

The Phi Sigma Tau

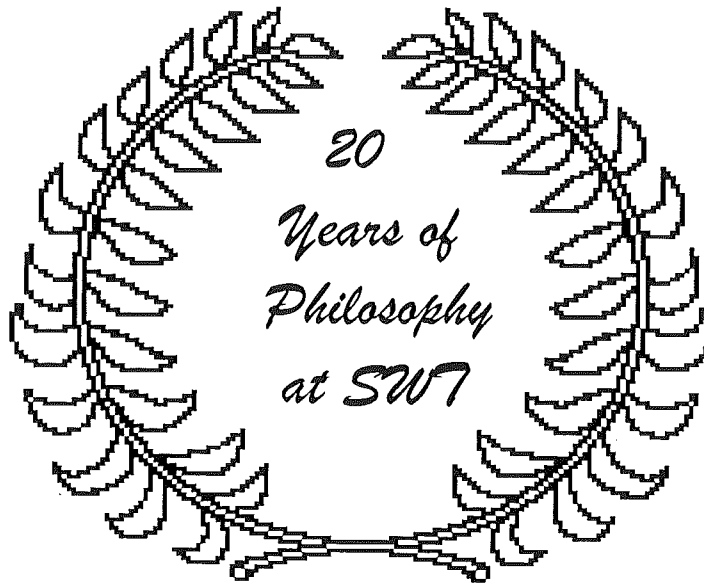
Bulletin

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

Fall, 1997

20 Years of Philosophy

Issue 6



Twenty years ago philosophy became an independent discipline at SWT with the establishment of the SWT philosophy department. We will commemorate this auspicious occasion with a departmental open house, an alumni banquet, and a philosophy symposium on October 24 and 25 (Homecoming). All students, alumni, and friends of philosophy are invited to participate in these events.

October 24 (Friday)

Departmental Open House

9:00-4:00

Take a tour of the department, visit with professors and students, and enjoy some light refreshments and good conversation in the Dialogue Room, LA 367.

Anniversary Banquet

7:00 - 9:00

The University Club

(Commons Cafeteria, lower level)

There will be a special initiation at the Anniversary Banquet for students and alumni who are interested in joining *Phi Sigma Tau*, the National Honor Society in Philosophy. (For more information, see page 5. Please return reservation forms by October 13.)

October 25 (Saturday)

SWT Philosophy Symposium

Liberal Arts Building

Morning Session:

9:00-12:30

Lunch:

12:30-2:00

Afternoon Session:

2:00-5:00

The SWT *Delta* chapter of *Phi Sigma Tau* is sponsoring this student symposium.

JACOB NEUSNER KEYNOTES SWT CONFERENCE ON FRESHMAN

On September 25-26 the Department of Philosophy and the Freshman Seminar Program sponsored a conference on the topic THINKING ABOUT FRESHMEN. Jacob Neusner, Professor of Religious Studies at the University of South Florida and Distinguished Professor at Bard College, opened the conference with a public address in Evans Auditorium.

The topic of Neusner's lecture, "How Does Learning Change Us?", set the tone for a series of discussions on the world of freshmen which were held at the Aquarena Conference Center the following day, Friday, September 26. Concurrent sessions focused on how to make the freshman experience valuable and constructive for first-year students, their teachers, and the university as a whole and featured discussions led by a variety of SWT professors, many of whom have taught in the Freshman Seminar program, as well as presenters from several other colleges and universities.

While on the SWT campus, Professor Neusner also led a discussion on "Other Ways of Doing Philosophy" in the philosophy dialogue room.

Professor Neusner is a respected and prolific scholar in the field of Jewish studies. The author of over 700 books and the most widely published professor of humanities in the world, Neusner has been called "the benchmark for productivity in all of academe" (*The Chronicle of Higher Education*, May 9, 1997). His primary field of inquiry has been the Jewish rabbinic literature of antiquity, with an emphasis on the Midrash tradition of interpretation, an exegetical approach which studies the writings of ancient Jewish scholars not merely as literal records of the past, but as works which intentionally reshaped and renewed a complex religion over the course of several centuries.

Professor Neusner has also written on topics related to education. Two selections by Neusner, "How to Grade Your Professors" and "Learning and Growing Up" are included in *The University in Your Life*, the text currently used by Freshman Seminar.

According to Dr. Jeff Gordon, editor of this text and director of the program, Neusner's writings on education reflect well the aims and ideals of Freshman Seminar, so much so that the entire text

of Neusner's book, *How to Grade Your Professors and Other Unexpected Advice* (1984) was required reading in the first year of the program.

"Jacob Neusner is very sensitive to the necessity of connecting university education to the student's primary purpose of growing up," Gordon said. "I included Neusner's work in the Freshman Seminar text because he sees that if you do not make a connection between what students are learning and what they are living, their education will be meaningless for them."

ZHU LECTURES CONTRAST EAST AND WEST

Professor Rui Zhu, the philosophy department's newest faculty member, delivered a weekly series of well-attended lectures in the Chautauqua Room during the month of September. These lectures highlighted the differences between Eastern and Western systems of thought. The topics were:

- Religion: East and West
(September 5)
- Emotion: East and West
(September 12)
- Freedom of Will vs. Freedom of Spirit in Taoism
(September 19)

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Student Notes

A paper by **Stephanie Reyes**, "St. Catherine of Siena: Free Will & Human Salvation" has been selected for presentation at the National Collegiate Honors Council in Atlanta on October 22-26, 1997. The original version of Stephanie's paper was written for **Professor Dean Geuras**, who is her advisor for the conference.

Marci Zubl and **Thomas Purcell** will be married on November 8th, 1997 in Austin, Texas. Both Marci and Thomas graduated from SWT with majors in philosophy. They met in **Professor Audrey McKinney's** philosophy class.

Faculty Notes

The SWT Department of Philosophy welcomes two new faculty members this fall,

Professors **Rebekah Ross-Fountain** and **Rui Zhu**. Professor Ross-Fountain, who served as the department's Critical Thinking Lab Coordinator last year, is an alumna of SWT who graduated in 1993 with a major in English and a minor in Women's Studies. She also holds a master's degree in philosophy with an emphasis in feminist theory from Southern Illinois University at Edwardsville.

Professor Zhu comes to SWT from Tulane University, where he received his doctorate in philosophy in 1997. He began his studies in philosophy at Beijing University in the People's Republic of China, and has taught courses in philosophy of mind at that institution, as well as courses in Asian and Chinese philosophy, logic, and ethics at Tulane.

The department also welcomes **Paul Wilson** as Critical Thinking Lab Coordinator. Paul, who holds a B.A. in philosophy and

sociology from SWT, is currently completing his master's degree in sociology.

The Words That Cannot Be Spoken

The other day as I sat on my mountain top,
I heard a reflection of the words that cannot be spoken.

The flock crossed in front of the morning sun,
Pink with the season's expectation for a bountiful harvest.

Glow my children,
that is your sole purpose.

Raise my tenders,
for your mission will be rewarded.

Flourish,
as the blue above gives calm to all who might wish to slow down and enjoy it.

Luke Bellville

Ginger Knight
and
Tommy Maness

Cordially invite their friends,
professors, and philosophy
compatriots to their wedding

Friday
October 24, 1997
5:00 p.m.
The Dialogue Room
(LA 367)

SWT Philosophy Graduates, May 1997



From left to right: Brad Goosen, Carlos Armintor, Jeremy Serrata, Christy Allison, Steve Grant

Coming Events

UT's Martinich to discuss "Theories of Interpretation" with *Phi Sigma Tau*

A special guest at the November 21st meeting of *Phi Sigma Tau* (3:00 in the Dialogue Room) will be A. P. Martinich, Professor of Philosophy at the University of Texas at Austin, who will discuss "Theories of Interpretation." Martinich is a scholar who has written extensively in the areas of philosophy of language, philosophy of religion, medieval philosophy, and the history of philosophy, with particular concentration on the work of Thomas Hobbes. In addition to many published articles, he is the author of *Communication and Reference*, *Philosophical Writing*, *A Hobbes Dictionary*, *The Two Gods of Leviathan: Thomas Hobbes on Religion and Politics*, and the widely-used *The Philosophy of Language*, which has been called the "best available general anthology in the philosophy of language." He is currently working on an intellectual biography of Hobbes.

All interested persons are invited to attend the meeting on November

21 and to participate in the discussion.

Richard Swinburne To Speak at SWT in Spring

Professor Richard Swinburne, Nolloth Professor of Philosophy at Oxford University, will visit the SWT campus on March 24-25 to deliver a lecture in Evans auditorium, teach two philosophy classes ("Philosophy of Science" and "Western Religions"), and participate in related philosophical discussions.

Professor Swinburne is an eminent, widely-published, and internationally respected scholar who has written major works in both philosophical theology and theoretical science. He is best known for a trilogy of works—*The Coherence of Theism*, *The Existence of God*, and *Faith and Reason*—the main focus of which is a formulation of a coherent and intellectually defensible basis for theistic belief which is compatible with the most powerful scientific theories.

Swinburne's most recent book, *Is There a God?*, reviews the arguments of his earlier works and makes them more accessible to the general public. This book will be the basis for two weeks of discussion this semester (October 27 to November 7—see dialogue calendar) in the philosophy dialogue room in preparation for Swinburne's visit. Paperback copies of *Is There a God?* are available at the SWT Bookstore at a cost of \$5.95.

More details about Swinburne's visit, which is being sponsored by the Price Lecture Endowment of the Campus Christian Community, the SWT Department of Philosophy, and the University Lecture Series, will be forthcoming in the *Bulletin* for Spring, 1998.

Spring Templeton Lectures to Examine Religion and Science

Professor Glenn Joy, whose course "Science and Religion" won a John Templeton Foundation prize in 1996, has announced that the Templeton Foundation will sponsor two lectures at SWT this spring. These lectures will address some of the contemporary philosophical issues which are emerging from the interaction between scientific inquiry and religious thought. One of the speakers has already been selected: Professor Howard J. Van Till, Professor of Physics at Calvin College. Professor Van Till is interested in examining the so-called "creation-evolution debate" and in investigating possible approaches to achieving a *rapprochement* between special creationism and evolutionary naturalism.

Look for more details on the Templeton lectures in the spring *Bulletin*.

**Special Phi Sigma Tau
Initiation**

Are you a student or SWT alumni who is interested in becoming a member of *Phi Sigma Tau*? *Phi Sigma Tau* is the National Honor Society in Philosophy. Its purpose is to encourage ties among philosophy departments, students, and persons who have philosophical interests. The SWT *Delta* Chapter of *Phi Sigma Tau* was founded in 1982. Eligibility requirements are as follows:
* 9 hours of philosophy courses completed with a B average
* a minimum GPA of 2.75 maintained at SWT

If you are interested in being initiated at the Anniversary Banquet, please indicate this on the RSVP form below. There is a national initiation fee of \$15.00. For more information contact Jo Ann Carson, *Phi Sigma Tau* advisor, at (512) 245-3143.

Lab Report:

Hello and welcome to a new year. This semester promises to be an exciting one, as we embark upon our third year of the dialogue series in the Philosophy department. As you may know the Critical Thinking Lab (LA 367) is our area dedicated to philosophical discussion and learning. With the new semester comes a new group of topics for the dialogue room, selected by faculty and students. Jewish Thought, Philosophy of Education, Logical Positivism, Contemporary Ethical Issues: Animal Rights, Aquinas, Swinburne, Hedonism, and Philosophy of Language are the topics for the Fall 1997 series. We have dedicated two weeks to Richard Swinburne in preparation for his visit to SWT in the spring of 1998.

We are fortunate to have visits from distinguished guests in the dialogue room this semester. On September 25th, Jacob Neusner discussed "Other Ways of Doing Philosophy", and in November A.P. Martinich will be discussing "Theories of Interpretation". We have also heard from faculty in other departments, such as professors Chris Frost and Stan Friedman from Psychology, Kim Folsie from Sociology, and W.C. Newberry from Curriculum and Instruction. Many of our own faculty members are presenting dialogues as well.

As always, the Critical Thinking Lab is open to students who seek to sharpen their critical thinking skills and engage in philosophical discussion. I am hopeful that like my predecessor, Rebekah Ross-Fountain, I will be successful in assisting the students and faculty of Philosophy at SWT. If you have any questions or concerns, feel free to call me at the lab (245-2403) or through the department (245-2285).

Paul Wilson
Critical Thinking Lab Coordinator

**SWT PHILOSOPHY DEPARTMENT - 20TH ANNIVERSARY BANQUET
Friday October 24
7:00 to 9:00 PM**

The University Club (Commons Cafeteria, lower level)

Reservation Form

Name: _____
Address: _____
Phone: _____

- Include the names of any guests who will accompany you to the banquet;
- Enclose \$10.00 for each alumni and each guest, \$5.00 for each student;
- Return to the SWT Philosophy Department **no later than October 13th.**

Southwest Texas State University
Department of Philosophy
601 University Drive
San Marcos, Texas 78666

Indicate: ___ Vegetarian ___ Vegan ___ *Phi Sigma Tau* Initiate
(Enclose \$15.00 initiation fee)

NEW PHILOSOPHY MINORS!



RELIGIOUS STUDIES

The minor in Religious Studies is an interdisciplinary minor requiring 18 hours of course work from the following list of choices:

Phil 3317	Science and Religion
Phil 3318	Reason, God and Nature
Phil 3319	Major Western Religious Systems of Thought
Phil 4388	Problems in Philosophy offered as Early Christian Philosophy
Rel 2310	Survey of the Old Testament
Rel 2315	Survey of the New Testament
Rel 2320	Life and Teaching of Jesus
Rel 3360	Comparative Religions
Rel 3365	The Christian Faith
Anth 3305	Magic, Ritual, and Religion
Anth 3375C	Myths and Mound Builders
Posi 3306	Religion and American Public Life
Posi 4313	Islamic Law and Politics
Arth 2301	Ancient Medieval Art History
Eng 3329	Mythology and Folklore
Hist 4318	History of Christianity



VALUES STUDIES

This minor allows a student with special interest in moral value theory to pursue a course of study which culminates in an independent research project in value studies.

The minor is comprised of 18 hours of course work.

Six hours lower division:

Phil 1305	General Philosophy
Phil 1330	Reasoning and Analysis
or	Phil 2330 Elementary Logic

12 hours upper division:

Phil 3320	Ethics
Phil 3321	Contemporary Moral Problems
Phil 3322	Business and Professional Ethics
Phil 4388	Problems in Philosophy

PHILOSOPHY SPRING 1998 COURSES

2312 HISTORY OF PHILOSOPHY SINCE 1600

This course provides an overview of modern philosophical thought through the nineteenth century.
Taught by Prof. Kalsi

2330 ELEMENTARY LOGIC

This course is a study of the nature and forms of correct reasoning, both deductive and inductive.
Section 251 taught by Prof. Hutcheson
Section 252 taught by Prof. Joy

3301 PHILOSOPHICAL ISSUES

This course examines the great philosophical concepts which through the years have challenged the best thoughts of people and have contributed to the fulfillment of the good life. Emphasis upon the applicability of those concepts to human life in our time and to the development of intellectual perspective. Approximately one half of this course will focus on the student's critical thinking skills.
This course will be taught at Kelly AFB in San Antonio. Instructor TBA.

3319 WESTERN RELIGION

A study of the basic tenets of Judaism and Christianity, this course examines their doctrinal differences, and a critical analysis of some of the perennial problems central to each.
Taught by Prof. Joy

3340 SYMBOLIC LOGIC

A study of the logic of propositions through propositional calculi, formal proofs, and first-order functional calculi. Also included is an investigation into the axiomatic method as used in logic and mathematics, including the concepts of completeness and consistency.
Taught by Prof. McKinney

3350B PHILOSOPHY AND LITERATURE

This course is intended to explain the relation between philosophy and literature. The main theme will be a comparison of the concepts of freedom in literature and in philosophic analysis.
Taught by Prof. Geuras

4350 PHILOSOPHY OF THE ARTS

This course involves a critical and historical examination of the most important (profound and influential) answers to the question, "What is art?"
Taught by Prof. Gordon

4355 PHILOSOPHICAL THEORY OF SCIENCE

This course is a study of the major theories concerning knowledge, belief, certainty, and perception. Topics covered will include empiricism, rationalism, realism, and idealism.
Taught by Prof. Hutcheson

4388 ASIAN PHILOSOPHY

This course is a gateway to Eastern thought. Topics cover Tian (Heaven), Di (Earth) and Ren (Man or Woman), with issues ranging from the status of man in the world, the meaning of life, the meaning of death, emotions, freedom, happiness, and truth. Mainstream schools such as Confucianism, Taoism, and Buddhism will be introduced. Come to class with stupidity, not wisdom. Nothing does more harm than bad wisdom.
Taught by Prof. Zhu

The *Phi Sigma Tau* Bulletin

Editor Jo Ann Carson
CTL Coordinator Paul Wilson
Technical Advisor Beverly Pairett

The Bulletin is published in the fall and spring by the SWT Department of Philosophy. Please direct all communications to the Department of Philosophy, Southwest Texas State University, San Marcos, Texas 78666.

Telephone: 512/245-2285
Fax: 512/245-8335
E-mail: JC28@SWT.EDU

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Southwest Texas State University
San Marcos, Texas 78666

