

Philosophy@stfx.ca

**A newsletter from St. F. X.'s Department of Philosophy
Spring 2004**

Welcome to the first issue of the Philosophy Department's Newsletter. In it, we hope to give readers an idea about the Philosophy programme at St FX, some information on the teaching and research interests of the professors in the Department, and a list of the courses we are offering next year.

Philosophy at StFX is one of the more popular departments in the Faculty of Arts. Our professors are noted for their teaching in the annual review of universities in Macleans, and many are known, internationally, for their research. In fact, in the last external review of the Department (2002), we were described as "almost certainly the best small Department [of Philosophy] in the country."

The Philosophy Department is committed to teaching and to providing students with a broad range of courses that do not compromise on standards. It's easy to see why philosophy graduates do so well on LSAT, GMAT and GRE tests (see page 4 for more). Our second and third year courses cover Ethics - theoretical and applied - philosophy of science, of literature, of religion, and of human nature, as well as all of the major periods in the history of philosophy.

But the Philosophy Department is actively involved in research as well. A third of the department has received grants from the SSHRC – Canada's leading research council on the humanities - and it publishes, on average, one book, two edited books, and 17 scholarly papers each year.

The Department is also undergoing renewal. We have new faculty members joining us this fall and in the fall of 2005 (more about this inside).

University study helps students to earn a living; philosophy contributes by studying what the *good life* is and how to *live well*.

Members of the Philosophy Department are happy to answer questions about courses and programs but also to talk more about what philosophy is. Or, you can just write phil@stfx.ca, or call 867-5085

Changes in 2004

Spring is a time of new beginnings – and several students who will be graduating with degrees in philosophy this year will be starting a new phase in their lives. Some of our recent graduates have gone on to careers in law school, business, consulting, management, religious studies. Among our graduates this year are Kathleen Ives, Student Union Vice President, Aime MacDonald, Jill MacKay, Cassandra Williams, Angela MacDougall, Adam Ledwell and Simon Clements. We wish all of them well in their future.

Dr. Nick Zunic, who has been teaching with us this year, will be leaving StFX for Toronto. Professor Zunic is a specialist in 19th century philosophy, and a product of the University of Toronto as well as of one of Europe's leading universities, the University of Leuven in Belgium. This year, he has been teaching ethics, and the philosophy of human nature; he has introduced students not only to the major figures in the history of philosophy but also to the philosophical writings of people like Jean Vanier. Professor Zunic has been a model of philosophy scholarship during his short time with us, and he will be missed.

Coming to StFX in the fall is Dr. Louis Groarke. Dr Groarke was here in 2002-03 in a limited term position, but he has decided that he finds StFX one of the best environments for doing philosophy in the country. There's more on Louis on page 3 of this newsletter. We are very happy to have him with us now in a tenure-track position.

Our renewal of faculty will continue into 2005. We are just now finishing our search for another specialist in contemporary Anglo-American philosophy and philosophy of language. More on the results in the next newsletter.

**Who's Who in Philosophy at StFX
(2004-05)**

William Sweet is Chair of the Philosophy Department and holds graduate degrees in philosophy, political science, and theology. He has studied (among other places) at the Universities of Ottawa, Saint Paul, Manitoba, Carleton, Paris, Vienna, and Berlin. Before coming to StFX, he taught in Ontario, Saskatchewan, Québec, and in France. He has been a visiting professor in India, Australia, and Belgium, has lectured in over 50 countries, and serves on the executive of a number of international philosophical organisations.

Professor Sweet's teaching interests include political and legal philosophy, the philosophy of religion, ethics, and cross-cultural philosophy. He is the author of four books, the editor of some 20 collections of essays in philosophy, and has published over one hundred scholarly papers; his work has been published in French, German, Polish, Farsi, Castilian, Gallego, and Chinese. Recent research in South Africa and India has been funded by a research grant from the Social Sciences and Humanities Research Council of Canada.

In earlier days, his avocations included rock climbing in the Canadian Rockies, music (he plays the guitar with very modest ability), Washin-Ryu Karate, and alpine skiing. For the past two years, he has been President of the University's Faculty Association.



Steven Baldner was educated at the University of Michigan (B.A., '73), the University of Louvain, at the University of Toronto (M.A., '74, Ph.D., '82); while at Toronto, he received a Licentiate degree ('79) from the Pontifical Institute of Mediaeval Studies. His primary academic interests are in 13th century philosophy, especially in natural philosophy and the problem of creation.

Professor Baldner has published a number of scholarly articles on Thomas Aquinas, Albert the Great, and Bonaventure; and (with William Carroll) a translation and study of Thomas' doctrine of creation. He also gives one or two formal papers each year on these authors at conferences or meetings of learned societies but the focus of his academic life is teaching. His full-time teaching appointments have been at Cardinal Muench Seminary (Fargo, North Dakota, 1981-1984); at St. Thomas More College (Saskatoon, 1984-1992), and at StFX. (since 1992). Dr. Baldner regularly teaches introductory philosophy, ethics, and Mediaeval Philosophy; he has also taught courses in metaphysics, the philosophy of religion, and Christianity and Science.

He is currently Co-ordinator of the Catholic Studies Program, in which he occasionally teaches; he

is half of the faculty complement in the Program in Classics, in which he regularly offers a course in Latin.

He writes that "I have understood the meaning of prime matter."



Christopher Byrne studied at the University of Toronto (BA '76; PhD '84) and the University of Heidelberg (MA '79), majoring in Philosophy, Political Science, and Ancient Greek. He has been a member of the StFX. Philosophy Department since 1985, teaching courses in ancient Greek Philosophy, logic, and ethics. He is also currently the Co-ordinator of the Classical Studies Programme at StFX, where he has taught an introduction to Ancient Greek and a survey of ancient Greek literature, principally Homer and the tragedians, in English translation.

Recent publications include "Plato, Justice, and the Beautiful Soul," *Canadian Aesthetics Journal* 7 (2002); "Aristotle on Physical Necessity and the Limits of Teleological Explanation." *Apeiron* 35 (2002), and "Matter and Aristotle's Material Cause." *Canadian Journal of Philosophy* 31 (2001). His current research concerns Aristotle and Plato's natural science and their views on the relation between physical necessity and the good.

He also spends much time correcting Prof. Baldner's views on prime matter.



Laura Byrne studied at McGill University (B.A.), the University of Nice, France (graduate studies in philosophy), and the University of Toronto (M.A., '81 and Ph.D., '87). She has taught previously at the University of Toronto, Dalhousie University, and the University of King's College, Halifax.

Professor Byrne has published articles on the application of formal logic to descriptions of social change (*Logic on the Track of Social Change*, D. Braybrooke, B. Brown, and P. Schotch with Laura Byrne (1995); Spinoza ("Reason and Emotion in Spinoza's *Ethics*: The Two Infinities," in *Spinoza: The Enduring Questions* (1994)); Nietzsche ("System and Contemporary Aspiration: A Hegelian Critique of Nietzsche," in *A Sense of the Contemporary*, 1989); feminism and philosophy ("The Self as Concrete Universal," in *Atlantis: A Woman's Studies Journal*, 1988); and Hegel ("Hegel's Criticism of Spinoza's Concept of the Attribute," in *Essays on Hegel's Logic*, 1990)).

Her current research concerns Spinoza's ethical theory and Early Modern natural philosophy, particularly the development of the concept of mass and the law of inertia in the 17th Century.

Besides philosophy, her principal interest is her family, which consists of one husband, a daughter, a border collie, tropical fish and three pampered cats.

She also spends a little time wondering why Professors Baldner and Byrne spend so much time thinking about prime matter when Early Modern matter theory is so much more interesting and correct.



Edward Carty has been at StFX since 1966. He studied at the University of Louvain, in Belgium, and is a graduate of the University of Glasgow, Scotland. In recent years, he has regularly taught courses in modern philosophy, Anglo-American philosophy, and the philosophy of science.

When not in his office, pouring over Roberts Rules of Order, Professor Carty is likely to be found with St. F.X. University Rugby Club, where he has been he has been Coach since 1967. He has also served on most of the senior academic committees of the University.



Louis Groarke is the newest member of the Department, rejoining the faculty after teaching last year at York University in Toronto. Raised in Calgary, he attended Colorado State University on a track scholarship as an undergraduate, and completed a PhD in philosophy at the University of Waterloo.

Dr Groarke has published in journals such as the *Journal of Value Inquiry*, the *Journal of Speculative Philosophy*, *Public Affairs Quarterly*, *Science et Esprit*, and the *American Catholic Philosophical Association Quarterly*. He has recently published a book entitled *The Good Rebel: Understanding Freedom and Morality*. His interests are value theory (moral/political philosophy and aesthetics), contemporary argumentation theory, and history of philosophy.

He is presently working on a book on Aristotle's notion of moral and scientific induction.



James Mensch has been at St FX since 1989. His main areas of research are phenomenology, current continental philosophy and philosophy of religion. He has lectured widely both in America and Europe and serves on a number of editorial boards. At the Inamori Foundation, he acts as a Nominator for the Kyoto Prize in Philosophy.

Dr Mensch currently holds a Social Sciences and Humanities Research Council Grant for the project, "Husserl's Account of Time and Internal Time Consciousness" (2002-2005). His previous grant from this agency (1998-2002) concerned the relation of ethics to selfhood.

He is the author of eight books. The six that have to do with phenomenology and continental philosophy are: *Hiddenness and Alterity: The Phenomenology of the Non-Manifest* (in press), *Ethics and Selfhood* (2003), *Postfoundational Phenomenology: Husserlian Reflections on Presence and Embodiment* (2001), *After Modernity: Husserlian Reflections on a Philosophical Tradition* (1996), *Intersubjectivity and Transcendental Idealism* (1988), and *The Question of Being in Husserl's Logical Investigations* (1981). He has also published *Knowing and Being* (1996), a work on the relation of epistemology to ontology, and *The Beginning of the Gospel of St. John* (1992), a study in the hermeneutics of religion.



Marcy Baker has been the Department's Administrative Assistant since 1996. A graduate of StFX in geology and an expert on little known facts about tree fungi, she also teaches courses in Antigonish on computers and how best to threaten your printer in to working. A wealth of information on the bureaucracy at StFX, she is a good person to talk with, for those who wanting information on anything to do with phil@stfx.

Courses for 2004-2005

PHIL 100 – Introductory Philosophy

... studies the major thinkers in the history of philosophy, and introduces students to logic and critical thinking.

PHIL 210 – Philosophy of Science

... examines scientific method and the logic of science.

PHIL 230 - Philosophy of Human Nature

... examines the nature of personal identity, how the mind is related to the body, and the possibility of survival after death.

PHIL 240 – Philosophy of Religion

... looks at different concepts of, and proofs for and against, the existence of God, the soul, and the relation of science and religion.

PHIL 270 - Philosophy & Literature

... examines philosophical themes as they occur in literature from around the world.

PHIL 330 – Ethics

PHIL 331 - Ethical Theories

PHIL 332 - Contemporary Moral and Social Issues

... deal with the major ethical theories and their applications to contemporary problems.

PHIL 340 – Logic

...introduces students to the rules of reasoning and argument.

PHIL 351 - Socrates and Plato

PHIL 352 – Aristotle

... discuss some of the major writings of the founders of the western philosophical traditions.

PHIL 390 - Anglo-American Philosophy

... examines the central questions of 20th century philosophy in the English-speaking world.

Did you know. . .

that in a study of students who wrote admission tests to law schools, graduate schools, and management programmes, philosophy graduates obtained among the very top scores?

Test Performance by Undergraduate Major

Rank	LSAT	GMAT	GRE/Verbal	GRE/Quant
1.	Mathematics	Mathematics	Philosophy	Physics
2.	Economics	Philosophy	English	Mathematics
3.	Philosophy	Engineering	Anthropology	Engineering
4.	Engineering	Chemistry	History	Computer Science
5.	Chemistry	Economics	Foreign Languages	Chemistry
6.	Other	English	Physics	Other Sciences

	Humanities			
7.	Foreign Languages	Computer Science	Other Humanities	Economics
8.	English	Foreign Languages	Journalism	Biology
9.	Anthropology	History	Political Science	Philosophy
10.	Biology	Other Humanities	Biology	Anthropology

Did you know. . .

⊖ that the founding president of the American Philosophical Association (1902) – who was also the founder of the journal, *The Philosophical Review* – was James Edwin Creighton, who was born in Pictou, Nova Scotia (April 8, 1861)?

Creighton taught philosophy at Cornell University (in New York) along with another Maritimer – and a former professor at Acadia and Dalhousie – Jacob Gould Schurman (born at Freetown, Prince Edward Island in 1854).