



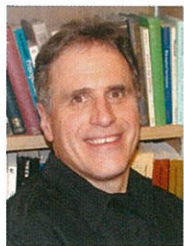
DEPARTMENT OF

# PHILOSOPHY NEWS

SPRING 2018

## Faculty news

There have recently been many important transitions within the Department of Philosophy faculty. Tom Buller stepped down as department chair in June 2017 after five very successful years in that role. Chris Horvath is serving as interim chair for the 2017-2018 academic year while the department completes a nationwide search for a new chair.



David Anderson

In 2017, David Anderson retired from Illinois State. Anderson joined the Department of Philosophy in 1988, and over the course of his career, he has become a highly respected scholar, teacher, and colleague. His contributions to work in cognitive science, robotics, and the philosophy of mind are very highly regarded and his establishment and direction of The Mind Project ([www.mind.ilstu.edu](http://www.mind.ilstu.edu)) have been extraordinary. In 2015 Anderson was awarded the Stan and Sandy Rives Excellence in Undergraduate Education Award, one of ISU's highest teaching awards.



Chris Horvath

## In memorium

**Julie Gowen** joined the Department of Philosophy in 1972 after completing her Ph.D. at the University of Wisconsin–Madison. She taught a wide variety of philosophy courses but specialized in religion and logic. Later in her career, she developed a secondary expertise in environmental ethics. She eventually served as coordinator of the college committee tasked with developing our first environmental studies program. In 1984, Gowen moved downstairs to the College of Arts and Sciences where she served as assistant and then associate dean. She served as acting chair of the department several times over her career and was named chair of the department in 1996. She served in that capacity until her retirement in 2000.



Julie Gowen

She was a generous, gracious, caring person. Her hard work and dedication to her students left a lasting mark on the Department of Philosophy and on Illinois State University.

**Shelley Liane Stillwell**, age 64, passed away suddenly on January 2, 2016. She was born November 25, 1951, in Wilkesburg, Pennsylvania. She attended Somerville High School in New Jersey, Kenyon College in Ohio, and Purdue University in Indiana, where she earned her Ph.D. in philosophy. Her dissertation focused on Ludwig Wittgenstein. Her interests also included research and teaching in the philosophy of art and the philosophy of psychology. She taught at ISU for 32 years, from 1979 until her retirement in 2011.

## Faculty scholarship

**Lana Kühle**

I've been a strong believer for some time now that my mind isn't just located in my brain but extends out into my body as well. Think about how you experience emotions. We don't say, "I'm thinking happiness right now"; we say, "I feel happy right now." The way we

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## New faculty and staff

**Eric Godoy** joined the department as an assistant professor in 2017. He earned his Ph.D. in 2014 from The New School for Social Research. His areas of specialization are in ethics, environmental philosophy, and social-political philosophy.



Eric Godoy

Godoy was the assistant chairperson of the Department of Social Science and Cultural Studies at The Pratt Institute in Brooklyn from 2014 to 2017. He has written articles on ethics and the environment that appeared in *Environmental Values and Ethics, Policy & Environment*.

**Andrew Higgins** graduated from ISU with a bachelor's degree in philosophy in 2007 and went on to receive a Ph.D. in philosophy from the University of Illinois in 2014. He proudly returned to his alma mater as an instructional assistant professor of philosophy. Higgins investigates philosophy (and philosophers) using data-driven research methods from psychology and information science.



Andrew Higgins

**Derek O'Connell** joined the department as academic advisor and instructional assistant professor in 2015. He received his Ph.D. from the University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign. His research areas include the 19th and 20th century philosophy (in particular continental philosophy and existentialism), philosophy of religion, and philosophical anthropology.



Derek O'Connell

O'Connell is the first full-time academic advisor for the department.

## Recent graduates

### Fall 2015

Summer Dill  
Alexandra Frackowiak  
Katie Gennrich  
Joseph Hawrysz  
Jacob Hoblit  
Stuart Palmer  
Jacob Rudeen  
Tyler Wilfley

### Spring 2016

Justin Adduci  
Ryland BeDell  
Nicole Belcher  
Alex Escobar  
Elizabeth Fansler  
Alita Kendrick  
Lauren Kosteroski  
Rudy Negrete  
Joe Rice  
Grant Skocaj  
Ryan Special  
Joe Tomasik

### Summer 2016

Andrew Parion  
Dierdre Savaria  
Andrew Sendra

### Fall 2016

Sydney Alcaraz  
Corwin Brown  
Brittney Grafelman  
Zachariah Barr

### Spring 2017

Dane Dustheimer  
Erik Hultberg  
Nichole Pearl  
Ben Keener  
Robert Parson

## 2015-16 and 2016-17 Student Award Winners

### 2016

#### Scott M. Elliot Essay Prize

Elizabeth Fansler and  
Sydney Alcaraz

#### Outstanding Senior

Elizabeth Fansler



Dee Savaria and Elizabeth Fansler

speaking about our emotions is no accident—we talk about feeling emotions because they are states that we experience across our entire bodies. Proponents of the view that consciousness is embodied argue that it's not just our emotions but our entire consciousness that is embodied. Now, on the face of it, this seems a bit weird. We're used to thinking of the mind as being in the brain. But I've been working to convince folks otherwise. This past year I've argued for the view that consciousness is an embodied phenomenon, and that to really understand it we need to look at how our inner body (think what lies inside your skin!) shapes how we experience the world. I wrote a number of papers that tackled this from various angles: I argued in "The Subjectivity of Experiential Consciousness: It's Real and It's Bodily" that if we're to understand the very special way that we experience the world we need to look inside our body; and I argue in "The Embodied Mind and Anorexia Nervosa" that endorsing this view of consciousness can help us better understand certain mental disorders, such as anorexia nervosa, and develop more effective treatment options. Going back to emotions, in "The Emotional Dimension to Multi-Sensory Perception," I argued that emotions change the way we experience the world around us and so if we want to really understand how perception works—how we see, hear, smell, taste, and so on—we need to keep an eye out for how emotions, via our bodies, affect it. There is much more work yet to be done, not only to show that this approach to consciousness is the correct one, but also to consider how it might help us better understand and treat illnesses of the mind. And I'm fully devoted to doing so—I'll be defending this view at a symposium session at the American Philosophical Association meeting next spring. Thankfully, I'm not alone in my interest in understanding consciousness from various angles. ISU has a cognitive science minor, of which I recently became director. I'm quite excited about this as I see it as an opportunity to work with great students across various departments that have a shared interest in understanding the mind. Going forward I plan to grow the minor and to create exciting new opportunities for students to grow their interdisciplinary interests. I plan to organize a variety of events—ranging from reading groups to conferences—that will allow cognitive science minors to showcase their work. These are exciting times in consciousness research, and I'm proud to help ISU take part!



Lana Kühle

**Daniel Breyer**  
Have you ever heard of *The Great Courses*? Maybe you've seen one of their ads in *Harpers* or *Scientific American*, or noticed that they sponsor one of your favorite podcasts? They produce audio and video lectures on a wide variety of topics, ranging from the humanities and sciences to business and woodworking. When I was an undergraduate in the 1990s, I had the pleasure of receiving one of their catalogues in the mail. With course titles like *Classical Mythology*, *Existentialism*, and *Philosophy and Religion in the West*, I was hooked. And once I got those courses, I was dazzled by amazing professors like Elizabeth Vandiver, Philip Cary, and the late Robert Solomon. I felt like I was their only student, learning directly from the best. In the years since, *The Great Courses* has expanded and forged partnerships with the likes of *National Geographic* and the *Smithsonian*. They've even worked with popular astrophysicist Neil deGrasse Tyson. And of course, I still love their courses. I mention all of this because last year, *The Great Courses* invited me for an audition. I know! I couldn't believe it either, especially since they claim that "only the top 1% (of college professors) are selected" to teach one their courses. Had they made a mistake? I was a little flabbergasted, but I was also really honored and excited. It turns out that their invitation was real. As part of my audition, I flew out to *The Great Courses* headquarters in Chantilly, Virginia, just outside Washington D.C. In one of their professional studios, while reading from a teleprompter, I recorded a sample lecture I'd prepared on "the elimination of anger," using the Buddhist philosopher Santideva and the Stoic philosopher Seneca as my guides. I didn't just record the lecture once. I actually recorded the same lecture, word for word, three times, and then the folks in the studio had me correct a few of my mistakes. (I think I managed to say my own name wrong at least once.) After that, my recruiters took me out for lunch and sent me packing back to Central Illinois. Once I was gone, they mixed everything in the studio and sent my lecture to focus groups that would determine my fate.



Daniel Breyer

Back at ISU, I waited. Nervously. And then, after months of anticipation, I got the word: they wanted me to design, write, and tape my very own course!

At this point, I'm already past the designing phase and into the writing phase. Ultimately, I'll be preparing 24 lectures, each of which should be around 30 minutes. This means that I have to craft each 4,500-word lecture very carefully; there's little room for improvisation. And did I mention that there's no audience? There's no audience. So, I can't rely on interacting with students or get away with some of the mischief I enjoy in the classroom. It's challenging, but it's also a lot of fun. What I'm basically doing is writing a 300-400 page book, which will serve as the foundation for each lecture when I head back to the studio to record.

All of my written materials are due by May 2018, and so I'm hoping to record this coming summer. Ideally, I'd like the course to get released in October of 2018, just in time for next Halloween! Why Halloween? Well, that's because the course is called *Understanding the Dark Side of Human Nature*. And what, you ask, is "the dark side" of human nature? For the purposes of the course, I've defined it as that aspect of ourselves that is variously evil, destructive, and filled with suffering. In the course, I'll be covering fascinating topics like evil, anger, weakness of will, the death drive, existential angst, and grief, among many others, while discussing classic and contemporary works by thinkers from a range of intellectual traditions. It's an exciting opportunity, and I'm really honored that I have the chance to pursue it.

As a preview, for your eyes only, this is the official customer-tested and Great Courses-approved blurb for *Understanding the Dark Side of Human Nature*:

"We cannot understand ourselves properly, and we cannot appreciate our deep desire for meaning and purpose, unless we're willing to grapple with the dark side of human nature—that aspect of ourselves that is variously evil, destructive, and filled with suffering. To that end, this course undertakes a wide-ranging comparative study. Beginning with the ancient debate between the Confucian philosophers Mencius (who thinks we're fundamentally good) and Xunzi (who thinks we're fundamentally bad), the course considers classic texts, great thinkers, and contemporary scholarship from both the Western and the Eastern traditions. While discussing works as varied as the Hindu classic *The Bhagavad Gita*, *Fear and Trembling* by the Christian Søren Kierkegaard, *The Myth of Sisyphus* by the existentialist Albert Camus, *The Way of the Bodhisattva* by the Buddhist Santideva, and the Daoist classic *The Zhungzi*, your professor brings to life our shared struggle to understand, confront, and overcome the dark side of human nature."

## Alumni Day

The department was delighted to have two recent graduates visit us for Alumni Day. On Alumni Day, graduates of Illinois State have lunch hosted by the president and have the opportunity to visit their home departments

Our 2015 Alumni Day guest was Sarah Khan '11. After finishing with a philosophy major at ISU, she earned her J.D. from the University of Iowa College of Law. She is now an associate at the The Law Offices of Stuart A. Reid, P.C., where she focuses on family law.

Our 2016 Alumni Day guest was Kate Simpson '08. After graduating with majors in philosophy and political science from ISU, Simpson spent two years with the Peace Corps in Panama. She returned and is now the city planner for the city of Bloomington, right here near campus.

## Thank you!

The Department of Philosophy would like to thank all those who have generously offered their support over the past two years:

John Barker, Clayton, Missouri  
 Robert and Barbara Brunette '78,  
 Madison, Wisconsin  
 Tom Buller, Flossmoor  
 Marth Burk '82, Bloomington  
 An Chiem '90, Portland, Oregon  
 Douglas Crossman '86, Bloomington  
 Anne Duback '82, Normal  
 Sarah Grimaldi '14, Spring Lake,  
 North Carolina

Nancy and Nathan Hancock '86,  
 Louisville, Kentucky  
 Chad Jacks '01, Las Vegas, Nevada  
 James and Marty Jacobs '73, Normal  
 Grace and William Johns '83, Normal  
 Stuart and Lauren Palmer, Normal  
 Laura and Ronald Rohlfing '73,  
 Chandler, Arizona  
 Solomon and Sara Rutzky '96,  
 Raleigh, North Carolina

Shawn Scolnick '12, McHenry  
 Alan Snyder '78,  
 Cottonwood Heights, Utah  
 Gregory and Denise Taylor '88,  
 Denton, Texas  
 Denise Vowell '74, Bentonville,  
 Virginia  
 Peter Weber '74, Bloomington

### 2017

#### Scott M. Elliot Essay Prize

Dane Dusthimer

#### Outstanding Senior

Healy Gier

#### Outstanding Junior

Alexandra Cruse

#### Outstanding Sophomore

Amy Lacny

#### Outstanding Freshman

Marquisha Howard



Dane Dusthimer



Healy Gier



Alexandra Cruse



Amy Lacny



Marquisha Howard

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