

Philosophy

Department

GRADUATE NEWS | SPRING 2021

Department News

Like nearly everyone else in academia, faculty and grad students in the Duquesne Philosophy Department have spent the past academic year connecting to one another largely through online platforms or hybrid partially-online, partially-face-to-face classroom teaching. It's been a difficult period, but we've done our best to keep an esprit de corps and sense of community solidarity alive in the department and to ensure that our vibrant intellectual community continued to work in creative and exciting ways. Despite the limitations of social distancing, our work together continued through fantastic graduate seminars on Deleuze's *Cinema* books and *Difference and Repetition*; Epicurean ethics; Gothic philosophy, architecture, and painting; Hegel's *Phenomenology*; Heidegger's *Being and Time*; Husserl's *Crisis*; Kant's *Religion within the Bounds of Reason Alone*; Marxism, Frankfurt School Critical Theory, and its aftermath; Nietzsche's untimely Dionysianism; Plato's *Republic*; and new developments in Queer Theory & Trans Studies. Together we've tried to ensure that social distancing has meant neither social nor intellectual isolation and instead sought to thrive as a community despite the pandemic.

Congratulations to all those who have defended their dissertations since our last newsletter and to all our graduating MAs – both groups completed their time in graduate school under circumstances all but unimaginable when they entered, and doing it with aplomb. Congratulations to Dr. Thomas Ball, Dr. Paul DiGeorgio, Dr. Jacob Greenstine, Dr. François Kodena, Dr. Jeff Lambert, Dr. Jiho Oh, Dr. Sila Özkara, and Dr. Paul Zipfel. Congratulations also to MAs Ryan Adams, Mary Brown, Brian Cordero, Alexandria Fricks, Suhyeon Huang, Jacob Joyce, Tiffany Race, Brennan Van Spankeren, and Bradley Waldruff!

One way we hope to strengthen and expand our sense of community in the department is through more direct outreach to our alumni and by continuing to make our public events accessible beyond the physical space of the campus. To stay in touch, we invite you to follow us on Instagram ([duquesnephilosophy](#)) and Twitter ([@duquesne_phil](#)), where the department has been active promoting its events (we hope to get our Facebook page working again soon as well!), and we'll also

soon be launching new department events listserv. We hope you are coming through the difficulties of the pandemic with your health and spirits intact and we wish you all the best!

Other Departmental News

The renowned **Dr. Judith Butler** presented two lectures at *What Makes for a Livable life, an Inhabitable World?*, the 39th annual Simon Silverman Phenomenology Center symposium. The lectures were titled "What is an Inhabitable World?: Scheler and the Tragic" and "Touching, Breathing: Merleau-Ponty for the Pandemic".

Dr. Thérèse Bonin and **Dr. James Swindal** helped to organize the "Racial Equity and Religions" event in collaboration with the **Consortium for Christian-Muslim Dialogue and the Duquesne University Interfaith Student Organization**, which consisted of a panel discussion held between representatives from the Judaic, Buddhist, Bahá'í Faith, Christian, Hindu, and Islamic communities, and was privileged to have as its keynote speaker former Duquesne philosophy professor **Dr. George Yancy**.

The Center for Interpretive and Qualitative Research (CIQR) presented *Interpretations and Meaning of White Supremacy: Anti-Black, Anti-Asian, and other Racisms in the Era of BLM*. This event was composed of three lectures: "Whither? Black Lives Matter and the fortunes of Democracy in the U.S. and Globally" given by the recently retired **Dr. Fred Evans**, "The Lie of White Innocence" by **Dr. George Yancy**, and "The Hyper/In/Visibility of Yellow Bodies" by Duquesne philosophy alum **Dr. Boram Jeong**.

Our department was also privileged to be joined by **Dr. Anthony Kane**, the director of Duquesne's Center for Excellence in Diversity and Student Inclusion, for a discussion on how to talk with students about race. This discussion was addressed to current and future teachers in the Humanities, and contributed to the pressing task of establishing a more inclusive learning experience by acknowledging the challenges involved in discussing race with students and identifying helpful techniques to navigate these challenges.

Department Awards & Honors

Dr. Kelly Arenson has been awarded a 2021-22 Presidential Scholarship Award for the summer of 2021 for work on her essay, "Ancient Women Epicureans and their Anti-hedonist Critics".

Dr. Kelly Arenson was also awarded a Fall 2020 Wimmer Family Foundation grant to develop a course for Duquesne's new first-year Essential Questions seminars, "Are Robots People?"

Dr. Fred Evans and **Dr. Ron Polansky** have both been awarded Professor Emeritus status for their long, distinguished, and meaningful engagement with the Philosophy Department, the McAnulty College & Graduate School of Liberal Arts, Duquesne University, and the profession at large.

A Paluse Faculty Research Grant was awarded to **Dr. James Swindal** for his collaborative work with William M. Wright IV (Duquesne Theology) on their co-authored manuscript, *The Eucharist and Existential Action: A Collaboration of Biblical Exegesis and Philosophical Theology*.

Dr. Eric Vogelstein has been awarded the 2021-22 Presidential Scholarship Award for work on his paper, "Medically-Assisted Dying and Professional Role Obligations"

Michael Kramer has been awarded a 2020-21 Fulbright Research Fellowship dissertation work in Germany at Heidelberg University! His project is Phenomenological Philosophy of Liminal and Transformative Consciousness, directed by Jay Lampert.

PhD student **Zach Slanger** has won the extremely competitive Graduate Student Award for Excellence in Teaching from Duquesne's Center for Teaching Excellence.



Zach Slanger

Kimberly Tucker and **Michael Kramer** won tuition awards for the "Affective Intentionalities in Medieval and Philosophy & Phenomenology" International Summer School through the University of Würzburg.

Congratulations to graduating Philosophy major **Austin Cottrell**, recipient of this year's General Excellence Award in Philosophy!

Congratulations also to graduating Philosophy major **Daniel Meyer**, recipient of this year's Award for Excellence in Service to the Philosophy Department!

Department Events

Embodied Voices Conference

Graduate Students in Philosophy, Minorities and Philosophy, and **Duquesne-Women in Philosophy** collaborated in organizing the *Embodied Voices: Phenomenological, Hermeneutical, and Psychoanalytic Approaches to Health* conference. In particular, **Mackenzie Foster**, **Sparkles Stanford**, and **Ryan Adams** deserve thanks and recognition for all of their hard work in putting this conference together. There were 232 registrations for the conference, which drew in attendees from several continents. The keynote, given by **Dr. Gail Weiss** of George Washington University, was entitled "Translating Lived Experience Across Multiple 'Worlds of Sense: Depathologizing and Decolonizing the Clinical Encounter." The plenary talk, entitled "'Dying Together: Derrida, Levinas, and End of Life Care", was given by **Dr. Megan Craig** of Stonybrook University. The conference also saw the welcome return of Duquesne Philosophy alumni **Dr. Boram Jeong** and **Dr. Stephanie Adair**.

Duquesne Undergraduate Philosophy Society Events

This year saw a series of debates organized by the Duquesne Undergraduate Philosophy Society and Dr. Patrick Miller. These events included:

- **Dr. Patrick Miller** and **Dr. James Swindal**, "Free Speech," September 25th
- **Dr. Patrick Miller** and **Dr. Jay Lampert**, "Technology," October 9th
- **Dr. Patrick Miller** and **Dr. Eric Vogelstein**, "Is Democracy Good?" November 2nd
- **Dr. Patrick Miller** and **Dr. James Swindal**, "Socialism vs. Capitalism," April 8th



News and Events

Philosophy Visiting Speakers Series

The 20/21 Speakers Series, organized by **Dr. Jay Lampert**, was pleased to host the following distinguished guests:

- **Charles Griswold** (Boston University)
“What is Philosophy? Is It Worth the Effort?”
September 11
- **Joanna Hodge** (Manchester Metropolitan University, Great Britain).
“The Timing of Secular Apocalypse: Thinking with Jean-Luc Nancy”
October 9
- **Julián Ferreyra** (University of Buenos Aires, Argentina)
“Deleuze and Hegel: A Turbulent Dance”
November 6
- **Illah Nourbakhsh** (Carnegie Mellon University)
“AI and Humanity”
January 15
- **Daniela Voss** (University of Hildesheim, Germany)
“French Philosophy and Technology”
March 19
- **Suzanne McCullagh** (University of Athabasca, Canada)
“The Temporality of Extinction”
April 16

Philosophy Faculty News

Dr. Lanei Rodemeyer has been somewhat productive in spite of, well, everything. She presented at two international conferences—unfortunately online—one which would originally have been in Helsinki, Finland (paper entitled “A Phenomenological Critique of Critical Phenomenology”) in October, and the other which was partially in Oslo, Norway and partially online (paper entitled: “Philosophical Perspectives on the Body: Possible Theoretical Foundations for Physical Education”) in September. She also had a chapter published in a volume on Time and Body which addresses Husserl’s levels of constitution and applies them to gender and eating disorders, and she prepared two other papers that are due to appear soon in other volumes (*The Husserlian Mind and Why Method Matters: Phenomenology as Critique*). Finally, she was honored to be invited as keynote speaker to the German Society for phenomenological Research (DGpF) conference, which will take place in September 2022 (postponed by one year due to the global health situation. Besides that, she is taking on (and even sometimes enjoying) the pedagogical challenges of teaching online and hybrid, and is fully aware of the effects of zoom fatigue when attending way too many committee meetings online.

In January 2021, **Dr. Jennifer Bates** presented (virtually) “Broken at the Nodes: Ekphrastic Crisis and Moral Receptivity in Hegel’s Religious Phenomenology and Shakespeare’s The Rape of Lucrece” at the MLA Conference 2021 on the panel “Hegel and the Literary: the Sestercentennial”. In February 2021, Bates published a book chapter “Hegel’s Rome and Shakespeare’s Coriolanus – Grounds for Tragedy” in the Arden *Coriolanus: Critical Reader* (ed. Liam Semler; Bloomsbury). In March 2021, Bates submitted a longer chapter version of her “Broken at the Nodes” paper for the book proceedings of the conference *L’héritage de Hegel / Hegel’s Heritage* (the conference was cancelled due to Covid but the papers are being published as a book by UNESCO). Lastly, our journal *Idealistic Studies*’ unstopable and excellent editorial board (Jacob Joyce,

continued

News and Events

continued

Aaron Higgins-Brake and Bates) published three issues (Spring, Summer and Fall 2020) and lined-up the forthcoming issue (Spring 2021) and started a Special Edition issue for Hegel's 250 Anniversary, on "Philosophical Idealism as Anti-Racism". Bates was proud of Jiho Oh's successful Ph.D. Defense in July 2020. She has enjoyed zoom-teaching new versions of undergraduate "Philosophy and Literature" (on Shakespeare's Roman Plays) as well as her graduate courses on Kant's religious works and Hegel's *Phenomenology*.

Dr. Tom Eyers used his sabbatical in Spring of 2020 to finish drafting his fourth monograph, *Romantic Abstraction: Language, Nature, Historical Time*. Through comparative readings of English, French, and German romantic poetry and philosophy, the book challenges the notion that romanticism was concerned above all else with immediate, even epiphanic experience. 'Romantic Abstraction' instead identifies persistent if often elusive forms of abstraction in the figural choices of romantic poets, and in the aesthetic manifestos of romantic philosophers. The romantic picturing of nature, stubbornly abstract even when it tries to be direct, is read as an ultimately melancholic attempt to hold on to a planet and a climate already on the way to extinction. Dr. Eyers is making final revisions to the manuscript with a view to sending it to a publisher by the end of the calendar year. A scheduled talk on the book in March of 2020 at Cornell University's Institute for German Cultural Studies was cancelled due to Covid, as was a trip to Australia, where Dr. Eyers was due to present much of the book at the University of Western Sydney. Both trips will be rescheduled. Dr. Eyers has three upcoming essays in edited collections, to be published this year. The first, 'Constructive Disorderings', a philosophical reading of the poetry of Wallace Stevens, will be published in *The New Wallace Stevens Studies*, edited by Gül Bilge Han with Cambridge University Press. The second, 'Criticism and the Non-I, Or, Rachel Cusk's Sentences', will be published in June by Palgrave in a collection, edited by Derek Attridge, *The Work of Reading: Literary Criticism in the 21st Century*. Finally, an essay on Jacques Lacan's 'Aggressivity in Psychoanalysis' will appear in *Reading Lacan's Écrits*, edited by Derek Hook and published by Routledge. Dr. Eyers has two invited talks on the horizon. The first, entitled 'Criticism and the Non-I', will be delivered on Zoom under the auspices of the Inter-Chicago Circle for Experimental Critical Theory in April 2021. The second, 'Baudelaire and Historical Time', a version of a chapter from his forthcoming book, will be presented at Dartmouth College in the Fall - hopefully in person.

Dr. Kelly Arenson's massive edited volume, *The Routledge Handbook of Hellenistic Philosophy*, appeared in print in July 2020. The 35-chapter volume provides comprehensive coverage of the ethics, epistemology, metaphysics, and contemporary relevance of Epicureanism, Stoicism, and Skepticism. It features accessible analyses of central aspects of the Hellenistic intellectual tradition

as well as applications to current debates in environmental ethics, bioethics, economics, feminist studies, and modern self-help. In the fall of 2020, Dr. Arenson's review of James Wood's new translation of Plato's *Philebus* was published in *Ancient Philosophy*. She is currently writing a book chapter on ancient Epicurean women, to be published in *Ancient Women Philosophers: Recovered Ideas and New Perspectives* (Cambridge University Press). She is also prepping three new courses for fall 2021, among them "Are Robots People?" an offering for Duquesne's new Essential Questions core requirement.

Dr. Jay Lampert is on sabbatical research leave, working on his next book, *Short Term*. A short piece of his has just come out in the collection *Minor Ethics: Deleuzian Variations* (McGill-Queens Press, 2021). His article "Deleuze and AlphaGo" will come out shortly with *Deleuze and Guattari Studies*. Being on sabbatical is nice.

Of **Dr. Fred Evans** accomplishments for fall-spring 2020-21, the following stand out. With his retirement, the department and Duquesne University awarded him the status of Professor Emeritus. The immediate and long term implication of that title is that he is still busy doing as much academic work as before. Most importantly, He is still in the enjoyable if challenging process of writing a book titled *Cosmopolitan Mind: A Political Ethics of World Togetherness*. His earlier book (2019), on the political aesthetics of public art and the fragility of democracy, is still drawing attention: the SPEP conference for 2021 in October will have a special book session on it; he gave a presentation based on the book at the University of Massachusetts, Lowell, this March; and has been invited to publish a related paper, this time on global art, for a special edition of the *Journal of Aesthetics and Art Criticism*. He also published an article on the implications of Black Lives Matter for U.S. and global democracy – this with the French journal *Sociétés: Revue Des Sciences Humaines et Sociales* (2020/4 no. 150) – and has given three invited talks on the topic this year, one in Spanish. One of these three presentations is actually still for this April, and it's of special importance: it's sponsored by the Duquesne Center of which he was the Coordinator for 20 years, and the two co-speakers are two of his former PhD students whose dissertations he advised. One has far surpassed me, George Yancy (Emory University), and the other, more recent, Boram Jeong (U. of Colorado, Denver), is on her way to doing so. There is another publication (a translation in Spanish of an earlier public art piece that he had published in English); an invited publication on Mikhail Bakhtin for the coming year; I gave an invited paper and a panel presentation earlier this spring with the Chinese academic organization, "Pathmarks"; he'll be teaching a graduate course on Foucault for the department in the fall; plus he's still directing some dissertations and sitting on the committees of others. All this, then, will give you a sense of what he meant by being happily busy despite "retirement."

News and Events

continued

Graduate Student Scholarly Activity

Aaron Higgins-Brake presented his essay “Appearance, Illusion, and Kant’s Transcendental Idealism,” at the Pittsburgh Area Kant Colloquium, Duquesne University, Pittsburgh, PA. He also presented an essay entitled “Kant’s Account of Sensation” at Society for European Philosophy and Forum for European Philosophy Joint Annual Conference, University of Staffordshire, Staffordshire, England.

This summer, **Daniel Cook** will present his ““What Other Can Disturb Me? The Temporality of Alterity in Levinas’s Totality & Infinity,” at the 16th Annual North American Levinas Society Conference: Solidarity & Community held at St. Michael’s College in Colchester, Vermont.

Over the past year, **Jacob Joyce** has engaged in a number of scholarly activities. He founded and organized the Pittsburgh Area Kant Colloquium, where graduate students from Duquesne University and the University of Pittsburgh came together to present their research. At the Colloquium he presented a paper on the modal status of things-in-themselves. He will be organizing a larger Kant conference in Fall 2021. He will be finishing his year-long term as the Assistant to the Editor for *Idealistic Studies* this May. Jacob also organized several MA student workshops intended to help second-year MAs develop their PhD application material.

Sparkles Stanford will also present their work, “Professor Challenger and Inequality Racism” this summer at the Deleuze & Guattari Studies Conference held at Charles University in Prague.

Defenses & Placements

Dissertation Defenses

Dr. Thomas Ball

Cultivating Eliot’s Historical Sense: Eliotic Time and The Waste Land’s Response to Alienation

Director: Dr. Tom Eyers

Dr. Paul DiGeorgio

The Phenomenology of Conversion

Director: Dr. James Swindal

Dr. Jacob Greenstine

The Ontology of Not-Being in Aristotle and his Predecessors

Director: Dr. Ronald Polansky

Dr. Greenstine is now teaching at Villanova University

Dr. François Kodena

Afrosafia: Knowledge and Méthode Chez Cheikh Anta Diop

Director: Dr. Jay Lampert

Dr. Jiho Oh

The Dialectic of Naturegeist in Hegel’s Anthropology: Soul, World, and Bodiliness

Director: Dr. Jennifer Bates

Dr. Sila Özkara

Circle of Circles: Rethinking Idealism Through Hegel’s Epistemology

Directors: Dr. Tom Rockmore (Peking University) and Dr. Anton Koch (Universität Heidelberg)

Dr. Özkara is now teaching at the University of Memphis.

MA Placements

Jacob Joyce will be attending Boston University’s PhD program in philosophy this Fall. In addition to this acceptance, he also received offers from the philosophy programs at UCLA, Indiana University Bloomington, Stony Brook, and UT Austin. He intends to write a dissertation on Kant’s influence on contemporary analytic philosophy.

Suhyeon Hwang received offers from the University of Tennessee, Western University (Canada), and the University of Kentucky. She will attend the University of Tennessee’s PhD philosophy program in the Fall.

Mary Brown accepted Purdue University’s offer of admission and will pursue her PhD as a member of their philosophy department.

Alumni Placements, Promotions and Awards

Mohammed Alhussain (MA 2013) has just been accepted into Cornell's Master of Public Administration program.

Dr. Karim Barakat (PhD 2018) has been appointed as a Post-doctoral Fellow at Lebanese American University in the Department of Humanities.

Dr. Nathan Eckstrand (PhD 2015) has accepted a Visiting Assistant professorship at Sam Houston State University. Nathan has previously taught at Mercyhurst University and SIAS International University / Fort Hays State University.

Aaron Higgins-Brake (current PhD student) has accepted a sabbatical replacement position in the Philosophy Department at Washington and Jefferson College.

Dr. Jeff Lambert (PhD 2020) has been appointed Education Coordinator at Crisis Center North, a non-profit counseling and resource center that provides services to victims of domestic violence and their loved ones in northern and western Allegheny County.

Dr. H.A. Nethery (PhD 2014) has received tenure and been promoted to Associate Professor at Florida Southern College.

Please send other news to philprint@duq.edu for inclusion in our next newsletter!

Alumni Giving

Philosophy Department faculty, staff, and students would like to extend our deep gratitude to Regis and Dianne Mckenna for their generous donation to the Mckenna Family Philosophy Endowment, which supports Philosophy academic programs at Duquesne. Thank you for your support of our commitment to phenomenology, existential philosophy, and their history!

We also would like to direct alumni attention to several specific opportunities for supporting Duquesne University and the Philosophy Department under the current difficult circumstances:

As always, an open gift the Duquesne Fund allows the University to continue to serve its students in a comprehensive way. See duq.edu/make-a-gift-to-duquesne for more information.

Donations through the Make a Gift site above that are specifically earmarked for the Philosophy Gift Fund (designate your donation for 'Gifts - Philosophy Department #210436') will directly support Philosophy graduate students, and will specifically underwrite the

Summer Intensive Language Grants that allow them to pursue language study to work as closely as possible with philosophical texts.

Duquesne's Brother Keating Initiative is a basic-needs umbrella program designed in response to insecurities being evidenced on college campuses across the country, with students reporting higher prevalence of housing and food insecurity in regional and national surveys in recent years. Under current circumstances of the pandemic, the Keating Initiative's food pantry has experienced a significant increase in use as students have lost safe access to grocery stores and/or financial means in which to support their access to food. Donations can be mailed to **Dr. Alia M. Pustorino-Clevenger, 115 Union, Duquesne University, 600 Forbes Avenue, Pittsburgh, PA 15282**. Checks can be written to Duquesne University with Brother Keating Initiative on the memo line. Aldi, Giant Eagle and Shop n' Save grocery store gift card donations are also accepted, and an Amazon wishlist can be found at https://www.amazon.com/hz/wishlist/ls/1IEZ62VJGQG9Q?ref_=wl_share

Stay safe and healthy!

