

The Owl

The St. Olaf Philosophy Department Newsletter
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Welcome to the Department from Charles Taliaferro



We send heartfelt good wishes to all those linked to the Philosophy Department, current students and graduates! We continue to enjoy our new digs on the fourth floor of the renovated Holland Hall and hope you will visit us soon. Recent events include Jeanine Grenberg and Anthony Rudd returning after a productive year in the UK, while Jason Marsh (newly tenured) is currently on sabbatical, doing great work in Europe and various places in the US and Canada. The brilliant Laura Engel returned to teach three courses this fall. We are in awe of the generosity of our philosophy major alumnus who continues funding our Pizza Thursday events, when we meet up with students weekly for philosophical interaction. We are deeply moved by the establishment this fall of the Kent E. Johnson Philosophical Research Fund (see note on page 4). All our courses this term are full (with more than 370 students) as members of the Department are also active across the curriculum in different Conversation programs, while Gordon ("Doc") is coached football.

We are in the midst of reviewing our course offerings and projects to insure the highest quality experiences we can foster for our students. We currently have over 30 majors. Sue Newland continues to be our unsurpassably excellent Academic Administrative Assistant. This year will conclude my six years as Chair (2013-2019). This has been the most challenging and exciting time in my 33 years at the college; among the most satisfying event(s) have been supporting the tenure and promotion of four fabulous colleagues who will carry on here on the hill after I leave to teach philosophy in prison (probably beginning in the fall of 2021). I hope none of the recipients of this newsletter are in prison, but if you are, I may be visiting you soon. We hope to see you at the Belgium Lectures this spring!

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Faculty Summer News

Professor **Danny Muñoz-Hutchinson** investigated the influence of Plotinus on late ancient commentaries on Book Three, Chapter Two of Aristotle's *De Anima*. To this end, he read the *De Anima*, commentaries of Alexander of Aphrodisias, Themistius, Simplicius, Priscian, and Philoponus. Professor Muñoz-Hutchinson also presented his research findings at the Second Annual North American Plato Workshop held at Hamline University in St Paul.



Professor **Anthony Rudd**, while sabbatical last year, spent the time in England, working on a book about why we should find it worthwhile to create or view paintings. (It's provisionally titled, *Why Paintings Matter*.) He continued to work on this project during the summer months, of which he spent in Pennsylvania visiting his wife (Professor Grenberg's) family as well as trying to do a bit of painting.



Professor **Laura Engel** spent the summer thinking about what it means to value something and how valuing is related to desiring, feeling, and believing. She spent time in upstate New York and California before making her way back to Minnesota to enjoy the changing seasons.



Continuing his ongoing work on the role of business in society, Professor **Mike Fuerstein** worked with Subi Rangan of the INSEAD business school on a book manuscript titled *Moral Capital*. Drawing on the philosophical tradition, the book provides business executives with a set of tools for integrating moral reasoning into their organization

Professor **Jason Marsh's** main summer event was visiting Prague, where he raised challenges to pessimistic philosophy at the Benatar under Fire Conference

Over the summer, department chair **Charles Taliaferro** worked with Hayli and Wael on the St. Olaf guide to ethics website (still working), gave a lecture at the University of London; he completed a book *What is Philosophy of Religion?* (Polity Press) and co-edited *The Naturalness of Belief* (Rowman and Littlefield), published in January. His co-edited six volume *The History of Evil* (with 130 scholars around the world) was published in July by Routledge. Apart from working on a five volume encyclopedia and an SEP entry that nearly killed him, Charles enjoyed playing with his four year old sheltie, Pip.

Current Student News

Hayli Marquette '19 was a summer resource intern for Sarah's, an Oasis for Women in St. Paul, MN. Sarah's is a holistic healing home dedicated to the safety and dignity for a diverse community of women — particularly asylees, refugees, and undocumented women. She primarily worked one-on-one with the residents there, where she learned much about resourcing, immigration law, advocacy, trauma, healing, and standing up for what is right.



Alex Cavender '19 participated in an 8 week summer research program (SROP) at the University of Iowa funded by the Graduate School Exploration Fellowship (GSEF).

There he researched Catholic sexual ethics and contemporary controversies thereof with Dr. Diana Cates in the Religious Studies department and presented his research at the University of Iowa Undergraduate Research Colloquium as well as the GSEF Annual Summit in



Mattias Kostov '20 worked this summer at the Hong Kierkegaard Library and for the XIII International Kierkegaard Conference while doing the Young Scholars Program lead by the Kierkegaard curator Prof. Gordon Marino.



Second from the right

Alumni News



Yishu Dai '18, is living it up in New York City! She works as a consultant for Navigant Consulting, a specialized professional services firm. Yishu investigates financial crimes such as money laundering, terrorist financing, human trafficking, and fraud. She's meeting all sorts of cool people and learning a ton about law, finance, and regulatory nuances. Yishu absolutely loves her job and is grateful for the education she received that helped her get there.

Nick Hodge '15 recently won the Minnesota State Fair Amateur Talent Contest for his performance on the Cyr Wheel. The Cyr Wheel is a Circus apparatus that was invented by the Germans long ago and was popularized by Daniel Cyr. It is a life-size ring that Nick spins, flips, and twists in - just like a coin! Over the past year, Nick has traveled nationally and internationally auditioning, competing, and performing as well as teaching. This is all in addition to working full-time in engineering and management. **Nick's email address is: nick.m.hodge@gmail.com**



PC Bret Treuren

The family of alumni, philosophy major Kent E. Johnson Ph.D., class of 1994, has set up a \$25,000 fund in honor of Kent for us to use in mentoring philosophy students— helping to fund student attendance at philosophy events and conferences. The fund has already been put to use, sending a current student to the undergraduate Minnesota philosophical meeting.

The Eunice Belgum Memorial Lecture Series 2019



The 41st Eunice Belgum Memorial Lectures will be delivered on March 11th and 12th by Professor Louise Anthony from University of Massachusetts, Professor Anthony's work focused on the question how mentality can be realized in a physical world; she has written extensively about mental causation, the nature of mental representation, and the relation between language and mind. With Norbert Hornstein, she co-edited a volume of original essays, *Chomsky and His Critics*. Professor Anthony is also interested in naturalistic epistemology, and is currently trying to develop a psychologically realistic account of empirical justification.

The Kierkegaard Library News



THE EIGHTH INTERNATIONAL
KIERKEGAARD CONFERENCE

*"The Wisdom of Kierkegaard:
What Existential Lessons have you Learned from Him?"*

June 13-17, 2018

Hosted by
the Hong Kierkegaard Library
at St. Olaf College

The summer for the Hong Kierkegaard Library began with the Eighth International Kierkegaard Conference where both renowned and aspiring scholars shared papers on the topic, *The Wisdom of Kierkegaard: What Existential Lessons have you Learned from Him?* 170 scholars and guests kicked off the event with a formal dinner and a welcome from President David Anderson. The conference was held June 13-17 and hosted international and national scholars, students, and Kierkegaard enthusiasts.

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=h>

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 Belgum 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

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

Name: _____

Address: _____

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!