

The Phi Sigma Tau

Bulletin

A Publication of the Department of Philosophy, Southwest Texas State University

Fall, 1996

Philounton Sophian Time

Issue 3

SWT ALUMNUS TO INTRODUCE THE DEVIL TO PHILOSOPHY STUDENTS

By Carlos Armintor

Philosophy majors pursue careers in business, journalism, law, medicine, education, and fight-scene choreography. The latter pursuit may give new meaning to the expression "constructing a knockdown argument."

Ask Buddy Sosthand, a 1994 graduate of SWT, who recently completed his first venture into the world of film with *The Devil*. He will be here Friday, September 13 to show and discuss the film. Sosthand plots the moves of the quick-tempered punchers in this film. But this does not mean he approaches his scenes quick-tempered; on the contrary, he has to be precise and calculating in choreographing a scene. "The first thing I ask myself is how do I make a scene believable and hold interest at the same time," Sosthand said. "Then I have to study the characters to see how they would react if they got in a fight. I want their personalities to come out in the fight scenes."

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BRIGHT IDEAS DIALOGUE TOPICS FOR FALL

- | | |
|--|------------------------|
| 1. Philosophy and Film | September 9-13 |
| 2. Existentialism
and the Meaning of Life | September 16-20 |
| 3. Privacy, Pornography,
and the Internet | September 23-27 |
| 4. Happy (400th) Birthday Descartes | September 30-October 4 |
| 5. American Thought | October 7-11 |
| 6. Science and Religion | October 21-25 |
| 7. Philosophy Looks at
American Politics | October 28-Nov. 1 |
| 8. The Problem of Evil | November 4-8 |

Watch the bulletin board/calendar outside the Dialogue Room (LA 367) for more information on scheduled events and discussions for each week.

Important note to students: You can (and we hope you will) schedule your own discussions at available times. Just write your topic (related in some way to the topic of the week) and discussion time on the calendar and round up some argumentative friends.

Sosthand is combining two of his loves: martial arts and philosophy. "It is great when you get to do things you love," Buddy said.

Sosthand draws on his background in philosophy not only to help him with fight scenes but with the film in general. "Marcello (director of *The Devil*) would ask me for advice," Sosthand said. "I told him I would break down the film analytically. Sentence for sentence. Scene for scene. Shirt for shirt."

Sosthand and the crew of *The Devil* wanted to make a film that would get people thinking and arguing. An argument is a series of premises that leads to a conclusion,

while an analogy or an example can be a good way of showing a point. If an argument rests solely on example, however, then it will most likely be insufficient, because an analogy is usually narrow and represents only an aspect of the argument. Transferring this idea to film, some claim that film is not a full argument, rather it is a way of showing a point. But if executed correctly, the film can be a very powerful contribution to an argument.

"When we think of an argument we [philosophers] are strict, but a film can serve as a catalyst to start a discussion," Sosthand said. "That was our goal." (Continued on p. 2)

The discussion the crew from *The Devil* want to start is: Who is the devil in this film? "In the beginning Marcello had a very definite idea of who the devil was, but the way things turned out I think it is a little harder to tell," Sosthand said.

The Devil also sets the stage to explore several interconnected themes. Some of these involve intervention, paternalism, and heroism. *The Devil* is about a group of young men who befriend a damsel in distress. They are successful, and this success leads them to try to help others who are in need. What happens raises a whole set of questions with moral implications. Is standing by and watching someone being raped, murdered, or otherwise victimized the same as actually victimizing them? Do we always have a duty or an obligation to help someone in need? How do we decide if someone is in need? At what point does any obligation we may have end? Even if our intentions are good, are we responsible for any bad consequences our actions may have? As for heroism, what about cases in which someone explicitly sets out to be a hero? Does a wannabe hero compromise his or her heroic authenticity? Is heroic intervention justified when a victim does not want help?

Trying to find some possible answers to questions like these should keep us busy for awhile after we are introduced to *The Devil*.

Buddy and the rest of the film crew have certainly been busy making their way through film festivals showing their little devil off. In addition to the primary film, at these festivals film makers usually show a production film which tells the story of the making of the film with "outtakes" not used in the final version. Describing one of these scenes, Buddy

said, "Yeah, I accidentally hit a guy too hard. It looked like a scratch, but when he took his hand from his head blood just started pouring out. Luckily, Marcello's father was a doctor and we got him stitching up the cut on tape."

Buddy is currently writing two screenplays. One is a Kung Fu epic, and the other is a bilingual comedy about life. He is also playing the role of a young cop in the film *Snake Tails*, UT's first feature film. His future plans are to go to Los Angeles where the crew from *The Devil* will reunite to work on another film.

Sosthand's presentation will be a part of the Philosophy and Film discussion, the first in a series of eight topics to be featured in the Dialogue Room this fall. (For information on the other topics, see **Bright Ideas** on page 1.)

DON'T MISS *The Devil*

Friday, September 13
2:00 P.M.

Liberal Arts Building
Room 112

A discussion and reception
will follow the film

STUDENT CONTRIBUTIONS SOLICITED

No, we don't want your money. We want your mind, specifically, any well-formed thoughts you generate upon becoming exercised about any of the eight topics that are scheduled for the dialogue room this fall. (See **Bright Ideas** on page 1.) So, if you want to say X about Y, put it in writing and submit it by the end of the semester, and we'll print some student commentary in the spring newsletter.

E-MAIL ADDRESSES

Oh, by the way, we also want your e-mail address, if you have one. Professor Skipper has suggested that we collect these as a way of channeling various electric ideas. Just send a blank e-mail message to Brian Archer, (BA03@SWT.EDU), or give your e-mail address to Beverly, Brian, or Professor Skipper.

FACULTY SOLICITATION

We want your money or your ideas. (This is an inclusive "or.")

Actually, we would prefer your ideas, given that we have all taken vows of poverty. Please let us know of any scholarly activity suitable for inclusion in the next (spring) newsletter. Brief book reviews are also welcome.

Skipper to Direct Film KAMP

Professor Robert Skipper will launch our week on Philosophy and Film (September 9-13) with a creatively anachronistic discussion entitled "Sex, Drugs, and Violence in Film: Four Views." This discussion will occur at 10:30 am and again at 3:00 pm on Monday (September 9) in the Dialogue Room. KAMP is an acronym for the four philosophers he will discuss. Can you guess who they are? Hint: None of them attended many movies. (The questions are going to get harder.)

The *Phi Sigma Tau* Bulletin

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NEWS FROM THE DELTA

From the President
Ryan Kane

Welcome back and all that.

As our eyes turn in the direction of the coming semester, we can expect only a pathetic doppelgänger of all the semesters past. Ahead of us lie more purposeless academic acrobatics filled with hoops, bells, and occasional flames. More scantron tests, credit card applications, monetary deadlines, and unchallenging classes filled with uninterested students await us. Behind all of this, the ringleaders assure us that the quality of our education is not tainted by the ever-so-balanced atmosphere of mediocrity, but, in fact, will make us more marketable in a mediocre world. Once again, we will be paying more money for less education. All of this talk is a bit aggrandized for my taste, but my intention is to make you aware of the fire that is constantly and inconspicuously consuming your very purpose for being here.

In the past, the fear of over-organization has kept me at a distance from formal societies and such. However, because we will dictate the form this association will take, I do not fear it so much as I am anxious about the unknown possibilities that this opportunity may generate. Essentially, the Philosophy Honors Society, *Phi Sigma Tau*, Texas *Delta* Chapter, represents an official academic tool by which our endeavors may be focused, and our efforts concentrated.

We have several student projects currently in the works. These include Carlos Armintor's honors thesis on William James, and Shane

Denson's and my paper on systematicity as a metaphorical learning device. Francisco Gomez produced, directed, and acted in *The Student*, a video made for an English honors course in the spring. Gomez is currently refining this video and will present it at an honors conference in San Francisco in October. And Buddy Sosthand, an SWT philosophy alumnus, was actively involved in the making of a film which is currently making the rounds of film festivals. Buddy will preview this film for us in September and help us probe its underlying philosophical themes, which should lead to some stimulating, if diabolical, discussion. (See Carlos Armintor's commentary for more on this.) I invite anyone with a project in the works to submit it into the forum of *Phi Sigma Tau* to be constructively dismantled and to stimulate ideas and areas for further philosophic exploration.

This semester promises to be exactly the same as previous semesters only inasmuch as we choose to make the same choices. (Even if one denies the real possibility of free choice, it is nonetheless phenomenally true that the choices we appear to make and the results we appear to get will appear to be similar to those in the past only if we fail to act on the desire to make them different. Got it?) Regardless of these complexities, I hope that anyone interested in taking advantage of the resources which this group offers will do so. Because taking advantage of this group requires intense participation in it, doing so will only be beneficial to us all. What is beneficial is active dialogue with the intent of making our brains work in ways that they

were at one time unable to do. *Phi Sigma Tau*, unlike many organizations here at SWT, can be the vehicle for this endeavor.



From the Secretary-Treasurer
Brad Jurica

Texas *Delta* had a very productive spring semester. Here's a brief overview.

Officers were elected in February. They are:

Ryan Kane President
Richard Harbour . . Vice-President
Brad Jurica . . Secretary-Treasurer
Jo Ann Carson . . . Faculty Advisor

In April ten new members were initiated--Christy Allison, Chris Andrews, Shane Denson, Don Gallegos, Ginger Knight, Steve McGovern, Paul Mercado, Stephanie Reyes, Pete Villejo, and Charles Wilkens--bringing the total number of active members in our local chapter to 23. Interest in Texas *Delta* and its activities continues to grow. Several students have been participating as associate members, and we hope to be initiating another fine group of sharp thinkers this year.

A by-laws committee was established in May. The committee, chaired by Christy Allison, has met twice this summer and has drafted a set of by-laws which will be proposed to the group at our first business meeting on September 20.

In February Professors Michael Orenduff and John Silber talked to students in the dialogue room in addition to giving their general lectures in the

(Continued on p. 4)

Morality and Values in the University lecture series. In March, Philosophy Department chairman Vince Luizzi discussed with us the themes of his book *A Case for Legal Ethics*. In April SWT Professor Mark Williamson teased our intellects by challenging the notion that there is an infinite number of sentence types in his discussion of "Every English Sentence." Ginger Knight, a philosophy senior, previewed for our group her paper "What is Justified," written for Professor Peter Hutcheson's course on the problem of evil. Several Texas *Delta* members also had the opportunity to meet and converse with Professor Ted Schneyer, who gave the annual Teague Lecture in Applied Jurisprudence in April.

It was a busy and productive semester, and another is on the way.

Film Wednesdays

Every Wednesday at 3:00 a video will be shown in the Dialogue Room, followed by an informal, student-led discussion. Sometimes these videos will be related to the topic of the week; sometimes they won't.

Know of a good film with philosophical content (either explicit or implicit) that you think everybody needs to see? Let us know.

Friday Food for Thought An Invitation to Students from Faculty

Would you like to observe members of the philosophy faculty making hash out of the weekly discussion topic? If so, bring something edible to the Dialogue Room on Fridays from 12-1:00 and partake of an altogether different meal-time phenomenon. It may get corny, we may flounder around a bit, and undoubtably a few red herrings will leap from the primordial stew, but, half-baked ideas notwithstanding, we'll fish around for some just desserts to satisfy our intellectual cravings. Join us.

STUDENT NOTES:

AWARDS

Philosophy students Shane Denson, Brad Jurica, and Ginger Knight were recognized at the Liberal Arts Awards Ceremony in April for their exemplary academic records.

Ginger Knight was also named Outstanding Philosophy Senior. She will begin law school this fall at The University of Texas at Austin.

Phi Sigma Tau Vice-President to Serve on Activities Committee

Beginning this fall, the Vice-President of Texas *Delta* will serve on the Activities Committee of the SWT Philosophy Department. In this capacity, the Vice-President will be a spokesperson for conveying ideas about the types of activities and philosophical topics the members of Texas *Delta* wish to pursue. Faculty members of this committee are Professors Jo Ann Carson, Lynne Fulmer, Glenn Joy, Robert Skipper, and Mark Williamson.

STUDENT PAPERS PRESENTED

SWT students Shane Denson and Ginger Knight presented papers written for Professor Peter Hutcheson's honors course "The Problem of Evil" at the annual conference of the New Mexico and West Texas Philosophical Society.

Shane's topic was "The Ever-so Persistent Problem of Evil." Ginger's topic was "What is Justified?"

The session on the philosophy of religion was chaired by Professor Hutcheson.

GRADUATE WORK

Ann Brinegar, 1993 SWT philosophy graduate, received her M.A. in speech communication from SWT in August. Her thesis topic was "Rhetorical and Ethical Analysis of Christian Restrictivism." Philosophy professor Dean Geuras served on her thesis committee.

Ann will begin divinity school at Baylor University this fall.

SWT Philosophy Graduates, May 1996



From left to right: Jordan Jones, Heather Keith, Ginger Knight, Richard Harbour, Laurie Harbour.

LECTURE SERIES GOES TO PRESS

After some frenzied editing, the six lectures which comprised the 1995-96 speaker series *Morality and Values in the University* have been compiled in an in-house publication of the same name. One hundred copies are being printed and will be distributed in early fall, according to philosophy professor Jeff Gordon.

A collaborative effort of the SWT Philosophy Department and the Freshman Seminar Program, which Dr. Gordon directs, the lecture series also received funding from the SWT Presidential Task Force on Core Values, the University Lecture Series, the Civitis Project, and the Texas Committee for the Humanities.

On behalf of the Philosophy Department and the entire university, Professor Gordon thanks the guest lecturers for their insights as well as for their cooperation in preparing the lectures for printing.

Morality and Values in the University contains the following lectures:

Hazel Barnes
Learning Who You Are and Teaching It to Others

Edward L. Long, Jr.
The Promises and Predicaments of the Learning Experience

David Hoekema
Building Moral Community in the University: or, "How Come After Shelling Out Four Years of College Tuition Our Kid Is More Confused than Ever About Right and Wrong?"

Robert Kane
Through the Moral Maze: Searching for Absolute Values in a Pluralistic World

J.M. Orenduff
Autonomy, Responsibility, and Education

John R. Silber
A Press Conference with the Community on Values and Morals in the University

Lab Report:

Dr. Robert Skipper is heading a project to make the information that is currently on the computers in the Critical Thinking Lab available on the World Wide Web. The project also involves developing additional learning material and exercises concerning critical thinking.

Not only will SWT students have access to course material from outside the lab, but other universities will be able to use the material in critical thinking courses in various disciplines.

Professor Lynne Fulmer is refining her assessment project on the ability to teach critical thinking. The Critical Thinking Lab is assisting in this study by automating student testing and accumulating data. This phase of the project involves formal analysis of the testing methods and of the statistical results.

Environmental Ethicist Rolston to Speak at Texas Lutheran University October 7, 7:30 p.m.

Distinguished environmental ethicist Holmes Rolston III of Colorado State University will speak on "Challenges in Environmental Ethics" on Monday evening, October 7, at 7:30 in the Timmerman Room of Hein Dining Hall on the campus of Texas Lutheran University in Seguin, Texas.

According to information received from Professor Mark Gilbertson of Texas Lutheran, Rolston is one of the world's leading scholars on the philosophical, scientific, and religious conceptions of nature. A founder of the journal *Environmental Ethics* and widely regarded as the father of environmental ethics as a modern academic discipline, Rolston

is the author of *Environmental Ethics: Values in and Duties to the Environment*, in which he develops and defends a case for a value-centered ecological ethic. Other critically acclaimed works by Rolston include *Philosophy Gone Wild, Science and Religion: A Critical Survey*, and *Conserving Natural Value*. He is also a backpacker, field naturalist, and bryologist.

For more information, contact Professor Gilbertson at (210) 372-6068.

Opportunities for International Study

We are investigating student opportunities for philosophical study abroad. Watch the spring newsletter for more information. Meanwhile, if you have a specific interest, let us know this fall.

SPRING COURSES

2312 History of Philosophy

This course is a survey of modern philosophical thought through the nineteenth century.

Taught by Prof. Kalsi

2330 Elementary Logic

This course examines the nature and forms of correct reasoning, both deductive and inductive.

Section 251 taught by Prof. Hutcheson

Section 252 taught by Prof. Joy

3318 Reason, God, and Nature

We will analyze the concept of God, terms predicated of God, and theological propositions and attempt to determine the nature of religious utterances in comparison with those of everyday life, scientific discovery, morality, and imaginative expression. Prerequisite: three hours of lower division philosophy, 3301, or consent of the instructor.

Taught by Prof. Gilbert Fulmer

3322 Business and Professional Ethics

This course is a study of major topics in business and professional ethics, including what a profession is, whether it differs from business, and what is involved with the moral education, social responsibilities, and ethical standards of professionals and business people.

This course will be taught at Kelly AFB in San Antonio. Instructor TBA.

4356 Philosophical Theories of Knowledge

We will study contemporary debates about whether anything at all is known (skepticism), the nature of justification, the definition of knowledge (the literature about justified true belief), and whether a person perceives real things that others perceive (or only her private "sense-data"). Theories of truth and *a priori* knowledge will also be considered. The students will write "thesis-defense" papers (not research papers) for the course. There will be student presentations and considerable class discussion. This course will probably meet at 11 MWF.

Taught by Prof. Hutcheson

4370 Metaphysics

We will undertake a systematic study of metaphysical problems by examining of classical and modern texts. Topics considered will involve being and unity, mind and matter, God, causation and necessity, free will and determinism. Prerequisite: three hours of lower division philosophy, 3301, or consent of the instructor.

Taught by Prof. Williamson

4388 Problems in Philosophy: Science and Religion

We will examine the nature and scope of science and scientific method as well as the nature and scope of religion, with the emphasis on modern science and Christianity. We will explore the relationship between religion and science and study the effects they have had upon each other. We will concentrate on the so-called warfare between science and religion, especially in the Copernican and Darwinian revolutions. And we will investigate the current work in cosmology and biology while seeking to determine the relevance of religion to this work and the relevance of this work to religion. The primary textbook is Ian Barbour's *Religion in an Age of Science*.

Taught by Prof. Joy

FACULTY NOTES:

AWARD WINNING COURSE

Professor Glenn Joy's new course, "Science and Religion," has been chosen for a John Templeton Foundation prize providing a cash award to Professor Joy plus \$5000 for Southwest Texas State University to use for course development. Professor Joy also received an all-expenses-paid trip this summer to attend a workshop on science and religion at The Center for Theology and the Natural Sciences in Berkeley, California.

"Science and Religion" will be taught as Philosophy 4388 this spring semester. Its primary textbook is Ian Barbour's *Religion in an Age of Science*.

LUIZZI VISITS ROMANIA AND HUNGARY

Professor Vincent Luizzi traveled this summer to Attila Jozsef University in Szeged, Hungary, where he advised the school on developing a program in applied ethics and discussed his book on legal ethics (*A Case for Legal Ethics: Legal Ethics as a Source for a Universal Ethic*, 1993). Then, after passing by train through the Transylvanian Alps, he spoke in Romania to a U.S. Information Service class of journalists and diplomats on the topic of the American judiciary. Professor Luizzi has applied for a Fulbright for Attila Jozsef for the fall of 1997.

PAPERS PRESENTED

Southwest Texas State University was the host for the annual meeting of the New Mexico and West Texas Philosophical Society held in April at the Driskill Hotel in Austin. Professor Lynne Fulmer did much of the organizing for this well-attended event. SWT faculty members who presented papers were:

- | | |
|----------------|---|
| Lynne Fulmer | "Fetuses, Violins, and Abortion" |
| Gilbert Fulmer | "Miracles, Consciousness, and Swinburne" |
| Jeff Gordon | "After Freud: Sketch for a Theory of Consciousness" |
| Robert Skipper | "The Conflict Between Business and Ethics" |

Professor Peter Hutcheson presented "Husserl's Reduction to the Sphere of Ownness" at the annual meeting of the Southwestern Philosophical Society in November 1995. In this paper, which is a commentary on another paper, Professor Hutcheson argues that Husserl's reduction to the sphere of ownness is really not another phenomenological reduction at all.

Professor Hutcheson presented another paper, "Pure Epistemology" to the annual meeting of the Husserl Circle in June. This paper is based on his Presidential Address to the New Mexico and West Texas Philosophical Society in 1993. It defends three positions:

- (1) phenomenological reduction is possible;
- (2) global skepticism is false; and
- (3) there is a transcendental consciousness.

CELEBRATING TWENTY YEARS OF PHILOSOPHY AT SWT

Be a Part of The Grand Scheme

The creation occurred in the spring of 1977. Yes, that was the year that the powers that be brought the Department of Philosophy at Southwest Texas State University into existence. We are looking for suggestions as to how we can best commemorate this cosmic event, as well as for names and current addresses of former SWT philosophy students and faculty. If you can provide either, please send in the form below or contact your favorite SWT philosophy professor.

Look for more information in the spring newsletter.



Your name _____

Your telephone, fax, or e-mail _____

Name(s) of former student(s)/faculty _____

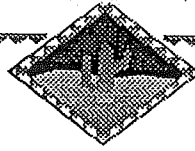
When did they attend SWT (approximate)? _____

Current address _____

Telephone, fax, or e-mail _____

Your suggestions for events (Guest speakers, topics, etc.) _____

Return to: Department of Philosophy, SWT, San Marcos, TX 78666



Words from the Chair

What's new in the Department of Philosophy is that the department is getting old! The department will be 20 years old in 1997.

Prior to its formation in 1977, the department was a division of the Department of English. The teaching of philosophy got started at SWT when the late Prof. Robert Walts of the Department of English asked Prof. James Treanor to design some philosophy courses. These included "Philosophies Men Live By," "Philosophy and the Arts," and "History of Philosophy." Over the years the number of philosophy courses and faculty multiplied, and eventually the English Department offered a minor in philosophy. It was in 1977 that the Coordinating Board approved the creation of the Department of Philosophy and a philosophy major.

The Department of English hosted a celebration for our newly born department in May 1977, and we are ready to host our own for our 20th birthday. We are scheduling it for homecoming weekend in fall 1997, but other than that, we have little mapped out. All philosophy majors, minors, and friends of the department, please assist us with planning an event which you would like to attend. We are looking forward to hearing from you and to seeing you next fall.

Vincent Luizzi