



PHI SIGMA TAU BULLETIN

TEXAS STATE UNIVERSITY

FALL 2014, ISSUE 27

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WELCOME HOME PHILOSOPHERS!



OFFICERS FALL 2014

- **President:**
David Tamez
- **Vice President:**
Anthony Megie
- **Secretary:**
Victoria Venturella
- **Public Relations:**
Travis Stockton
- **Faculty Advisor:**
Prof. Jo Ann Carson

These are strange and exciting times of significant change around the Texas State Department of Philosophy, and we invite you to join us! After two years in Derrick Hall the department returns to the middle of the Quad and the newly renovated, and newly named, Comal Building. We have a lovely new glass-walled Dialogue Room to showcase our Dialogue Series and to welcome the University and San Marcos communities into reasoned and challenging conversations. We also have a new seminar room, perfect for our growing graduate program in Applied Philosophy and Ethics. We not only have new space, we have twelve new full-time faculty members in the department, including specialists in American Pragmatism, the life and thought of Martin Luther King, Jr., Philosophy of Science, Bioethics, the Philosophy of Compassion, Nietzsche, and five recent graduates of our MAAPE program. There are now so many of us that we have already outgrown our new space and we retain offices on the 2nd floor of Derrick Hall. We continue to teach most students who pass through the university. In Fall 2013 alone that meant over 5000 students, more than we taught in the full year just 6 years ago. MAAPE graduates have found teaching positions at The University of the Incarnate Word, Our Lady of the Lake University, Northeast Lakeview College, San Antonio College, Colorado Mountain College, and more. And, graduates of our programs are now in PhD programs at the University of North Texas, the University of Kansas, and Northwestern University. There are other transitions this year. Professor Rebecca Raphael will complete her 3rd and final year as the NEH Distinguished Teaching Professor in the Humanities (3 of the past 4 NEH Professors have been in our department!) continuing her work to bring disparate parts of our university into dialogue about the meaning, place, and importance of religion and religious studies. For the first time since 1966 we open an academic year without the company and good humor of Professor Glenn Joy, the first person hired by the then Southwest Texas State College to teach philosophy, and the first tenured member of the department, who has been named Distinguished Professor Emeritus and now lives in California. And, we open the academic year for the first time in 33 years without Professor Luizzi as Department Chair. Professor Luizzi will spend most of the Fall 2014 semester at Dartmouth College, and will return to full-time teaching in Spring 2015. The flourishing state of our department, and our beautiful new quarters, owe much to his wisdom, leadership, and sensibilities. Thank you, Vince!

Dr. Craig Hanks
Professor and Chair, Department of Philosophy

TEXAS STATE UNIVERSITY PHILOSOPHY DIALOGUE SERIES



The Texas State Philosophy Department, in conjunction with *The American Democracy Project*, is proud to present The Fall Dialogue Series at Texas State. The Series is a platform for open, critical discussion of a number of topics and is returning for its 20th year, kicking off on Constitution Day, Wednesday, September 17th in our new, spacious Dialogue Room in the Comal Building. Some highlights for the upcoming semester will include:

A dialogue with Jo Ann Carson (TXST) and the students of the Philosophy of Education course on September 23rd, 3:30P on *Nurturing a Democratic Community in the Classroom*. Wednesday dialogues at the San Marcos Public Library* will also begin this week, with MAAPE students presenting *The American Democracy Project* on September 24th, 3:30P.

During Week 5 of the Dialogue Series, Carol Adams will contribute to the topic *Expanding the Moral Realm*, presenting *The Sexual Politics of Meat* on October 20th, 11:00A. As she describes it, the presentation "provides an ecofeminist analysis of the interconnected oppressions of sexism, racism, and speciesism."

The following week, *Civil Rights/Human Rights* will feature Catherine Hawkins from the TXST School of Social Work, presenting *Women's Rights as Human Rights in Ethiopia* on September 29th, 11:00A. That same day, Jorge Valadez (Our Lady of the Lake University) will discuss *Humans Rights Issues related to the Israeli-Palestinian Conflict in Gaza and Israel* at 2:00P.

For more information on the series, and to pick up your own copy of the full Dialogue Calendar, come by the Philosophy Main Office (Comal 102.) *The San Marcos Public Library portion of the Dialogue Series is sponsored by the Philosophy Dialogue Series, San Marcos Public Library, Texas State Common Experience, and National Endowment for the Humanities. Located at 625 E. Hopkins Street.

TXST EXCELS AT INTERNATIONAL BUSINESS ETHICS COMPETITION

Jo Ann Carson, TXST Faculty

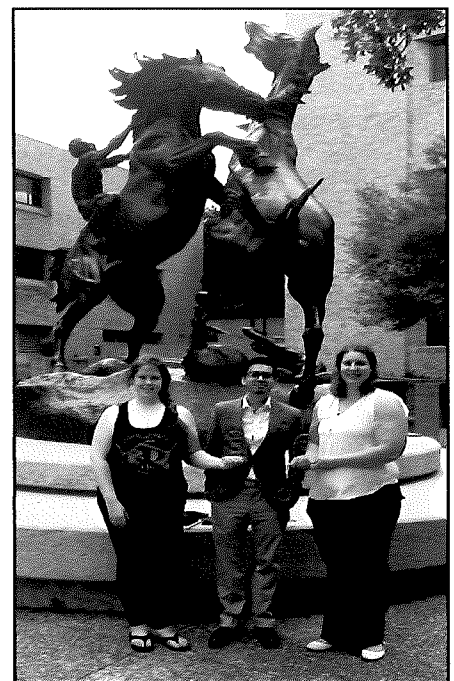
Three graduate students from Texas State brought home two first place trophies from the International Business Ethics Case Competition held in Tucson, Arizona on May 7-9. The Texas State team of Shanna Shultz, Alejandro David Tamez, and Coleen Watson bested teams from England, Canada, France, Hungary, Spain, and the U.S. to win both the 30-minute and 10-minute presentation at the graduate level on the topic "Is That Blood on Your Shirt? Exploitation in Garment Manufacturing."

The International Business Ethics Case Competition (IBECC) is the oldest and most recognized intercollegiate business ethics competition. The event is held in conjunction with the Ethics & Compliance Officer Association's (ECO) annual Sponsoring Partner Leadership Forum.

Each team selects a topic from any area of business ethics and prepares a presentation describing the problem and proposing a solution. Judges listen to the team's presentation, question students and then give the team feedback. Presentations cover the legal, financial and ethical dimensions of the case, but special emphasis is placed on the strength of the ethical analysis of the problem and the ethical acceptability of the solution.

The Texas State team constructed a hypothetical situation in which they served as ethical consultants to GAP, Inc. concerning the tragic events that occurred at the Rana Plaza, a GAP vendor, where over 1,000 people were killed in a building collapse in April of last year. Using what they termed the Golden Rule Standard, they argued that GAP has an ethical obligation to sign the Accord on Fire and Building Safety in Bangladesh as a step toward expanding its value framework toward a sustainable capitalism that recognizes human rights and advances the common good while simultaneously meeting the demands of a profit driven business.

Schultz is in the masters program in Communication Studies, and both Tamez and Watson are philosophy students in the Master of Applied Philosophy and Ethics program. Team advisor is Jo Ann Carson.



From Left to Right: Shanna Shultz, Alejandro David Tamez, and Coleen Watson.

PHILOSOPHY ALUMNI BANQUET

Our annual Alumni Banquet will be on Friday, October 3rd from 6:00-9:00PM. This is a catered event, with dinner options for both omnivorian and vegetarian diets. The tickets this year will \$20.00 for attendees. It is being held at The Price Center, 222 W. San Antonio Street San Marcos, Texas 78666. Please contact Beverly Pairett at philosophy@txstate.edu for more information.



Right: The Historic Price Seniors Center. Financed, and named after, philanthropist H. Y. Price, Jr., this grand structure was donated to the City of San Marcos in 1995 to be used for "youth and/or senior citizen programs."

Photo courtesy of www.price-center.org.

NEW FACES IN THE PHILOSOPHY DEPT.

Administrative Assistant II

Camrie Pipper

M.A., Literature,
Texas State University

"When I'm not spending time with my nieces and nephews, I like to watch classic movies and read dystopian novels. Some of my favorite writers are Margaret Atwood and J.R.R. Tolkien."

Full-Time M.A. Lecturers

Seth Barton

M.A., Applied Philosophy & Ethics,
Texas State University

Cody Chumbley

M.A., Applied Philosophy & Ethics,
Texas State University

"In my free time (outside of Philosophy) I'm an avid sports fan and love watching/playing all kinds of sports, especially basketball, volleyball, or soccer."

Kyla Hobbs-Darilek

M.A., Applied Philosophy & Ethics,
Texas State University

"In my spare time, I enjoy reading, biking, camping, taking photographs, and road trips in any direction (though usually west.)"

Samantha Pepas

M.A., Applied Philosophy & Ethics,
Texas State University

"In my free time I enjoy reading, dancing, and living a dynamic life!"

Coleen Watson

M.A., Applied Philosophy & Ethics,
Texas State University

"I love competing and training in Olympic Weightlifting, exploring the breweries and pubs of central Texas, and cheering on my New Orleans Saints (as well as the Texas State Bobcats.)"

Full-Time Ph.D. Lecturers

Steve Bein

Ph.D., Philosophy, University of Hawaii at Manoa (Honolulu)

Specialization: Ethics (applied, theoretical, biomedical, environmental), Japanese philosophy, Chinese philosophy.

Charles Hobbs

Ph.D., Philosophy, South Illinois University (Carbondale)

Specialization: Classical American Pragmatism, Ethics.

"I like to spend time with my wife Tamara, our nine-year-old son Adrian, and our one-year-old daughter Maryam. I also enjoy selected history and biography."

Joseph Laycock

Ph.D., Religion and Society, Boston University. Tenured-Track at TXST.

Specialization: Religion in Americas, American Catholicism, Sociology of Religion.

"I once coached boxing and still practice boxing and other martial arts in Austin."

Greg Moses

Ph.D., Philosophy, UT (Austin)

Specialization: Nonviolence, Social and Political Philosophy, Race and Racism, African American Philosophy, ML King, Jr., Peace, Ethics.

"My free time is for restaurants and bookstores, TV shows and concerts, reading and writing."

Burkay Ozturk

Ph.D., Philosophy, University of Illinois at Chicago

Specialization: Philosophy of Science

Nevitt Reesor

Ph.D., UT (Austin)

Specialization: Nietzsche, History of Ethics.

Jonathan Surovell

Ph.D., Philosophy, University of Pittsburgh

Specialization: Metaphysics, Epistemology, History of Analytic Philosophy.

FAVORITE SUMMER READS FROM AROUND THE DEPARTMENT

Amelle Benedikt: My funnest summer reading was Lydia Davis' *The Collected Stories of Lydia Davis* which binds together 4 volumes of her short stories, almost 200 stories in all. These little word-voyages ranged from several words, to several pages. Davis describes so many worlds, for example, the literary, pencil-wielding world of an anxious language translator, or the lonely old man in a foreign country, or the emotional world of an unloved daughter, or the vexed world of a pacifist who becomes pest-ridden, or the over-observed world of a little boy in a house of 13 woman, or the shrinking world of a weak brother-in-law, or the fantasy world of an unnoticed housecleaner. Davis describes such a variety of self-aware beings that she provides hope, perhaps even evidence, that the inner life of the "other" is not inscrutable for those with imagination and empathy. Check it out.

Bob Fischer: Karen Stohr's *On Manners*. It's a fascinating investigation into the moral reasons behind etiquette rules. If—like George Costanza—you've ever wondered why you aren't supposed to bring Pepsi and Ring Dings to a dinner party, then this is the book for you.

Burkay Ozturk: My favorite summer read has been Deirdre McCloskey's *Bourgeois Dignity: Why Economics Can't Explain the World*. McCloskey, a renowned economist and political philosopher at the University of Illinois, argues in this recent book that the traditional theories of economics can't explain the great economic transformation the world has experienced during the last 2 centuries. These traditional theories incorrectly attribute the increase of median global per capita income from 2 dollars per day to 30 dollars per day to psychological (Weber) or economic (Marx, Engels and North) causes. However, according to McCloskey, the actual cause of the immense increase was neither economic nor psychological; it was ethical. Unlike the societies preceding them, the new global community has increasingly embraced a new ethics: *Dignity and freedom for all*, regardless of race, gender, nationality or social class. Dignity gives us hope to improve our social standing and financial well-being, freedom gives us the ability to effect that improvement. Through these two, even the people of very humble origins or marginalized identities gain an unprecedented incentive and means to be economically productive. This, McCloskey argues, explains the great economic transformation we have witnessed.

Chris Perez: *Meditations with Meister Eckhart* by Matthew Fox. The book is about the mystic, prophet, feminist philosopher, and declared heretic, Meister Eckhart (1260-1329.) Although short at 131 pages, it is a solid compilation of his writings. There is a brief introduction by Fox, who explains how Eckhart's approach to Christianity was radically different, resembling Buddhist or Hindu thought more than the traditional Christian view of the day (the Inquisition was in full-swing.) The question that this reading brought out was, which of the two views, Eckhart's or the highly conservative Vatican's, would Jesus agree with? The answer is clear to me. The next question was, how often does it happen that the original teachings are so twisted, used as a power device? The other book is Michael Foley's *Embracing the Ordinary*. I love Foley's humor, having read *The Age of Absurdity* while in Amsterdam. The book is slow at times, the subject is the quotidian or rather the ordinary, and a large amount is spent on Proust and Joyce, which can be slow. But his point is clear; there are rewards for paying attention to the beauty of the ordinary moment, the here and now. From everyday speech to a day at the office, he focuses on the banality of life.

Nevitt Reesor: I read "Zen in the Art of Archery" by Eugen Herrigel, first published in the US in 1953. It's an interesting and helpful view of Zen, though it presents a rather elitist perspective, which is not unusual. I've also been reading selections from "Lives of the Noble Greeks and Romans" by the first-century Greek and Roman historian, Plutarch, in preparation for a week of seminars at St. John's College in Santa Fe, NM in early August. The books are a collection of biographies, which can be read as comparative character studies. At the request of a friend, I've been skimming "For a Church to Come: Experiments in Postmodern Theory and Anabaptist Thought" by Peter C. Blum, forward by John Caputo. Blum tries to show similarities between Anabaptist thought, especially in contemporary figures like John Howard Yoder (now deceased), and philosophers like Nietzsche, Heidegger, Derrida, Merleau-Ponty, and others. It sounded like a strange idea at first, but the author makes an interesting case, at least based on my very cursory reading. I've read a few essays from Paul Tillich's 1948 book, "The Shaking of the Foundations." Tillich, who taught for many years at Union Theological Seminary, was one of the 20th-century's most influential Christian theologians. Reading his essays makes me wonder if my long-incoming antipathy for Christianity has been due in part to a needlessly narrow conception of divinity.

Katherine Rompel: *The Red Tent*, by Anita Diamant. While the original account of Dinah's story in the Book of Genesis is violent and brief, Diamant breathes new life into ancient text with her retelling of the narrative of Jacob, his wives, and his extraordinary daughter. Combining history, culture and imagination, this book takes readers into the mystic Red Tent, the center of creation within which children are born, communities are bonded, and women share the divine secrets of their lives and traditions.

Rebekah Ross: One of my for fun reads this summer was Neil Gaiman's *The Ocean at the End of the Lane*. It is creepy and beautiful. If you are inclined to like creepy, beautiful things, then I would highly recommend it as a captivating, quick read. The novel was appealing to myself and my 18 year old son, and that is no small accomplishment.

Coleen Watson: I read the memoir *Orange is the New Black* by Piper Kerman, which the Netflix series is based on. Much like the fantastic show (which Kerman works as a consultant on), OitNB gives great insight into Kerman's experiences living in a women's minimum security prison, separated from loved ones and the rest of society. While you don't find some of the dramatic plot lines or flashbacks that the show has, readers will still recognize the people that characters, such as Red, Crazy Eyes, and Taystee, were based on. Of course, this firsthand account of the broken American justice system raises many questions about crime and punishment, but mostly I found myself thankful that the dumb decisions of my youth didn't come back to ruin the rest of my life as was the case with most of these women.

Lijun Yuan: The Works of Alison Jaggar, a Professor of Distinction in Philosophy and Women & Gender Studies. This year, the 38th Annual Bertram Morris Colloquium at CU-Boulder celebrated Jaggar's work in a special conference titled *In the Unjust Meantime: A Conference in Honor of Alison M. Jaggar*. In addition to three keynote speakers, there will be panel presentations by professional philosophers who studied with Jaggar at CU-Boulder and who currently work in "non-ideal theory."

STUDENTS IN PHILOSOPHY

TXST SYMPOSIUM & TEXAS PHILOSOPHICAL CALL FOR PAPERS

18th Annual Texas State Philosophy Symposium

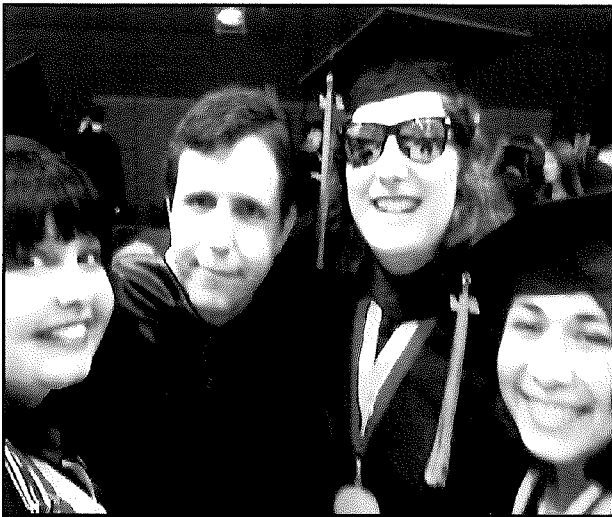
Hosted in April 2015. Undergraduate or graduate papers on any philosophical topic are welcome. Papers should be suitable for a 20-minute presentation, submitted for blind review (author's name on cover page only), and are due in February 2015. Send by email (.doc or .docx file) to Jo Ann Carson, jc28@txstate.edu.

Texas Philosophical

This journal is open to any philosophical essays written by Texan undergraduate students during the FY14-15 school year. Deadline for consideration is noon on 31st May 2015. Please check TexasPhilosophical.com for information regarding submission. Papers are to be emailed as a word document or in rich text format to TXPHIL@txstate.edu.

ETHICS BOWL

The Texas Regional Ethics Bowl competition will be held at St. Mary's University in San Antonio on Saturday, November 15, 2014. Qualifying teams will participate in the 19th Intercollegiate Ethics Bowl on February 22, 2015 in Costa Mesa, CA. For more information, please contact Jo Ann Carson, jc28@txstate.edu.



Getting ready to walk at the Spring 2014 Graduation Ceremony in Strahan Coliseum. From Left to Right: Katherine Rompel (MA '14), Zachary Russell (MA '14), Coleen Watson (MA '14) and Shaula Rocha (BA '14).

ALUMNI UPDATES

Seth Barton (MA '14) is a lecturer for the TXST Philosophy Department.

Tim Brown (MA '12) was recently promoted to Head JV Coach for Women's Basketball at Asbury University in Wilmore, KY.

Chris Cates (BA '14) recently became the Manager of Yard Operations for Union Pacific Railroad in Colton, CA.

Jenn Garcia (MA '13) was promoted to manager at Jo on the Go Coffeehouse here in San Marcos, TX.

Emma Long (BA '13) has been accepted into the University of New Orleans' Graduate Program in History, receiving both a scholarship and graduate teaching assistant position.

Kandace Lytle (MA '11) recently became the Director of Marketing for the Fort Bend Chamber of Commerce in Sugar Land, TX.

Lacey Merritt (BA '13) recently became a Field Organizer for the Wendy Davis Campaign for Governor in Texas.

Samantha Pepas (MA '14) is a lecturer for the TXST Philosophy Department.

Shaula Rocha (BA '14) recently began working in administration for the Central Texas Veterinary Specialty Hospital in Austin, TX.

Katherine Rompel (MA '14) is a lecturer for the TXST Philosophy Department.

Coleen Watson (MA '14) is a lecturer for the TXST Philosophy Department.

ΦΣΤ ACTIVITIES

In addition to our regular dialogues, Phi Sigma Tau members will be coming together this fall for several fun activities. Members will join in movie nights, bowling at Sunset Lanes, participation in the Talk of the Times, and fundraising with our Book/Bake Sales.

TALK OF THE TIMES

Talk of the Times, an activity of the *American Democracy Project* at TXST University, is a weekly open forum on current events and issues led by members of Phi Sigma Tau. Discussions are held on Fridays in the Comal Building.

WELCOME OUR NEW ASSISTANT PROFESSOR OF RELIGIOUS STUDIES

Rebecca Raphael, TXST Faculty

How do films proffer religious worlds? What does the Virgin Mary have to do with UFOs? Are otherkin groups a religion? Why did people demonize Dungeons and Dragons? If you find these questions intriguing, you will want to meet Professor Laycock.

This fall, Joseph Laycock joins the Philosophy Department as Assistant Professor of Religious Studies. He comes with a doctorate from Boston University's religious studies program, with specializations in American religious history, American Catholic movements, new religious movements, and various religion and pop culture topics. Professor Laycock's research includes books on a 20th century Catholic visionary, communities of people who self-identify as vampires, and case studies of moral panics in the '80s. (As a teenage D&D player in the early '80s, I am arguably part of the data for that book.)

Professor Laycock is also a blogger for the online magazine *Religion Dispatches*, where he writes on current religious issues and controversies. A full list of print and online publications is available on his personal website.

As a former high school teacher, Professor Laycock once coached boxing. He still practices boxing and other martial arts in Austin for fun and fitness. He also enjoys travelling and exploring unusual places and subcultures, both in Texas and around the world.

We are happy to welcome Professor Laycock to the faculty and look forward to building religious studies at Texas State.

To check out Professor Laycock's work, visit the online magazine *Religion Dispatches* at <http://religiondispatches.org> and his persona website at <https://txstate.academia.edu/JosephLaycock>.

TEXAS STATE UNIVERSITY

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UPCOMING CONFERENCES ACROSS THE COUNTRY

Network of Philosophy of the Social Sciences

May 8-10, 2015; submissions due December 15, 2014.

For individual papers, submit an abstract of 800-1000 words, prepared for anonymous review. For symposium proposals, submit a single file, prepared for anonymous review, that describes the theme of the symposium in 400-500 words, identifies the participants (a maximum of 4), and provides 500-600 word abstracts for each of their papers.

Website: <http://poss-rt.net>

Hypatia Call for Papers: Exploring Collaborative Contestations

May 28-30, 2015; submissions due January 1, 2015.

This conference welcomes papers and panel proposals on topics that address: a commitment to diversity, broadly construed; an openness to disagreement among feminists on difficult issues; and opportunities for collaboration among feminist philosophers within and across various disciplines, subfields, and theoretical orientations. Submissions on any topic in feminist philosophy will be considered. Submission requires a 250-500 word proposal for paper or panel.

Website: <http://www.villanova.edu>

Pacific University Undergraduate Philosophy Conference

April 17-18, 2015; submissions due February 1, 2015.

Papers are required to be of philosophical content, but there are no specific restrictions on subject matter within the arena of philosophical discussion itself. Papers should be approximately 3000 words (10-12 pages.) Electronic submissions (as Word documents) are required and should be sent to: boersema@pacificu.edu. Submissions should include both the paper and an abstract (that is, a 100-200 word summary of the paper.) Selected papers from the conference will be published in Volume 5 (2014) of the journal *Res Cogitans*.

Website: <http://www.pacificu.edu>

Please check out the American Philosophical Association's *Calls for Papers* webpage for a complete list of conferences happening in the U.S. and around the world: <http://www.apaonline.org>.