

PHILOSOPHY

NORTHWESTERN

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Message from the Chair



Dear alumni and friends,

This has been yet another year of exciting initiatives, activities, and developments in the philosophy department. Our students and faculty are thriving; colloquia, workshops, conferences, and other events continue to enrich our community's intellectual life; and we are adding several colleagues to our ranks. We were delighted to welcome two Weinberg College fellows to the department: Megan Hyska (PhD, University of Texas at Austin), who specializes in philosophy

of language and political philosophy, and Patricia Marechal (PhD, Harvard), who specializes in ancient philosophy, ancient medical theory, and ethics. We also welcomed postdoctoral fellow William Paris (PhD, Penn State), a specialist in Africana philosophy, black feminist philosophy, and African American philosophy. In addition, we are excited to have recruited a new assistant professor of instruction, Chad Horne (PhD, University of Toronto), a specialist in bioethics and political philosophy who will join the department this fall.

Ongoing initiatives run by our undergraduate community include the Undergraduate Philosophy Society and Women in Philosophy; the PhilFEST, celebrating senior students who write honors theses (see page 13); PhilNight, a series of minilectures by faculty members on topics selected by the Undergraduate Philosophy Society; and annual lectures, including the Inclusiveness Lecture, aimed at making the department more welcoming for all students, and the Bussey Lecture, featuring a high-profile woman in philosophy. The department boasts two new undergraduate-graduate initiatives: a Northwestern chapter of Minorities and Philosophy, the international student network aimed at addressing issues of minority participation in the field, and PHILm, a film society showing and discussing movies with philosophical themes.

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PHILOSOPHY NORTHWESTERN

Department of Philosophy
Judd A. and Marjorie Weinberg
College of Arts and Sciences
Northwestern University
1880 Campus Drive, Kresge 3-512
Evanston, Illinois 60208-2214
Phone 847-491-3656
Fax 847-491-2547

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Northwestern

Message from the Chair, continued

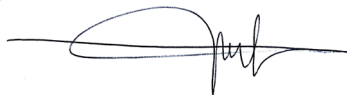
To continue making our undergraduate program as vibrant and productive as possible, we constantly think about ways to improve our students' experience. These include

- teaching students to meet the highest standards of scholarship and to acquire the needed skills to critically examine complex questions and communicate effectively
- expanding the variety of courses to offer students a learning experience touching a wide range of philosophical topics, perspectives, and traditions
- recognizing superlative accomplishments in philosophical work and citizenship by conferring annual awards for students' outstanding achievements
- supporting research opportunities and providing travel funds to undergraduate students so they can present at national and international venues
- emphasizing support for student initiatives such as the Undergraduate Philosophy Society, Women in Philosophy, MAP, and PHILm
- creating and supporting new ways of integrating undergraduate, graduate, and faculty work in philosophy by fostering mentoring relationships, joint initiatives, and research opportunities
- strengthening connections between our students and professional networks that can help students jump-start their professional careers after graduation

The continued generosity of our alumni enables us to make this department a thriving, energetic, and welcoming environment. All donations specifically earmarked as gifts to the philosophy department are used wholly to strengthen our programs and activities and benefit our students. A gift of any size makes a considerable difference.

Thank you for your continuing friendship with the philosophy department and for your ongoing commitment to Northwestern.

Sincerely,



Cristina Lafont
Professor and chair

To give online, please visit wewill.northwestern.edu/weinberg-philosophy. You may also make a contribution by calling the development office at 800-222-5603.

Faculty News

Mark Alznauer has been on sabbatical for much of 2018–19, spending time with his family and traveling to Spain, England, Italy, and rural Pennsylvania. He gave talks at the University of Navarra in Pamplona, Oxford University, the University of Padua, and Tulane University and concluded his term as vice president of the Hegel Society of America. He is currently editing a collection of essays on tragedy and comedy in Hegel's philosophy and working on three projects of his own. The first concerns Hegel's theory of truth, a theory that is unique in characterizing individual concepts as true or untrue; the second examines the connection between poetry and theodicy; and the third—more aspirational than the others—considers the problem of slavery and social progress in 19th-century social theory.

Penelope Deutscher continues as associate director of the Critical Theory Cluster and principal investigator on the Critical Theory in the Global South grant; in the latter capacity, she organized the November 2018 conference “Decolonizing Critical Theory” at Northwestern. She traveled to France and Mexico to give keynotes on gender studies and deconstruction. Her 2017 book *Foucault's Futures*, published in Spanish translation this year, was the topic of an author-meets-critics panel at the Society for Phenomenology and Existential Philosophy's 2019 conference and won the Canadian Association for Continental Philosophy's 13th Annual Book Award.

Kyla Ebels-Duggan has been exploring ideas for her book project on the reasons people have for valuing and loving things: that while valuing and loving are attitudes *for* which people have reasons, they are not attitudes *to* which people could reason; that reasons for loving depend in part on direct experience and appreciation of valued things; and that such experience can yield reasons that outstrip any attempt to formulate them. She gave presentations on the project at Rice University, the University of Wisconsin, the University of California, San Diego, and elsewhere. The recipient of a Public Voices fellowship from the OpEd Project, a group that promotes op-ed and similar writing by women and other underrepresented groups, she published articles in *Psychology Today* and *The Hill* and has others in the works. She participated in a June workshop at the University of Notre Dame on teaching courses on philosophy as a way of life and hopes to launch a pilot course for first-year students in spring 2020.

Sean Ebels-Duggan taught courses in logic and a first-year seminar on Augustine's *Confessions*. He is finishing a project on identity criteria of abstract objects and has been thinking about whether “logical” and “mathematical” are different classifications and why they are interesting. Although he did not achieve moral perfection this year, his “pizza skills,” he says, “improved somewhat.”

Michael Glanzberg continues his research on theories of truth and paradox and on the nature of linguistic meaning and its connections to cognition. He is the editor of the *Oxford Handbook of Truth*, recently released by Oxford University Press, and has published papers on the connection between mind and language and the nature of context dependence. Glanzberg often collaborates with researchers both in the United States and abroad and has recently presented papers in Austria, Croatia, and Latvia as well as at US universities. An associate editor of *Linguistics and Philosophy*, he serves on the boards of several journals in addition to chairing the consulting board for the University of Latvia's Laboratory for Perceptual and Cognitive Systems.

Sandy Goldberg returned from a sabbatical year with a renewed commitment to teaching and research. He published the book *To the Best of Our Knowledge* (Oxford University Press), about knowledge as a social affair, and finished *Conversational Pressure*, forthcoming from Oxford, about the expectations generated when we speak to one another. He taught courses on speech act theory, philosophy of language, and the prospects for self-knowledge. Of the lectures he gave in the United States and abroad, none was more rewarding than his lecture at Stateville Correctional Center in Illinois as part of the Prison Education Program run by philosophy department colleague Jennifer Lackey. He says it was inspirational to see inmates show interest in what some might deride as esoteric points in philosophy of language.

Richard Kraut is collaborating with David Ebrey (Humboldt University, Berlin) on a second edition of the *Cambridge Companion to Plato*—slated for publication in 2020, 28 years after the first edition—that will contain eight new essays and revised versions of seven previously published essays. Kraut's book *The Quality of Life: Aristotle Revised* (Oxford University Press) came out in November, and he taught two 2018–19 graduate seminars: Love and Friendship in Plato and Aristotle, and Hedonism and Antihedonism.

Jennifer Lackey completed her first year as inaugural director of the Northwestern Prison Education Program (see page 16) and chair of the American Philosophical Association's Committee on the Status and Future of the Profession. She is working on a book, *The Epistemology of Groups*, and finished editing the essay collection *Academic Freedom*, both forthcoming from Oxford University Press. Her papers on norms of credibility, false confessions, testimonial injustice, the duty to object, the quality of assertions, group lies, and academic freedom appeared in journals and edited collections. She continues as editor in chief of *Episteme: A Journal of Individual and Social Epistemology*, editor of *Philosophical Studies*, and epistemology subject editor for the *Stanford Encyclopedia of Philosophy*. A presenter at conferences and institutions in the United States, China, Brazil, South Africa, Japan, Singapore,

the United Kingdom, Hong Kong, Mexico, and Switzerland, she also published op-eds in the *Washington Post* and *Psychology Today* and recently gave a TEDx Talk on prison education.

Philosophy department chair **Cristina Lafont** finished her book *Democracy without Shortcuts*, to be issued by Oxford University Press in December, in which she defends a participatory conception of deliberative democracy against other conceptions of democracy that, she argues, would actually undermine the democratic ideal of self-government. She taught a course on Heidegger and Gadamer on interpretation and published her research in journals and collections; her articles included "Neoliberal Globalization and the International Protection of Human Rights" in the journal *Constellations* and "Separation of Church and State" in the forthcoming book *The Blackwell Companion to Atheism and Philosophy*, edited by G. Oppy. Invited to discuss her book manuscript and other work at conferences in Prague, Mexico, Oslo, Hamburg, Boston, New York, and elsewhere, she continued her research as codirector of the research project Global Capitalism and Law at Northwestern's Buffett Institute for Global Affairs.

José Medina continues his research on epistemic injustice and on issues of race, gender, and sexuality in visual and verbal communication. A keynote speaker at several national and international conferences, he traveled to Peru, Singapore, Canada, Germany, and several US universities to present papers on critical race theory, gender theory, and political epistemology. He published essays in *Feminist Philosophy Quarterly*, *Southern Journal of Philosophy*, and in several edited volumes, in addition to coediting the forthcoming volume *Theories of the Flesh: Latin-American and US Latina Feminist Theories* (Oxford University Press). Medina is coeditor of *Symposia on Gender, Race, and Philosophy* and cofounder and coorganizer of the Midwest Race Theory Workshop, which convened in April at Northwestern.

Axel Mueller received the support of the student groups Minorities in Philosophy, Women into Philosophy, its graduate counterpart WIPHICA, and the Northwestern Undergraduate Philosophy Society for his ongoing administrative efforts to diversify the canon at Northwestern. The new advanced course Philosophy of Science, which develops the field's realism-constructivism debate as a background for contemporary discussions of gender and race in social ontology, resulted from these efforts. While he put finishing touches on a

special issue of *Philosophy and Social Criticism* on populism, his “other soul,” he says, “collected pebbles of the mosaic that an article on the philosophy of neuroscience as laboratory science will become.”

For **Ken Seeskin**, the 2019–20 academic year will mark the end of a 47-year run, during which he will have taught close to 10,000 students (by his reckoning). When Northwestern first hired him, the philosophy department was in a house on Hinman Avenue, and computers of the era were so massive, they occupied whole buildings. He is currently putting finishing touches on *Thinking about the Prophets*, a sequel to his book *Thinking about the Torah*. A conference honoring his contributions to the University will be held in May 2020 (see page 17).

Gregory Ward holds faculty appointments in philosophy, linguistics, and gender and sexuality studies and currently codirects the Sexualities Project at Northwestern, an initiative that promotes research and education on sexuality, sexual orientation, and health in social context. In addition to teaching and presenting talks, most recently at the Linguistic Society of America’s conference in New York, he published papers on the pragmatics of natural language and was named to the 2018–19 Associated Student Government Faculty Honor Roll. He will be on sabbatical in 2019–20.

Stephen White was on leave in 2018–19. As a Laurance S. Rockefeller visiting faculty fellow of Princeton’s University Center for Human Values, he gave talks and developed a series of papers exploring parallels between the ethical principles concerning a person’s participation in collective actions and practices and those governing a person’s own conduct over time. His paper “Intention and Prediction in Means-End Reasoning” was published in *American Philosophical Quarterly*. He also gave talks at the University of Toronto and the American Philosophical Association’s Central Division meeting and helped organize the May conference of the Northwestern Society for the Theory of Ethics and Politics.

Rachel Zuckert finished her book *Herder’s Naturalist Aesthetics* (Cambridge University Press), which was years in the making. Otherwise, 2018–19 was pretty much all Kant, all the time. President of the North American Kant Society, she gave talks on Kant’s epistemology and aesthetics in China, Denmark, and the UK; taught two upper-level undergraduate courses on Kant’s philosophy; and cotaught Philosophy of Religion with colleague Ken Seeskin. She also taught a first-year seminar on philosophical and literary views of the self.

Three Questions for Three New Faculty

Megan Hyska

Tell us about your dissertation and where your research is going next.

My dissertation was written as three papers, all concerned with how conversations are organized into topics. I focused on “higher-order” talk—conversational contributions that characteristically function not just to elaborate on, but to evaluate, clarify, and revise the existing conversational structure. I also explored the idea of how modeling a conversation’s topic structure can represent the way issues are collaboratively deliberated in that conversation, which suggests a new way of using linguistic data to contrast agents’ deliberative strategies. This in turn suggested a novel way of using formal linguistic tools to study sociopolitically interesting features of mass discourse, such as polarization and propaganda.

Since defending my dissertation last spring, I’ve been thinking about the general form of a theory of propaganda, the role of discourse structure in theories of communication, and how to use formal linguistic tools to characterize how dissident speech can disrupt a conversation, both as a tool of salutary political resistance and otherwise. Finally, I’ve been integrating my account of higher-order speech into a more general picture of how planning and plan revision work in conversation.

What courses did you teach this year, and what excited you about them?

I taught an introduction to the philosophy of language and a first-year seminar on propaganda. Both were delightful. In the philosophy of language course, I taught papers by Gottlob Frege, Bertrand Russell, Donald Davidson, and other central figures of the analytic tradition who have exhilarated me ever since my first encounters with them as an undergraduate myself. And in the propaganda seminar, I had an astonishingly



Megan Hyska

engaged and intelligent collection of 15 students arguing all quarter about what democratic ideals require of our attempts to persuade one another, what kinds of messages count as propaganda, and how digital media alter the contours of public discourse.

What have you found notable about Northwestern undergraduates so far?

In one seminar I required students to hand in and meet with me about a rough draft of their papers. I was surprised and impressed by how seriously the students took the revision process, submitting final papers that demonstrated really careful rethinking of their drafts’ arguments in light of our discussions. This receptiveness to critical feedback has been a joy to encounter.

A portrait of Patricia Marechal, a woman with long brown hair, smiling slightly. She is wearing a dark top. The background is a blurred bookshelf filled with books.

Patricia Marechal

Patricia Marechal

Tell us about your dissertation and where your research is going next.

My dissertation explored the interplay of passion and intellect in a well-lived life. I argued that while Plato exhorts us to cultivate proper feelings merely to keep disordered passions from interfering with reasoning, Aristotle thinks the passions contribute substantively to three intellectual achievements that are essential to human flourishing: practical wisdom, contemplation, and the appreciation of art. According to Aristotle, then, passion is the basis for epistemic excellences that are central to a good life.

I am currently pursuing a number of research projects. One explores Galen's views on melancholy, a condition strikingly close to what we call depression. Galen, the most famous doctor of the ancient world, recommended therapies for overcoming this psychic ailment that are at times surprisingly familiar. For example, he suggests taking trips to beautiful destinations or listening to our favorite music; at other times his therapies seem odd—for example, drinking white hellebore to restore black bile to its normal levels, thus easing despondency. He also suggests that if we get in the habit of imagining horrible tragedies befalling us, real problems won't sadden us, since they will never match up to those catastrophic scenarios. I believe that reflecting on this example and others like it can help us shed light on the ways different explanatory frameworks engender different attitudes



William Paris

toward these psychic illnesses. A longer project of mine is to investigate the impact of these ancient Greek philosophical and medical theories on the Islamic world. The Islamic authors synthesized philosophical and medical views on psychic health and made original, significant connections between ancient Greek philosophy and medicine, in ways that remain largely unexplored in Anglo-American philosophy.

What courses did you teach this year, and what excited you about them?

I taught Introduction to Ancient Philosophy, focusing on the philosophical views of Socrates, Plato, Aristotle, Epicurus, and Epictetus. What excited me most about the class were the questions these authors try to answer: What are the fundamental constituents of reality? How do we come to know things? How can we be happy? What makes for a just society? These questions are enduring and still motivate philosophers and scientists.

I also taught the upper-level undergraduate course Ancient Theories of Desire. We investigated the nature of desire, the relationship between desire and action, and the role of different kinds of motivation in a good life. Do human and nonhuman animals share the same kinds of desires? Are there different species of motivational

states? Are desires a sort of belief, a kind of affective state, or something else? How does desire relate to pleasure, pain, and the emotions?

What have you found notable about Northwestern undergraduates so far?

It's been wonderful to see students who are not philosophy majors or minors get excited about classical philosophy. My impression is that students don't rest until they understand the difficult texts we read in class, and they always raise original and interesting questions. I was pleasantly surprised to see that students come to office hours to keep discussing the course materials. It's been a delight to work with students who are so intellectually curious and who have a real passion for learning.

William Paris

Tell us about your dissertation and where your research is going next.

In my dissertation I studied Frantz Fanon, Sylvia Wynter, and Hortense Spillers as philosophers of race who claimed that humanism, in the aftermath of slavery and colonialism, needed to be reinvented. I traced their arguments that notions of gender, sexuality, and identification would all have to be reconfigured if a more just world were to be brought about. My current work takes up these themes in a book manuscript titled "Black Mythologies: Race, Culture, and the Practice of Utopia." I develop a notion of Blackness that is not reducible to racial identification but is regarded instead as a historical mythology that designates who properly belongs in political society and who does not. The invention of Blackness has produced devastating consequences for many peoples around the globe since the advent of slavery and colonialism, but my book proposes that by centering the violence of slavery and colonialism in the construction of political society, new mythologies of solidarity can be generated that will go beyond racial, cultural, and national identification.

What courses did you teach this year, and what excited you about them?

I taught Introduction to Political Philosophy and the upper-level African American philosophy course Race, Rationality, Revolution. I enjoyed both courses immensely. In Political Philosophy we examined the role of "state of nature" arguments in the philosophical construction of just political societies. I showed students the explicitly racial role of the state of nature in Western political thought and how taking this seriously allows us to better understand contemporary political societies. Race, Rationality, Revolution was historical, examining the contentious relationship between race and rationality from the turn of the 20th century to today. Throughout the course we were able to historicize the dynamic relationships between race, rationality, and political movements.

What have you found notable about Northwestern undergraduates so far?

These courses were my first with Northwestern undergraduates. What surprised me was not only that most students did the readings but that they closely engaged with the texts. They asked probing and challenging questions that enhanced the lecturing experience. In the past I have often had to lecture as if the students had not done the reading, which meant there was little time for discussion and elaboration of the themes. At Northwestern, I can assume the reading has been done and proceed to more complex philosophical territory. It's wonderful teaching such curious and thoughtful students who are willing to reflect openly on issues such as race and injustice.

2018–19 Activities Roundup

The **After-Life of Phenomenology Workshop**, now in its eighth year, is the only Northwestern workshop series organized by graduate students that features continental philosophy. Cosponsored by Northwestern's philosophy, German, and French and Italian departments, the Critical Theory Cluster, and the Chicago-Area Consortium in German Philosophy,



the workshop hosted six talks in 2018–19: James Kreines (Claremont McKenna College), “Absolute Idealism and the Metaphysical Definitions of God: Hegel on Aristotle and Spinoza”; Sally Sedgwick (University of Illinois at Chicago), “An Argument for Geist’s Historical Nature”; Vicky Spencer (University of New Zealand), “Herder and Relativism”; Daniel Smith (Purdue University), “The Pure Form of Time and the Power of the False: Deleuze on Temporality and Truth”; Laura Papish (George Washington University), “Radical Evil in Light of Kant’s Natural Historical Writings”; and Samir Haddad (Fordham University), “Questions of the Foreigner in *Of Hospitality*.”

The **Ancient Philosophy Workshop** welcomed a variety of scholars to workshop a wide range of papers on ancient philosophy and its relevance to contemporary issues. In addition to Sean Kelsey (Notre Dame), Connie Meinwald (University of Illinois at Chicago), and Marc Gasser-Wingate (Boston University), speakers included Emily Fletcher (University of Wisconsin–Madison), who examined the relationship of justice and injustice in Plato’s *Republic*, arguing that justice and injustice are “independent ingredients” in the life of any person; Patricia Curd (Purdue University), who spoke on the “way of truth” in the poem of Parmenides, focusing on how to reconcile the poem’s two disparate halves and arguing that Parmenides endorses a



form of monism that still allows for scientific investigation; and Richard Patterson (Emory University), whose paper asked where in fact our moral intuitions come from, speculated on where they *should* come from, and argued that Plato concurs with the main claims of social intuitionism in cognitive science.

The **Brady Program**’s 2019 senior class completed a project that addressed Evanston’s affordable housing problems. Meanwhile, third-year Brady students plan to continue exploring ways to serve the city’s migrant population. Professor Anne Eaton will join the program as a 2019–20 visiting faculty member. An associate professor of philosophy at the University of Illinois at Chicago, she holds an MA in art history and a PhD in philosophy and art history from the University of Chicago, specializing in aesthetics and philosophy of art, feminist philosophy, ethics, the Italian Renaissance, and feminist art history, theory, and criticism. Eaton taught the second-year course *The Good Society* for the Brady Program in 2012–13 and 2016–17. Her book *Rough Heroes: Philosophical Reflections on Cinema, Morality, and Art* is forthcoming from Oxford University Press. An Evanston resident for decades, Eaton looks forward to mentoring Brady Scholars who are collaborating on community service projects.

The **Chicago-Area Consortium in German Philosophy** held its 10th annual workshop in June, convening at DePaul University’s Lincoln Park campus and featuring talks by area faculty. During the year the consortium hosted speakers Andrew Cooper (University of Warwick), James Kreines (Claremont-McKenna College), Vicki Spencer (Otago University, New Zealand), and Jennifer Uleman (SUNY Purchase), who gave talks on Kant’s philosophy of science,

Activities Roundup, continued

Hegel's metaphysics, Herder's philosophy of history, and Nietzsche's treatment of race, respectively. Another highlight: Northwestern philosophy PhD Laura Papish (George Washington University) came back to campus to visit a class and lecture on Kant's theory of evil.

The **Climate Committee**—a department initiative aiming to raise awareness and hear concerns about the challenges that marginalized people and groups encounter in the field of philosophy and in Northwestern's philosophy department in particular—welcomed Ariana González Stokas to campus to deliver the 2019 Inclusiveness Lecture, "Tracing Epistemic Reparation: Outlining the University as a Collective Site of Amends." González Stokas, formerly dean for inclusive excellence at New York's Bard College, was recently named Barnard College's vice president for diversity, equity, and inclusion. During the year the committee hosted a tea for prospective students and an evening in



Ariana González Stokas



Chicago-Area Consortium in German Philosophy

downtown Chicago for both prospective and current students who identify as members of marginalized groups. Serving on this year's committee were graduate students John Beverley, Hansen Garlington Breitling, Carmen De Schryver, and Regina Hurley.

The **Critical Theory in the Global South Project** is an initiative of the International Consortium of Critical Theory Programs, a Mellon Foundation-funded consortium jointly housed at Northwestern and the University of California, Berkeley, that facilitates intellectual exchange and illuminates the global form and reach of critical theory today. It sponsored many 2018–19 events, including a talk by Gabriela Balcarse (University of Buenos Aires), "Resistance and Argentinian Feminism"; graduate student workshops at Argentina's National University of Tres de Febrero, led by Northwestern faculty Penelope Deutscher (philosophy) and Alejandra Uslenghi (Spanish and Portuguese) in collaboration with Daniel Link (University of Buenos Aires); and graduate student workshops in Mexico City on curriculum development, led by Andrew Parker (Rutgers University)

and Marisa Belausteguigoitia (National Autonomous University of Mexico) and including the participation of Northwestern philosophy graduate students Carmen De Schryver and Taylor Rogers. Also taking active roles in the project were José Medina of Northwestern and Mellon international predoctoral fellow Cintia Martinez of National Autonomous University of Mexico.



Alejandra Uslenghi, Penelope Deutscher, and Daniel Link discuss the Spanish translation of Deutscher's recent book *Foucault's Futures* as part of the Critical Theory in the Global South project. (Photo: Sebastian Freire)

For further information about the project, see criticaltheory.northwestern.edu/mellon-project/critical-theory-in-the-global-south.

The **Epistemology Brownbag Series** featured 10 speakers during 2018–19, including Robert Audi (University of Notre Dame), Nevin Climenhaga (Australian Catholic University), Rik Peels (Vrije Universiteit Amsterdam), Declan Smithies (Ohio State University), and Heather Spradley (Harvard University).

The inaugural year of the **Film and Philosophy Society (PHILm)** for undergraduates highlighted movies with philosophical themes (broadly construed). The lineup included *13th*, *Sorry to Bother You*, and *I Am Not Your Negro*—films that examine race and the prison system, race and modern capitalism, and the philosophy of race. Also in the lineup was *Conspiracy*, an on-screen reenactment of World War II’s Wannsee Conference, which touches on the nature of totalitarianism along with important themes raised by Hannah Arendt.

The **Midwest Race Theory Workshop**, cofounded and coorganized by Northwestern’s José Medina, DePaul University’s María Acosta and Elizabeth Millán, Loyola University Chicago’s Jaqueline Scott, and Marquette University’s Grant Silva, is a regional organization that connects faculty and graduate students who work in critical philosophy of race. MRTW meets quarterly for a full day of paper presentations and discussions of works in progress, rotating among the coorganizers’ home campuses. This year’s meetings included presentations by faculty and graduate students from National

Autonomous University of Mexico as well as DePaul, Loyola, Marquette, and Northwestern. One featured paper was by Marzouq Alnusf of Northwestern, “Behind the ‘Seen’: A Critique of Al-Saji’s Account of Racializing Vision and Hesitation.”

The **Northwestern–Notre Dame Epistemology Conference**, now in its 10th year, was held at the University of Notre Dame and featured a keynote by Jason Stanley (Yale University) and papers on responsibilist evidentialism, epistemic obligations to know, the relationship between credence and perception, and the relationship between self-deception and pragmatic encroachment.

The **Northwestern Undergraduate Philosophy Society**, pursuant to its self-described aim of “fostering a safe climate to practice earnest conversation and providing a great way to meet other lovers of inquiry, regardless of major,” held weekly meetings at Evanston’s Celtic Knot Public House, the type of establishment where most great philosophical notions originate (says NUPS), with free chips courtesy of the philosophy department.

The **Northwestern University Society for the Theory of Ethics and Politics** held its 13th annual NUSTEP conference in May, featuring keynotes by Sarah Stroud (University of North Carolina) and Peter Railton (University of Michigan) and papers on a wide range of topics, including hypocrisy, akrasia, smugness,



Peter Railton



Sarah Stroud

addiction, war, climate change, and absolute goodness. Lively discussions fostered a genuine philosophical community during the conference’s three days. The event was coorganized by faculty members Kyla Ebels-Duggan, Richard Kraut, and Stephen White, with help from graduate students and department staff. To see the full schedule for this and past years’ conferences, visit philosophy.northwestern.edu/community/nustep.

The **NU MAP** (Minorities and Philosophy) chapter invited DePaul University's María del Rosario Acosta Lopez to deliver its inaugural lecture last fall. In December it hosted a moderated discussion, organized by the Critical Theory Cluster, that addressed the "decolonization" of South African universities. NU MAP's reading group met throughout the year, aiming to "decolonize" the undergraduate philosophy curriculum. The chapter received funding from the Marc Sanders Foundation to send a team to the 2019 National High School Ethics Bowl; the resulting collaboration with students from Chicago's Sullivan High School will continue next year as they prepare for the 2020 competition.

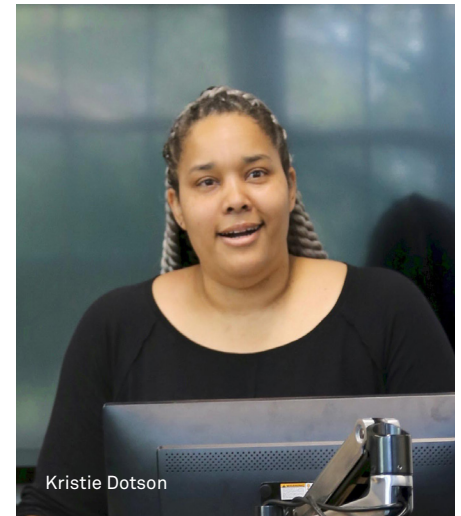
PHILnight 2019, the annual event at which Northwestern philosophy faculty give 15-minute talks for undergraduates and take audience questions, drew a lively group of both philosophy majors and nonmajors to hear José Medina, who spoke on epistemic resistance and the depiction of violence; William Paris, who highlighted the challenges of "decolonizing" philosophy; and Axel Mueller, who discussed the pragmatics of objectivity. The event was organized by the Northwestern Undergraduate Philosophy Society, WiPhi, and MAP-UG/Decolonizing Philosophy.

The **PhLing** workgroup, which brings together faculty and students from philosophy, psychology, linguistics, and other cognitive sciences to discuss topics in linguistics and the philosophy of language, hosted three

presentations in 2018–19: Megan Hyska (Northwestern) spoke on "The Information-Structural Dynamics of Discourse Revision and Repair"; J. J. Lang (Stanford University) discussed the nature and norms of assertion; and Northwestern graduate student Mauricio Maluff Masi workshopped a paper on the dynamics of conversational presupposition and its potential role in political polarization.

The **Practical Philosophy Workshop** invited several scholars to make presentations on issues related to the uses of philosophy and philosophical techniques in everyday life. Samuel Fleischacker (University of Illinois at Chicago) spoke on empathy and demonization; William Paris (Northwestern) on Franz Fanon and race; David Ingram (Loyola University Chicago) on the impact of microlending on women's agency; Marya Schechtman (UIC) on the phenomenon of the awareness of oneself in time and its relation to identity; Elvira Basevich (University of Massachusetts at Lowell) on the promise of Black radical Kantianism; and Asha Bhandary (University of Iowa) on the problem of perpetuating social inequalities when modeling persons as caring in liberal care theory.

Student group **Women in Philosophy** (WiPhi) continued to create a supportive network for people of underrepresented genders at all levels of philosophical study. In April, WiPhi's copresidents—undergraduate Agneska Bloch and graduate student Regina Hurley—had the honor of introducing the 2019



Gertrude Bussey Lecturer, Kristie Dotson of Michigan State University. A feminist epistemologist and philosopher of race, Dotson seeks to center the Black feminist voice, which has been routinely pushed to the margins in philosophy, and dismantle the race- and gender-based hierarchies that shape both who gets to produce knowledge and what counts as knowledge. In her Bussey lecture, "Beyond the Now: Epistemic Oppression and the 'Common' Sense of Mass Incarceration," she built on her notion of epistemic oppression—the systemic exclusion of women, people of color, and other marginalized people from knowledge production and distribution—by recounting a personal anecdote that vividly illustrated the importance of storytelling in philosophy. The annual lecture is named after the recipient of the first philosophy doctorate conferred by Northwestern and is hosted by WiPhi and the philosophy department. Northwestern's Alice Kaplan Institute for the Humanities cosponsored this year's lecture.

Student News

Department hosts 10th annual PhilFEST

PhilFEST, a highlight of spring quarter, marks the culmination of the academic year with senior honors students presenting their research in 10-minute speeches, each followed by audience questions; the whole undergraduate philosophy community then welcomes visitors and celebrates with food and drink. Presentations are always at an extraordinary level, thanks to enthusiastic students with ambitious projects and dedicated supervisors. Presenters each receive a “philosophy love rose” signifying the department’s appreciation for their accomplishments.

This year’s PhilFEST, held on April 16 and attended by about 35 people from all over Northwestern, featured five senior honors students, whose research is summarized below in their own words.

Agneska Bloch

“Why Can’t Virtue Alone Correct Epistemic Injustice?”

(supervisor: José Medina)

Not being heard or not having a voice can be a collective epistemic problem of justice. The recently developed paradigm of epistemic injustice powerfully elucidates this problem as systematically threatening the individual agency of knowers in our epistemic communities. I argue that this paradigm has important limitations and propose to extend it: combatting epistemic

injustice, I argue, requires reform at the interpersonal, institutional, and supra-institutional levels through affirmative action that will both change the conditions in which knowledge is produced and disseminated and seek to amplify the voices of marginalized knowers.

Conor Jones

“Can Morals Be Learned?”

(supervisor: Michael Glanzberg)

Every adult has access to a rich and substantive array of moral judgments. How are these judgments realized psychologically? And how do we acquire them? Using arguments from the foundational linguistics literature as an analogy, I claim that the content of our moral judgments is largely mediated by an innate moral faculty too structurally complex to be



learned from experience. In this way, our moral capacity is not learned; it is acquired, like our sense of vision or our first language’s grammar, and selected from a set of capabilities innately available to us.

Joseph Lamps

“General Workspace Theory and the Modularity of Mind”

(supervisor: Michael Glanzberg)

American philosopher Jerry Fodor has argued that the mind’s peripheral faculties are modular, meaning encapsulated and domain-specific, but central faculties are not. Against this, my paper develops arguments that the peripheral faculties are not totally



modular and that central faculties are somewhat but not totally modular. It uses heuristics, language, and connectionism to weaken Fodor's arguments against central modularity and ultimately uses general workspace theory to take it down. Specifically, it argues that a domain-general global workspace surrounded by domain-specific modules provides a framework for understanding domain-general thinking in a modular mind, which Fodor pessimistically argued was impossible.

Daniel Nahon

"The Binding of Isaac and the Nature of Religious Morality"

(supervisor: Rachel Zuckert)

This paper critically examines Kierkegaard's interpretation of the story of the binding of Isaac—specifically, Kierkegaard's stance that faith transcends ethics. I argue that this transcending of ethics only occurs given a Hegelian-Kantian

notion of ethics. In the alternate interpretation of ethics I provide, it is an ethical requirement to perform God's will.

Tyler Washington

"Silencing Speech and the First Amendment"

(supervisor: Axel Mueller)

The First Amendment to the US Constitution claims to protect Americans' right to free speech, but the amendment itself is remarkably quiet on what free speech entails and the extent to which it should be protected. My work defines the

communicative ideal I take the First Amendment to pursue, presents silencing speech, and explicates how it challenges the communicative ideal in the context of examining existing First Amendment jurisprudence. On this basis, I analyze a recent Mississippi court case to conclude that the Mississippi state flag, and the requirement that it be taught in Mississippi public schools, institutes conditions that make free speech impossible because of the discriminatory silencing of speech the flag inevitably constitutes. Therefore, the Mississippi state flag's current presence in classrooms should be regulable in court by the First Amendment.

Jun Kyung You

"The Prospect of Moral Artificial Agents"

(supervisor: Axel Mueller)

I deal with two separate but related questions: "What is the desirable direction of moral artificial agent development?" and "Is the idea of a moral artificial agent coherent?" Inquiries into the first question aid answering the second. Since there are limited desirable options in developing moral artificial agents and these are rarely being pursued in AI ethics research, there are also limited possible (in the normative sense) conceptions of moral artificial agents. I show that these limited possible conceptions make it unlikely for us to recognize the decisions of moral artificial agents as trustworthy, reliable, or bound by constraints similar to (often contingent on) those of human moral reasoning and, therefore, that artificial agents ought not to be taken as having gained full moral agency.



Tyler Washington



Daniel Nahon



Jun Kyung You

2018–19 Departmental Awards

Herder Prize for the best paper written by a first- or second-year student

Carl Morison, “The First Amendment and Its Universal Necessity for Democratic Deliberation” (Axel Mueller, instructor)

Jack O’Leary, “A Quinean Analysis of Augustinian-Ontological Metaphysics” (Sean Ebels-Duggan, instructor)

Brentano Prize for the best paper written by a third- or fourth-year student

Jake Gordon, “Reconciling ‘Constructionism’ with ‘Internalism’: Are Dominant Feminist and Transgender Theories Consistent?” (Axel Mueller, instructor)

Daanish Khazi, “Unresolved: Kant and the Problem of Free Will” (Rachel Zuckert, instructor)

David Hull Prize for the best senior thesis of the academic year

Agneska Bloch, “Combatting Epistemic Injustice with (Epistemic) Affirmative Action” (José Medina, supervisor)

Philosophy honors for accomplishments as a philosophy major, work in the honors program, and thesis (titles shown)

Honors with distinction

Agneska Bloch, “Combatting Epistemic Injustice with (Epistemic) Affirmative Action” (José Medina, supervisor)

Conor Jones, “On Moral Judgments: Acquisition, Structure, and Innateness” (Michael Glanzberg, supervisor)

Jun Kyung You, “Moral Artifacts: Enframing, ‘Ready-Ethics,’ and Anthropocentrism” (Axel Mueller, supervisor)

Honors

Joseph Lamps, “How Global Workspace Theory Can Weaken Arguments against Modularity” (Michael Glanzberg, supervisor)

Daniel Nahon, “The Binding of Isaac as a Lens into the Nature of Religious Morality” (Rachel Zuckert, supervisor)

Tyler Washington, “Silencing Speech and the First Amendment” (Axel Mueller, supervisor)



Agneska Bloch, Conor Jones, and Daniel Nahon



Kyla Ebels-Duggan, director of graduate studies, with McCarthy Award winner Ann Corbitt

Stephen Toulmin Prize for the year’s best philosophy grade point average for a graduating philosophy major

Agneska Bloch

Lula A. Peterson Prize for exemplary citizenship as a philosophy major

Agneska Bloch for her leadership and engagement on behalf of philosophy students as the department representative on the Weinberg College of Arts and Sciences student advisory board, as well as her work as president of WiPhi, organizer of the Bussey Lecture, and liaison among undergraduate philosophy organizations, and her efforts on behalf of all Northwestern undergraduates as a member and officer of the Associated Student Government

Ruth Barcan Marcus Award for tutoring in formal logic

Emily Winterhalter

Lily Zhang

Thomas A. McCarthy Award for Excellence in Teaching by a philosophy graduate teaching assistant

Ann Corbitt

What's next for the Class of 2019?

Their Northwestern undergraduate careers are behind them. Here's what some of our philosophy majors and minors are doing next.

Daanish Khazi "I will be joining Roland Berger as a junior consultant."

Joshua Krivan "I will be attending law school in fall 2020. In the interim, I hope to work at a law firm as a paralegal/legal assistant."

Daniel Nahon "I will be working for a recruiting firm in Chicago for a year while applying to law school for the following year."

Ian Su "I'll be working at Singapore's Public Utilities Board as an industrial engineer."

George Tan "I am going to Georgetown to pursue a degree in law."

Tyler Washington "I will be attending the University of Michigan Law School."

Daniel Wu "I will be teaching English in Malaysia for one year on a Fulbright scholarship before returning to the States, where I have a consulting job with Deloitte."

Jun Kyung You "I will be applying to graduate schools in philosophy and law schools this year and will be staying in Korea while I wait for the results."

Northwestern Prison Education Program

The Northwestern Prison Education Program is the only program in Illinois to provide an undergraduate liberal arts curriculum to incarcerated people. Founded and directed by Jennifer Lackey, the Wayne and Elizabeth Jones Professor of Philosophy, and run at Stateville Correctional Center in Crest Hill, Illinois, NPEP admitted its inaugural cohort of 22 students last fall. Students pursued coursework in sociology, legal studies, philosophy, psychology, playwriting, and literature; participated in reading groups facilitated by NPEP's graduate student advisory committee; met for weekly study halls with volunteers and peer educators; and hosted a highly successful One Book One Northwestern event.

As NPEP prepares for its second round of admissions, plans are in motion to offer several new courses this fall: Chemistry of Nature and Culture, Writing the Dramatic Television Pilot, Quantitative Reasoning, and Violence Reduction and Transformational Change in the Justice System. With the Illinois Department of Corrections, NPEP will also run admissions in two additional medium-security facilities this year, allowing the program to reach more incarcerated people and create educational opportunities for those close to release.

NPEP has also begun facilitating four-to-six-week minicourses taught by senior graduate students from across Northwestern. The student volunteers teach college-prep skills-building courses, which culminate in Northwestern University certificates of completion, to incarcerated people awaiting trial at Cook County Jail.



Jennifer Lackey

Hansen Breitling, a first-year graduate student in the Department of Philosophy, describes his experience with NPEP as giving him "a renewed respect and appreciation for the transformative effects of education. Getting to know, work with, and learn from the students in the program, as well as the other volunteers, has consistently been the most important and enjoyable part of any week. I am so grateful to NPEP for the opportunities it has provided me to make meaningful connections with others while being able to assist with the educational journey of the students in the program."

Lauren Leydon-Hardy, a department graduate student who received her PhD earlier this year and will join Amherst College this fall as an assistant professor of philosophy, adds, "As a first-generation student, I have always known that education is transformative. Through NPEP, however, my understanding of the life-changing power of education has been exponentially deepened. I have

also come to know some of the most truly incredible people and made friendships that will last a lifetime. Every aspect of this work has been a gift.”

The new Northwestern student group Undergraduate Prison Education Partnership has supported NPEP by recruiting tutors, hosting outreach events, and raising funds for academic supplies. UPEP is finalizing a series of workshops at Stateville focused on such subjects as mindfulness and academic skills. UPEP founder and president Sophia Ruark says, “I am so lucky and thankful to work with NPEP and be a part of the lives of these students. We work hard to ensure that our tutoring and support are positive contributions to their pursuit of education, because our students deserve quality educational opportunities. I am grateful to serve this community, and I look forward to the future of our work.”

Studies show a 43 percent reduction in recidivism rates for incarcerated people who participate in prison education programs. Indeed, the higher the degree, the lower the recidivism rate: 14 percent for those who obtain an associate’s degree, 5.6 percent for those who obtain a bachelor’s degree, and no recidivism for those who obtain a master’s degree. NPEP believes in the transformative power of education and is excited to continue this work.

Save the date!



The Department of Philosophy will host a conference May 5–6, 2020, in honor of Professor Kenneth Seeskin’s retirement. All alumni are heartily invited to join us in celebrating Professor Seeskin’s research, teaching, and service to the University. In particular, alumni may wish to attend Professor Seeskin’s May 6 public lecture, which will serve as the conference keynote and as the Philip M. and Ethel Klutznick Lecture in Jewish Civilization, cosponsored by the Crown Family Center for Jewish and Israel Studies and the Jewish Federation of Metropolitan Chicago. Conference details will be announced when they are finalized.