

ILLINOIS STATE
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Department of
PHILOSOPHY Alumni
Newsletter

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Summer 2012

News from Normal

All things considered, it's been a good year for the Philosophy Department. Our most important accomplishment in FY12 has been a significant uptick in the number of students completing the philosophy major. From a typical graduation rate of about 15 a year, we're expecting a total of 24 this year, a one-year jump of more than a third. Ironically, the graduate bulge comes at a time when the number of regular faculty has reached its nadir. Due to a string of retirements, including Professors Harry Deutsch and Shelley Liane Stillwell last summer, we are at barely half our traditional classroom strength. Bleak as our lot may seem, we've now hired a talented new junior colleague, Assistant Professor David Sanson, and a new department chairperson, Professor Thomas Buller. With these appointments, and Professors David Anderson and I back in the classroom full time, come fall we will be substantially closer to our normal instructional capacity than we were in 2011–2012, and we will hope to be able to add two or three more regular faculty over the next few years.



Jim Swindler
Department Chair

All philosophy alumni will recall the extraordinary services provided by Assistant to the Chairperson Iris Baird. After 26 years, Iris has decided to join her husband in retirement and will be leaving her post June 30. She has been the heart and soul of the department for all of us, students and faculty alike, the go-to person for any help we have needed. And she has always been there for us, with her invariably good humor and remarkable understanding of the workings of the University. We will miss her a lot, and I'm sure she would be delighted to hear from our alums, especially if you have stories to tell; she's at iebaird@IllinoisState.edu.

Despite the dip in numbers, our faculty have continued to be quite productive. This past year, we've seen publication of two refereed journal articles and seven peer-reviewed conference presentations; Professor Todd Stewart continues to serve as a journal editor, three held elective offices in professional organizations, and three served on journal advisory boards. Professor Daniel Breyer has just won a National Endowment for the Humanities fellowship on the new field of experimental philosophy. Professor Alison Bailey has given several invited talks on issues in gender and race this year.

As a consequence of having fewer regular faculty, everyone has had to serve on two or three department committees. Professor Chris Horvath and Stewart continue as academic advisors and Bailey, Breyer, and Anderson continue as directors of interdisciplinary minors, Women's and Gender Studies, Religious Studies, and Cognitive Science, respectively. Horvath is now heading up a department committee of the whole to produce the department's eight-year program review. Beyond the department, we continue to be engaged in a variety of roles. Two faculty serve on college-level committees, one as a chair, and one serves on three university committees. Anderson serves on the standing American Philosophical Association committee on Computing and Philosophy and organized a panel at a national meeting.

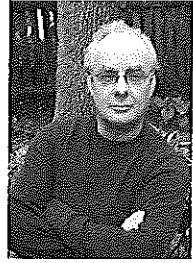
Two faculty held federal grants this year. Anderson is finishing a decade of work on the National Science Foundation and National Institutes of Health sponsored Mind Project and Emeritus Professor Kenton Machina is wrapping up the current phase of his National Science Foundation project to bring more women and minorities into information technology majors.

We had six colloquia this year, four by external speakers and two by our own faculty. Two of the external speakers came in conjunction with the Women's and Gender Studies Program and the International Studies Series. Again this year, the Philosophy Club sponsored one of the external speakers. As you will recall from your time at Illinois State, such enrichment activities are essential to round out and extend the philosophy program.

New faculty and staff

Thomas Buller

We welcome Thomas Buller as the new chairperson of the Department on July 1. Buller has taught in the Department of Philosophy at the University of Alaska, Anchorage, since 1997. He was chairperson of the department from 2004–2009. When he began at UAA, the Philosophy Department offered only a minor, but Buller developed the philosophy major that was approved in 2001. There are approximately 50 majors in that department now. He is currently a Visiting Professor in the Provost's Office at Governor's State in University Park. Buller's research focus is in neuroethics, particularly in regard to the development of neuroprosthetics and other brain-machine interfaces. He was co-chair of the 2012 annual meeting of the American Society for Bioethics and Humanities. His main interests outside of work are watching soccer and listening to jazz.



David Sanson

This fall the department will welcome David Sanson to teach and do research in metaphysics, logic, and the history of philosophy. Sanson completed his Ph.D at UCLA, where he won two awards for outstanding teaching. He comes to ISU with his wife and young daughter after teaching at Ohio State for six years.



Retirements

Shelley Liane Stillwell retired in May 2011. She and her dog Ludwig continue to live in Bloomington. Stillwell earned her Ph.D. at Purdue University and began teaching at ISU in 1980. She spends her time thinking about how to spend her time.

Harry Deutsch retired in summer 2011 and lives in Normal. He teaches part time at Heartland Community College in Normal. He continues his research, mainly on Frege and Gödel. Deutsch earned his Ph.D. in Philosophy at UCLA. He began teaching at ISU in 1982.

Iris Baird has announced her retirement on July 1 of this year. She remembers, "When I began in the Department of Philosophy in August 1986, Chairperson Kenton Machina and I, the department secretary and the only support staff, were the only ones in the department who had computers. The office was located in room 351 in Stevenson." Iris says she has worked with seven chairpersons, including a couple who were interim chairs for a semester. The most memorable moments for her are moving the department office to Stevenson 412 in the summer of 1995, and then organizing the move for the entire department office, faculty, and staff to Turner in May 2007 and then back to Stevenson in August 2008, three days before classes began! "We had 125 boxes stacked all over the department office, most of our pens, pencils, copy paper, telephone books, everything, were still in boxes; and students are coming into the office for assistance in getting into classes, and students were calling—we had new VoIP phones, and we were not familiar with how to transfer a call and all that they did! But we DID have our computers hooked up, so I could access the mainframe and read my email," Iris recalls. She added, "I have enjoyed working in the Philosophy Department for the past 26 years. Our majors are the best!"

Faculty leaving

Steve Zusman will be leaving ISU at the end of the spring 2012 semester for a tenured position at Waubesa Community College. The main campus is in Sugar Grove, with other branch campuses in downtown Aurora, on the Rush-Copley Medical Center campus, and in Plano. Zusman has taught in our department since Spring 2008. We will miss him, and we wish him well.

Victoria Costa decided to leave Illinois State at the end of the spring semester 2011 and join her philosopher husband, Josh Gert, at William and Mary College. Even though she was a part of our faculty for only one year, Costa was a great addition to our family, and we were very sad to see her go. We wish her the best of luck in her career.

Dan Estrada will also be leaving Illinois State at the end of the spring 2012 semester to return to California. Estrada says, "I will be moving to Riverside, California, to finish my studies. Teaching for the Philosophy Department at ISU has undoubtedly been one of the best working and learning experiences I've had in my short career, and I'll miss the campus and student body tremendously. I feel awkward saying goodbye, because I'm sure you'll be able to find me online."

Grant updates

David Anderson's Mind Project (Mind.IllinoisState.edu) has just completed the new Virtual Parkinson's Lab—the most ambitious neuroscience lab ever. Students become neurobiologists doing research on Parkinson's Disease. After surgically implanting electrodes, students monitor dopamine levels to try to discover which of two competing theories regarding the mechanisms that cause Parkinson's are best supported by the data.

The Mind Project is winding down its seven-year, \$1.3 million National Institutes of Health SEPA grant. We have a national evaluation firm that is assessing two of our online modules. They are doing a qualitative assessment of our new robotics curriculum, which includes our classic Virtual "Top-Down" Robotics Lab as well as two new "Bottom-Up" virtual labs. And it is doing a controlled study comparing our Virtual Stroke Lab to a text-based version of the same content.

If you are interested in previewing our two new labs or have any groups (grades 6–12, college, adults, seniors, other) who would like to be part of our beta-testing team, please contact David Anderson (dlanders@IllinoisState.edu).

Kenton Machina is working with The National Science Foundation (NSF), a federal agency that supports scientific and technological development in the U.S. Professor Emeritus Kenton Machina is in his ninth year of NSF funding, serving as a co-principal investigator with Professor Anu Gokhale (Department of Technology).

His project involves reaching out to students enrolled in Finite Mathematics (a general education course some of you probably remember), with the aim of opening up to these students the world of possibilities in the various areas of information technology. Even though today's college students grew up with the Internet and many digital devices, few have any idea of the range of opportunities that are open to graduates who have some technical skill and background knowledge in this area. Machina's project supports seniors who write a blog for the mathematics students about current IT developments—you can visit the blog at ISUTech.wordpress.com.

The project also brings in professional visitors once per week after one of the mathematics classes, to talk with about 45 students who stay for an hour after class to hear from these visitors. The visitors come from many different fields—Web development, network management, software engineering, business information systems, telecommunications, special education, law enforcement, and even philosophy (to talk about artificial intelligence). Students from the mathematics sections that the project works with are much more likely to enroll in computer-related courses than their peers. Now that there is enough data to demonstrate the project's effectiveness, the results will be published for schools across the nation to use. (By the way, there is a significant number of philosophy alumni who work in some aspect of information technology.)

Alumni news

Solomon Rutzky '96 welcomed his first child, Naphtali, on July 7, 2009, and his second child, Raphael, on March 3, 2011.

Arnold Koenig '10 welcomed his first child, Eeva, on July 24, 2011.

Aaron Lauter '07 After graduation, Lauter spent some time working and traveled to Liberia to do some volunteer work in the summer of 2008. That fall he began law school at the University of Illinois and has been a member of the University of Illinois Law Review and clerked for the U.S. Attorney's office for the District of Colorado and the Urbana law firm, Frederick and Hagle. He graduated in May 2011 and began working as an associate at Frederick and Hagle after the bar exam this summer. He lives in Champaign with his wife, Tricia '08, who is an itinerant teacher for the Rural Champaign County Special Education Co-op. She completed her graduate studies at the University of Illinois in 2011, in Global Education Policy.

Alumni Day 2011

John Greuling was the Alumni Day Speaker this year. He is the president and CEO of The Will County Center For Economic Development. During his presentation to current students, he encouraged them to "formulate a thought and be able to communicate that thought."



Student news

Emily Kuchenbrod wrote the winning essay in the Quality Category of this year's Honors Program In-Course Honors Project Contest. Her essay is on Ayn Rand and was directed by Chris Horvath. Kuchenbrod's award includes a cash prize of \$100.

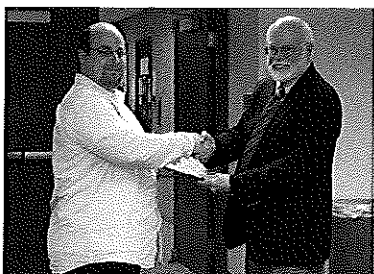
Weston Love was awarded the 2011 Outstanding Senior Award.

Nora Fitton was awarded the 2011 Kenneth and Marilyn Kennard Scholarship for the Outstanding Rising Senior.

Philip Uebbing was awarded the 2011 Scott Elliott Award for the Outstanding Rising Junior.

Christopher Weaver was awarded the 2012 Outstanding Senior Award.

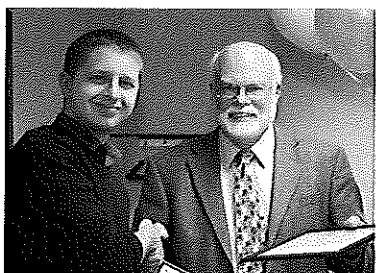
Aaron Kirts was awarded the 2012 Kenneth and Marilyn Kennard Scholarship for the Outstanding Rising Senior.



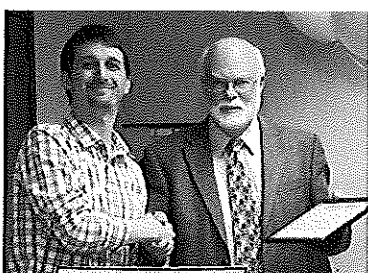
Weston Love



Nora Fitton



Christopher Weaver



Aaron Kirts

We are always excited to learn of the activities and accomplishments of our alumni. Please send your news to Crystal Scheiman at cjschei@IllinoisState.edu. Follow the department's developments at Philosophy.IllinoisState.edu, and by all means, stop by and see us when you are in the neighborhood.

Department of Philosophy

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Faculty awards, presentations, service

Kenton Machina continued his work under an NSF grant to encourage women and minority students to enter the fields of mathematics, science, and technology.

Michael Breyer won a place in the upcoming NEH Institute at the University of Iowa on Experimental Philosophy. The institute runs throughout July and will include many of the key researchers in this newly developing area of philosophy.

Alison Bailey delivered two invited lectures; "Pedagogical Challenges and Strategies: Teaching Race and Gender in Philosophy," Symposium on Pedagogical Challenges and Strategies around Issues of Race, Class, Gender, and Sexuality, American Philosophical Association, Central Division, Minneapolis and "Shared Responsibility: Understanding Hate Crimes from The Perspective of the Injured," plenary speaker, Undergraduate Ethics Symposium, The Prindle Institute for Ethics, DePauw University.

Todd Kukla successfully defended his dissertation in March 2011. The dissertation is titled, "Kant's Theory of Global Intentionality: An Interpretation of the Transcendental Deduction." Arthur Melnick served as chair of his committee.

David Anderson won a slot in the 2011 CTLT "Design a Quality Course: Online and Blended" workshop, sponsored by the Provost. This is the second year running that the department has landed one of these positions. This year Anderson will be building an online rendition of PHI 101.

Chris Horvath was elected to the Faculty Review Committee to serve for a three-year term, beginning fall 2011.

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