" (2009).

We are very excited to welcome back Ted and Jill to our department and look forward to seeing what great things they do next!

Five Questions for Ted and Jill

1. What is your favorite part of being a philosopher?

2. What thinker has influenced you the most?

3. Which of your articles/books are you most proud of?

4. If you were stranded on a desert island, what philosophy book/paper would you want to have with you?

5. What is the most exciting part of being back at Rutgers?

Ted's Answers:

1. Philosophy!
2. David Lewis
3. Writing the Book of the World
4. David Lewis's book On the Plurality of Worlds
5. The colleagues, both graduate students and faculty

Jill's Answers:

1. Getting to think about physics without having to step foot in a lab!
2. No one person. My dissertation committee: David Albert, Barry Loewer, and Tim Maudlin.
3. "The 'Structure' of Physics: A Case Study," in which I convinced myself of a position that I had thought was crazy. Also “Time in Thermodynamics,” into which I managed to condense almost my entire dissertation.
4. The Collected Works of David Albert - which does not exist yet, but should.
5. I love the people in this department!

Faculty Update: A Year of Achievements

Check out some highlights from the accomplishments of our faculty in 2015!

Ruth Chang has been invited to give a lecture on choice and development at the World Bank in March 2016. Ruth has also been invited to give the 2017 Quain Lectures in Law at University College London (past lecturers include Joseph Raz, Philip Pettit, Cass Sunstein, and Antony Duff).

Ernest Sosa published Judgment and Agency (Oxford University Press), which is the subject of scheduled book symposia, with his responses, at ten international conferences or journals.

Doug Husak has completed his book Ignorance of Law: A Philosophical Analysis (Oxford University Press), which is expected to appear in print in 2016. Doug has also been invited as a Visiting Scholar to the Institute of Advanced Studies in Jerusalem for a research group on "The Legitimization of Modern Criminal Law."

Barry Loewer was invited to speak on the philosophy of physics with Tibetan monks in Bylakuppe, India at a conference entitled "Quantum Mechanics and Buddhist Emptiness." Barry was also the keynote speaker at the First Annual Conference of the Society for the Metaphysics of Science (hosted by Rutgers University-Newark). Finally, last July the Central European University invited Barry to speak at a conference based entirely on his influential work in the philosophy of physics, the philosophy of science, and metaphysics.

Susanna Schellenberg wins the Friedrich Wilhelm Bessel Research

In December 2015 Rutgers Associate Professor Susanna Schellenberg joined the ranks of a select group of internationally renowned scientists and scholars to have received the Friedrich Wilhelm Bessel Research Award from Germany's Alexander von Humboldt Foundation.

This honor is awarded annually to twenty young scholars from across the world. Recipients must have received their doctorate less than 18 years ago and be nominated by an established academic working in Germany or by a previous award winner of the Humboldt Foundation in conjunction with a researcher in Germany. The award honors those whose research shows such promise that he or she is expected to have a "seminal influence on their discipline beyond their immediate field of work."

Susanna and other recipients of the award are invited to spend up to a year collaborating on a major research project with other specialists at one or more research institutions in Germany.

Faculty Update: A Year of Achievements

Alvin Goldman receives the Lebowitz Prize for Philosophical Achievement!

In 2015 Rutgers Board of Governors Professor Alvin Goldman shared the Martin R. Lebowitz Prize with Jennifer Lackey (Northwestern University). The award is conferred by the American Philosophical Association in conjunction with the Phi Beta Kappa Society.

The prize is awarded to pairs of individuals for "outstanding achievement in the field of philosophy." Alvin and Jennifer received the prize for their influential work in Social Epistemology.

Winners are invited to deliver talks on their subject at one of the three meetings of the APA and at an event hosted by the Phi Beta Kappa Society. Alvin and Jennifer spoke at the APA Eastern Division meeting in January 2016.

2015 Faculty Promotions!

Jonathan Schaffer to Distinguished Professor

Andy Egan to Full Professor

Thony Gillies to Full Professor

Justin Kalef to Assistant Teaching Professor

Trip McCrossin to Assistant Teaching Professor

More highlights from our faculty's achievements in 2015!

Jeff King was invited to be a Visiting Professor at the School For Advanced Study in the Social Sciences (EHESS) in Paris during the Spring of 2015. While there, Jeff gave a course of lectures entitled "Context and Semantic Value," which were cosponsored by EHESS, Ecole normale supérieure, and the Institute Jean Nicod.

Alvin Goldman published a book, Epistemology: A Contemporary Introduction (Oxford University Press) co-authored with Matthew McGrath. The book is a textbook intended for use either in upper-division undergraduate classes or entry-level graduate classes.

Larry Temkin was a Visiting Scholar at the Australian National University in the summer of 2015. In the past year, Larry has also delivered approximately two dozen lectures, including lectures in Canada, England, Sweden, Australia, New Zealand, and the U.S. He was also interviewed for the UK Philosophy Bites podcast and for a podcast posted by Stockholm's Institute for Future Studies. Finally, Larry made several contributions to a special 175 page symposium on his book Rethinking the Good, which appeared in The Journal of Moral Philosophy.

Visiting Professor Awards

Marilyn Adams and David Albert were elected to the American Academy of Arts and Sciences.

Derek Parfit was awarded the Rolf Schock Prize in Philosophy and Logic by the Royal Swedish Academy of Arts and Sciences for his lifetime contributions to Philosophy.

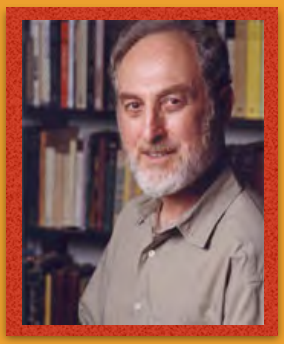
Faculty Update: A Year of Achievements

Alvin Goldman and Ernest Sosa numbered among top six most influential epistemologists since 1945!

Any academic department would be immensely proud to have one of its members numbered among the top 10 most influential scholars in his or her field. But here in the Rutgers Philosophy Department we are overjoyed to announce that we are lucky enough to boast of not just one but in fact two of the most influential epistemologists since 1945!

On January 12th, 2016, the Leiter Reports released the results of a poll asking about the most important epistemologists since 1945. After just under 400 votes were tallied, the results (http://leiterreports.typepad.com/blog/2016/01/most-important-anglophone-epistemologists-since-1945-the-results.html) revealed the following list of the top 10 epistemologists since 1945:

1. W.V.O. Quine
2. Alvin Goldman
3. Roderick Chisholm
4. Wilfrid Sellars
5. Timothy Williamson
6. Ernest Sosa
7. Tied: Fred Dretske & Edmund Gettier
9. Donald Davidson
10. William Alston



Board of Governors
Professor Alvin Goldman

Board of Governors
Professor Ernest Sosa

Our own Alvin Goldman came in second place and our own Ernest Sosa in sixth place! Note further that this list ranks Alvin Goldman as the most important and Ernest Sosa as the third most important living epistemologists working since 1945!

The Rutgers Philosophy Department is honored to count such singular philosophers among its faculty!

Undergraduate Corner - Philosophy Club

The Rutgers University Philosophy Club

By Ubtene Zamininia

The Rutgers University Philosophy Club is a Rutgers funded, student-run organization for undergraduate students interested in various aspects of philosophy. The organization serves not only as a space for students to discuss philosophy outside of the classroom but also brings students from other fields such as Psychology, Math, Physics, and English, some of whom are pursuing minors in philosophy and some of whom are simply interested in overlapping topics between their respective fields and philosophy.

The organization's typical meeting involves students presenting papers. The paper may be one which the presenter has written himself or herself, or it may be a professional philosopher's paper in which the presenter is interested and feels competent enough to present on.

This year the Philosophy club participated in a special event on Food Ethics. We cosponsored an Interdisciplinary Panel on Food Ethics featuring philosophers Beth Henzel (Rutgers graduate student) and Adam Shriver (Rutgers PTL and post-doc at UPenn), along with Rachel Swom (Rutgers Human Ecology Department) and Ethan Schoolman (Rutgers Human Ecology Department).

Chris Hauser (Rutgers graduate student) delivers a talk on the philosophy of perception to the Philosophy Club.

The central event of the organization, however, is the "faculty lecture series". The lecture series is features not only faculty members of Rutgers University but also our outstanding graduate students.

The sole requirement of the lecture series is that the guest speaker present on a topic or project from his or her current research.

The speakers for the lecture series during this past Fall semester included Sam Lebens (Rutgers post-doc), Liz Camp (Rutgers faculty), Branden Fitelson (Rutgers faculty), David Black (Rutgers graduate student), and Chris Hauser (Rutgers graduate student).

The upcoming lineup of speakers includes Isaac Wilhelm (Rutgers graduate student), Eddy Keming Chen (Rutgers graduate student), Andrew Moon (Rutgers post-doc), Ben Bronner (Rutgers graduate student), Peter Klein (Rutgers faculty), Barry Loewer (Rutgers faculty), and Ernest Sosa (Rutgers faculty).

Mercedes Diaz (the adviser for the philosophy club) has one final dinner with the Spring 2015 Officers of the Philosophy Club.

Participants and speakers for the Interdisciplinary Panel on Food Ethics gather round for a photo after the event.

Undergraduate Corner - Philosophy Conference

Princeton-Rutgers Undergraduate Philosophy Conference

By Sheng-Yao Cheng

On February 28, 2015, Rutgers University hosted the second annual Princeton-Rutgers Undergraduate Philosophy Conference (PRUPC). The conference was structured similarly to the first, with six undergraduate speakers from the United States and Canada presenting on topics ranging from ethics and metaphysics to epistemology and ancient philosophy. After each undergraduate spoke, Rutgers graduate students commented on their presentations before the floor opened up for a general Q&A period.

Patricia Cipollitti (Georgetown University undergraduate student) delivers a paper on the use of myth in Plato's dialogues.

The conference attendees were privileged to hear presentations from four engaging keynote speakers this year. Gideon Rosen gave a thought-provoking presentation on speculative metaphysics. Peter Klein imparted his wisdom on how not to solve the Gettier's problem. Doug Husak gave us a preview of his forthcoming book on the ignorance of law. Ernie Lepore "talked dirty" on the open-endedness of slurring. After each keynote address, the speakers engaged the conference audience in lively discussions.

Ernie Lepore (Rutgers Board of Governors Professor of Philosophy) discusses the open-endedness of slurring.

The conference would not have been possible without the dedication of my co-organizers, Elena Di Rosa from Princeton and Brina Breitbart and Paul Musso from Rutgers. I am also extremely grateful for the generous and enthusiastic support from the Princeton and Rutgers Departments of Philosophy and the Rutgers College Avenue Campus Dean's Office. Many thanks to Rutgers' Phi Sigma Tau members for reading and selecting the conference papers. Lastly, I am indebted to Mercedes Diaz for her tireless work ensuring that every piece of the conference came together smoothly.

Preparations for the third annual PRUPC are currently underway. It will be held at Princeton University in Spring 2016.

Undergraduate Speakers and Graduate Student Commentators:

Undergraduate Speakers:

Adrian Yee (University of British Columbia)

Patricia Cipollitti (Georgetown University)

Emma Ritter (St. Olaf College)

Andrea Parente (Rutgers)

Matthew Gibbons (Rutgers)

Noah Gordon (Rutgers)

Graduate Commentators:

Morten Dahlback (Norwegian University of Science & Technology)

Sherif Girgis (Princeton)

Rodrigo Borges (Rutgers)

Michael Hicks (Rutgers)

Christopher Hauser (Rutgers)

Anton Johnson (Rutgers)

Undergraduate Corner - Summer Diversity Institute

The 2015 undergraduate attendees faculty speakers, and graduate student speakers gather together for a photo.

The faculty speakers for 2015 included Howard McGary (Rutgers), who is the chief organizer of the institute, and Jorge Garcia (Boston College).

The graduate student mentors for 2015 were Anton Johnson (Rutgers), Will Fleisher (Rutgers), Claire Becerra (University of Washington), and Clifton Granby (University of Memphis).

Rutgers Summer Institute for Diversity in Philosophy

By Mercedes Diaz

The 18th Annual Rutgers Summer Institute for Diversity in Philosophy took place from July 26-August 2, 2015 at the University Inn & Conference Center on campus.

This seven day program, hosted always on the Rutgers University Campus in New Brunswick, is designed to encourage students from various cultural, ethnic, and socio-economic backgrounds to consider a career in academic philosophy. Under the supervision of the institute staff, these students explore various areas and methodologies in philosophy, hear from leading philosophers, interact with professional philosophers about their experiences in the profession, and attend workshops on developing skills for doing successful graduate work. Students also interact with graduate students from various backgrounds and graduate programs. Finally, attendees also receive advisement and assistance in applying to graduate schools. The Institute covers travel and living expenses of attendees for the seven-day period and provides a stipend of $250.

Students must be in their sophomore or junior years in college; demonstrate that they can contribute to creating greater diversity in the discipline of philosophy; enrolled full-time in a college or university in the United States; maintain good academic standing; and be interested in exploring philosophy as a career. Students agree to participate fully in the program by attending all lectures, workshops, discussion groups, student paper presentations, and by reading the assigned literature packet.

Fifteen to twenty students from around the country are selected based on a review of the student's academic background, personal statement, writing sample, grades, and faculty recommendations. Past participants include students from Amherst College, Austin Peay State University, Barry University, Bethel College, City College-CUNY, Connecticut College, CSU-Fullerton, Georgetown University, Gordon College, Grinnell College, Howard University, Kansas State University, Kenyon College, Mount Saint Mary's University, Pepperdine University, Reed College, Rice University, Rutgers University, SUNY New Paltz, UCLA, University of Minnesota-Morris, University of Oregon, University of Texas-El Paso, University of Wisconsin-Madison, Wellesley College, and Western Washington University.

In the past, presenters at the institute have included prominent faculty from the University of Arizona, Barnard College, Boston College, Bowling Green, Brown, Columbia, Cornell, CUNY, DePaul University, East Carolina University, Fordham University, Georgia State University, Grand Valley State University, Harvard, Howard, Loyola-Marymount, MIT, Michigan State University, Northwestern University, Notre Dame, Princeton, NYU, Rutgers, San Diego State University, San Jose State University, Spelman, Stanford University, St. Cloud University, SUNY at Stony Brook, Syracuse, Towson University, University of Central Florida, University of Colorado, University of Illinois, University of Maryland, University of Massachusetts-Amherst, University of Memphis, University of Minnesota, UNC-Chapel Hill, University of Oregon, University of Washington-Seattle, University of Winnipeg, Vanderbilt, Vassar College and Yale.

Grad Life - Meet the First Years

Meet the First-Years!

The news bureau tracked down the department's six first-year students to try and find out a bit more about them. We asked them to answer the following 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, what philosophy paper or book would you most like to have with you?
4) What are your non-philosophical interests or hobbies?

Laura Callahan

Institutions: B.Phil from Oxford University; B.A. in math and philosophy from Indiana University

Areas: epistemology, ethics, and philosophy of religion

Desert Island Pick: Kierkegaard's Fear and Trembling

Hobbies: cooking, making pottery, playing bluegrass fiddle, traveling, and hiking

Sam Carter

Institutions: B.Phil from Oxford University; M.A. from University of Edinburgh

Areas: philosophy of language, philosophy of cognitive science, and medieval logic

Desert Island Pick: Karl Marx's Das Kapital (Vols. I-III)

Hobbies: running, mountain hiking, and abysmal wordplay

Jimmy Goodrich

Institutions: B.A. in philosophy from Rutgers

Areas: moral and political philosophy

Desert Island Pick: Derek Parfit's Reasons and Persons

Hobbies: rolling my eyes at Sam's abhorrent word play

Graduate Student Update

Here's a look at what our grad students have been up to this year:

Bob Beddor

Publications:
1) "Justification as Faultlessness," forthcoming in Philosophical Studies

Presentations/Talks:
1) "Noncognitivism and Epistemic Evaluations," at the Central APA
2) "An Agreeable Account of Doxastic Disagreement," at the 3rd Philosophy of Langauge & Mind Conference, Oslo
3) "Believing Epistemic Contradictions," with Simon Goldstein, at the 19th Oxford Philosophy Graduate Conference

Laura Callahan

Publications:
1) "On the Problem of Paradise," forthcoming in Faith and Philosophy

Presentations/Talks:
1) "Evil: Only Sometimes Evidence Against God," at The Society of Christian Philosophers Eastern Regional Conference

Eddy Chen

Presentations/Talks:
1) "Our Fundamental Physical Space: An Essay on the Metaphysics of the Wavefunction," at the 3rd International Black Forest Philosphy of Physics Summer School and at the First Annual Meeting of the Society for the Metaphysics of Science
2)"The Best Summary of the Quantum World: The Universal Wavefunction as a Humean Law," at the 15th Congress of Logic, Methodology, and Philosophy of Science and at Tsinghua University Philosophy of Science Colloquium
3)"Great Expectations: Introducing the Surreal Decision Theory," with Daniel Rubio, at the Pitt-CMU Graduate Conference in Philosophy; the 15th Congress of Logic, Methodology, and Philosophy of Science; the 5th International Congress on Logic, Rationality, and Interaction; the Princeton Workshop on Infinite Values; and at Peking University's Colloquium on Logic, Language, and Cognition
4) "Pascal's Wager Meets Surreal Numbers," with Daniel Rubio, at the Eastern Regional Meeting of the Society of Christian Philosophers

Grad Life - Meet the First Years

Danny Forman

Institutions: B.A. in philosophy and psychology from Carleton College

Areas: epistemology and mind

Desert Island Pick: Roger White's "Epistemic Permissiveness"

Hobbies: watching cerebral movies and doing my jazz show, The Gloaming Hour, on Rutgers radio

Isaac Wilhelm

Institutions: M.A. in philosophy from Tufts University; B.A. in mathematics and film theory from the University of Chicago

Areas: metaphysics, philosophy of science, logic, and philosophy of language

Desert Island Pick: Horologium Oscillatorium (because it would take a really long time to read, and it's fun to mess around with clocks!)

Hobbies: reading poetry, making short films, playing various board/card games, and fishing

Nevin Johnson
(MA in Legal Philosphy Student)

Institutions: J.D. from Cleveland-Marshall College of Law; B.A. in Philosophy from the University of Akron

Areas: philosophy of law, political philosophy, and ethics

Desert Island Pick: Ronald Dworkin's Law's Empire

Hobbies: drinking coffee, listening to music, and watching crazy videos on YouTube

Marilie Coetsee

Presentations/Talks:

1) “Love, Reason, and Religion in Politics," at the Inaugural Theistic Ethics Workshop, Wake Forest University
2) "On the Affective-Phenomenal Representation of Value," at Affect: Memory, Aesthetics, and Ethics Interdisciplinary Conference (University of Manitoba); the European Philosophical Society for the Study of Emotions; and the Summer School in Moral Phenomenology (Central European University)
3) "Reasoning with the Unreasonable," at the Association for Social and Political Philosophy (Amsterdam University)
4) "Science and the Sacred," with Murat Arici, at the Workshop on Science and Religion in Islam and Christianity (Grand Valley State University)

Georgi Gardiner

Publications:

1) “Safety's Swamp: Against the Value of Modal Stability," forthcoming in American Philosophical Quarterly
2) "In Defense of Reasonable Doubt," forthcoming in Journal of Applied Philosophy
3) "Normalcy and the Contents of Philosophical Judgments," in Inquiry

Presentations/Talks:

1) “The Roles of Group Belief," at the Group Belief and Agency Workshop, Southampton University, UK

E.J. Green

Publications:

1) “A Layered View of Shape Perception," in The British Journal for the Philosophy of Science

Beth Henzel

Degree:

1) Graduated from the MSL program at Yale Law School

Presentations/Talks:

1) ""The De Minimis Defense: A Problematic Defense for Classification," at the XXVII World Congress on the Philosophy of Law and Social Philosophy
2) "A Theory of Counterfactuals for Negligence: Possible World Semantics and Torts," at the 3rd Annual Tel-Aviv University Workshop for Junior Scholars in Law: Theory Coming to Life

Grad Life - Life in the Department

A Year of Grad Talks

Every semester, our graduate students organize a series of graduate student talks in which students present original work to their fellow graduate students. Here were the presentations from 2015:

Spring 2015 Grad Talks:

Chris Weaver, "Against Causal Reductionism"

Simon Goldstein, "A Preface Paradox for Assertion"

Eddy Chen, "The Best Summary of the Quantum World: the Wave-Function as Humean Law"

Stephanie Leary, "The Essential Question in the Naturalism vs. Non-Naturalism Debate"

Tim Campbell, "Reasoning without Transitivity"

Nick Tourville, "Flat"

Daniel Rubio, "Advanced Modalizing for Modal Realists"

Bob Beddor, "Believing Epistemic Contradictions"

Michael Hicks

Publications:
1) "Derivative Properties in Fundamental Laws," with Jonathan Schaffer, forthcoming in The British Journal for the Philosophy of Science

Presentations/Talks:
1) "The Epistemic Role Account of Lawhood," at the First Annual Meeting of the Society for the Metaphysics of Science

Stephanie Leary

Presentations/Talks:
1) "Non-naturalism and Normative Necessities," at the UNC-Chapel Hill Metaethics Workshop and at the Speculative Ethics Forum (St. John's University, NYC)

Daniel Rubio

Presentations/Talks:
1) "Necessitism and the Abstract/Concrete Distinction," at the Central APA
2) "God Meets Satan's Apple," at The Society of Christian Philosophers Midwest Regional Conference
3)"Testimony Aggregation by Multiplicative Weight Updates," at the Rutgers-Princeton-Penn Social Epistemology Workshop
4) "Great Expectations: Introducing Surreal Decision Theory," with Eddy Chen, at the Society for Exact Philosophy (McMaster University)

Eli Shupe

Publications:
1) "Transformative Experience and the Limits of Revelation," forthcoming in Philosophical Studies

Presentations/Talks:
1) "Transformative Experience and the Role of Revelation," at the Canadian Philosophical Association

Peter van Elswyk

Presentations/Talks:
1) "Beautiful for a lump of clay," at the Yale Graduate Conference
2) "Trading propositions for dispositions," at the Pacific APA

Isaac Wilhelm guides listeners through the nuances of orbital dynamics at his grad talk entitled "Chaos Regained: On the Possibility of a New Era of Orbital Dynamics."

Grad Life - Life in the Department

A Year of Grad Talks (continued)

Fall 2015 Grad Talks:

Peter van Elswyk, "Assertion Regained"

David Rose, "Cognitive Science for the Revisionary Metaphysician"

Isaac Wilhelm, "Chaos Regained: On the Possibility of a New Era of Orbital Dynamics"

David Black, "Establishing Flow: The Swamping Problem and Derivative Value"

Steve Woodside, "Liability by Omission"

Grad students and faculty chat over tea and cookies during the new weekly department tea time.

Thursday Tea Time in the Department

This year saw the start of a new weekly tea time gathering in the department. Faculty and students are invited to gather together every Thursday afternoon for tea, treats, and conversation. On colloquia days, tea time transitions into a talk from our guest speaker.

Reading Groups

As always, the Rutgers graduate students and faculty ran a number of reading groups this past year, including groups on value theory, metaphysics, philosophy of religion, formal epistemology, language, linguistics, philosophy of science, and more. These gatherings continue to be a staple in the intellectual life of the department.

Climate Committee Update

By Eli Shupe

This has been a busy semester for our Climate Committee (Austin, Beth, Eli, Kelsey, Isaac, Laura, Megan, Peter, Sam, and faculty advisor Doug Husak). In November, the annual Women in Philosophy Dinner was held. Faculty, graduate students, and undergraduate majors gathered to share food and experiences, and turn-out was almost twice as high as last year. Some of the undergraduate women in attendance later reached out to women in the graduate program, hopefully marking the beginning of several productive informal mentorships.

Thanks to the hard work of members of the Committee over the last year and a half, we are also prepared to finally go live with the Rutgers Philosophy Graduate Climate Survey. Data will be anonymously collected in Spring 2016 and analyzed by an outside statistician.

Finally, we have organized our annual Climate Lecture, which will be given by Rachel McKinnon (College of Charleston) and take place on February 11, 2016 – save the date!

Rutgers philosophy and linguistics graduate students gather around for a picture with Noam Chomsky after a private opportunity to meet with the renowned scholar.

Grad Life - Life in the Department

Rutgers Philosophers Have Talent!

Every semester, our grads, post-docs, and their partners show off their non-philosophical talents at the department's talent show. As usual, this year's talent shows did not disappoint! Indeed, this year's two shows featured musical performances (including several duets), shaggy dog stories, fine art demonstrations, handicraft displays, recited poetry, and even a philosophy mad-lib led by the one and only Nico Kirk-Giannini!

We thank Simon Goldstein for continue his tradition of organizing and hosting these fun-filled events!

Rutgers Workshop on Teaching Philosophy

By Nick Tourville

The first Rutgers Workshop on Teaching Philosophy was held in the seminar room on March 28, 2015. Four experienced teachers led some extremely helpful sessions full of useful tools to implement in the classroom. Our very own Larry Temkin started things off with a model first lecture, supplemented with insightful (and often humorous) commentary. After that, Simon Cullen showed us how to use argument visualization software and presented evidence from his Princeton course that it can help students massively improve their analytical reasoning skills. Justin Kalef, another speaker from Rutgers, offered advice on how to view and interact with students to encourage them to be highly motivated, autonomous philosophers. Finally, Kimberly Van Orman from SUNY Albany introduced us to team-based learning techniques with hands-on demonstrations.

Overall, the speakers demonstrated how important and rewarding effective teaching can be, and gave concrete advice for how philosophy teachers at all levels can improve. The workshop was organized by Megan Feeney, Pamela Robinson, David Black, Daniel Rubio, and Nick Tourville.

Graduate Student Job Placement Update

Spring 2015 Placements:

1) Robert Beddor: 2 year postdoc at Leuven, Belgium
2) Matthew Benton: 1 year postdoc at Notre Dame
3) Tim Campbell: 2 year postdoc at Institute for Future Studies, Stockholm
4) Richard Dub: 1 year postdoc (extended) at Geneva
5) Ben Levinstein: 2 year postdoc at Oxford
6) Alex Morgan: tenure-track at Rice
7) Ron Planer: 1 year postdoc at ANU followed by tenure-track at Kentucky
8) Kurt Sylvan: permanent post at University of Southampton (UK)
9) Chris Weaver: tenure-track at Illinois-Urbana Champaign
10) Tobias Wilsch: 3 year postdoc at Uppsala (Sweden)

Conferences, Colloquia, & More - Colloquia

Rutgers Philosophy Department Colloquia & Lectures

Every year, the Rutgers Philosophy Department brings a number of colloquia speakers and hosts several sponsored lectures. Here is a run-down of last year's colloquia speakers and lecturers, many of whom are widely considered to be some of the most influential figures in their respective fields:

Spring Semester 2015

COLLOQUIA
Ralph Wedgewood (USC)
"Internalism Reexplained"

Sarah Buss (Michigan)
"Why a Determinate Constitutive Aim is Incompatible with the Conditions of Rational Agency"

Hans Halvorson (Princeton University)
"The Invariant Structure of Equivalent Theories"

MARC SANDERS LECTURE
Peter van Inwagen (Notre Dame)
""The Rev'd Mr. Bayes and the Life Everlasting"

CLASS OF 1970 LECTURE
Kit Fine (NYU)
"Mathematics and the Method of Abstraction"

MESTHENE LECTURE
David Chalmers (NYU)
"Finding Space in a Nonspatial World"

CLIMATE LECTURE
Kristie Dotson (Michigan State University)
"Rejecting Fundamentality: Prolegomena to Black Feminist Philosophy"

Scott Soames invites listeners to join him on his quest to find an answer to what Wittgenstein called 'The Single Great Problem of Philosophy.'

Fall Semester 2015

COLLOQUIA
Imogen Dickie (Toronto)
"Proper Names: Transition to the End Game"
(comments by Megan Feeney)

Victor Tadros (Warwick)
"Permissibility in a World of Wrogdoing"
(comments by Beth Henzel)

Scott Soames (USC)
"Propositions, the Tractatus, and 'The Single Great Problem of Philosophy'"
(comments by Peter van Elswyk)

PHILOSOPHY OF MIND LECTURE
Albert Newen (Ruhr University)
"Defending Cognitive Penetration of Perceptual Experience'"

BYRNE LECTURE
Patrick M. Byrne (CEO and Chairman of Overstock.com)
"Liberalism and Social Justice: How Compatible are They?"

Conferences, Colloquia, & More - Byrne Lecture

"Liberalism and Social Justice: how compatible are they?"

Dr. Patrick M. Byrne, CEO of Overstock.com, joined this semester's lineup of colloquia speakers by delivering an intriguing lecture entitled "Liberalism and Social Justice: How Compatible Are They?" Weaving together a narrative that was at once personal, philosophical, and practical, Byrne invited his audience to rethink what liberalism is, to recognize the importance of sound economic reasoning in pursuing justice, and to avoid the hidden pitfalls in unreflective commitment to agendas pursued under the rubric of 'social justice.'

Byrne began in a personal key, letting listeners in on the story of his own family roots, his father's education at our very own Rutgers, and his father's later fateful encounter with Warren Buffett. Sharing stories from conversations with his three key mentors – Warren Buffett, Milton Friedman, and Noam Chomsky – and drawing on insights from their thinking, Byrne proceeded to define and explain the dangers of regulatory capture. Regulatory capture occurs, explained Byrne, when a regulatory system or institution – economic, social, or political – is taken control over (often secretly or non-explicitly) by a certain interest group. When such systems are captured, the resulting monopoly leads to a breakdown of liberalism, to corruption, and to deception: economic inefficiency follows but also a great potential for injustice, inequality, and stagnation in social and economic progress.

Appealing to some principles from Friedman's economic thought, Byrne emphasized the importance of using careful economic reasoning to recognize the difference between appearance and reality in assessing the impact of purportedly well-motivated, 'liberal' policies. In this vein, Byrne turned his listeners' attention to the popular expression 'social justice' and the examples of the economically and socially harmful policies carried out under its banner. Taking minimum wage law as a prime example, Byrne offered an economic explanation of how minimum wage law – paraded as a liberal policy demanded by 'social justice' – can have detrimental economic and social consequences, undermining the very goals it appears to be serving. Appealing to the historical record, Byrne argued that minimum wage laws were originally used to underwrite racist agendas: by setting a minimum wage, policy makers effectively eliminated the natural negative economic consequences of racism, thereby facilitating racist hiring practices.

Moving on to a second example, Byrne examined current US education policy, once again emphasizing the essential importance of sound economic reasoning in the pursuit of justice. An outspoken critic of the current system, Byrne illustrated how educational justice could be better achieved by replacing the current, unjustly distributed educational budget with a voucher system. By putting the economic power in the hands of families and children most in need of educational opportunity, such a system, Byrne argued, would empower underserved families and create economic incentives for schools to perform better. Byrne concluded by casting an inspiring vision as to how such a voucher system could create space for new innovations in education, including the possibility of retired professors taking on students newly empowered by their ability to exchange vouchers for world-class educational experiences.

Who is Patrick M. Byrne?

Sometimes referred to as "the most hated man on Wall Street," Dr. Patrick M. Byrne has achieved no small measure of fame for his campaign against corruption on Wall Street. In addition to being the CEO and Chairman of Overstock.com, Dr. Byrne has a MA from Cambridge University, where he was a Marshall Scholar, and also a PhD in Philosophy from Stanford University. A popular and frequent interviewee on all the major TV outlets, Dr. Byrne set up Worldstock, a division of Overstock, which sells products from more than 6,000 artisans in developing countries worldwide, and returns, on average, more than 70% of the retail price of each item sold directly to the artisan. Dr. Byrne has also been a strong supporter of the Mentoring Program for Graduate Women in Philosophy headed by our own Liz Camp and Jill North (along with Liz Harman from Princeton University), and in which another of our faculty members, Ruth Chang, also regularly participates.

Conferences, Colloquia, & More - Conference Craze!

The 11th Rutgers Epistemology Conference

Epistemologists swarmed through New Brunswick on May 8th and 9th, 2015, for the 11th biennial Rutgers Epistemology Conference. The first Rutgers Epistemology Conference was held in 1999 and subsequent conferences were held each year until 2003. In 2005, the committee switched to biennial meetings, making the 2015 "REC" conference the 11th since the idea's inception.

As always, the conference brings together the profession's most famous epistemologists, along with a number of younger scholars, for a few days of intensive epistemological exploration. This year's conference included five invited speakers along with the two winners of the Young Epistemologist Prize:

Brie Gertler (Virginia)
"Self-Knowledge and Demands of Rational Agency"

Ram Neta (UNC-Chapel Hill)
"Basing and Taking"

Duncan Pritchard (Edinburgh)
"Epistemic Angst"

Jim Pryor (NYU)
"The Merits of Incoherence"

Sherrlyn Roush (Kings College London)
"Knowledge of Our Own Beliefs"

YOUNG EPISTEMOLOGIST PRIZE WINNERS:
Jason Konek (Bristol)
"Epistemic Conservativity and Imprecise Credence"
Clayton Littlejohn (Kings College London)
"Stop Making Sense: A Puzzle about Rationality"

The former group of speakers has the option of publishing their papers in either Episteme or Philosophy and Phenomenological Research, while the Young Epistemologist Prize papers are automatically published in the latter journal.

The conference also featured Aaron Bronfman (Nebraska-Lincoln), Anil Gupta (Pittsburgh), Rebecca Kukla (Georgetown), and Maria Lasonen-Aarnio (Michigan) as invited discussants.

In addition to these speakers, the returning invited participants list constituted a veritable "Who's Who" list of living epistemologists. These participants included Robert Almeder, David Christensen, Earl Conee, Joseph Cruz, Adam Elga, Jeremy Fantl, Alvin Goldman, Gilbert Harman, Christopher Hill, Hilary Kornblith, Jennifer Nagel, Matt McGrath, Joel Pust, Mark Richard, Patrick Rysiew, Jonathan Schaffer, Robert Shope, David Sosa, Ernest Sosa, Scott Sturgeon, John Troyer, Jonathan Vogel, and Jonathan Weisberg.

The conference was funded by the Rutgers SAS Deans Office and by an endowment raised by Rutgers Board of Governors Professor Ernest Sosa. Susanna Schellenberg was the conference's main organizer, and she was assisted by Rutgers graduate student David Rose. Much thanks is owed to Mercedes Diaz, Jean Urteil, and Pauline Mitchell for their administrative assistance, without which this conference would not have been possible.

The next Rutgers Epistemology Conference will be held in 2017, details for which will be forthcoming soon!

Penn-Rutgers-Princeton Social Epistemology Workshop

On April 25th and 26th, 2015, Princeton hosted the third annual Penn-Rutgers-Princeton Social Epistemology Conference. The conference is devoted to exploring issues in the growing field of Social Epistemology, of which our own Board of Governors Professor Alvin Goldman is a prominent founding figure. Attendance for the conference is typically limited to members of the Penn, Rutgers, and Princeton philosophy departments, along with a few outside visitors.

This year's speakers included our own Daniel Rubio ("Testimony Aggregation and Multiplicative Weight Updates"), Chris Willard-Kyle ("Why Difficulty Matters in Peer Disagreements"), and Andrew Moon ("Disagreement, Conciliationism, and Independence"). Tom Kelly of Princeton University delivered the keynote lecture on the topic of disagreement in philosophy.

This year's conference was organized by Alvin Goldman (Rutgers), Adam Lerner (Princeton), Pamela Robinson (Rutgers), and Daniel Singer (Penn). Past workshops have been held at Rutgers and Penn. The next workshop is scheduled for March 19th and 20th, 2016, and will be hosted at Rutgers.

Conferences, Colloquia, & More - Conference Craze!

Aristotle on *Episteme*, *Techne*, *Empeiria*, and *Sophia*

On June 12th and June 13th, 2015, Rutgers hosted the 1st conference in a series of conferences honoring the memory of Allan Gotthelf (1942-2013). The conference, entitled "Aristotle on *Episteme*, *Techne*, *Empeiria*, and *Sophia*," featured leading scholars of Aristotle from around the world, including our own Robert Bolton and Gregory Salmieri. Other presenters included Ursula Coope (Oxford), James Lennox (Pittsburgh), Joel Yurdin (Haverford), Alan Code (Stanford), and Marko Malink (NYU). A second conference was held at the University of Pittsburgh from October 30th to November 1st, 2015.

Both conferences were sponsored by the Anthem Foundation for Objectivist Scholarship's grant to Rutgers University. We owe a special thanks to our own Robert Bolton and Gregory Salmieri for their important role in organizing the conferences. Stay tuned for more conferences in the upcoming year!

God and Value Theory Conference

Amidst the arid days of a New Jersey August, value theorists and philosophers of religion gathered at 106 Somerset for a discussion of creation, value theory, life after death, and the problem of evil. Speakers included Meghan Sullivan (Notre Dame; Rutgers grad), Mark Johnston (Princeton), Scott Davison (Morehead State), James Sterba (Notre Dame), Michael Zimmerman (Colorado-Boulder), Paul Draper (Purdue), Jada Twedt Strabbing (Fordham), Amy Seymour (Fordham), Noah Lemos (College of William & Marry), Alex Pruss (Baylor), Klaas Kray (Ryerson), Michael Almeida (Texas-San Antonio), and our own Philip Swenson and Dean Zimmerman.

The conference was organized by Philip Swenson and Dean Zimmerman and sponsored by the Templeton Foundation and Rutgers Distinguished Professor and Chair of the Philosophy Department Larry Temkin. Special thanks are owed to Mercedes Diaz and Pauline Mitchell for their help organizing hotels and catering.

"Bridges 2" Formal Epistemology Workshop

Continuing the tradition which began with "Bridges 2014," in September 2015 Rutgers Professor of Philosophy Branden Fitelson brought together scholars from Munich, Amsterdam, and the NYC area for a truly international three day workshop in Formal Epistemology.

Speakers included Rohit Parikh (CUNY), Miriam Schoenfield (Texas-Austin), Graham Priest (CUNY), Sonja Smets (Amsterdam), Alexandru Baltag (Amsterdam), Paolo Galeazzi (Amsterdam), Soroush Rafiee Rad (Amsterdam), Nina Gierasimczuk (Amsterdam), Jakub Szymanik (Amsterdam), Vincenzo Crupi (Turin), Rossella Marriano (Scuola Normale Superiore in Pisa), Catrin Campbell-Moore (Cambridge), Lavinia Picollo (Munich), Barbara Osimani (Ludwig-Maximilian University in Munich), and Noebert Gratzl (Ludwig-Maximilian University in Munich). In addition to these visitors, Rutgers graduate students Bob Beddor, Simon Goldstein, and Una Stojnic also presented papers.

The conference was organized by Branden Fitelson and Rutgers graduate student Will Fleisher. It was sponsored by the Rutgers Philosophy Department and the Rutgers Center for Cognitive Science.

Philosophy and Emily Dickinson Conference

In December 2015, Rutgers philosopher Elisabeth Camp hosted a conference entitled "Thinking Through Forms: Philosophy and Emily Dickinson." The conference brought together an interdisciplinary cadre of contributors to a volume on Emily Dickinson and philosophy which Liz is editing for Oxford University Press's new philosophy and literature series. In addition to bringing in outside speakers, the event also included participants from other departments at Rutgers, including the English Department, who have research interests in philosophy in American intellectual history, especially American Transcendentalism and Pragmatism.

The conference was sponsored by the Rutgers Center for Cultural Analysis and by the Philosophy and English Departments. Special thanks are owed to Mercedes Diaz for her administrative help in the organization of the conference.

A LETTER FROM THE CHAIR

Dear All,

I concluded my first Letter from the Chair by observing that "it is my great fortune, and honor, to be Chair of the world's greatest philosophy Department." As I write my second Letter from the Chair, I am more convinced than ever of my good fortune in this regard.

It has been another banner period for the Department.

Our undergraduates continue to be a joy to teach. Our classes are brimming with eager, inquisitive students, and we have a cadre of smart, committed majors. Our undergraduate philosophy club is as active as it as ever been. Our undergraduate journal, *Arête*, continues to be one of the best in the country. Last Spring, another outstanding group of students was inducted into our Phi Sigma Tau Philosophy Honors Society, and there is no doubt that this year will see another banner group earn that distinction. In addition, the second annual Princeton-Rutgers Undergraduate Philosophy Conference was a great success.

Our graduate students continue to infuse boundless energy and enthusiasm into our Department. They play a crucial role in virtually every aspect of the Department: from their invaluable contributions to our seminars, to their great commitment as teachers and graduate assistants, to organizing countless reading groups, to their indispensable role in the recruitment of the next generation of graduate students and faculty. Unsurprisingly, our graduate students once again reaped a boatload of honors and awards, gave talks and participated in conferences worldwide, published up a storm, and, as a group, continue to be among the most competitive and successful candidates in one of the worst job markets that Philosophy has ever seen.

Our faculty members continue to shape the philosophical agenda in their roles as Editors and Editorial Board Members of leading journals, worldwide lecturers; keynote speakers at major conferences; advisers to major national and international granting agencies; and, most importantly, as publishers of seminal work. Their honors and accolades are too many to list here, but I note, for example, that for the second year in a row a Rutgers Philosopher, Alvin Goldman, won the distinguished Phi Beta Kappa and American Philosophical Association Lebowitz Prize for Philosophical Achievement (Jonathan

Philosophy Convocation

The Philosophy Department undergraduate convocation was held on May 11th, 2015. The ceremony took place in the Rutgers Multi-Purpose Room, with approximately 150 students, friends, and family members in attendance. The excellent turnout spoke to the pride and enthusiasm of philosophy undergraduates here at Rutgers.

The following students received awards:

W. J. Norton Alumnae Prize (female senior with highest GPA in philosophy):
Andrea Parente

Sanford Doolittle Philosophy Prize (outstanding achievement in philosophy):
Andrea Parente

Emily F Mitchell Prize
(an outstanding major who exemplifies a genuine love of learning and enthusiasm for thinking philosophically about the world around them):
Andrea Parente and Christopher Moore

Highest Honors in Philosophy:
Raaghav Pandya
Andrea Parente
Nicole Salvatore
Joshua Tarzia

High Honors in Philosophy:
Brandon Ferrick

A LETTER FROM THE CHAIR (continued)

Schaffer won it last year), and that Susanna Schellenberg was selected by the Humbolt Foundation to receive the prestigious Friedrich Wilhelm Bessel Research Award, given to only twenty "international renowned scientists and scholars" who "are expected to continue producing cutting-edge achievements which will have a seminal influence on their discipline beyond their immediate field of work." Even more impressively, I note that in a January 2016 ranking of the most important Anglophone epistemologists since 1945, our own Alvin Goldman and Ernie Sosa occupied two of the top six slots!!! Only (the immortal) Quine was ranked ahead of Alvin! Our entire Department basks in their reflected (and well-deserved!) glory, and I might add that it speaks volumes about the nature of our Department that Alvin and Ernie chose to move to Rutgers in the first place, and have remained here ever since. Last year was also a banner year for our distinguished group of regular Visiting Professors. Marilyn Adams and David Albert were elected to the American Academy of Arts and Sciences. In addition, Derek Parfit was awarded the Rolf Schock Prize in Philosophy and Logic by the Royal Swedish Academy of Arts and Sciences for lifetime contributions to Philosophy, a prize which many regard as the closest award to a Nobel Prize in Philosophy.

The Department has adopted a number of changes designed to make our already great program and atmosphere even better. As of last year, we instituted get-togethers for everyone affiliated with the Department following our monthly Department meetings, and as of this year, there is a new set of graduate requirements in place; an earlier, family-friendly, start time for our colloquia; and Departmental "teas" prior to our colloquia. In addition, although we are still seeking a major donor to endow it, the Department has firmed up an agreement in partnership with Oxford University Press to launch what we hope will soon prove to be one of the world's most distinguished lecture series in Philosophy, along with the likes of the Dewey Lectures, the Locke Lectures, and the Tanner Lectures.

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There is no end to the long list of "highlights" I could include in this letter, but I would be remiss if I didn't at least mention that last year's Class of 1970 Lecture, the Mesthene Lecture, and the Sanders Lecture were delivered to large and enthusiastic audiences by three of the world's leading philosophers, Kit Fine, David Chalmers, and Peter van Inwagen, respectively, and the Department remains deeply grateful to the generosity of those donors who made those lectures possible. In addition, this fall Patrick Byrne gave a talk challenging the compatibility of liberalism and social justice that was both deeply personal and intellectually provocative. I would also be remiss if I didn't note how pleased the Department is about the retention of Branden Fitelson; the well-earned promotions of Trip McCrossin and Justin Kalef to Assistant Teaching Professors, Andy Egan and Thony Gillies to Full Professors, and Jonathan Schaffer to Distinguished Professor; and the hiring of Jill North and Ted Sider from Cornell—Jill as an Associate Professor, and Ted as Rutgers's first Andrew W. Mellon Chair in Philosophy.

Thus, as I said in my first Letter from the Chair, this is a golden-age for Philosophy at Rutgers, and I am very proud to be a part of it. I am also deeply grateful to everyone who helps make the Rutgers Philosophy Department the truly special place that it is: faculty, staff, graduate students, undergraduates, alumni, and friends.

Warmly yours,

Would you like to donate to Rutgers Philosophy?

http://philosophy.rutgers.edu/donate

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Many thanks to all contributing writers!