

# The Owl

The St. Olaf Philosophy Department's Newsletter • October 2017

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## A Greeting and an Update on the Department by Charles Taliaferro



Greetings from the fourth floor of the new, renovated Holland Hall!

Constructed in 1922, this venerable Norman Gothic style building is now full of light with spectacular windows, wide corridors, and multiple places for students (and faculty) to gather informally. We welcome back Mike Fuerstein, Danny Munoz-Hutchinson, and Corliss Swain from sabbaticals. Jeanine Grenberg and Anthony Rudd are in the UK for 2017-18 (writing, research, lectures at St. Andrews and elsewhere). We are delighted that Kathryn Swanson is with us over the year. We are also delighted to welcome back Laura Engel to help out this first term, as I had a major accident (an infected wound, perhaps from hiking in Brazil while attending a Philosophy Congress in August). Given a mandatory 5 week medical leave, Laura has been hired to take over my classes. In all, we are offering sixteen courses this term with a healthy enrollment of over four hundred students.

We continue to be deeply grateful to the wonderful and anonymous philosophy major who continues to fund Pizza Thursday, a weekly gathering of students and faculty to discuss philosophy. We are engaged in an intensive self-study this fall, and you may be contacted to offer advice on how we might strengthen the major and our course offerings for all interested. You have played an important role as students and, as graduates, you continue to matter to us greatly and we would love to benefit from your wisdom. In semester two we will host Professor Charles Mills as our Belgium Lecturer who has done important work on the philosophy of race and social justice.

Please send updates on your life and work to us via Sue Newland (the greatest AAA imaginable) and we will post this on our website. Come see us in our new digs!

Each of us sends our best wishes and you have our Highest Regard, Charles (Chair 2013-2019)



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# Phi Sigma Tau Fall Events

Phi Sigma Tau is happy to announce that the coming school year will be abjectly packed with colloquia, faculty discussions, and events. Our Fall Induction Ceremony will be held on



2017-18 Phi Sigma Tau Officers (left to right): Dempsey Olsen '18, Alexander Cavender '19, Elijah Viola '19, and Elise Steichen '18,

October 5th, and we are excited to welcome all of our new members into the Society! Planning is already underway for this year's slate of activities, including a hosted lunch with Belgium lecturer Professor Charles Mills, an end-of-term writing workshop, various student colloquia, and a facilitated discussion between St Olaf and Carleton philosophy students. Our plans for this year's World Philosophy Day include making and selling buttons depicting favorite philosophers, a joint celebration with Professor Charles Taliaferro, and the showing of, in the Secretary's words, 'a philosophically dense movie.'



Every St. Olaf student who loves philosophy is welcome! If interested, contact Elise at: [steich1@stolaf.edu](mailto:steich1@stolaf.edu)

## Philosophia

We are pleased to announce that one of the department's student organizations has returned from hiatus. Philosophia, founded in 2014 by Emma Ritter '15, Steph Hagan '16, and Meredith Varie '16, is a reading and discussion group dedicated to promoting diversity within the field and discipline of philosophy, and is currently directed by Dempsey Olsen '18 and Hayli Marquette '19. Readings and discussions usually center around marginalized or underrepresented philosophers or philosophical topics, paying particular attention to feminist and critical race theorists. If you'd like to learn more about the group, please visit [pages.stolaf.edu/philosophia](http://pages.stolaf.edu/philosophia).

## Philosophy Major to Present at Conference

The Department of Philosophy is happy to announce that one of our own majors, Alexander Cavender '19, has recently been invited to present his paper, "Time: A Moving Image of Eternity," at the 2017 Minnesota Philosophical Society Conference and Undergraduate Conference, held at St Cloud University on Nov. 4th. Alex will be presenting alongside other undergraduate philosophers from universities and colleges around Minnesota, as well as members of MPS.

We are delighted that Alex has achieved such success!

# Faculty Summer News

## Professor Charles Taliaferro

Charles's summer involved working with Alex Cavender ('19) and Professor Cunningham on the philosophy of God and time; conducting a three day workshop for St. Olaf faculty on ethics in normative perspective; writing seven articles or book chapters (including one for the forthcoming Wiley-Blackwell Jimi Hendrix and Philosophy); editing a dictionary, encyclopedia, journal, and book series; and contributing to a week long Philosophy Congress in Brazil (see image). At the end of summer, Charles officiated a wedding in D.C. and is now officially licensed to conduct marriage ceremonies which he will do for free for philosophy majors and alumni, except for travel expenses if the wedding is in the Arashimaya Bamboo Forest, Japan, or some other non-local site.



## Professor Gordon Marino

Gordon was commissioned this summer to write an essay for the New York Times' "Sporting" series, entitled "The Honor of Boxing Is at Stake." He is also scheduled to give two lectures this fall: "Sports, Risk, and the Human Ideal" at the University of Louisville and Muhammed Ali center in October, and "Six of Seven Life Lessons that I have Drawn from Kierkegaard" at Wheaton College in November.



## Professor Michael Fuerstein

Mike spent the summer working with Prof. Subi Rangan of the INSEAD Business School (Fontainebleau, France) on a curriculum that will enable CEOs and other high-level business executives to integrate moral reasoning into their firm's mission and operation. He expects to launch this program in 2018.

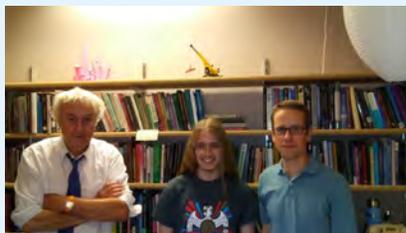


## Professor Jason Marsh

Jason gave a talk on disability and wellbeing at the Candian Philosophical Association in Toronto. The feedback received helped him to complete a paper which is forthcoming in the Oxford Handbook of Philosophy and Disability.

## Professor Arthur Cunningham

Arthur and Charles supervised research this summer by Alex Cavender, philosophy major, under the TRIO/McNair program. We read together and discussed a host of contemporary work on God and time. Alex presented a poster on his research at the end of the summer, and is working on a paper based on his research.



## Professor Danny Munoz-Hutchinson

Danny spent the summer finalizing his book, Plotinus on Consciousness, which is being published by Cambridge University Press. And, he attended a week-long seminar on the Verbal Art of Plato at the Center for Hellenic Studies in Washington, D.C..

## Professor Kathryn Swanson

This summer Kathryn completed and defended her dissertation entitled Non-Ideal Autonomy and Relationships of Care at the University of Minnesota. She also started work as an adjunct faculty member with Mitchell-Hamline's School of Law Hybrid JD program. Her and her family bought land up north and spent their weekends enjoying the woods.

## Professor Jeanine Grenberg

Jeanine spent her summer in Europe, giving invited talks in Belgium (at the University of Leuven) and Scotland (St. Andrew's University), and then attending a "Great Texts" conference in Winchester, England. In between, she and her husband were able to travel in the Lake District and then spend a month in London where they attended three "Proms" concerts at the Royal Albert Hall, and she continued her effort to play the cello by meeting regularly with her London cello teacher. She is beginning her sabbatical now, and she and Anthony have situated themselves in the town of Swanage on the south coast of England. She is continuing to work on her book utilizing Kant's moral theory to analyze the novels of Jane Austen. This is proving to be great fun. Just yesterday she discovered a new formulation of the Categorical Imperative and began crafting initial thoughts on comparing the virtue of usefulness in Anne Elliot in Persuasion with Professor Fuerstein in the department meetings. As time permits, she continues to play her cello and explore new recipes for fun dinners. And because they are on the south coast of England, one good way to clear her head in between intense writing sessions is to take a long, exhilarating coastal walk with stunning views of the English Channel.

## Philosophy Alumnus Returns to the Hill

Professor Hilary J. Bousein, who graduated in 2009 from St. Olaf with a double major in Classics and Philosophy, has recently accepted a position in the Classics department. Below is a transcribed interview with Hilary, discussing changes on the Hill, philosophy, and philosophy's relationship with classics.



DO: The only thing I know about you is that you're a philosophy alumnus, from St Olaf. Can you talk a little bit about how being a Philosophy major, especially at St Olaf, contributed to your career and how you ended up at St Olaf teaching Classics?

HB: Absolutely. I graduated in 2009 with a double major in Philosophy and Classics, and at that point I had decided that I would go to graduate school in Classics, it narrowly edged out philosophy, narrowly. But keeping some philosophical interest. In a lot of ways Classics and Philosophy are a pretty natural combination, not only of course due to Plato and Aristotle- I'm teaching the Apology this semester, actually-

DO: Oh, good luck.

HB: Thanks! I may need it, we'll see. I went down to graduate school at the University of Virginia, in Classics, mostly focusing on Greek poetry, which ended up being my specialty while I was there- but I took a couple of Philosophy classes as well. As it turns out, Classics and Philosophy are at the same building at UVA, Classics downstairs and Philosophy upstairs with their heads in the clouds, so it worked out really nicely, actually. I got my Ph.D. in 2016, summer of 2016, so relatively recently, and I wrote my dissertation on "The Vocabulary of Honesty in Archaic Greek Poetry". So it was sort of the nexus of philology- the part of Classics that deals with literature and words- and philosophy, there is the element of 'Here's a claim of truth, what is this doing here, what does this person mean by this kind of truth that they're talking about?' And also linguistics, which has always been an interest of mine, so really the nexus of those three things is where I ended up working, and I'm still doing some work in that area. Last year I taught for a year down at Texas A&M university, and now I am here.

DO: Can you talk about changes in the campus that you've noticed already, if you have at all?

HB: Well of course Holland Hall is the big one! It's cool! It's very obviously different from how it used to be. It's a little hard to get used to.

DO: It is, it is, it freaks me out a little bit every time I go in there, to be honest.

HB: It does seem like they've improved the layout though, it used to be so dark in those halls.

DO: And the offices now are just so gorgeous. I want one, desperately.

HB: You and me both! And this is already pretty nice. But right so, Philosophy, the campus has changed in a relatively recent way. Classics, when I was here, was up on the third floor of Old Main, and they moved over here when this building was renovated from the old science center. So this is new for me, we kept some of the same furniture and the bust of Cicero that's out there and so forth, but my memories of Classics are up on the third floor of Old Main, dealing with- and this is before they renovated Old Main, so there was a time when we had bats. There was a time when Sue Newland, actually, currently Philosophy's AAA, was at the time working for Anne Groton, as secretary for the Classical Association of the Midwest and South. And she once went to get a paper from a file cabinet or a cupboard, and put her hand in without looking, and there was a bat. And I don't think she did that ever again. I don't really know quite how she kept from having a heart attack.

## An interview with Hilary Bousein, continued

DO: Have you remained in contact at all with any of the philosophy professors that were here?

HB: Only a little bit here and there. Every once in a while Charles Taliaferro will, of course, send something, and every once in a while I'll send a reply. I would have liked to keep a little more in contact with Professors Grenberg and Rudd, both of whom I had classes from when I was here. We sort of kept in contact for the first couple of years when I was out, and then things fall by the wayside a little bit, unfortunately. But I would certainly think of them fondly. Even if you're not in contact with the people, stuff from the classes sticks with you, and ways of thinking about things stick with you, in certain ways. I had an epistemology class with Rudd at some point, and I've drawn still on things we talked about in that class, either in my own work, or even in teaching, talking about what it means really to translate a language, certainly something I think about all the time as a classicist. 'How close can we really get?' A perfect translation is probably not possible, unless it is, is the epistemological question. How close can we get, and if we don't mean a perfect translation, what do we mean when we say translation? These are important things, both for me as a classicist and for my students, too. It's easy for a student in a language class to kind of go 'This means this and this means that' and memorize the flashcards, without ever thinking about what it mean... Is there really this perfect correspondence between 'video' in Latin and 'I see' in English. Presumably not, but where's the sort of slip there? How do we deal with that?

DO: Well, are you teaching any philosophy majors at the moment, have they infected any of your classes already?

HB: That's a good question. Not that I know of- but I'm not a hundred percent sure about that, I'm probably teaching future philosophy students, I have a section of beginning Latin at the moment, and of course they're all very young and haven't figured out what they're majoring in quite yet.



### This Year's Philosophy Retreat

Philosophy faculty from St. Olaf and Carleton colleges held their annual retreat in a cabin overlooking the St Croix river during the sunny weekend of September 22nd-24th. The retreat leader was Katja Vogt, Professor of Philosophy at Columbia University. Dr. Vogt is a specialist in ancient philosophy, but also works in contemporary ethics, action theory, and normative epistemology.



# The Kierkegaard Library

The Hong Kierkegaard Library is proud to announce two events this year! The first is the Julia Watkin Memorial Lecture, given this year by the Reverend Ronald Marshall and entitled 'The Confused Name of the Century: Luther's Thought as the Matrix for Kierkegaard's Writings', taking place at 7:00 p.m. in Viking Theater on Thursday, November 9th, and followed by the Eighth International Kierkegaard Conference in June of 2018. Both events are open to the public, and the Library encourages all to attend.

The Hong Kierkegaard Library would also like to welcome Kierkegaard House Foundation Fellow Andres Albertsen of Argentina, who is here for 2017-18 academic year, and KHF Scholar Claus Juel Henriksen of Denmark for the fall semester.



## *The Eighth International Kierkegaard Conference*

*The Wisdom of Kierkegaard: What have we learned?*

*June 13-17, 2018 | St. Olaf College | Northfield, Minnesota  
Sponsored by the Howard and Edna H. Hong Kierkegaard Library of St. Olaf College  
Open to faculty, staff, and students of St. Olaf College  
For more information, please visit: <https://wp.stolaf.edu/kierkegaard/international-conference/>*

If you are interested in learning more about Kierkegaard or getting involved with the Library, please check out the Library's website at: <https://wp.stolaf.edu/kierkegaard/> for various opportunities for faculty, students, and Kierkegaard enthusiasts to get connected to the Kierkegaard Library.



## Julia Watkin Memorial Lecture Fall 2017

# The Confused Name of the Century:

Luther's Thought as the Matrix  
for Kierkegaard's Writings

Shortly after Kierkegaard died, the first book came out on his connection to Martin Luther – largely on the matter of criticizing the Church. Since then this connection has been noted off and on, but usually only in a few broad generalities. In this lecture three things will be addressed: 1) Show a large number of specific connections between the two men. 2) Give a rationale for Kierkegaard's interest in Luther. 3) Show how these connections enhance our appreciation of both Kierkegaard and Luther.



**Please Join Us:**

**7:00 PM**

**Viking Theater**

**Thursday, Nov. 9th**

**Speaker: Rev. Ronald Marshall**



Ronald F. Marshall, who baptized as an infant in the old Norwegian Evangelical Lutheran Church of America (est. 1917), has been the pastor of First Lutheran Church of West Seattle since 1979. He received a Bachelor of Arts in Philosophy from Washington State University in 1971; a Master of Divinity from Luther Seminary in Saint Paul, Minnesota, in 1975; and a Master in Religion from Claremont Graduate School in 1978. He is the author of *Kierkegaard for the Church: Essays & Sermons* (2013); *Kierkegaard in the Pulpit: Sermons Inspired by His Writings* (2016); and the forthcoming *Kierkegaard Listening to Luther Preach*.

*Open to the public* | Sponsored by the Hong Kierkegaard Library

## World Philosophy Day

The Philosophy Department is happy to announce that World Philosophy Day will be celebrated jointly with both Carleton College's philosophy department, Phi Sigma Tau, and Dr Javad Heiran-Nia of the Islamic Azad University on November 16! Phi Sigma Tau will be selling buttons emblazoned with a selection of philosophers in Buntrock Commons throughout World Philosophy Day, and Dr Hieran-Nia will send a message of peace and wisdom to the philosophy students of St Olaf.



## Future Events

### Eunice Belgum Memorial Lectures



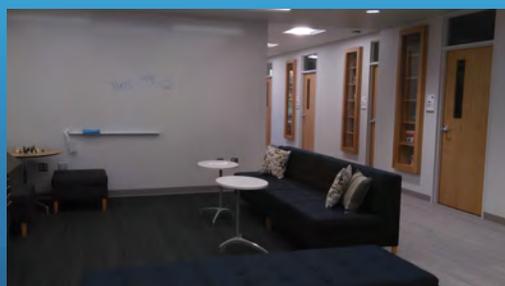
The 40th Eunice Belgum Memorial Lectures will be delivered on April 12th and 13th by Professor Charles Mills. Professor Mills, a Distinguished Professor of Philosophy at the City University of New York, won the Gustavus Myers Outstanding Book Award for *The Racial Contract*, and has also held positions as a UIC Distinguished Professor and as the John Evans Professor of Moral and Intellectual Philosophy and Northwestern University. Professor Mills has previously given lectures at St Olaf, sponsored by the Institute for Freedom and Community.

More details regarding the Belgium Lecture series can be found on the philosophy department's website at: <http://wp.stolaf.edu/philosophy/eunice-belgum-memorial-lectures-podcasts/>.

## Photos of the New Holland Hall



Corridor with faulty offices



One of the many student common areas



Looking out of the new windows

## Check out these Resources from the St. Olaf Philosophy Department!

To stay connected and receive regular updates on activities, check out the St. Olaf Philosophy Facebook Page:  
<https://www.facebook.com/St-Olaf-Philosophy-565288890180412/?ref=hl>

Learn more about the department and the major on the Philosophy Department's web site: <http://wp.stolaf.edu/philosophy/>

Check out stories from St. Olaf Alumni to discover how Philosophy students have used their college training to make the world a better place at: <http://wp.stolaf.edu/philosophy/alumni-profiles/>

## A Call for Help

For nearly 40 years the Belgium family have financially supported the **Eunice Belgium Memorial Lecture** series via an endowment fund. However the endowment, which the Belgium family generously provided, is no longer sufficient to cover the ever-rising costs of these lectures.

In order to continue the lecture series in its current format, the endowment needs to grow by about \$40,000. This is where you, our dear philosophy alumni, come in. Would you be willing to donate 'to the cause'? Any amount would be gratefully accepted.

Please attach the slip below to your check.

Thanking you in advance,

Charles Taliaferro, Chair, Philosophy Department



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Donation to Eunice Belgium Memorial Endowment Fund [030-11920]

Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Address: \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

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Amount of Donation: \$ \_\_\_\_\_

Please make checks payable to 'St. Olaf College', and send to Development Office, St. Olaf College. 1520 St. Olaf Avenue, Northfield, MN 55057.

Thank you.