



†Department Review, 2001

Philosophy@X is your source of news and information about what is happening in the philosophy department at St. Francis Xavier University. It has been a very busy year for the department. Read about it here! In this issue you will find: true confessions, stories about how your professors got interested in philosophy; the 2007-8 timetable, information about new course offerings, news about the recent scholarly activity of faculty members, a state of the nation report from the Socratic Circle (our philosophy club), graduate correspondence, and sadly, news of the decease of two former members of the department

L. F. Groarke, editor

NEW COURSES FOR 2007-08

Philosophy 251 Critical Thinking. A completely new three credit course intended to give students basic training in the logic of everyday arguments. Taught by Dr. John Cook, the course will provide an excellent theoretical introduction to natural language arguments and an opportunity for honing the argumentative skills essential to any successful undergraduate career. Second term, N2 block.

Philosophy 321 Kant to Hegel. A new course taught by Professor James Mensch intended to bolster our offerings in modern German idealist philosophy. The course will be available in the Second term, GH block.

Philosophy 382 Contemporary Continental Philosophy.

Examines late 20th and early 21st century philosophical ideas in continental Europe. A discussion of the writings of some of the major figures in contemporary philosophical movements, particularly in France and Germany: Derrida, Foucault, Deleuze, Kristeva, Cixous, Gadamer, Habermas, and Horneth. Prerequisites: Normally Philosophy 381 or permission of the Instructor. May not be taken for credit with Philosophy 380. Second term, T block.

Philosophy 461 & 462 Metaphysics and Epistemology I & II (Seminar). [Course description from Professor Christopher Byrne] The topic for the year is materialism; in particular, what is today the most widely-held version of this position, non-reductive materialism. In the first term, we will consider the historical discussion of materialism found in Plato's *Timaues*, Aristotle's *Metaphysics*, and works by Aquinas, Descartes, and Hume. In the second term (Philosophy 462), we will consider works by 20th-century philosophers, concentrating on contemporary versions of non-reductive materialism and its application to questions such as freedom and determinism, the relation between mind and body, and personal identity. This course is open to third- and fourth-year students from any department. Philosophy 461 is a pre-requisite for Philosophy 462.

Prerequisite for Philosophy 461: Two previous courses in philosophy or permission of the instructor.

ORIGINS

Philosophy is an unknown quantity to most incoming undergraduates. Most people do not decide by age nine that they want to become a philosopher. Yet, some students do eventually, after taking a course or two, perhaps by luck, or fate, or Divine Providence, end up majoring in philosophy and even continuing their pursuits into graduate school. How we decide what we are going to do for the rest of our lives is a complicated question. So we asked a few faculty members how they originally became interested in philosophy. Here are their responses:

WILLIAM SWEET There was no 'Damascus road' event that led me to study philosophy. From a very early age, I was interested in issues of religion, science, and politics – and I kept finding myself ending up asking fundamental (i.e. philosophical) questions. When I started secondary school, I found myself buying a philosophy book – I think it was *Philosophy: An Introduction* by Randall and Buchler – because I was trying to figure out what 'truth' is. I can remember going to the city library when I was in Grade 11, to borrow a book by Nietzsche. (In retrospect, I think that that was just about the right age for reading Nietzsche.) And I can also remember buying one of Bertrand Russell's books of popular essays, as well as *The Pocket Aquinas* (which disturbed my parents greatly). At the root of this, I'm sure, was the influence of Jesuit teachers who forced me to look at fundamental issues, to pursue the assumptions, and not to be satisfied with simple answers.

I arrived at university, interested in – but still not willing to specialize in – philosophy. (In fact, I deliberately avoided attending the University of Ottawa, which had a required philosophy course.) Yet I ended up taking philosophy in first year anyway and, throughout all my other courses, I kept coming back to philosophical questions. I did fairly well that year, but my lowest grade was in philosophy, and I was determined to figure out how this could be possible. So by the middle of my second year, I switched my main honours subject to philosophy.



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CHRISTOPHER BYRNE reports from Ottawa that he was first drawn to philosophy by reading the dialogues of Plato. (He was reading them at an early age in Greek, no doubt!) He has been attempting to follow the Socratic form of refutation ever since.

LAURA BYRNE The course of Descartes' young life was dramatically altered by three disturbing dreams commissioning him to produce a new mathematical philosophy and science. Did anything like that happen to me? No. What, then, brought me into philosophy? Curiosity.

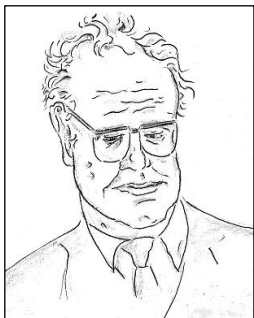
When I went to McGill, I knew very little about philosophy, except perhaps Vulcan philosophy. I had intended to enter one of the professions into which women finally were being welcomed in larger numbers. I hate the sight of blood and had contrived to miss all dissections in biology class, so law school seemed like a good idea. Accordingly, my first philosophy classes were in the philosophy of law and political philosophy. The questions interested me, so I took more courses. Two things really intrigued me: logic, and the notion of a philosophical system. Here were THE BIG IDEAS, treated in an almost mathematical manner.

I signed up for classes in Ancient, Mediaeval and Early Modern Philosophy. Philosophical systems seemed to multiply beyond necessity. Interesting ...

Eventually, I took the advanced logic course, and learned about Russell's and Godel's assaults on the foundations of mathematics. Next, I read about Quine's and Putnam's refusal to grant a privileged status to the claims of logic. Curious ...

Then I got the opportunity to study in France. On the one hand, there was Hegel's system – the dialectic confidently spiraling upwards from “being, pure being”. On the other hand, there was Foucault's deconstruction of all philosophical systems into relations of power. And curiously ...

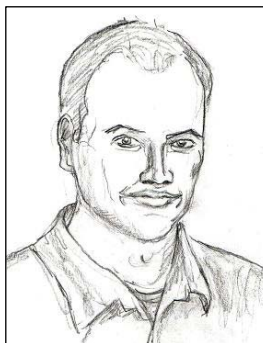
I decided to stick around in philosophy to see what would happen next. Curiosity killed the legal cat, but satisfaction brought her back – as a graduate student in philosophy. I haven't made up my mind about anything – but I'm still curious.



ED CARTY British philosopher G. E. Moore, asked to explain the source of his interest in philosophy, famously reported: “I had indeed at Dulwich [College] read Plato's *Protagoras* ...; but I was certainly not then very keenly excited by any of the philosophical questions which that dialogue raises...What must have happened, during this second year at Cambridge, was that I found I was very keenly

interested in certain philosophical statements which I heard made in conversation.” In other words, Moore was interested in the peculiar things philosophers said, their weird ideas, which struck him as odd and needing further investigation. Although my principle studies were the classics at the University of Glasgow, it was mandatory for all Arts students to take Philosophy. In completing my philosophy requirements, I, in like fashion, discovered the importance of a rational examination of our situation in life.

JAY COOK My road to philosophy was neither interesting nor eventful. My parents expected that I attend university after high-school, and like many people who come to university from this perspective, I took courses in university that were familiar to me from high-school (Mathematics, English, History, etc.). I did not intend to major in Philosophy – I don't think I knew then what it was! As it turned out, however, I performed miserably in



all my courses except the one Philosophy course in which I had enrolled to fill a time-slot in my schedule. Looking back, I am still not quite sure why I did well in Philosophy and stuck with it. In part, it may have been because of the novelty of the material, and the unique demands Philosophy places on one as a student. In part, it may have been because of my teachers. And in part it had to do with the fact that I had to

get a university degree (in anything) or my parents would kill me! (Ironically, even today my parents don't know that it was Philosophy I studied – on some days, my father tells his friends that I teach Psychology, on other days, that I teach Physiology). Whatever the reason was, I stuck with it, and graduated with a BA, eventually going on to earn a MA and PhD.

DOUG AL-MAINI After a successful summer of petty vagrancy and eating sushi without paying for it, I began school in Grade 11 with a history class on ancient and mediaeval society. “Oh, great,” I thought at the time, “boring old cultures where everyone has bad teeth.” I sat down at my desk, and looked up at the teacher. Well, he certainly did have bad teeth. Not to mention the bald head, jutting nose, and bulbous eyes. “Ugh,” I thought, “school has never looked so distasteful.” He proceeded to sit on top of his desk, and stared at the whole class with those eyes. The gaze narrowed, and focused on me. “Doug Al-Maini,” he announced loudly, “Please tell the class why you chose to study ancient history.” As the sweat broke out on my forehead, various things raced into and out of my mind. Who starts a class like this? How could you put a student on the spot like that? But more

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worrying was the fact that I couldn't answer his question, and I knew it. Why was I taking History? I had no idea, and I couldn't even remember signing up for the course. "Uh, how did you know my name?" was all I could come up with. "I know the name of all my students. That, and I know your mother. She's tired of the restaurant bills that result from your predilection for raw fish, by the way. Why did you take my class?" I sat back, defeated. "I don't know, I've never thought about it," I replied truthfully. "In this class," he continued with an expanded gaze that took in all of us, "you will learn about the Greeks, who first put down in words the maxim that the unexamined life is not worth living. You will also, hopefully, take the lesson to heart. Later we may even discuss whether it might be true. But for now, I want each of you to take out a piece of paper and write down what you think philosophy is." A question I've been trying to answer ever since.

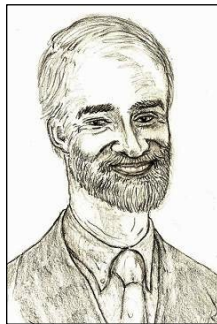
TERRENCE MCEACHERN My early academic interests were



in politics and English literature. As I proceeded through my undergraduate study, I came to realize that the formal study of philosophy could offer meaningful insights into the foundations of these disciplines. This became more pronounced as I acquired a formal interest in the philosophy of 18th and 19th century medicine and human subjects research. Especially in these areas, the medical philosopher and

ethicist provided a voice of conscience that was often violently resisted. They attempted to insert moral conscience into the development of many of the medical procedures and pharmaceutical products that many of us depend on today. It is these early voices such as Ignaz Semmelweis, William Harvey, John Gregory, and more recently Hans Jonas, that remind us of the ongoing important role of ethical and philosophical inquiry into the medical institutions that impact our way of life.

STEVEN BALDNER It was as easy as 1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 6. [Step 1] Ca. 1955: Baldner definitively rejects a career in big game hunting to devote himself to the study of philosophy. [Step 2] 1968: Baldner reads Augustine's Confessions for the first time and is disturbed by the problem of evil. [Step 3] 1969: Baldner meets Prof. William Carroll, who introduces Baldner to the history of ideas and dissuades him from accepting a football scholarship at the University of Michigan. [Step 4] 1972: Baldner reads Kierkegaard and becomes



an existentialist. [Step 5] 1974: Baldner studies Latin and the works of St. Anselm with Prof. John Crossett. Under Crossett's influence, Baldner accepts the argument in the Proslogion as sound. [Step 6] 1977: Baldner meets Father James A. Weisheipl, with whom he studies Aristotle's Physics and Posterior Analytics and Thomas' Commentaries thereon. And so, in six easy steps, Baldner becomes a card-carrying Thomist of the strict observance and learns the secret handshake.

LOUIS GROARKE Having two brothers who also have PhDs in philosophy I was always struck by the way in which the three of us made our way gradually but inexorably into philosophy. My brother Leo began in chemistry; my brother Paul obtained a Bachelor's degree in English Literature and then went to law school; I began in zoology and then did a degree in art history. I have asked myself when we began our studies in such widely different disciplines how did we all end up in philosophy. I think it has something to do with the way we go about thinking about things. Philosophy comes from a particular method. The method is to ask questions and keep on asking them until you get to the very bottom of things where you can go no further. So you start in chemistry and keep on asking questions until you get to philosophy of science and then maybe, metaphysics; or you begin in law and keep on asking questions until you end up wondering about justice and you are suddenly doing political philosophy and then, perhaps, you end up in the philosophy of human nature; or you begin in art and ask questions about beauty and creativity until you end up in aesthetics, and so on. I think it is the method of philosophy that drew us to the discipline; a (very) stubborn attitude of persistent curiosity or inquiry. I should also mention that I did have a very good teacher named Dan Lyons at Colorado State University who first sparked my interest in philosophy at a university level in a course on, what else, Aristotle.



WAY TO GO ED AND DEREK

Ed Carty, the doyen of the philosophy department, was inducted into the St. Francis Xavier Sports Hall of Fame (along with Derek Wood of the English department) in a banquet and ceremony held in the Millennium Centre last Fall. Ed and Derek were recognized as StFX "builders" for their many years of selfless service as co-coaches of the men's rugby team.



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(Incidentally, the 1st Division side of the Men's Rugby Club lost the Cockburn-Carty league trophy with a 34-12 loss to UNB on November 8.) From the official dispatch from StFX Athletics:... This tandem of inductees has been the essence and mainstays of Rugby at StFX University for the past 35 years. Acting as volunteers, these men have dedicated their time and talents to coach, organize, manage and build the game of rugby on campus and throughout the province. Their shared passion for the game and commitment to providing young athletes an opportunity to participate sparked the introduction of a Women's Rugby program in the mid 1980's. These two men have helped to shape a Rugby program at StFX with a tradition of success highlighted by several Nova Scotia University titles and a number of Maritime University championships. Regardless of the records and accomplishments of their teams Ed and Derek are most recognized for instilling in their athletes the ideals of sportsmanship and 'playing with class.' "



On Dec.3 (the Feast Day of St. Francis Xavier), Ed also received an honorary X-ring for his years of teaching and service to the university and for his commitment to StFX rugby. This is a very special distinction, as only one honorary X-ring is given out each year, to a faculty member that has had a lasting effect on university life. (Picture courtesy of StFX Communications)

ANOTHER PHILOSOPHER ON CAMPUS

The philosophy department is pleased to welcome another philosopher to campus. Gyongyi (Ginger) Hegedus has been appointed to a tenure-stream position in religious studies. Dr. Hegedus received her MA in Islamic studies from the University of Budapest (Hungary); she completed her doctorate in medieval philosophy at the University of Leuven (Belgium); and she has a post-doctoral licenciante from the University of Toronto (Pontifical Institute of Medieval Studies). As a research fellow, she has spent several years in the Middle East: at the University of Tunis, the University of Damascus, and the Hebrew

University of Jerusalem. Dr. Hegedus' main interest is the history of Islamic and Jewish thought, especially medieval philosophy. She has an office on the fifth floor and promises to be an excellent resource person for students interested in Islamic and medieval philosophy. [Don't tell the religious studies department—she's really a philosopher!]

APPOINTMENTS

Congratulations to **Professor Sweet**, our chair, who has been appointed Academic Vice-President of Saint Thomas University in Fredericton (he will be taking a two-year leave of absence from the department). He was also elected Vice-President of the Canadian Philosophical Association at last year's annual business meeting. The CPA is the premier academic body that represents professional philosophers in Canada. Professor Sweet will take over as President after the general meetings this year, and then finish off his three-year term in an advisory role as "Past President." His election is both a widespread recognition of his distinguished scholarly work and of how much he has contributed to philosophy in Canada over the years. Professor Sweet was also re-elected Vice-President of the Istituto Internazionale Jacques Maritain, in Rome, in March 2006 and serves as one of five elected international scholars on the Program Committee for the next World Congress of Philosophy (to be held in Seoul, Korea, in 2008).



StFX Names Dr. Steven Baldner Dean of Arts

July 10, 2006, News Release (News@STFX): St. Francis Xavier University President Dr. Sean E. Riley announced today that **Dr.**

Steven Baldner has been appointed Dean of Arts. "I look forward to the challenges this new role will bring," Dr. Baldner said. "I will be working closely and collaboratively with faculty, staff, and members of the senior administration to create a great academic experience." ... "It is wonderful to see someone with such outstanding experience and enthusiasm take on the Dean of Arts role," said Dr. Sean



Riley. "His efforts as dean will help ensure StFX offers an unparalleled teaching and learning environment." Professor Baldner will be sorely missed by scores of students and by his colleagues in the department, but we trust the good ship "Arts" will navigate safely through whatever rough waters lay ahead with him at the helm. (Picture courtesy of StFX Communications)

IN MEMORIAM

Sadly, two former members of the philosophy department passed away this year. George Sanderson, well-known wit and long-time editor of the *Antigonish Review* and Father Howard J. Shea, professor, parish priest and devoted islander will both be missed.



Born in Montreal, **George Sanderson** was a dedicated father, husband, friend and professor. He held a PhD in Philosophy from L'Institut Supérieur de Philosophie in Louvain, Belgium. He taught Philosophy at St. Francis Xavier University for thirty-seven years. He was editor of the *Antigonish Review* literary magazine for

many years and a member of "Voices", a group studying community development for Antigonish.

Rev. Howard J. Shea received his early education in Miminegash and then at St. Dunstan's University in Charlottetown. In 1946 he entered the Scarboro Foreign Missions in Toronto and was ordained into the Priesthood in 1951. He stayed with the Scarboro Fathers having served two terms as Rector. From 1965 to 1989 he taught Philosophy at St. Francis Xavier. After retiring he returned to his summer home in Cascumpec and spent his winters in Sun City, Florida. He was an avid bridge player and was very involved in teaching retreats. He also filled in for many Priests around the many Island parishes lending a hand wherever he was needed.



ACADEMIC ACTIVITIES

Several Department members participated in the Atlantic Region Philosophical Association 2006 annual meeting (ARPA) held in October at St Thomas University and the UNB Fredericton. Dr William Sweet is the Secretary of ARPA; Drs. Louis Groarke and Jay Cook presented papers, along with Prof. Gyongi Hegedus of the Department of Religious Studies.

James Mensch has been invited to present a paper at the 37th Annual Meeting of the Husserl Circle (April 22 - 28, 2007). The international meetings this year will commemorate Jan Patočka (long considered one of the most important contributors to Czech philosophy, as well as one of the most influential central European philosophers of the 20th century). They are being held at Charles University in Prague. Professor Mensch will be speaking on "Patočka's Asubjective Phenomenology and the Mind-Body Problem." The following month, he has been invited

to lecture at the Universities of Regensburg, Vienna, and Ljubljana. Dr. Mensch's recent publications include: "Sustaining the Other: Tolerance as a Positive Ideal," in *Interpretando la experiencia de la tolerancia*, ed. Rosemary Rizo-Patrón, Lima: Fondo Editorial de la Pontificia Universidad Católica del Perú, 2 vols. 2007, II, 99-106; "Excessive Presence and the Image," *Symposium, Journal of the Canadian Society for Continental Thought*, 10:2, Fall 2006, 431-440; "Politics and Freedom," *Idealistic Studies*, 36:1, 2006, pp. 75-82; "Ethics and Selfhood: A Reply to Dermot Moran and John Drummond," *International Journal of Philosophical Studies*, 14:1, 2006, 109-118; and "Artificial Intelligence and the Phenomenology of Flesh," *Phanex, Journal of Existential and Phenomenological Theory and Culture*, 1:1, 2006, 73-85.



Doug Al-Maini has organized a symposium entitled "And A Liberal Dose of Greek: The Modern Engagement with Ancient Political Philosophy" for this year's Canadian Philosophical Association Meetings in Saskatoon. As Professor Al-Maini explains: "2007 marks the fiftieth anniversary of Eric Havelock's *The Liberal Temper in Greek Politics*. Havelock's work was a landmark step in setting out how a liberal might interpret the classical world and its texts according to liberal principles. While the debate continues, recent scholarship on the relationship between elites and their polis has provided new grounds for understanding Greek intellectuals as adhering to a decidedly anti-liberal stance. In this Symposium, the question of what a liberal has to gain from reading the ancient political philosophy of the intellectual elites, and whether the modern West should be so sanguine in invoking its intellectual ties to such ancient authors will be addressed. Do liberal views on liberty, tolerance, utopianism, consensual relations, and relativism regarding the Good allow for the liberal having a meaningful reading of ancient political thought?" Professor Al-Maini will be speaking on "Stoic Cosmopolitanism and the Foundations of Liberalism." Professor Al-Maini also has a piece on the Ancient sophist, rhetorician and orator Isocrates forthcoming in a volume on the sophists (Duckworth).

Laura Byrne has a paper entitled "The Geometrical Method in Spinoza's *Ethics*," edited by Jonathan Lavery, forthcoming in a special issue of *Poetics Today* on genres of philosophy. She is currently working on a paper on Galileo, Descartes, and the problem of the Cartesian Circle.



Christopher Byrne has been spending his sabbatical working on a book on Aristotle's *Physics*. During the Fall semester, he presented a paper at the University of Ottawa colloquium series entitled, "Plato and Aristotle on Physical Necessity and the Good."

At the end of April **Jay Cook** is attending the "School of Inferentialism," and a series of lectures, "Between Saying and Doing: Towards an Analytic Pragmatism," by Robert Brandom (University of Pittsburgh) in Prague, Czech Republic. These tutorials and lectures on Brandom's work are organized by the Institute of Philosophy of the Academy of Sciences of the Czech Republic together with the Faculty of Philosophy & Arts of the Charles University in Prague. He is also presenting a paper entitled "A Davidsonian Approach to Kripke's Puzzle" at the meetings of The Society for Exact Philosophy in Vancouver in May. He has already presented a paper on the same topic as part of the famous Dalhousie philosophy colloquium series at the beginning of March.

William Sweet's most recent book, *Bernard Bosanquet and the Legacy of British Idealism*, appeared from the University of Toronto Press in early February 2007. Other recent works include: *Religion and the Challenges of Science* (ed. with Richard Feist) (Aldershot: Ashgate Publishers, 2007); Edition of *Works of Arthur Ritchie Lord* (with Errol E. Harris), 3 vols. (with introductions and critical biographies) (Lewiston, NY: Mellen Press, 2006); *Philosophy of Religion* [Vol. 8, *Proceedings of the XXI World Congress of Philosophy, 2003*] (Ankara: Philosophical Society of Turkey, 2006); and *Freedom of Religion* (Bangalore: Dharmaram Publications, 2006).

Louis Groarke's most recent publications include: "Callicles" in *The Sophists*, Edited by Patricia O'Grady, Duckworth (forthcoming); "Philosophy as Inspiration: *Les Pensées* of Blaise Pascal," *Poetics Today* (forthcoming); and "What is Freedom? Why Christianity and Theoretical Liberalism Cannot be Reconciled," *Heythrop Journal* (April 2006), 257-274. Professor Groarke is also attending the Association for Core Texts and Courses (ACTC) annual meetings in Williamsburg, Virginia. This year's theme is "From Here To There: The Odyssey of the Liberal Arts." The meetings are sponsored by Hampden-Sydney College, Averett University, James Madison University, Lynchburg College, and Norfolk State University. Dr. Groarke, along with Dr. Joseph Khoury (English, StFX) will attend the meeting as part of an initiative to bring a Liberal Arts Curriculum to StFX.

DID YOU KNOW...?

Both Drs. Doug Al-Maini and Louis F. Groarke have been nominated for the 2006-07 Outstanding Teacher Award.

TALKS AND EVENTS

Medieval Philosophy Lecture Series

In late January-early February, the department had three invited speakers lecture on different topics in medieval philosophy. This series was part of an on-going search for a new professor to replace Dr. Steven Baldner

Matthew Kosteletzky, University of Leuven, Belgium, "Human Nature Manifested in St. Thomas Aquinas' *Summa Contra Gentiles*". From the abstract: "I will show that the description of human reason's natural capacities to know God is understood by St. Thomas Aquinas himself to be a theological investigation and that this explicit investigation provides an implicit account of Thomas' notion of human nature."

Paul Symington, State University of New York, Buffalo, "Aquinas on the Identity of the Categories". From the abstract: "I will support the thesis that St. Thomas Aquinas uses the per se (essential) modes of predication that are discussed in Aristotle's *Posterior Analytics* in order to establish Aristotle's specific categories. I will show exactly how Aquinas uses these in order to establish that substance, quantity and quality are distinct modes of being."

Brian Dobell, University of Balamand, Lebanon, "Becoming a Christian: The Problem of Augustine's Conversion." From the abstract: "I will discuss the story of St. Augustine's conversion in the Milanese garden in 386 C.E. as is described in his autobiographical *Confessions*. This remains a thoroughly perplexing event. In fact, one scholar (Prosper Alfaro) has gone so far as to argue that Augustine was converted to Neoplatonism rather than to Christianity in 386, and that he only later became a Christian. I will argue that Augustine's conversion came in stages."

Philosophy and Woman's Studies



March 2007: Together with the StFX Women's Studies Program, the Department welcomed **Dr Christine Overall**, Professor of Philosophy at Queen's University in Kingston, and holder of The Nancy's Chair in Women's studies at Mount St Vincent University, who spoke on "Sex/Gender Transitions, Identity, and Personal Aspirations."

2006-2007 Philosophy Lecture Series

Jim Gerrie, University of Cape Breton, "Doctor Assisted Suicide From A Philosophy Of Technology Perspective" Abstract: "Some, like James Rachels, have argued that there is no critical moral distinction between withdrawing life-saving medical

technology and actively ending someone's life. Dr. Gerrie will argue that Rachel's conclusion can only be drawn by completely ignoring the last several decades of work in the field of the Philosophy of Technology, not to mention what "twenty years of increasingly critical history and sociology of technology have discovered" (Feenberg 1999, 201). In the case of formalized assisted suicide one is choosing to use a novel technology and thus one sits on the cusp of all the inevitable and uncertain positive and negative social and environmental effects that will inevitably be unleashed."

Douglas Al-Maini, St. Francis Xavier University, "The Maturing Philosopher in Plato's Myth of the Cicadas." Abstract: "The meaning of the myth of the cicadas in Plato's *Phaedrus* has come to assume a prominent role in modern readings of the dialogue; this paper will analyze the cicadas as a representation of the proper development of philosophers and good philosophical practice. Imagery connected to the actual life-cycle of the cicada provides one key to understanding questions important to Plato's ethics and political thought, such as how we are to identify latent philosophers and how philosophy is to relate to political culture. The cicadas show that the potential for doing philosophy indicates itself in an eagerness to engage in discussion, specifically dialectics, a practice that in principle is amenable to any political context in which power is associated with discursive consensus."

Timothy Christie, Director of Ethics Services, Atlantic Health Sciences Corporation, "Ethics, Reducing Harm, and Injection Drug Use." Dr. Christie's first hand account of his work as an applied ethicist in Vancouver's notorious "East Side" injected some gritty realism into a sometimes abstract discussion of applied ethical issues. After providing some recent statistics on Supervised Injection



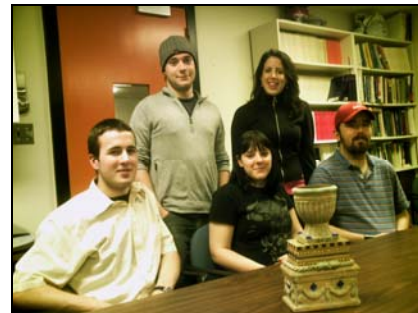
Sites, heroin prescription, and Needle Exchange Programs - programs which have apparently led to a reduction in some of the negative consequences of addiction - Dr Christie then argued that this approach can also supported by a number of contemporary ethical theories. Not everyone agreed, but it was a challenging and a clear account for faculty and students of both the Philosophy and the Nursing departments.

James Mensch, St. Francis Xavier University, "Politics and Freedom." Abstract: "True freedom involves choices whose scope is not limited in advance by a particular dogma. When we attempt to understand it, a number of questions arise. It is unclear, for example, how the openness of real choice can fit into the organized structures of political life. What prevents the expressions of freedom from disrupting this life? What sets limits

to their arbitrariness? The general question here concerns the adaptability of freedom to a political context." In his paper, Dr. Mensch argued that freedom is inherently political because its origin is social. It gains its content from the multiple interactions that make up social life.

Michael Hymers, Department of Philosophy, Dalhousie University, "Wittgenstein on Meaning, Morality, and Method." Dr. Hymers located the fundamental difference between Wittgenstein's early and later work in his rejection of proposition 6.41 of the *Tractatus*, according to which all value must "lie outside the world". This early view of both ethical and semantic value as both transcendental and transcendent is replaced in his transitional writings and lectures by an appeal to implicit conventions, which prove to be of central importance to his later metaphilosophy and to the much-discussed theme of rule-following. The task of philosophy, he comes to think, is to make our implicit grammatical conventions explicit, whenever lacking a clear overview of them leads us into philosophical confusion. This task is virtually unavoidable because, as the rule-following puzzles of the *Investigations* show, some of our norms must be implicit if we are to have any norms at all. This leaves us with a puzzle concerning Wittgenstein's continued silence about ethics.

THE SOCRATIC CIRCLE



The Socratic Circle (pictured above) with the infamous "Hemlock Cup." (Has anyone ever drunk from the cup and lived?). Executive for 2006-07: President Dary Jessome (*back left*); Vice President James Snow (*front right*); Treasurer Brain O'Shea (*front left*); Secretary Nadia House (*front middle*); Communications Office Katie McGreer (*back right*); Members-at-large Darrah McGowan and Ben Austring.





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The Socratic Circle is the philosophy club on campus. It organizes extracurricular activities of a philosophical and social nature for students in philosophy and in all the other disciplines. Non-majors are most welcome. Louis Groarke is the faculty liaison, but the club is a student-run body. It is the students who ultimately decide what activities, events, and/or projects they want to support and organize.

SOCIETY REPORT

Dary Jessome, President

The 2006/2007 academic year has been a successful one for the Philosophy Society. The highlights have included so far our best attended event to date, a debate on World Philosophy Day, with well over 100 students attending, and the addition of three new executive members, Nadia House, Katie McGree, and Darrah McGowan. On a personal note: The Philosophy Society has been an essential part of my undergraduate education at StFX and I wish I had four more years just like this one to spend with it. I will miss our debates, socials, and meetings but I know that the society is being left in good hands and that the relationships that make up the society will continue to last long after I'm gone.

Our society is open to any topics relevant to philosophical discussion, and we welcome new members, ideas, activities, etc. So, if you are interested in a lively, engaged discussion, or are looking for a fun, challenging evening (sometimes with entertainment or speakers), join us! Feel free to contact any of our student executive members, or Dr. Louis Groarke, to get involved.

Come Philosophize!

New Event: The first, but hopefully not the last, open student discussion is fast approaching. We will be taking to the floor such moral issues as "The ethics of spin" and "What is God?" for unpanelled debate. Over cookies and juice we hope to gain some more knowledge on these subjects and exercise our argumentative skills. Hopefully we will all leave feeling like Socrates! The discussion group will be held on March 29th at 7 pm at Jack's bar.

STUDENT DEBATE FOR WORLD PHILOSOPHY DAY

On November 16, the Philosophy Department and the Socratic Circle celebrated UNESCO's fifth World Philosophy Day by arranging a debate on the Platonic theme: "Should Philosophers be Kings?" Arguing that philosophers should indeed be kings (of course, they should!) was Drs. Doug Al-Maini, Joseph Khoury (*English*) and Corinna Wagner (*English*). Arguing against this self-evident truth was a team made up of Drs. Doug Brown (*Political*

Science), Marat Akopian (*Political Science*), and Greg McGuire (*Psychology*). (Beware of politicians!) Dean of Arts, Dr. Stephen Baldner was the guest referee and MC. The two teams engaged in an exciting, thought-provoking - and, at times, humorous - exchange. Well over 100 students and faculty attended the event, and an informal social followed. The debate was also covered in campus media, and there was some significant interest from members of the public in having similar philosophical events in the coming year. The "no-side" won and was awarded the infamous Hemlock Cup, specially crafted for the occasion by philosophy student and sometime goldsmith James Snow. There is talk of making the competition for the Hemlock Cup an annual event.

A second debate was held on March 8, pitting a team from the university debating club (X-debate) against a team of faculty members (Doug Al-Maini, Louis Groarke, Greg McGuire) on the subject: "Be it resolved that assassination is a reasonable tool of a state's foreign policy".

STUDENT NEWS

We have two graduating honours students this year: **Dary Jessome**, who is completing his thesis, *Distributive Justice and Patenting of Human Genes* under Professor Sweet, and **James Snow**, whose thesis *International Law, Just War Theory and The Domestic Analogy Concerning the Right of National Self-Defense*, is being supervised by Professor Groarke.

James Snow has been accepted into law school at UNB. Paul Curry (BA '05) is a student in the PhD philosophy program at the University of Ottawa, but he is still also considering med. school.



Therese Tisseverasinghe (left) received the MacDonald medal from Dr. William Sweet, Chair of the Department at graduation May 2006. The Father Charles R. MacDonald Memorial Medal is the highest distinction for academic excellence given to a philosophy graduate. Father MacDonald taught in the department from the 1940s until shortly before his death in 1975.

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phil@stfx.ca

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The department has an additional prize, the Father Edo Gatto Award, which is presented to a student who demonstrates excellence in medieval philosophy, particularly in the department's courses in this area. It was established in memory of Fr. Gatto (BA '52) who died tragically in a motor vehicle accident in Dec. 1991. This prize was not awarded last year.

FROM THE TRENCHES

Therese Tisseverasinghe (BA '06). I am currently enrolled in a one-year philosophy Master's program at Saint Mary's University. In addition, I received two entrance scholarships! The Faculty of Graduate Studies and Research Award (\$10,000) and the Faculty of Graduate Studies and Research Fellowship (\$6,000).

My Master's program consists of six half-credit courses and a thesis. Last semester I took courses in Philosophy of History, Philosophy of Law, and Argumentation Theory. My courses this semester are Philosophy of Biology, Theory of Knowledge, and Aesthetics. My primary philosophical interest is to study Aristotle's *Nicomachean Ethics*. I am critically examining whether Aristotle's conception of the third and highest form of friendship is compatible with his idea of the contemplative life being the most virtuous form of life. I am also submitting a paper for Aesthetics on Collingwood's theory of art for publication in the *British Journal of Aesthetics*.

I find that living in a city like Halifax has also greatly enhanced my university experience. For instance, I attend the Friday afternoon Philosophy Colloquiums held at Dalhousie University. In addition, I am following a weekly conversation course in German and looking forward to taking a French conversation course in April. I am also learning flamenco dancing! And I work part-time as a research assistant and in the Alumni Department.

After completing my MA program this fall, I am hoping to start my PhD. For my doctorate, I will continue my studies in Ancient philosophy, especially that of Aristotle. In particular, I am interested in working on Aristotle's conception of emotions. Reflecting back on my undergraduate experience, I am extremely glad that I began my endeavor in philosophy at StFX as it laid a solid foundation. I am also grateful to all my philosophy professors, some of whom I keep in touch with on a regular basis. Their dedication and support throughout my studies at X has been tremendous.

Irene McMullin (BA '98) recently graduated from Rice University, earning a PhD in continental philosophy. The Rice website lists Irene's interests as: Existentialism, Phenomenology, Social and Political Philosophy, German Idealism, Aesthetics, Heidegger, Sartre. Here follows an excerpt from a letter sent to our chair:

"Dear Professor Sweet, I wanted to write to share my good news with you. Though you may have already heard from my uncle Jim, last week I successfully defended my dissertation. It was called "The Social Self: A Heideggerian Account of Intersubjectivity." I'm having a hard time believing it is finally finished; that so many years of labour have come to an end. But what a great feeling - especially since my committee was very pleased with the results.

I am currently living in Wuppertal, Germany. I received a research stipendium from the German government to come over here to work on my German, finish my thesis and participate in the German philosophical community. It has been very rewarding so far. Not only am I taking 20 hours a week of language classes, but I am also participating in a seminar on the neo-Kantian Ernst Cassirer, and another on a French Phenomenologist named Marc Richir. Being here makes me realize, yet again, what an enormously rich philosophical culture the Germans have - not only is it exciting to read giants of the tradition like Kant in the original, but there are conferences, reading groups, and lectures happening all the time..."

From a letter from former student **Ross Dance (BBA '06)** to Professors Groarke and Carty (Ross is presently working as an accountant in Calgary): "Well I'm pretty busy. It's our busy season from the end of December until April because most companies have year ends of Dec. 31 and require audits in the months that follow. I've been mostly working on oil and gas companies so I'm learning about that industry. The part I enjoy most about my job at Ernst & Young is the interactions and meeting others. They do a fantastic job hiring and our office is outfitted with some of the nicest and smartest people I've ever met. Accounting will not be what I spend my life doing, but I think it is important to learn it as it is the language of business...In terms of philosophy, I really miss it. I do spend a lot of time with Cody Ellis who you know from the gym at StFX and who Ed Carty had asked you to mention to me was from Calgary and only got interested in philosophy in 4th year. Cody and I run along Bow River and play squash and go to the gym. Some days when we are having discussions we get really into them and there have been times at the Y when others have actually stepped in and offered their own opinions. Cody is interesting because his philosophy is framed on things being socially constructed. For instance he argues that ethics are the result of an evolutionary process that has made it possible for us to live successfully in society together. He does not subscribe to any kind of natural law and does not really agree with my views on absolute moral values. It makes for interesting discussions. I have been thinking more and more about doing more Philosophy



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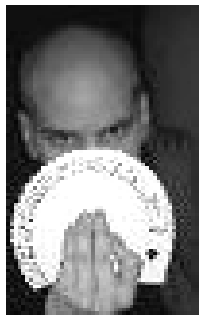
in school and eventually maybe doing a PhD. But for now I have to focus on debits and credits...Ross

Marie-Claude McIntyre (BA '06) After graduating from St. FX in May 2006, I decided to work for a year in order to improve upon my financial situation. As most university students know, four years of studies can put a significant dent in your pocketbook. Fortunately, I was offered a wonderful working opportunity as a paralegal at a firm in Fredericton. I have always wanted to eventually go to law school and this experience has intensified my desire to do so.

As a first year student at St. FX, I arbitrarily chose to study philosophy. I soon found myself very much engaged in the study's lectures, readings, and assignments. In my second year I joined the philosophy society. My involvement with this group made it possible for me to meet various accomplished philosophers from across Canada. The society has also helped me to expand my knowledge of philosophy's various applications in political, social, and scientific realms.

Philosophy has instilled within me a desire to know. It has taught me to ask questions and to think critically. During the latter part of my degree, I became increasingly interested in the philosophy of law. I began to question the very foundation of our legal system. Why do we have laws and where do they come from? Where is the intersection of law and morality? Will our current system of laws lead us to a common good? Ultimately, the law interests me because I strive to answer the above questions. Although I plan to work within the system, my reasons for going to law school lie in the desire to study the system itself. Again, I have always known that I *wanted* to go to law school. Studying philosophy has helped me to understand *why* I wish to do so.

Our very own magician, **Jeremy Bennett (BA '06)** has become 'the first person in Canada's history to have a nationally broadcasted television street magic program aired', according to Glenda McCarthy, reporter for *The Georgian*. Jeremy, a philosophy graduate, began filming his DVD last summer after a long five years of planning. He spent the fall in the studio in Halifax, meeting and charming potential broadcasters. "Over the past few months I have been working with the director, executive producer, writer, and editor. I have received about 19 minutes of footage from the DVD to review and approve and am very pleased with what I am seeing so far." Well done and good luck Jeremy.



TENTATIVE TIMETABLE - 2007-08

Course	Course Title	Professor	Term	Block
100:11	Intro Philosophy	Cook	FULL	C
100:12	Intro Philosophy	Al-Maini	FULL	B
100:13	Intro Philosophy	Byrne/Mensch	FULL	D
100:14	Intro Philosophy	TBA	FULL	F
100:15	Intro Philosophy	Groarke	FULL	E
230	Philosophy of Human Nature	Al-Maini	FULL	M
240	Philosophy of Religion	TBA	FULL	D
251.20	Critical Thinking	Cook	2nd	N ₂
321.20	Kant to Hegel	Mensch	2nd	GH
331.11	Intro. to Ethics	Al-Maini	1st	F
331.12	Intro. to Ethics	Byrne	1st	Q
332.21	Contemporary Moral & Social Issues	Al-Maini	2nd	F
332.22	Contemporary Moral & Social Issues	Byrne	2nd	Q
336.11	Ethics in Health & Medicine	Groarke	Full	A ₃ +B ₃ +P ₂
340	Logic	Cook	Full	E
361.10	Early Med. Philosophy	TBA	1st	Q
362.20	Philosophy High Middle Ages	TBA	2nd	Q
371.10	Social and Political Philosophy	Groarke	1st	GH
382.20	Contemporary Continental Philosophy	Mensch	2nd	T
461.10	Metaphysics I (Seminar)	Byrne	1st	HJ
462.20	Metaphysics II (Seminar)	Byrne	2nd	HJ
489:20	Honours Thesis	TBA	2ND	TBA

CONTACT INFORMATION

philosophy@stfx.ca
www.stfx.ca/academic/philosophy/
Department of Philosophy
P.O. Box 5000, Antigonish, NS.
B2G 2W5
Tel. 902.867.5085 Fax. 902.867.3243

Original artwork by L. F. Groarke
Managing editor Marcy Baker