



# The Phi Sigma Tau

Bulletin

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

Spring 1999

Celebrating the SWT Centennial: 1899-1999

Issue 9

**Philosophy Symposium**  
**Southwest Texas State University**  
**Evans Liberal Arts Building, Room 118**  
**March 6, 1999**



9:30 Registration/Coffee in Foyer of Evans Auditorium

Morning Session (10:00-12:00)

- 10:00 Melissa Lomax-LeBeau Southwest Texas State University  
"Camus' Absurd"
- 10:30 Michael Arfken Southwest Texas State University  
"The Nature of Self-Affirmation"
- 11:00 Clinton Tolley Wheaton College  
"Plato/Socrates: A Dialectical Reading of the Platonic Dialogues"
- 11:30 Matthew Flamm Texas A&M University  
"A Jamesian Defense of the Pragmatist Conception of Truth Against a Possible Form of Deductivism"

Afternoon Session (2:00-4:30)

- 2:00 Jennifer Runnels Southwest Texas State University  
"Duty as a Motive in the Philosophy of Immanuel Kant"
- 2:30 Michael Royal Wheaton College  
"Kant's Ostensible Antithesis of "Public" and "Private" and the Subversion of the Language of Authority in "An Answer to the Question: 'What Is Enlightenment?'"
- 3:00 Andrei Buckareff Texas A&M University  
"Evolution, Suffering, and Divine Action in Process Theism: A Critique"
- 3:30 Joseph Magee University of St. Thomas  
"Aristotle, Sensation, and Supervenience"
- 4:00 Curtis Franks Rice University  
"The Truth About Gravity and the Weight of Truth"

## NEWS FROM THE DELTA

From the President: Reflections on Water, Chaos, and Hope

Fellow Philosophy Students:

The semester has reached the point of no return, and mid-terms loom above us all.

Hopefully, the post-midterm trauma of this semester will not exceed that of the last. Many of us still suffer, either directly or indirectly, from the effects of what has been dubbed by many students, faculty, and staff "The Semester From Hell." The excessive rains, which infiltrated my own home, as well as that of Critical Thinking Lab Coordinator Paul Wilson and countless others, catalyzed other events which helped to plummet the hopes (and grades) of much of the student population. Thankfully our administration kept our best interests in mind, and acted appropriately in order to accommodate students who had suffered losses.

As I carried a single duffel bag (full of clothes I managed to salvage before the water in my home crept above my waistline) to my girlfriend's apartment (now ex-girlfriend-I hold the flood responsible), I remembered Thales, and cursed him. After settling and drying, I ventured out into the chaos known as post-flood San Marcos. Despite the absence of any electricity or working traffic signals, beer had sold out of every convenience store, grocery store, and liquor store within a fifteen mile radius. Only when tragedy strikes do college students decide to prioritize their lives. But who could blame them? Having nothing else to do, I lit a few candles and listened to the cries from the keg party two floors down, after returning empty-handed from my quest to procure some basic toiletries.

I thought to myself, could we, given enough knowledge, have mathematically predicted this disaster and its effect? Could we ever hold an equation responsible for such emotional turmoil? Could developments in chaos theory help us derive such an equation? Those questions reverberate within me to this day, and I still struggle for answers. No finite number of philosophy courses could have ever completely prepared me for what many of us endured last semester; but as a philosophy student, I found that despite the disorder which surrounded me, I could still hide within myself and reflect on my situation. I found solipsism to be an especially comforting philosophical position throughout the trauma,

since it became the only way for me to believe that I had some limited control over my surroundings. Obviously, my belief in the position dwindled before I decided to write this letter. If it had not, I would be writing only to myself, which seems absurd.

After the flood, I realized how powerless we are, and how hopeless and depressing life can be, and on that note, I wish you all a great semester.

Seriously, this semester looks much more promising than last. I hesitate to make that claim, but I think it is well-justified. It seems that more and more philosophy students interact with one another. Phi Sigma Tau aspires to initiate projects in addition to the dialogue series and philosophy symposium. We want and need input from all philosophy students about possible activities which would help promote and encourage the serious academic pursuit of philosophy. Hopefully, we all will graduate some day, and afterwards must find some way to continue our pursuits, either in a graduate program, or in a job which allows us to use our education. Personally, I would like to find some way to assist and support philosophy students who wish to proceed to the next level of academic study. The more graduate students our department produces, the more our reputation builds, and the more likely the department will claim a permanent home in some building on the campus which is not condemned. The small size of our department may facilitate a sense of community among the philosophy majors and minors, which could promote more dialogue between faculty and students, and lead to other developments within the department. Feel free to contact me or any other Phi Sigma Tau member for any suggestions which would help further the interests of the department, and ultimately, of its students.

James Hulgán

President, Phi Sigma Tau, Delta

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# PHILOSOPHY DIALOGUE SERIES

## SWT- SPRING 1999

Phone: 245-2285/ Location: University Service Center (USC) 2nd Floor

	MONDAY	TUESDAY	WEDNESDAY	THURSDAY	FRIDAY	SATURDAY
<i>Philosophy of Love</i>	FEBRUARY 15 12 noon <i>Friends or Lovers: What's the Difference?</i> Prof. Glenn Rawson	16	17 2pm ASK A PHILOSOPHER: Prof. Jo Ann Carson	18	19	20
<b>PRIMATE ETHICS</b>	22	23 2pm <i>A Survey of Thinking on Primate Ethics</i> Prof. Vince Luizzi	24	25	26 1pm FILM: <i>Gorillas in the Mist</i>	27
<b>Freedom and Determinism</b>	MARCH 1 12 noon ASK A PHILOSOPHER: Prof. Bob Dyal	2	3	4 12:30pm <i>Peter Van Inwagen's Third Argument for Incompatibilism</i> Prof. Rui Zhu	5 2pm Phi Sigma Tau Initiation and Reception	6 10-12am, 2-4:30pm Symposium Evans Liberal Arts Rm.118
7	8	9	10	11	12	13
<b>M</b>	<b>I</b>	<b>D</b>	<b>T</b>	<b>E</b>	<b>R</b>	<b>M</b>
14	15	16	17	18	19	20
<b>SPRING BREAK</b>	<b>SPRING BREAK</b>	<b>SPRING BREAK</b>	<b>SPRING BREAK</b>	<b>SPRING BREAK</b>	<b>SPRING BREAK</b>	<b>SPRING BREAK</b>
<b>PHILOSOPHY OF TIME</b>	22 3pm <i>Understanding Time Travel</i> Prof. Gil Fulmer	23	24 2pm <i>St. Augustine and Time</i> Prof. Dean Geuras	25	26	27
<b>WOMEN and SPIRITUALITY</b>	29	30 12:30pm <i>On Mary Daly's "Beyond God the Father"</i> Prof. Rebekah Ross-Fountain	31	APRIL 1 2pm <i>Heroines in the Bible</i> Prof. Rebecca Raphael	2	3
<i>JOHN STUART MILL</i>	5	6 12:30pm <i>Mill on the Subjugation of Women</i> Prof. Lynne Fulmer	7	8 12:30pm <i>Utilitarianism and the Is-Ought Fallacy</i> Paul Wilson	9	10
<b>Contemporary Ethical Issues: Public Office and the Right to Privacy</b>	12 THIS WEEK: TBA	13	14	15	16 2pm Phi Sigma Tau meeting	17

*Dialogue topics and times are subject to change; for more information, please call the Philosophy department, 512/245-2285.*

**Turn page over for brief history of philosophy**

**Causes of Death for Some of the Great Philosophers**  
by Stiv Fleishman

**Thales: Drowning**

**Parmenides: It wasn't anything at all**

**Ockham: Cut while shaving**

**Russell: Cut while being shaved by one who did not shave himself**

**Descartes: Stopped thinking**

**Spinoza: Substance abuse**

**Leibniz: Monadnucleosis**

**Darwin: Natural causes**

**Hume: Unnatural causes**

**Kant: Transcendental causes (although it was his own idea)**

**Paley: By design**

**Heidegger: By Dasein**

**Meinong: Climbing accident**

**Neurath: Boating accident**

**G. E. Moore: By his own hand, obviously**

**Sheffer: Stroke**

**Sartre: Nausea**

**Pascal: Became despondent after losing a wager**

**Wittgenstein: Tried to see if death was an experience one lived through**  
(Alternate: fell off a ladder)

**Hegel: Collision with owl at dusk**



From left to right: Professor Fulmer, Justin Glowney, James Hulgan, Dan Bissett

### SWT GOES TO ETHICS BOWL

Three *Phi Sigma Tau* members of *Delta* chapter represented Southwest Texas State University at the South Central Texas Regional Ethics Bowl. Held at St. Mary's University in San Antonio in mid-November, the competition featured teams from eight Texas colleges and universities. Team members fielded a set of questions posing significant ethical problems ranging over such areas as professional ethics, personal relationships, and political and social ethics. Adapted from the "College Bowl" format, the Ethics Bowl gives teams of students an opportunity to exercise and sharpen their moral reasoning skills in a cordial and collaborative environment. St. Mary's hopes to make the competition an annual event.

The 1998 team--Daniel Bissett, Justin Glowney, and James Hulgan--was coached by Professor Lynne Fulmer. Many thanks to these students and to Professor Fulmer.

#### Paul Wilson's Lab Report

Welcome to the new year and semester. It's business as usual in the Critical Thinking Lab, but we have another exciting semester of dialogues scheduled for our philosophy dialogue series. Topics for Spring 1999 include: Freedom and Determinism, Primate Ethics, Philosophy of Time, John Stuart Mill, and Women and Spirituality. Professors Jo Ann Carson

and Bob Dyal are our featured speakers for "Ask a Philosopher," some improvisational/open topic dialogues scheduled in February and March

#### The *Phi Sigma Tau* Bulletin

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### FALL 1999 COURSES

#### Philosophy 3321-Contemporary Moral Problems

Professor Audrey McKinney - MW 12:30-1:45

Exploration of philosophical dimensions of such contemporary moral problems as abortion, euthanasia, poverty, animal rights, nuclear war, and privacy in a computer age.

#### Philosophy 3332- Social and Political Philosophy

Professor Vince Luizzi - MWF 11-11:50

Critical examination of major theories concerning the organization of societies and governments.

#### Philosophy 3333 - Feminist Theory

Professor Rebekah Ross-Fountain -TH 12:30-1:45

Examination of major feminist theories including liberal feminism, Marxist feminism, radical feminism, and post-modernist feminism.

#### Philosophy 4350 - Philosophy of the Arts

Professor Jeff Gordon - MWF 10-10:50

Critical and historical analysis of the nature of aesthetic experience and creative genius.

#### Philosophy 4356 - Philosophical Theory of Knowledge

Professor Marie-Luise Kalsi - TH 11-12:15

Study of the major theories concerning knowledge, belief, certainty, and perception including such topics as empiricism, rationalism, realism, and idealism

#### Philosophy 4388 - Zen

Professor Rui Zhu - MWF 2-2:50

Reading the Zen Koan to unravel the deepest wisdom of being one with everything, to say the unsayable, to hear the true silence.

#### Honors 3370 - The Problem of Evil

Professor Peter Hutcheson - MWF 11-11:50

Examination of major attempts to answer this question: Is it reasonable to believe in an all-knowing, all-powerful, and all-good God, despite the appearance of pointless evil?

#### Women's Studies 3376 - Images of Women

Professor Audrey McKinney - T 3:30-6:15

Critical examination of the images of women prevalent in Western culture, with special attention on the fragmentary and conflictive character of the images.



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PHILOSOPHY CHAT ROOM  
[www.swt.edu/acad\\_depts/philos/](http://www.swt.edu/acad_depts/philos/)

### **Words from the Chair**

We are pleased to announce the appointment of Dr. Rebecca Raphael as Assistant Professor of Religion in the Department of Philosophy. Dr. Raphael joined the faculty in January after the Department conducted a national search last fall to fill the position. Dr. Raphael received a B.S. in Speech from Northwestern University and did her graduate work at University of Chicago, which conferred on her the degrees of A.M. in Humanities and Ph.D. in Divinity. The title of her doctoral dissertation is "Divine Word, Divine Song: Inspiration and Authority in Hesiod and First Isaiah." This semester Dr. Raphael is teaching Comparative Religions and Old Testament: The Hebrew Scriptures; both courses are part of the Department's new interdisciplinary minor in Religious Studies.

Congratulations and welcome to Prof. Raphael.