

# The GRACE

*Challenging the Intellect Since 1843*



## **IN THIS ISSUE**

<b>CHAIR'S LETTER</b>	<b>P. 2</b>
<b>GRADUATE NEWS</b>	<b>P. 6</b>
<b>GRADUATE AWARDS</b>	<b>P. 10</b>
<b>ALUMNI NEWS</b>	<b>P. 23</b>
<b>UNDERGRADUATE NEWS</b>	<b>P. 32</b>
<b>PPE UNDERGRADUATE NEWS</b>	<b>P. 36</b>

<b>RESEARCH REPORT</b>	<b>P. 38</b>
<b>COURSE REPORT</b>	<b>P. 44</b>
<b>DEPARTMENT HISTORY</b>	<b>P. 48</b>
<b>FACULTY NEWS/AWARDS</b>	<b>P. 50</b>
<b>IN MEMORIAM</b>	<b>P. 60</b>
<b>CONTRIBUTIONS</b>	<b>P. 64</b>
<b>FACULTY</b>	<b>P. 66</b>

## Dear Friends of Michigan Philosophy,

I write to you having finished my second year as Chair of Michigan Philosophy. The COVID-19 pandemic has affected us all this past year, and the Department is no exception. We have had to continue much of this year with remote instruction and departmental interactions. This has been a challenge, but our excellent faculty, graduate students and staff have once again dealt with the difficulties in creative and caring ways. Due to their efforts, Michigan Philosophy has continued to provide the excellent undergraduate and graduate instruction for which it is known. As was the case last year, we hosted a meaningful virtual graduation ceremony in honor of our Philosophy and PPE (Philosophy, Politics and Economics) majors. During this ceremony, four students were awarded the Frankena Prize for excellence in the major. This number of awardees is unprecedented: the previous record had been 2! This was a graduating class of philosophy majors of which we all can be proud. (See the Undergrad Report, p. 32.)

As the Fall 2021 term begins, we are beginning to emerge—slowly, cautiously—from the pandemic. We have returned to campus, albeit with the (sensible) requirement to wear face coverings when indoors. Faculty and graduate students are learning to get used to teaching while masked. Yet even though we are not back to complete normalcy, one can sense the heightened appreciation of in-person instruction and interaction.

Michigan Philosophy also has been invigorated. As was the case during the previous admissions cycle, a virtual admissions fair yielded a stellar class of incoming graduate students (introduced later in this newsletter, p. 16). In addition, the Department has been revitalized by the addition this year of three scholars to its regular ranks:

- **Kristie Dotson** joins us from Michigan State University as a University Diversity and Social Transformation Professor, with a joint appointment in Philosophy and the Department of Afroamerican and African Studies (DAAS). Kristie specializes in

epistemology, metaphilosophy, and feminism (particularly women of color and Black feminisms), and works more specifically on how knowledge-related concerns play a role in maintaining and obscuring oppression.

- **Renée Jorgensen** is joining us from the Department of Politics at Princeton University. Renée works on issues concerning the relation of moral and civil rights to social norms and conventions. She also has interests in semantics and pragmatics of slurs, the ethics of rational deliberation and use of evidence, and just war theory.
- **Emmalon Davis** joins our faculty after having been an LSA Collegiate Fellow and, before then, a faculty member at the New School in New York. Emmalon specializes in ethics, social and political philosophy, and epistemology, and has a special interest in where these areas intersect with philosophy of race and feminist philosophy. A focus of her work is the epistemic exclusion of diverse practitioners within the academy.

All three of our new faculty members are affiliated with—and will serve to greatly strengthen—the Department's PPE program. Winston Churchill is reputed to have said: "Never waste a good crisis." Michigan Philosophy has done just that and has been fortunate to be able to take advantage of opportunities to bolster its faculty even in the midst of the various disruptions of the past year.

In staff news, we are pleased to welcome **Jessica Hobbs** as our new Events and Communications Coordinator. Jessica joins a superb departmental staff that includes **Kelly Campbell (Chief Administrator)**, **Shelley Anzalone (Executive Assistant)**, **Carson Maynard (Graduate Coordinator)**, and **Jude Beck (Undergraduate Coordinator)**. The fact that the Department runs so smoothly even in times of crisis is due to their dedication and hard work: *Thank you!*



As it has in the past, this newsletter will include reports on various facets of our research and our graduate and undergraduate programs, activities and awards. This newsletter also includes the traditional research report (from Gordon Belot, on "Boltzmann's Brains," [p. 38] an intriguing skeptical scenario connected to current physics) and course report (from Maegan Fairchild, on her new course, Metaphysics: Art & Ontology, PHIL 298 [p. 44]). In addition, a Rackham alumni article that relates the history of the involvement of Michigan PhD Zoë Johnson King [p. 26] in the initiation of the Ethics Bowl; graduate student **Elise Woodard** contributes her research article, "A Puzzle about Fickleness" [p. 28]; and **Jamie Tappenden** reports on an interesting piece of departmental history [p. 48] involving the mathematician and Michigan alum Claude Shannon, known as "the father of information theory." Finally, there are articles on this year's Tanner Lecture (by graduate student Abdul Ansari, p. 54) and the Tanner Library (by former library assistant Stephen Hayden, p. 56).

Regarding news and events in the Department during this past year, there are several items to report:

### Faculty News

Several of our talented faculty members have received special recognition this past year. **Ishani Maitra**, who was recently promoted to the rank of Professor, received **LSA's John Dewey Award**, which recognizes long-term commitment to undergraduate education. Speaking of John Dewey (who at one point was on the faculty at Michigan): **Allan Gibbard, the Richard B. Brandt Professor Emeritus of Philosophy**, has been selected by the American Philosophical Association to deliver the 2022 John Dewey Lecture, which is a reflection on philosophy in America as seen from the perspective of a personal intellectual journey. **Liz Anderson** has been elected to the American Philosophical Society, the oldest learned society in the United States. New member **Renée Jorgensen** has received a fellowship from the American Council of Learned Societies to work on her monograph, *Rewriting Rights: Making Reasonable Mistakes in a Social Context*.

During Winter 2022, two of our faculty will present public lectures for special endowed professorships they have been awarded. **Liz Anderson** will present a lecture as **the first Max Mendel Shaye Professor of Public Philosophy, Politics, and Economics** (set for Tuesday, February 15, 2022 from 7:00-9:00 pm), and **Sarah Moss** will present a lecture as **the new William Wilhartz Professor of Philosophy** (tentatively set for Tuesday, January 25, 2022).

### ***Congratulations to all!***

Finally, I want to remember **Frithjof Bergmann, Professor Emeritus of Philosophy**, who passed away this year (In Memoriam p. 59). After receiving his PhD in Philosophy from Princeton, he joined the Department in 1961 and remained until his retirement in 1999. Bergmann was known for his writing on Nietzsche, Hegel, and Sartre, for his novel and influential theory of freedom of the will in his *On Being Free* (1977), and for founding the “New Work” movement, which addresses issues regarding the relations among work, self-realization, freedom, and technological and social change.

### Special Events

Despite the imposition of various financial constraints due to

the pandemic, the Department was able to host several special events. Our regular colloquium series went virtual, and featured presentations from Thi Nguyen (Utah) and Kieran Setiya (MIT), as well as from our own **Anna Edmonds, Emmalon Davis, and Janum Sethi**. The Department also sponsored virtual events for reading groups that covered a wide range of topics. In particular, the **Ethics Discussion Group (EDGE)** invited Linda Radzik (Texas A&M) and Sharon Street (NYU), and the **Mind and Moral Psychology Group** invited Jonathan Phillips (Dartmouth), Matt Stichter (Washington State), and Joanna Demaree-Cotton (Yale). The **Foundation of Physics Reading Group** hosted Michigan PhD Chip Sebens (Caltech), and the **Aesthetics Discussion Group** hosted Sherri Irwin (Oklahoma) as well as Michigan PhDs Nils-Hennes Stear (Auburn) and Robin Zheng (Yale-NUS). The **Race, Gender and Feminist Philosophy Group** welcomed Alex Guerrero (Rutgers) and Kathleen Jenkins (Glasgow). Desirée Valentine (Marquette) delivered the **Minorities and Philosophy MLK Lecture**, and Andrea Pitts (UNC-Greensboro) gave the **Minorities and Philosophy Cesar Chávez Day Lecture**.

Due to the pandemic, we were not able to hold our annual Tanner Lecture on Human Values as planned during Winter 2021. However, we were able to hold the event in-person at the beginning of this term. The lecturer was the prominent philosopher Kwame Anthony Appiah (NYU), who spoke on the timely topic of the status of work in the context of the COVID-19 pandemic. A symposium on the lecture included contributions from Juliana Bidanure (Stanford), Joshua Cohen (Apple University), and Andrea Veltman (James Madison). You can view this fascinating lecture on [YouTube](#).

### Appreciation

Over the years, the Department has consistently benefitted from the extraordinary generosity of its alumni and friends. Donors have helped us recruit, train and support outstanding faculty, through such funds as the Malcolm M. Denise Endowment, in honor of Theodore Denise (which funds research), the Nathaniel Marrs Fund (for faculty retention), the Weinberg Professorship (held by **Brian Weatherson**), and the previously mentioned Shaye Professorship (held by **Liz Anderson**) and Wilhartz Professorship (held by **Sarah Moss**). Interdisciplinary initiatives have been supported by the Weinberg Fund for Philosophy and the Cognitive

Sciences, the Hough Fellowship in Psychology and Ethics, and the PPE Strategic Fund, the latter of which supports our thriving interdisciplinary Program in Philosophy, Politics, and Economics. Last, but certainly not least, donors have helped us to sustain and improve our undergraduate and graduate programs, through support from the Weinberg Endowment for Philosophy (which funds our Frankena and Stevenson graduate student prizes and graduate summer support, among many other things), and the Ilene Goldman Block Memorial Fund (which funds internships for our undergraduate Philosophy and PPE majors, among many other things).

We acknowledge those who have donated to the Department in 2020-21 at the end of this newsletter. There is a description of our several endowments on our website at <https://lsa.umich.edu/philosophy/alumni-friends/endowments.html>. The Department also has an Annual Fund that provides essential support for various undergraduate and graduate activities and programs. If you would like to donate to the Fund, you can find information on how to do so at <https://lsa.umich.edu/philosophy/alumni-friends/annual-fund-giving.html>. We are grateful to all our contributors, past, present and future: Thanks for your support of a truly outstanding Department.

I wish you and yours health and safety as we slowly emerge from the pandemic. And as always, Go Blue! (or as we like to say in Michigan Philosophy, Go Grue!\*).

Best,

*Tad*

Tad M. Schmaltz  
Professor of Philosophy  
James B. and Grace J. Nelson Fellow  
Philosophy Chair

\*: ‘grue’: a predicate introduced by the philosopher Nelson Goodman in his *Fact, Fiction, and Forecast* (1st edition, 1954). A grue object is green before some future time *t* and blue thereafter. Goodman uses the predicate to introduce “the new riddle of induction,” which is illustrated by the fact that past evidence that an emerald, for instance, is green seems equally to confirm that it is grue.

Like the rest of the university, the philosophy graduate program is slowly transitioning back to the way things were before the pandemic. The bulk of our students are back in Ann Arbor. We had huge incoming classes the last two years, and the members of both these classes arrived in town over the summer. So it's as big an influx of people to the department as we've probably ever seen. A lot of things are still in flux though. Some events are still virtual, and those that are in person are done through masks, and preferably in ventilated rooms. Travel is still a challenge. And the job market, which practically didn't exist last year, is only sputtering back into life.

But our students keep producing things at an incredible rate. Many outreach programs that got shuttered by the pandemic got revived in virtual form. Students can now attend workshops around the globe, even if they would never have thought of flying ten thousand miles to attend a couple of talks. And they have been publishing fascinating research in top journals. In the last year, these publications have included:

- **Sean Costello**, "Aristotle on Light and Vision: An 'Ecological' Interpretation," *Apeiron* (available ahead of print). DOI: <https://doi.org/10.1515/apeiron-2019-0063>.
- **Aaron Glasser**, "What Does 'Mind-Wandering' Mean to the Folk? An Empirical Investigation," co-authored with Zachary C Irving, Alison Gopnik, Verity Pinter, & Chandra Sripada, *Cognitive Science* 44 (10), (2020). DOI: <https://doi.org/10.1111/cogs.12908>.
- —, "Mind-Wandering: A Philosophical Guide," co-authored with Zachary C Irving, *Philosophy Compass* 15 (1), (2020). DOI: <https://doi.org/10.1111/phc3.12644>.
- **Josh Hunt**, "Interpreting the Wigner-Eckart Theorem," *Studies in History and Philosophy of Science* (2021). DOI: <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.shpsa.2021.01.007>.
- **Mica Rapstine**, "Regrettable beliefs," *Philosophical Studies* 178: 2169–2190 (2020). DOI: <https://doi.org/10.1007/s11098-020-01535-7>.
- **Laura Soter**, "Cultural schemas: What they are, how to find them, and what to do once you've caught one," co-authored with Andrei Boutyline, *American Sociological Review* 86 (4), (2021). DOI: <https://doi.org/10.1177/00031224211024525>.
- —, "What we would (but shouldn't) do for those we love: Universalism versus partiality in responding to others' moral transgressions," co-authored with Martha K Berg, Susan A Gelman, & Ethan Kross,

*Cognition* 217 (2021). DOI: <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.cognition.2021.104886>.

And the papers accepted for publication include:

- **Jason Byas**, "Rectification & Historic Injustice", *Routledge Companion to Libertarianism* by Matt Zwolinski and Benjamin Ferguson (eds) (forthcoming early 2022).
- **Calum McNamara**, "Scientific Theories as Bayesian Nets: Structure and Sensitivity", co-authored with Patrick Grim et al, *Philosophy of Science* (forthcoming 2022).
- **Elise Woodard**, "Epistemic Atonement," *Oxford Studies in Metaethics* 18, Russ Shafer-Landau (ed) (forthcoming).
- —, "On Subtweeting," co-authored with Eleonore Neufeld, *Conversations Online* (OUP), Patrick Connolly, Sanford Goldberg, & Jennifer Saul (eds) (forthcoming).

Our students have presented talks, mostly virtually, at a number of events over the last year. There are fewer local events than in a normal year, but this is more than made up by the number of talks our students have given 'in' Canada, Germany, the UK, and Australia:

- **Mercy Corredor**, "The Ethics of Complicity: Suspect Identities and Proleptic Empathy," presented in November 2020 (at Ryerson University), February 2021 (at the University of Michigan Mind and Moral Psychology Working Group), March 2021 (at Saint Mary's University, Halifax), and April 2021 (at the Prindle Institute for Ethics, DePauw University).
- **Sean Costello**, "Nocturnal Vision in Plato's Timaeus," the 44th Ancient Philosophy Workshop, University of Texas (Austin TX), March 2021.
- —, "Aristotle on Building the World from the Ground (and other Elements) Up: An Education-Driven Theory of Hylomorphic Ordinary-Object Ontology," *Change and Changemakers in Ancient Philosophy*, Siegen, Germany, July 2021.
- —, "Disambiguating Anaxagoras's notions of ψυχή and νοῦς, and their relation to σπέρματα, in Fragments B4a and B12," VOID: Early Greek Philosophy Workshop, University of Kent (UK), September 2021.
- **Paul de Font-Reaulx**, "Penelope and the Drinks," presented in March 2021 (at the Brown Graduate Conference, Brown University) and April 2021 (at the 2021 Rocky Mountains Philosophy Conference, University of Colorado Boulder).
- **Aaron Glasser**, "Affective Control: obsessions as actions," co-presented with Zachary C. Irving, Southern

Society for Philosophy and Psychology Mental Illness and Mental Agency Symposium, Louisville KY, 2020.

- **Gillian Gray**, "A Pragmatic Pluralist Approach to Social Categories of Identity," *Social Ontology* 2021, San Diego CA (virtual), August 2021.
- **Rebecca Harrison**, "Only Joking! The Role of Responsibility in Speech Act Metaphysics", Michigan-MIT Social Philosophy Workshop (virtual), June 2021.
- —, "How to unintentionally do things with words," Australasian Association of Philosophy Conference (virtual), July 2021.
- —, "Whose uptake matters? Sexual refusal and the ethics of uptake," *Words Workshop* (virtual), September 2021.
- **Malte Hendrickx**, "Against Capacity Views of Action and Control," European Society for Philosophy and Psychology, Leipzig, Germany (virtual), August 2021.
- —, "The Normative Insignificance of Psychological Realizability," *Philosophy of Neuroscience Forum*, Tübingen, Germany, July 2021.
- **Josh Hunt**, "Norms to Explain By," Conference on Difference-Making and Explanatory Relevance, Hamburg, Germany (virtual), July 2021.
- **Ariana Peruzzi**, "Imperialism and the Freedom of Movement: Prioritizing the Freedom to Stay," U-MIT Social Philosophy Workshop (virtual), June 2021.
- —, "A Capability Approach to the Freedom of Movement," Australasian Association of Philosophy Conference (virtual), July 2021.
- **Mica Rapstine**, "Regrettable beliefs," Pacific APA, April 2021.
- **Julian Rome**, "Hermeneutical Injustice for Tennessee Transgender Youth", Australasian Association of Philosophy Conference (virtual), July 2021.
- **Laura Soter**, "Acceptance as Doxastic Suppression", Princeton-Michigan (Meta)normativity Workshop, August 2021.
- —, "Philosophy with Freshmen and Fourth-Graders," American Association for Philosophy Teachers (AAPT) Summer Conference, June 2021.
- —, "What's Philosophy with Kids All About?," Delta Kappa Gamma (Ann Arbor Retired Teachers' Association), November 2021.
- —, "Universalism versus Partiality in Responding to Others' Moral Transgressions", poster at Society for Philosophy and Psychology, June 2021.
- **Angela Sun**, "Can Consent Be Irrevocable," APA Central Division Meeting, February 2021.
- —, "Counterfactual Reasoning in Art Criticism," American Society for Aesthetics Eastern Division Meeting, April 2021.



**Brian Weatherson**  
Director of Graduate Studies



**Caron Maynard**  
Graduate Studies Coordinator

- **Elise Woodard**, “Why Double-Check?”, UC Berkeley Philosophy Colloquium, January 2021.
- —, “Epistemic Vigilance: In Defense of Epistemic Norms on Evidence-Gathering,” co-presented with Carolina Flores, in March 2021 (at the Early Career Inquiry Network) and April 2021 (at the Pacific APA Colloquium).
- —, “On Subtweeting,” with Eleonore Neufeld, Michigan-MIT Social Philosophy Workshop, June 2021.
- —, “The Ignorance Norm & Paradoxical Assertions,” Edinburgh Graduate Epistemology Conference, August 2021.
- —, “Epistemic Atonement,” presented in July 2021 (at the Australasian Association of Philosophy Conference), August 2021 (at the Princeton-Michigan Metanormativity Workshop), and September 2021 (at the Virtual Metaethics Colloquium and the Madison Metaethics Workshop (MadMeta)).
- **Sophia Wushanley**, “Privacy as Protection from Domination,” Boston University Graduate Student Philosophy Conference (virtual), April 2021.
- **Glenn Zhou**, “The Stoics on Nonrational Impulsive Representation,” Australasian Association of Philosophy Conference, July 2021.

Our students organised four conferences here at Michigan:

- In March 2021, the University of Michigan Spring Colloquium, titled “Between I and We: Structures, Individuals, and Power”, was **co-organized by Mercy Corredor and Rebecca Harrison**.
- In June 2021, the Michigan-MIT Social Philosophy workshop was **co-organized by Jason Byas and Mica Rapstine**, with a keynote lecture by Renée Jorgensen.
- In July 2021, the 3rd Biannual Alumni Conference was **co-organized by Mercy Corredor, Gillian Gray, and Angela Sun**. Alumni Sam Liao (PhD 2011), Cat Saint-Croix (PhD 2018), and David Wiens (PhD 2011) were the invited presenters, and alums from the 1970s onward joined in for an alumni reunion as well as a mentorship panel, in which participants discussed graduate student well-being and success, work habits, and transitioning to faculty life. The social event was a hit and we heard some wild stories from years past, mainly about shenanigans featuring Allan Gibbard.
- In August 2021, the Princeton-Michigan Meta-Normativity Conference — **co-organized by Abdul Ansari and Mica Rapstine** — featured two keynote speakers: Mark Schroeder (USC) and Chelsea Rosenthal (Simon Fraser).

In cooperation with A2Ethics, **Laura Soter** organized three virtual “Ethics Across Borders” symposia, and a virtual Ethics Case Writing workshop. **Josh Hunt** and **Elise Woodard** co-led a Professional Development & Mentorship summer series. **Elise Woodard** and Carolina Flores (from Rutgers) co-organized a “Political Epistemology Quasi-Seminar” with participants throughout Britain and America.

Our students continue their work at making academic philosophy a more inclusive place. **Angela Sun** served as the co-director of Minorities and Philosophy (MAP) International during the 2020-2021 year. **Rebecca Harrison and Ariana Peruzzi co-organized** the Michigan Minorities and Philosophy chapter, with events including a lecture by Dr. Desiree Valentine (Marquette) on January 18, as part of the 2021 Reverend Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. Symposium, and a lecture by Dr. Andrea Pitts on March 31, 2021, as part of Cesar Chávez Day. With undergrad Rhea Dhingra, **Mercy Corredor co-organized** and ran *Aretē: Prison Outreach Program*, a group that brings philosophy classes to local prisons. (see p. 25 for more on this wonderful program.)

This year's sixth annual Michigan COMPASS workshop was held in October 2021, for students from underrepresented groups considering graduate school in Philosophy, was **co-organized and facilitated by Abdul Ansari, Gillian Gray, Emma Hardy, Ariana Peruzzi, and Alice Kelley**, with 12 of our grad students serving as mentors. Elizabeth Anderson gave opening remarks, while Jim Joyce, Ishani Maitra, and Gordon Belot joined a Q&A panel on applying to grad school. One of the participants, **Sophia Wushanley**, joined the department as a first-year graduate student in Fall 2021. This year's sixth annual Michigan COMPASS workshop, co-organized by **Paul de Font-Reaulx, Gillian Gray, Ariana Peruzzi, and Julian Rome**, will be held in October 2021.

In Winter 2021, **Abdul Ansari, Laura Soter, and Adam Waggoner co-organized** the first virtual Ethics Bowl, which was a great success. **Coaches included Mercy Corredor, Kevin Craven, Brendan Mooney, Mica Rapstine, Julian Rome**, and visiting grad student Maria Waggoner. **Adam and Maria co-coached the team that won second place!**

Targetting slightly younger students, Philosophy with Kids! ran a successful (virtual) fourth year in spring 2021, at Orchard Hills Elementary in Novi. **Co-organizers Josh Hunt and Laura Soter** — together with volunteers **Elizabeth Beckman, Malte Hendrickx, Adam Waggoner**, and visiting grad student Maria Waggoner — had a great time talking with the fourth-graders about philosophical problems from self-driving car trolley problems, to puzzles of personal identity, to whether robots can create art!

Our students won a number of prizes from the department and the university. **Mercy Corredor** won the **Charles L. Stevenson Prize for excellence in a dissertation dossier**, **Angela Sun** won both the **John Dewey Prize** for her outstanding teaching and our **Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion (DEI) Prize**, **Gillian Gray** won the **Faculty Prize for Excellence in Teaching**, and our **Special Prize for Leadership in Cocurricular Enrichment (SPLICE)** was **co-awarded to Gillian Gray and Sumeet Patwardhan**. **Elise Woodard** was awarded the **Cornwell Fellowship** in recognition of her excellent (original and creative) philosophical work. **Guus Duindam** won a **Rackham Pre-Doctoral Fellowship**. **Lindy Ortiz and Margot Witte** received **Rackham Merit Fellowships**.

Beyond Philosophy, **Guus Duindam** was awarded the **Class of 1908 Award**,

for the third-year law student with the highest cumulative GPA. **Alice Kelley** won the **student-nominated “Honored Instructor Award”**, in recognition for having made a significant impact on the educational experience of one or more students living in Michigan Housing. **Cameron McCulloch, Sophia Wushanley, and Josh Petersen co-founded** and applied for funding for a **new Rackham Interdisciplinary Workshop on Knowledge, Information, and Society**. **Laura Soter** was awarded a grant from **PLATO (Philosophy Learning and Teaching Organization)** for her project “Fostering Philosophy: Pursuing a Philosophical Pedagogy for Students Impacted by Trauma”.

***Our students have done better than we could have hoped for at managing, and even thriving, during the pandemic. We are thrilled to have so many wonderful young philosophers join us in Ann Arbor this year, and we're looking forward to having big events together. Hopefully the next newsletter will be able to feature a photo of a large group of Michigan philosophers!***





The **Dewey Teaching Prize for Excellence as a GSI** was awarded to **Angela Sun**. The winner this year was quite apparent given some of her students' comments:

- Not only was she extremely knowledgeable and adept at explaining hard concepts in clever ways, but she was also very approachable, down-to-earth, and extremely funny. I struggled with the difficulty of this class but Angela was always willing to meet one-on-one and able to understand exactly where I was confused.

- Although I think it helped to have a lot of confident voices in the class, she was extremely skilled at creating an equitable classroom. Students who liked to speak a lot were given a fair amount of time, while those who spoke less, I think, were encouraged by her positive demeanor.

- She is excited and that gets me excited! She is knowledgeable and very well prepared for class.

Angela was also awarded this year's **DEI Prize** for her special contributions to departmental DEI activities.

***Congratulations, Angela!***



This year's **Faculty Prize for Excellence in Teaching** was awarded to **Gillian Gray**. Her students' comments show why she was deserving of this award:

- I absolutely loved this course...because of Gillian's prowess as an instructor. She clearly loved what she was doing, and she kept every student as engaged as possible.

- The quality of instruction was fantastic. [S]he was extremely helpful and always brought a fun attitude to class. She is clearly brilliant, which is reflected in how fluidly she discusses the material.

- Wow! Her preparation for every discussion section was clearly evident and her knowledge of the subject was vast.

- This was my only real discussion for the semester, and I got to feel as if I could participate and communicate as well as connect with other students.

Gillian was also this year's co-winner of the **SPLICE Award** (Special Prize for Leadership in Co-Curricular Enrichment) for her outstanding contributions to co-curricular efforts. Her departmental service includes COMPASS Workshop organizer, Ethics Bowl coach, and Michigan Philosophy Alumni Conference organizer.

***Congratulations, Gillian!***



**Sumeet Patwardhan** was this year's co-winner (along with Gillian Gray) of the **SPLICE Award** (Special Prize for Leadership in Co-Curricular Enrichment) for his outstanding contributions to co-curricular efforts such as COMPASS and grad student initiated conferences. Sumeet was the GEO President during 20-21 which involves facilitating the entire union's organizing efforts including meeting facilitation, member coordination, strategizing and public relations. While Co-Chair for the Bargaining Committee this past academic year, he oversaw GEO's expansive and high-stakes bargaining campaign. He is the co-coordinator for the Race, Gender, and Feminist Philosophy Reading Group, which meets twice-monthly, as well as the Race, Gender, and Feminist Philosophy Rackham Interdisciplinary Workshop. Despite being remote, he also organized several virtual speakers and continued with student-led conferences for 20-21 as well as judged the Ethics Bowl quarterfinal rounds.

***Congratulations, Sumeet!***



**Mercy Corredor** was this year's recipient of the **Charles L. Stevenson Prize** for excellence in a candidacy dossier, titled "Anger and the Desire for Payback". Funded by the Marshall M. Weinberg Endowment for the Frankena and Stevenson Prizes, this prize carries a \$3,000 stipend. Her research interests concern moral learning and political transformation and are motivated by the question: how can we make the idea of living in a society of equals more appealing at the level of *affect*? In her dissertation, she explores the conditions under which it is and is not appropriate to express certain emotions – anger, shame, empathy - and aims to work out how these emotions can help construct a more just society. Her future plans will think about these questions relating to projects in neighboring domains: mental illness, race, and how the elderly are treated. Mercy is also the co-coordinator for the Race, Gender, and Feminist Philosophy Rackham Interdisciplinary Workshop.

***Congratulations, Mercy!***



**Elise Woodard** is this year's **Cornwell Prize** winner for her essay "A Puzzle About Fickleness", as appearing in NOÛS, 24 November 2020. (see page 20 or [click here](#) to read the article in full.) Elise's paper starts with a striking observation, Professor Brian Weatherson notes: "optimal management of one's beliefs requires changing one's mind some of the time, so as not to be too stubborn, but also requires that changes not be too frequent. Going in for inquiry presupposes that one is competent to reliably judge the question at issue. The excessively fickle person cannot rationally believe that; the fact that they think so many of their past efforts are mistakes means they can't think of themselves as reliable". The review committee was very impressed with this year's entries, but Elise's submission was particularly impressive.

***Congratulations, Elise!***



**Guus Duindam** received a **Rackham Pre-Doctoral Fellowship** as well as the **Class of 1908 Memorial Scholarship** from UM Law School, awarded to the student who attained the highest scholastic average at the beginning of their senior year. His dissertation, "Kant's Formula of Universal Law: An Interpretation and Defense of the Supreme Principle of Morality," focuses on Kant's Formula of Universal Law ("FUL"), the first formulation of his Categorical Imperative, which is widely criticized as rigid, unworkable, and subject to countless counterexamples. Duindam argues such pessimism is unwarranted because it is due to interpretive missteps. Standard interpretations of FUL are subject to two fatal flaws. First, they insufficiently recognize that FUL's two contradiction tests serve distinct functions: the first determines permissibility and the second moral worth. Second, modern interpretations rest on a mistaken and anachronistic conception of the maxim, the principle FUL is designed to test.

***Congratulations, Guus!***

**Alice Kelly** received the student-nominated "**Honored Instructor Award**", in recognition for having made a significant impact on the educational experience of one or more students living in Michigan Housing. (Due to COVID, last year's celebration did not occur, but honors, such as Alice's, should not go unnoticed.) Her students have praised her for being a great GSI along with her great PowerPoint presentations. Despite virtual classes in 20/21, she made discussions engaging, lively, and used a variety of teaching techniques so as not to cause Zoom-overload. Alice was praised for taking time out of her own schedule to meet with students and help with their papers. She was always flexible and helped make classes interesting.

***Congratulations, Alice!***

**Cameron McCulloch** co-founded (along with **Josh Petersen** and **Sophia Wushanley**) and applied for funding for a new **Rackham Interdisciplinary Workshop on Knowledge, Information, and Society**. The group was fully funded by Rackham and aims to bring together people from across the university interested in the rapidly expanding set of questions around the philosophy of information. The group's focus for Fall 2021 is privacy, and will continue to focus on a new topic each term, united by an interest in the ways that information and communication technologies are changing the production, use, and transfer of knowledge and the structure of interpersonal and interpersonal relationships, as well as the relationships between states, corporations, and between individuals and these larger group agents. The group will be co-sponsoring the Spring Colloquium on March 18-19, 2022 on Political Epistemology.

***Congratulations to all!***

**Lindy Ortiz** received a **Rackham Merit Fellowship**. She tells us, "I am very thankful to be receiving a Rackham Merit Fellowship. I am happy to have been welcomed into the RMF community filled with wonderful people that are both encouraging and supportive. Graduate school is extremely overwhelming when your family doesn't understand it or know how to help. So, I feel lucky to have the opportunity to not only receive resources to help me be a better scholar but also to have a community that is understanding and that is on this journey with me. It makes this process way less scary knowing that I will never be alone."

***Congratulations, Lindy!***

**Laura Soter** was awarded a grant from **PLATO (Philosophy Learning and Teaching Organization)** for her project "Fostering Philosophy: Pursuing a Philosophical Pedagogy for Students Impacted by Trauma". The grant will be used for the development of a curriculum for middle schoolers that focuses on using philosophical skills to cultivate social-emotional learning. This curriculum will be targeted to students who are struggling in school due to academic or personal difficulties, with a particular focus on trauma-informed pedagogy. Laura and her co-grant winner, Alexandra Chang (Lincoln Middle School) will run this program at Lincoln Middle School in Ypsilanti.

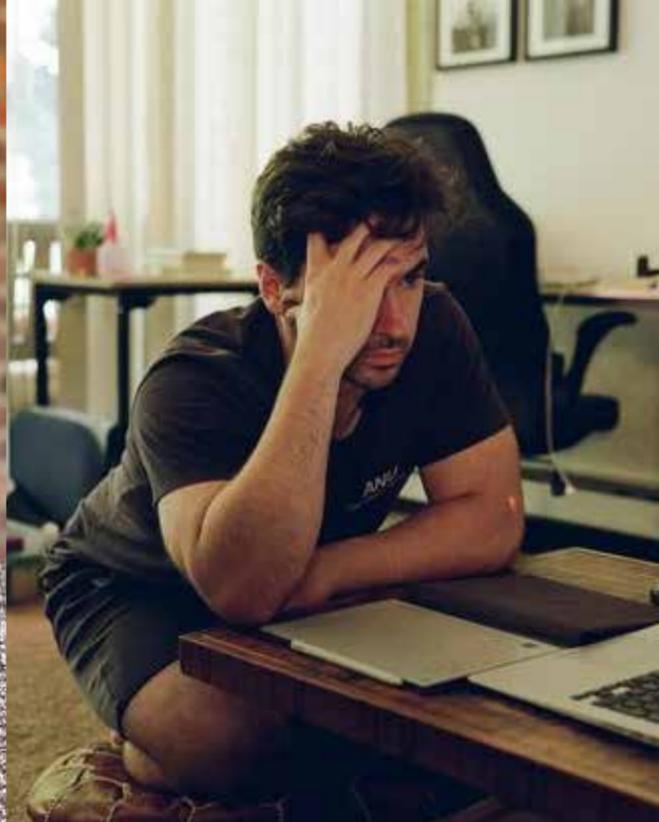
***Congratulations, Laura!***

**Margot Witte** received a **Rackham Merit Fellowship (RMF)**, which recognizes entering students who have outstanding academic qualifications, show exceptional potential for scholarly success in their graduate program, and demonstrate promise for contributing to wider academic, professional, or civic communities. The RMF aims to promote inclusivity at the University of Michigan by supporting graduate students of marginalized identities and those who have demonstrated particular commitment to DEI issues. In addition to providing standard tuition and stipend funding, the award provides an extra year of fellowship, which Margot hopes to use to continue advancing inclusivity in both the department and discipline.

***Congratulations, Margot!***



**Emma Hardy** was awarded the **Weinberg Cognitive Science grant**: "The Weinberg grant has supported me by allowing me to pursue my interdisciplinary research projects connecting the areas of the metaphysics of free will and cognitive science. This year, I've developed papers on the psychology of the use of manipulation arguments in intuition pumps for moral responsibility. I also continued to co-organize the Mind and Moral Psychology working group, which although still online was a well-attended work-in-progress (and external speaker talks) group."



**Calum McNamara**: "I'm a (rising) fourth year graduate student, and am currently in the early stages of writing my dissertation. Roughly speaking, my dissertation project deals with connections between metaphysics and decision theory. Working on this project has meant that I've had to familiarize myself with two different, and quite large, literatures. Receiving the Weinberg Pre-doctoral Fellowship this Summer has really helped me make progress on my project, as I've been able to devote myself full-time to acquiring the necessary background. Thanks to the fellowship, I think I'm on target to have a large chunk of my dissertation finished by the Fall!"



**Sherice Ngaserin Ng Jing Ya**: "Receiving the Weinberg Pre-Doctoral Funds this year made a significant difference to my summer. With my necessary expenses covered by the fund, I was able to put my focus on my coursework and research. In addition to working on papers for my courses, I was able to put a large amount of my time into my research for a grant on Platonism and Buddhist Philosophy, of which I am a collaborator with 12 philosophy and classics professors from all over the world. I translated a rarely-discussed passage in a Sanskrit philosophical text by the Indian philosopher Vasubandhu, and have been working on writing my book chapter which puts it in conversation with Plato's Theaetetus."



**Elise Woodard** was awarded the **Weinberg Summer Dissertation grant**: "I am very grateful for the award which allowed me to focus on my dissertation and next major research projects over the Summer. With this funding, I was able to polish two papers from my dissertation and submit them to academic journals. At this point, each of my dissertation chapters is either under review at journals or published. In addition, I began working on a new project on "Epistemic Atonement." Epistemic atonement is the process of making up for one's previous bad believing. I argue that to atone, agents must restore trustworthiness, which requires demonstrating epistemic sensitivity going forward. This paper is now forthcoming in *Oxford Studies in Metaethics* and is the seed of my next major research project, after the dissertation."



**Glenn Zhou**: "The award has allowed me to focus on my research during the summer after I took the intensive French course in the spring. I have thus far developed a wide range of research interests in history of philosophy: I'm now working on Aristotle's theory of boundaries and its applications to his physics and psychology as my dissertation project, while I have also worked on Descartes's theory of error, the Stoic account of nonrational impulsive representation, and Zhuangzi's approach to being a sage."



**Francisco Calderón (2021 Cohort):** "I did a double major in Physics and Philosophy at the Universidad de los Andes in Colombia, where I also learned a little German and some Ancient Greek. I am mainly interested in issues lying at the intersection of the philosophy of physics (particularly quantum field theory) and the philosophy of science, and I sometimes dabble in related matters of metaphysics and logic. I'm also very keen on ancient Greek philosophy (especially the Presocratics and Plato) and early Greek science. I do not engage in many non-academic activities, but I really enjoy food, museums, and most things nerdy, and I hope to develop more outdoor hobbies at Ann Arbor! Not only is U-M Philosophy and its commitment to interdisciplinarity a perfect academic environment for me, but all of the people I have met (even over a screen or an email!) have stood out as welcoming and kind. I'm very excited to join the department!"



**Sarah Colquhoun (2021 Cohort):** "I'm moving to Ann Arbor from Richmond, VA, but I'm originally from Missouri. I just finished my undergrad at VCU where I studied philosophy and history. I have a three year old Newfoundland named Pansy. We hike together in the early morning most days, and our shared hobbies also include swimming, driving around with the windows down, and a game she invented I call "tug of war fetch". I also like to play mandolin/fiddle and work on pointless coding projects (including an analytic philosophy generator!). I chose UM because it has strengths in a lot of areas, and I don't want to feel like I have to commit to narrow interests so early. I was also attracted to the location because of the climate, city, and (relative) proximity to my hometown."



**Aaron Glasser (2021 Cohort):** "I received my BA from Cornell and I'm joining the philosophy program at Michigan with primary interests in philosophy of mind, action, and cognitive science, and secondary interests in psychiatry, aesthetics, and non-western philosophy. Michigan offers an optimal environment for exploring each of these interests (and where they meet)—how could one turn down an opportunity to work with such incredible faculty!? Outside of academia, I like to make and curate movies."



**Gabrielle Kerbel (2021 Cohort):** I grew up in a suburb of Philadelphia before moving to western Massachusetts to attend Mount Holyoke College, where I studied philosophy and math. For fun, I like to work on giant jigsaw puzzles and play games. (I think this means I had "pandemic hobbies" even before there was a pandemic!) I chose UM philosophy because I found the department to be extremely welcoming and because I thought it seemed like the ideal place for me to study philosophy — and the philosophy of physics, in particular. And also for the weather, of course."



**Lindy Lane Ortiz (2021 Cohort):** "I received my bachelor's degree May, 2021 in Philosophy and Political Science, emphasizing in Law and Public Policy from California Lutheran University...I was involved in the McNair Scholars Program for two years where I researched and presented on topics related to justice, oppression, and liberation. [S]ome of my passions include community services, tennis, yoga, and being with my dog. My philosophical interests range from political philosophy, feminist philosophy, and philosophy of race. My plan is to eventually become a professor so that I can share my interest through teaching and continue to work on important research...I'm excited to join UM Philosophy and to see what the future holds!"

## VIRTUAL GRAD ADMISSION FAIR 2021



For the second year in a row, UM Philosophy conducted our **2021 Admissions Fair virtually**, albeit this time without the last-minute pivot! With more time to plan, we built out the website into a more robust central hub with a detailed schedule and Zoom links, as well as embedded videos and links to virtual tours, faculty talks, and informative documents. **Josh Petersen, a member of the 2021 PhD cohort**, reflected that "Michigan's virtual admissions events immediately communicated to me UM's unparalleled community. Through one-on-one conversations with faculty, working group presentations, and seminars, I was so glad to experience Michigan's supportive philosophical culture. Though I was thousands of miles away from Ann Arbor, virtual admissions still helped me to imagine vividly what life as a UM grad student might be like."

**Josh Petersen (2021 Cohort):** "I completed my undergraduate studies in Philosophy and German at Stanford University. Since graduation, I've worked in grassroots human rights advocacy, focusing primarily on environmental racism, mass incarceration, and the free movement of people. I have eclectic research interests in (formal) epistemology, political and legal philosophy, feminist philosophy, and the science — and I'm thrilled to be joining a department that fosters such lively connections between these areas! Alongside my PhD, I'll also be pursuing a contemporaneous JD at Stanford Law School. Outside of philosophy, I'm a serious classical pianist, so I couldn't be happier to be studying in one of the country's classical music capitals!"

18

**Declan Trudel (2021 Cohort):** "I was born in Santa Cruz, CA, but spent most of my life in the Inland Empire. I went to UCLA earning a bachelor's in Classics and Philosophy. I only became interested in both of these topics during college. I first wanted to study philosophy as a way of understanding politics, but I eventually became interested in the field more generally, especially ancient philosophy. I look forward to studying at Michigan in the fall! There were a lot of things I found attractive about Michigan, including the interdisciplinary character of study at Michigan and the department's strengths in normative and ancient philosophy. Most of all, I've been impressed by how this is combined with a culture of generosity and support throughout the department."

**Margot Witte (2021 Cohort):** "I'm originally from Northern California, and I did my undergraduate at Brown University, where I wrote my honors thesis on justification and epistemic carelessness. I graduated in 2019, and I've been working as a bread baker in Savannah, GA for the last year and a half. I'm delighted to be joining UM in the fall, particularly because of the strong community and breadth of research interests represented by the graduate students and faculty. I'm primarily interested in traditional epistemology, and I'm hoping to explore topics in social and feminist philosophy in the coming years. Outside of philosophy, I enjoy being outside in whatever ways I can, and -- of course -- baking."

**Yixuan Wu (2021 Cohort):** "I'm from China. I did my master's in logic and philosophy of science at LMU Munich, and before that I studied maths and philosophy at St Andrews. During the gap year I'm doing some online tutoring, and I'm also studying and spending time on my hobbies. In my free time, I enjoy long-distance running, drawing (mostly on my computer), and reading non-fictions. I chose UM philosophy for the friendly community and the flexible degree structure. A (very random) fun fact about me: I have a 5L water bottle. I'm very excited to meet everyone in the Fall!"

**Sophia Wushanley (2021 Cohort):** "I chose Michigan because of the department's inspiring faculty, staff, and students, and its support of interdisciplinary research. I earned my BA in Philosophy (*summa cum laude*, Phi Beta Kappa) from the University of Pennsylvania in 2015. In 2017, I obtained a *maîtrise* from the University of Paris 1 Panthéon-Sorbonne, where I conducted research on data ethics. I returned to philosophy after several years of experience working in Parisian startups as a software engineer. When not coding or doing philosophy, I like spending my time watching sci fi movies and hanging out with other people's dogs, among other things."



**Elizabeth Beckman (2020 Cohort):** "I spent the last year in Kentucky zooming into UM. I enjoyed having a break from isolation via late evening seminars and cohort catch-ups. It's good to be in person now and living with other grads." Elizabeth is one of our grad student GEO Stewards for the 21/22 AY. She, along with fellow 2020 cohort member Malte Hendrickx, volunteered with the department's 4th annual Philosophy with Kids! program, held virtually this spring at Orchard Hill Elementary School.



**Sean Costello (2020 Cohort):** "I am very happy to be starting my second year at Michigan within the Program in Ancient Philosophy. I have really enjoyed the courses that I have taken so far and look forward to finally getting to meet everyone in-person. Outside of the department, I am the sitting Secretary of the Graduate Student Council of the American Philosophical Association. My research focuses on philosophy of mind in the history of philosophy -- particularly, visual perception, memory, and φαντασία."



**Paul de Font-Reaulx (2020 Cohort):** "I did my first year wholly remotely from Sweden, which--thanks to the significant support and accommodation of the department--worked really well. While this was a good experience in many ways, I am now very happy to finally be able to participate in person in Ann Arbor. I am excited about being this year's COMPASS Workshop Coordinator and social chair for the grad students!"



**Malte Hendrickx (2020 Cohort):** "What a weird year. Sleephacking, virtual picnics and a strike were certainly not among the things I expected my first year of grad school. But these were not the only surprises: I was most surprised by how well I think the community adapted: in teaching, reaching out, online socials or being flexible when pandemic issues arose. The most tricky for me were the heated discussion transforming into a black screen instead of a long night at the bar, making wonderful friends that you spend calls instead of times with, and the shocking lack of coffee breaks to just run into people and discuss whatever floats their boats. But I am thankful this was not a lost or wasted year, despite the unfortunate circumstances. It was year that taught me much and made me yearn to join the A2 community in person. Thanks to everyone who went so many extra miles so that I already feel part of the community!"



**Mica Rapstine (2020 Cohort):** "My first year passed by in a blur. To the extent that blurs can be evaluated, it was a good one! I especially enjoyed the activities our cohort put together to limit the sorts of distance the pandemic could cause us. We sat in Zoom rooms together, reading or sharing problem set strategies. We met virtually for Friday coffee hour check-ins. (These were happy hour check-ins for our folks who've been an ocean away!) We fought intense screen fatigue to join in for role-playing game adventures in which (imaginary) lives were saved. I can hardly wait for Angell Hall life with these folks and with the larger department family! [Note: Photo caption: not coming out from behind this mask until Angell Hall!]."



# ALUMNI and RECENT GRAD NEWS

**Julian Rome (2020 Cohort):** "What is the ideal group chat platform? What meeting time is most fair given the 3+ different time zones folks are joining from? Is it possible to avoid both Zoom fatigue and isolation? How long is too long to spend looking at a screen? These are not the questions I expected to be investigating during my first year of graduate school in philosophy. From learning an ancient language in a contemporary virtual format, to trying to stay focused in Zoom classes with political unrest and personal issues surging in the background, nothing about this year was what I expected. But experiencing UM for the first time in this context definitely showed me what a wonderful department I have joined. It required so much more planning and effort, this past year, to do things like chat with someone over a coffee, continue discussions after class, go over paper ideas with professors, and just get to know one another. That makes it all the more meaningful to me that people were still willing to do all of those things. I think I've gotten a glimpse of Michigan Philosophy's amazing resilience and creativity, and I am so excited to experience the department in-person this fall."

**Sarah Sculco (2020 Cohort):** "Despite all of the challenges this year brought, I have been so impressed by the kindness of the Philosophy Department. Every faculty member (and staff!) with whom I have interacted has been welcoming, encouraging, kind, thoughtful, and understanding. I have enjoyed every one of my classes, and I am confident that things will only get better from here. I can't wait to meet in person. Thank you, everyone, for all of your support. It has meant so much! This year was difficult due to the circumstances, but I can't imagine a better place to be than Michigan's Philosophy! Here are a few fun memories I have:

-Our cohort organizing an around-the-world gift basket for the ever-wonderful Carson! I loved getting and putting together packages from around the world; Malte even sent over some things from Germany! Carson and I enjoyed some delicious hot chocolate, even though it was absolutely freezing out.

-I especially loved Laura Ruetsche's Feminist Philosophy of Science class. We had so many fun moments in class, and I learned so much from Laura and my classmates. I also thoroughly enjoyed hearing perspectives from students in the class outside the discipline. It truly was an interdisciplinary, exciting, and enlightening class!

-Another fun memory I have with my cohort is playing Pen and Paper games; I'm so excited to continue playing, and I hope anyone who is interested will join us next year!"

**Ian Fishback (PhD 2020)** defended his dissertation, "**Method and the Morality of War**", under the supervision of Professor Elizabeth Anderson. His dissertation "links just war theory to broader arguments about method in philosophy, social science, policy, and law. After 9/11 and a string of irregular battles, practical and theoretical challenges to the traditional just war framework undermined its normative foundations. As it lost influence, revisionist just war theory (RJW) ascended. RJW is more individualistic, asserts that the morality of war is the same as the morality of domestic self-defense, and claims that the traditional understanding of the morality of war is radically mistaken. I argue that the morality of war is the same as the morality of domestic self-defense. However, revisionists misunderstand the empirical nature of war, the moral nature of war, and the relationship between the two." Ian has been awarded a Fulbright Scholarship at Lund University.

The UM Philosophy's M.A. program is designed for students currently pursuing a professional program or academic degree at the UM outside of philosophy, for whom a graduate credential in philosophy would be advantageous. Only in exceptional cases are other students accepted into the M.A. program.  
**We welcome this year's exceptional cohort!**

**Hedieh Alavi Tamaddoni:** "I received my BS in electrical engineering from Virginia Tech in 2010, and my MSE in electrical engineering from UM in 2013. In 2019, I received my PhD with UM's Department of Biomedical Engineering and since then, I have been a Postdoc Researcher with UM Engineering's Histotripsy Group. Beginning Winter 2020, I began pursuing my MA in Philosophy. My fields of research are signal and image processing, histotripsy, and therapeutic ultrasound."



**Ibrahim Haydar:** "Ahoj! While wrapping up my undergrad here at Michigan this past year, I decided to alter course to seriously consider a career in philosophy. So I entered this program hoping to lay some foundation to that end! I did my undergraduate degrees in cognitive science, mathematics, and biochemistry where I realized that what I was learning was at its most engaging when applied to and/or analyzed by philosophy. I especially appreciate the role that philosophy plays in shining lights on various details across disciplines and subsequently drawing out deep and meaningful discussion from them, thereby tying together the bigger picture all the better. Thus, I have been most philosophically interested in epistemology and the philosophy of science, though I am also keen to learn more about the philosophy of language and more philosophy generally. I am excited to be here and eager to learn and to sharpen my skills."



**Benjamin Ordiway:** "I am a U.S. Army Civil Affairs officer in my second year of a terminal M.A. in philosophy. Following my studies, I will instruct philosophy at the United States Military Academy at West Point. My main interest is how we might improve military education and training to field a more moral—therefore more influential—force. To that end, I have designed and am piloting a dual-process moral reasoning model to preempt moral transgressions and defend against moral injury. I am married (way up) to my wife, Teresa. We have a wonderful daughter, Claire. I am an avid hockey player and enjoy putting my ethics studies to the test on the ice, occasionally (often) putting my team on the penalty kill."



## PHILOSOPHERS BEING EXCELLENT

Grad student **Mercy Corredor** and undergrad **Rhea Dhingra** have co-organized and designed the syllabus for *Aretē: Philosophy in Prisons*, a new group made up of undergraduates, graduate students, and philosophy faculty members which seeks to bring philosophy classes to a nearby prison – specifically, the Huron Valley Women's Correctional Facility. Why *Aretē*? *Aretē* (Greek: ἀρετή) is a concept in ancient Greek thought that, in its most basic sense, refers to "excellence" of any kind. The program has submitted an application to Huron Valley which, if approved, will allow Michigan faculty members and graduate students to teach *inside* of the prison. The submitted proposal draws from two other programs: Ethics Bowl and the Inside-Out Prison Exchange Program, an international education program which brings college students into prisons to learn alongside incarcerated persons. The idea (if successful) is that Michigan undergrads would be taking an Ethics Bowl class inside of the prison alongside incarcerated persons. The class would be centered around various Ethics Bowl cases and would culminate with an Ethics Bowl tournament held inside of the prison. To better prepare for this, *Aretē* group members have spent the last year studying the ethics of prisons and prison abolition in an interdisciplinary reading group. Highlights from this reading group include discussion of Angela Davis' *Are Prisons Obsolete?* and the PBS documentary *The Interrupters*.



Statue of Aretē in Celsus' Library in Ephesus

# Moral Victories

By James Dau, Rackham Graduate School, 1/29/21 Alumni Spotlight

With support from the Rackham Program in Public Scholarship, **U-M Philosophy Ph.D. alum Zoë A. Johnson King** co-founded the Michigan High School Ethics Bowl, helping high school students explore and apply moral philosophy to local issues. What defines right action, and how such actions can be applied consistently to real-world situations, has been the subject of philosophers and ethicists going at least as far back as Socrates, and it's a conversation that continues today, over 2,500 years later. It is a conversation Zoë A. Johnson King (Ph.D. '18) has always relished.



What defines right action, and how such actions can be applied consistently to real-world situations, has been the subject of philosophers and ethicists going at least as far back as Socrates, and it's a conversation that continues today, over 2,500 years later. It is a conversation Zoë A. Johnson King (Ph.D. '18) has always relished. After completing her undergraduate and master's degrees, she took a job teaching secondary education in south London, where she grew to love teaching philosophy in particular. "That age, around 16, is when everyone is just starting to come to grips with their values, beliefs, and the meaning of existence," she says.

"They're starting to confront the big questions, and every day brings a new opportunity to really broaden someone's perspective."

## Keeping It Real

While she would miss teaching secondary school, Johnson King always knew she wanted to return to academic philosophy and so came to U-M as a Ph.D. student in the Department of Philosophy in 2013. Her long-standing interests in moral psychology and moral education drew her to focus on moral uncertainty—how people reason their way through complex, morally fraught situations that may cause them to feel pulled in multiple directions at once.

And while many works of philosophy tackle hypothetical scenarios and thought experiments, Johnson King chose to work primarily with real-life case studies. "All the cases I used were real-life examples with the names of the people involved changed," she says. "That made them more complicated, but it also made them more sensitive to the concrete reality of what everyday moral reasoning is like. It helped me capture the subtlety and nuance of being a moral agent in the world more than you get from more imagined scenarios."

At the same time Johnson King was examining how people apply ethics to their daily lives, Jeanine DeLay, a former U-M philosophy lecturer and co-founder of A2Ethics—a nonprofit dedicated to promoting ethics and philosophy initiatives in local communities—reached out to U-M philosophy graduate students with a proposal that promised to meld Johnson King's two interests. Building on a national model begun at the UNC Chapel Hill about a year earlier, A2Ethics wanted to bring a new program to local Ann Arbor high schools—the Ethics Bowl. Part debate competition, part collaborative dialogue, ethics bowl competitions see teams of high school students apply ethical principles to a variety of real-world case studies, with responses from the rival team and questions from a moderator all aimed at developing their stance to its fullest extent. A panel of judges evaluates their final stance, awarding points for the construction of the team's argument and engaging in civil dialogue. "It's an exercise in figuring out the best answer to a question, rather than just beating the other team, with the power of your mind," Johnson King explains.

Johnson King and DeLay got to work setting up a Michigan regional ethics bowl, the winners of which would go on to compete in a

national championship at UNC. During their first year, they focused on building partnerships with five high schools in the Ann Arbor area, working with faculty members to recruit teams, and having those teams work with U-M philosophy graduate students to strengthen their understanding of ethics and develop their stances on each case study. Since case studies are assigned at random at the ethics bowl competition, teams were best served by preparing for all of them.

One of the defining features of Michigan's Ethics Bowl, distinguishing it from other state competitions, is the local focus of its case studies. Instead of picking issues from around the country, cases are sourced from the local and state community, ensuring that their teams were grappling not only with difficult ethical situations, but ones that hit home. These included issues like managing the faltering wolf population in Isle Royale National Park, or issues surrounding felon disenfranchisement. "We write up our own case studies, working with people from our own communities," Johnson King says. "It not only makes them local, it makes them intergenerational and often very personal."

## Greater Good

After the first year, Johnson King and her colleagues wanted to not only continue the Ethics Bowl, but to expand it into nearby cities [...] But asking graduate students to coach teams at more distant schools, and asking those schools, some of which had limited financial resources of their own, to send their teams to Ann Arbor to compete was not an insignificant request. Johnson King turned to the Rackham Program in Public Scholarship for help, receiving an \$8,000 grant to support travel, stipends for the graduate student coaches, and event expenses. The additional support allowed six more schools to join the Michigan Ethics Bowl,

and for the graduate student coaches to visit their teams [...] over the course of the school year. As a second-year graduate student, Johnson King not only coached the Ann Arbor Pioneer team—all the way to victory, she adds—but she also recruited most of the coaches and organized the events, which were hosted at Palmer Commons on the U-M Ann Arbor campus.

After the competition, Johnson King ...invite[d] members of her team to the department's year-end celebration, where they spoke about how studying ethics had helped them change and grow, and inspired some of them to pursue undergraduate majors or minors in philosophy. It was a moment that brought home the value of the ethics bowl, and the department committed to funding it in perpetuity. "The second year was the most formative year of the Ethics Bowl," Johnson King says. "That was when it solidified into something that was going to last. The support from Rackham allowed us to transform it from an experiment into a sustainable program that could continue from year to year and had committed schools and resources."

Johnson King completed her doctoral program in 2018. [T]he Ethics Bowl has continued to draw new students from around the state...Teams prepared remotely this year, and will compete in the first-ever virtual Ethics Bowl in the first week of February, 2021 [see box below]. "Training people to give reasons for why they believe and act as they do, and to assess the strength of those reasons, has only become more relevant. We're training people to reason their way through a complex, considered opinion on important current moral and social issues. To my mind, that's the skill you need to engage other people in good faith and effectively navigate democracy in the United States and elsewhere."



Thanks to our organizers **Abdul Ansari, Laura Soter, and Adam Waggoner**, 2021 marked the first ever **Virtual Michigan Ethics Bowl!** It was a *great* success, with sixteen teams from ten different Michigan high schools competing for the virtual Hemlock Cup. This year's winning team was from Washtenaw International High School (WIHI), who went on to represent Michigan in the National Bowl. The final two cases in the championship round were "Every Word A Messenger" by Peg Eby-Jager, which focused on the ethics of sharing content on social media, and "Parasports and Athletes with Non-Apparent Disabilities" by Lisa Grawel. The Bowl would not have been possible without the help of over a dozen UM philosophers—including faculty, graduate students, and alumni—who helped with organizing, coaching, and judging.

There is a tension in our thinking about changing one's mind. On the one hand, agents who are fickle seem less than fully rational. More specifically, there seems to be something odd about an agent who changes her mind frequently without gaining new evidence. On the other hand, one-off changes of mind based on redeliberation are far less problematic. More forcefully, we tend to regard agents who never redeliberate and change their minds as closed-minded or dogmatic. How and when can one-off changes of mind be rationally permissible, even admirable, when constant such changes seem quintessentially irrational? What might our explanation of this asymmetry tell us about *epistemic* rationality?

In §1, I motivate this puzzle and clarify its scope. The puzzle is to explain why fickleness is often more problematic than its one-off counterparts. In §2 I argue that fickleness is not just practically problematic but also epistemically problematic, and thus an epistemic solution is desirable. I offer my positive proposal in §3. On my proposal, fickleness is often irrational because fickle agents typically gain second-order evidence that they are unreliable—and their resultant beliefs unstable—in the course of changing their mind multiple times. I call this the Ratifiable Reasoning account, since it claims that changes of mind are rational if they result in beliefs that the agent can rationally endorse. In §4, I canvas some alternative solutions to the puzzle and argue that they fail to adequately explain the asymmetry. In §5, I point to avenues for further research on epistemic norms on changing one's mind; in particular, I consider how both time-slicing and process-oriented views in epistemology might explain the importance of redeliberation in our epistemic assessments of others.

## 1. A Puzzle About Fickleness

When we consider cases of changing one's mind, we often find that frequent redeliberation is more problematic than one-off redeliberation. What explains this? While this is a complex phenomenon—involving a number of contextual factors—I attempt to isolate one important part of the explanation for why frequent redeliberation is problematic when it results in changes of mind.<sup>1</sup>

To motivate the asymmetry, it will be helpful to contrast two agents, Fran and Tom:

Fran: Fran is a history buff, who has studied conflicting theories about how Amelia Earhart died. She thinks the most plausible theories are that she died in a plane crash or in Japanese captivity. On June 1, she is convinced that Earhart died in a plane crash. However, on June 2, she changes her mind: she now believes that Earhart died in captivity. On June 3, she changes her mind again, once again believing that she died in a plane crash. Fran continues to cycle through these theories, despite neither gaining nor losing—much less forgetting—any first-order evidence. Moreover, at a certain point, it's not the case that she changes her mind in virtue of noticing something new about the evidence. Nonetheless, she keeps changing her mind each day throughout the month, cycling back and forth between the theories.<sup>2</sup>

Tom: Tom, like Fran, is a history buff who has studied conflict-

ing theories about how Amelia Earhart dies, and he agrees with Fran's assessment about the two most plausible theories. From June 1–15, he believes that Earhart died in a plane crash. However, on June 16, he changes his mind, and for the remainder of the month, he believes that she died in Japanese captivity.

Let's suppose, for now, that Fran and Tom are similar in the following relevant respects. In addition to sharing the same first-order evidence bearing on how Amelia Earhart died, they are equally adept at assessing it. Furthermore, they do not gain or lose any evidence during this time. In addition, they both know their own track records, including how often they changed their mind and which views they held each day. Finally, they each change their mind as a result of reassessing the evidence, not merely because they (for example) bumped their heads. Intuitively, it seems like there is something defective about Fran's frequent mind-changing that is not present in Tom. Indeed, Fran seems paradigmatically fickle, frequently and frivolously changing her mind. This seems true even if we describe the agents as switching between weaker, probabilistic claims of the form 'Amelia Earhart died in such-and-such conditions.'

Of course, assessing changes of mind requires taking into account many contextual factors. For example, if Tom had changed his mind merely because he bumped his head, whereas Fran changed her mind each day as the result of careful redeliberation, it would be more difficult to say which agent was doing worse—though both agents would arguably still seem far from ideal. Moreover, had Fran changed her mind once each week, rather than each day, it would be more difficult to offer any useful normative or evaluative comparisons between her and Tom absent further information. Although frequent redeliberation that results in changes of mind—i.e. *fickleness*—can look pathological or odd, it doesn't follow that more redeliberation is always all-things-considered worse. In other words, we cannot simply count the number of times an agent changes her mind and infer that the agent who engages in  $n$  changes is doing better—by some useful metric—than someone who engages in  $n+1$  changes. As with other normative or evaluative assessments, the details matter.

One of the details that matters is whether the agent redeliberated in between changes. An agent *redeliberates* when she goes through a process of reasoning or reassessing the evidence. Redeliberation need not be conscious; it can happen 'under the surface,' so to speak.<sup>3</sup> We can distinguish cases of redeliberation from cases of *jumping*. An agent *jumps* when she flips between doxastic responses as if by a flip of a coin, without going through any sort of reasoning process—subconscious or conscious. Had Fran and Tom merely *jumped* between responses, both would seem to be engaged in problematic behavior. Moreover, it's not clear we would judge Fran more harshly simply for jumping more. Thus, the asymmetry in question is one between cases of one-off and frequent redeliberation. For now, I set cases of jumping aside and will return to them in §5.

At this point, I merely hope the reader shares my intuition that there is *prima facie* something *more* problematic, defective, or odd about Fran's behavior compared to Tom's, once we stipulate that they

each redeliberated and did not lose or gain first-order evidence. We have not yet attempted to explain this intuition or capture the many contextual factors on which our assessment may depend. We can motivate this intuition further by considering the types of questions we would be inclined to ask these agents and the answers that would satisfy us.<sup>4</sup> We might ask each agent why they changed their minds. Suppose that Tom replies by saying that he changed his mind as a result of reassessing the evidence or the virtues of the competing theories. This has the shape of a satisfactory response, even if we want more details filled in. However, this answer is far from sufficient to assuage our worries about Fran. Merely telling us that she reassessed the evidence each time will not satisfy us; we will still want to know why she changed her mind *so much and so frequently*. Indeed, especially given the stipulation that she does not gain or lose first-order evidence, it's difficult to know what plausible explanation she could offer us.

This thought experiment suggests two upshots. First, if someone changes their mind frequently, this requires more explanation than if they merely changed their mind once or infrequently. Second, it is difficult to come up with a rationalizing story for Fran's frequent mind-changing, one that would render it fully intelligible and unproblematic. While a rationalizing explanation for Tom's change of mind is readily available, spelling out a rationalizing story for Fran is more challenging. This supports the contention that there is something at least *prima facie* more problematic about Fran's behavior compared to Tom's.

In short, there seems to be an asymmetry—at least one of degree—between Fran and Tom. This calls out for explanation. How could the mere frequency of deliberative changes make a difference to our assessment of agents, particularly if more redeliberation is not necessarily bad? The puzzle of fickleness is to explain this asymmetry. More generally, it is to explain what factors are relevant for determining whether an agent is problematically fickle. Importantly, the puzzle of fickleness arises not because occasional redeliberation is always rational and frequent redeliberation always irrational. Rather, the aim of this paper is to explain why there often seems to be some rational difference—at least one of degree—between infrequent and frequent changes of mind.

With some assumptions, we can render the asymmetry even starker. It seems that agents like Tom who occasionally redeliberate are not only doing less poorly than fickle agents. Rather, they are often positively praiseworthy. Indeed, we often think that careful redeliberation is a good thing, something that virtuous and thoughtful agents engage in. If this assumption is correct, then the asymmetry between infrequent and frequent redeliberation is not merely one of explaining why we are inclined to negatively evaluate Fran more than Tom. We also want to explain why we are inclined to positively appraise agents who occasionally redeliberate, and thereby change their minds. In other words, the asymmetry may be one not only of degree but category. I bolster these intuitions further in §2 and argue that it is a virtue of a solution if it can explain this starker asymmetry as well.

My account will explain how and when the frequency of redeliberation matters. In particular, I'll argue in §3 that as one repeatedly redeliberates and thereby changes one's mind, one gains second-order evidence that one will not settle and that one is unreliable regarding the question at hand. Nonetheless, this second-order evidence can be defeated or outweighed in cases where one has good reason to think one is epistemically improving each time. This happens, for instance, in cases where the evidence is particularly complicated or multi-faceted, and thus new things become salient to the agent each time she reassesses it, or new interpretations are offered. Moreover, how complicated the evidence is makes a difference to how frequently one can reassess it while still being fully rational; at a certain point, as in Fran's case, there cease to be new things one can notice without acquiring new evidence or cognitive skills. My account—the *Ratifiable Reasoning Account*—thus allows me to characterize why frequent deliberative changes are often problematic as well as what it takes for it to be permissible.

In the next section, I'll argue that a full solution to the puzzle of fickleness will explain why fickleness can be *epistemically* problematic, not just practically problematic.

## 2. Merely Practical vs. Epistemic Solutions

One natural reaction to fickleness is to argue that it is practically problematic. In support of this solution, it seems correct that agents who frequently change their mind are unlikely to achieve their goals. After all, we need to have some fixed points in order to engage in reasoning and planning.<sup>5</sup> A fickle agent will also be more likely to face opportunity costs and sunk costs. She makes plans to go to a comedy show but then changes her mind; she now prefers the opera, but she missed out on the opportunity for those tickets days ago. Indeed, it is undeniable that fickleness can come with a price.

While I agree that fickleness is often practically problematic, it is not *merely* that. Here I aim to motivate the claim that fickleness is (also) epistemically deficient. First, I'll offer positive reasons for thinking that an epistemic solution is desirable. I'll then argue that a merely practical solution is incomplete.

First, there seem to be epistemic values that the fickle person cannot realize without difficulty. This is true both interpersonally and intrapersonally. Interpersonally, it would be difficult to fully rely on or trust fickle agents, either generally or about a particular matter.<sup>6</sup> If we know someone has changed their mind several times about whether  $p$ , or that they have simply jumped between stances regarding  $p$ , we would hesitate to rely on them about  $p$ . Intrapersonally, there are values of consistency that fickleness makes it difficult to realize. We need stability in our beliefs in order to reason effectively, draw inferences, and to see what the evidence entails, and frequent deliberative changes make this ground shaky. Moreover, it would be difficult for fickle agents to trust or rely on themselves, knowing that they have frequently changed their minds.<sup>7</sup> Finally, consider someone who believes that  $p$  while also believing that if she were to reopen deliberation, she would not conclude that  $p$ . This person is making some epistemic mistake even if she is never going to act on her belief regarding  $p$ . My proposal in §3 defends this claim further and shows why it would be an epistemic mistake.

Indeed, similar considerations help us motivate the stronger asymmetry, namely that one-off deliberative changes can sometimes be unproblematic and even praiseworthy. First, observe our practices: we don't typically think that

agents who occasionally redeliberate and, as a result, change their minds are untrustworthy or unreliable, so long as other conditions for being a good epistemic agent are met. On the contrary, we tend to regard agents who carefully redeliberate and change their opinions as particularly thoughtful, open-minded, and responsible epistemic agents. Indeed, we will often see such agents as more reliable than agents who never change their minds, for they examine their beliefs carefully and reflect on the relevant epistemic considerations. By contrast, agents who never redeliberate and are never willing to change their minds seem dogmatic and less trustworthy, especially given that we often epistemically improve by undergoing deliberative changes. Second, these practices seem justified. As Jane Friedman emphasizes, it seems like double-checking our beliefs is an important part of belief maintenance; redeliberating is just one way to double check (Friedman 2019b).<sup>8</sup> If we genuinely double-check, we will at least sometimes be willing to change our minds. Finally, even if no one is relying on the one-off redeliberator, the one-off redeliberator seems better equipped to realize other epistemic values, such as understanding and justification, than someone who never redeliberates. These points help bolster intuitions in favor of the stronger asymmetry suggested in §1, and thus it's a virtue of any account that can explain this contrast as well.

In addition to these positive reasons for thinking that that fickleness is epistemically defective, there are further reasons for thinking that the *merely practical* solution is incomplete. The latter solution fails to explain the puzzle of fickleness in cases where nothing practical is at stake. For example, it's far from obvious that fickle agents always fail to satisfy some practical goal, or that the problem with fickleness lies in resulting actions. This is particularly clear in cases where one changes one's mind frequently about purely theoretical questions that one will never act on and is not obligated to pursue. Indeed, Fran may fall in this category: despite the fact that she is a historian, suppose her interest in Amelia Earhart's death is merely a leisurely side interest. There is still something problematic about Fran frequently changing her mind, at least compared to Tom. Yet it is far from obvious that there is anything practically problematic with Fran's fickleness. Rather, the problem with Fran's fickleness is partly cognitive or epistemic. The burden is on the person who believes otherwise to offer a compelling reason to think that fickleness always and only involves practical irrationality or imprudence.

We can strengthen this argument by prying the epistemic and practical further apart. For example, there can be cases where fickleness is practically rational yet seems epistemically problematic. Imagine Anya, who is offered \$100 every time she genuinely and truly changes her mind on an issue that doesn't directly affect her livelihood, such as some purely theoretical beliefs. Setting aside worries about doxastic voluntarism, it is in her practical interest to change her mind as much as possible! However, the more money she makes, the more epistemically impoverished she'd become.

A defender of the practical solution might object to the use of money in an intuition pump. However, it is far from uncommon to appeal to the role of financial considerations in determining practical costs and practical irrationality—just turn to the literature on Dutch Book Arguments or practical reasons for beliefs and intentions! Alternatively, they might argue that someone who changes her mind so frequently would still be practically unfortunate even if she ended up rich. For instance, she would be ill-equipped to make plans.

It's not obvious, though, that fickleness on this matter will affect her

ability to make plans more generally. Moreover, it seems possible that Anya would maximize expected utility by changing her beliefs as much as possible, the monetary gain being worth the loss in planning currency. Thus, the practical solution is particularly poorly situated to explain the intuitive problem with fickleness in such cases. This is a significant limitation. It is true that fickle agents will have difficulty achieving some of their goals. They can also arguably be exploited via Dutch Books. What the *merely* practical solution gets wrong is that these are the *only* problems with fickleness.

I take these arguments to have motivated the claim that an epistemic solution is desirable, not to have decisively established it. That claim will become more plausible as we assess both my solution and the alternatives that deny it. Before turning to my proposal, I want to flag a terminological choice: I will frame my solution as one regarding epistemic *irrationality*. This is partly for ease of expression and familiarity.<sup>9</sup> Those who are skeptical that this is genuinely a matter of rationality can instead read my solution as explaining why there is something epistemically defective about fickleness. With this, I turn to my proposal.

Edited for space. To read Elise's Cornwell Prize winning article in full, please visit: Wiley Online Library: <https://doi.org/10.1111/nous.12359>

1. I am thankful to an anonymous referee for suggesting this framing.
  2. For similar examples, see Titelbaum (2015) and Hedden (2015a). Both agree that there is intuitively something epistemically wrong with some cases of mind-changing without a change in evidence (though Hedden attempts to explain this intuition away). Nonetheless, the problem I'm focusing on here is different from ones previously considered. Titelbaum is focused on explaining what is epistemically wrong with what I call 'jumping,' where an agent jumps between beliefs without redeliberating; he is specifically concerned with cases where one forgets one's beliefs in between jumps. Hedden is focused on the difference between interpersonal disagreement and intrapersonal disagreement (in the form of changes of mind). By contrast, I am focused on the difference between redeliberating and changing one's mind once and doing so multiple times. I discuss Titelbaum and Hedden's views briefly in §5.
  3. Compare work on the 'Deliberation-without-attention' effect by Dijksterhuis et al. (2006), who explicitly make room for the notion of unconscious deliberation. It also seems like our everyday notion of deliberation allows it to be unconscious; otherwise, 'conscious deliberation' would sound redundant. One difference between subconscious redeliberation and jumping is that an agent can be better equipped to offer a rationalizing explanation for why she changed her mind in the former case. Furthermore, in cases of redeliberation, one bases one's response on the evidence, while in cases of jumping one does not. (Thanks to Jane Friedman for suggesting this.) Of course, there are cases where it is hard in practice to distinguish between jumping and subconscious redeliberation; my point is that there is an important normative difference.
  4. This strategy draws inspiration from Titelbaum (2015).
  5. Hedden (2015a) n1: "Briggs (2009) argues along these lines for diachronic principles of rationality." In a similar vein, Elga (2010) shows that an agent who frequently changes her mind may be subject to a variant of the Dutch Book Argument and thus will be in a position to surely lose money. Moss (2015b) replies that agents in these cases don't actually change their mind; they merely change what credence function they identify with. For a classic discussion of the Diachronic Book Argument for conditionalization, see Lewis (1999).
  6. Similarly, Kauppinen (2018) argues that we hold agents epistemically accountable by reducing trust in them. If I am correct that we would generally be more hesitant to trust fickle agents, and reducing trust is a distinctive way of holding someone epistemically accountable, then this would further support my claim that we epistemically assess fickle agents. My proposal in §3 will offer one explanation of this. For now, the point is that: intuitively, it seems we would be more wary of deferring to someone who is fickle.
  7. There's an interesting question here about someone who changes their mind multiple times but forgets their own track record. On my preferred take, whether this person is irrational or merely unfortunate depends in part on whether they should have evidence of their track record. If the forgetting is a result of their own mismanagement of beliefs, I'd be disposed to judge their fickleness as epistemically problematic. However, if they were given a drug that makes them forget about their track record, it seems like they are merely unfortunate. Thanks to Maria Lasonen-Aarnio and Brian Weatherson for discussion.
  8. Thanks also to Adam Lovett for discussion on this topic.
  9. That said, I think a further way to motivate this framing is by appealing to the functions of rationality ascriptions. For example, rationality ascriptions play an important role in helping us determine whom we can trust or rely on for our beliefs and other doxastic attitudes. (See, for example, Dogramaci (2016).) Conversely, by calling fickle agents irrational, we appropriately signal that they are more difficult to trust or rely on.
- \*Acknowledgements: For extremely helpful feedback on earlier drafts, I am very grateful to Sarah Buss, Jason Byas, Carolina Flores, Jane Friedman, Josh Hunt, Jim Joyce, Maria Lasonen-Aarnio, Calum McNamara, Sarah Moss, Mark Schroeder, Adam Waggoner, and Brian Weatherson. I am also thankful to audiences at NYU's Washington Square Circle and Reed College as well as participants of the Michigan Epistemology Working Group and Mark Schroeder's dissertation seminar for probing questions and discussion. Finally, I am very grateful to two anonymous referees for their formative feedback for how to restructure and present the paper.

**2020/21** was a remarkable year for the UM undergraduate program in philosophy. It was a year in which almost all contact between faculty, graduate student instructors and our students took place across the gulf of electronic media. The challenge of this format was real and ever-present. As one of our graduating philosophy majors put it in a response to our annual survey:

*Virtual learning in a pandemic has been quite the challenge. While it seems easy on paper to switch between classes with no need to compensate for travel time, many of us become bogged down with zoom fatigue. With most aspects of our lives being digital these days, it becomes difficult to stare at this screen all day without experiencing headaches and such. However, I appreciate the teachers at Michigan for stepping up and equipping themselves for this virtual environment. Now students are free to have office hours at just about any time with their professors and I feel as if this may be a practice that goes beyond the pandemic. We have a centralized platform for virtual conferences now that the entire world knows how to operate zoom.*

There are definitely pluses as well as minuses, as the student astutely observes. Overall I found myself missing the physical classroom, and other instructors I spoke with seemed to agree. But I am thankful that the worst-case scenarios I imagined at the beginning of the academic year—persistent glitches, insufficient technical resources, large numbers of instructors out sick—never materialized. Thanks to a matching grant from the College of LSA, we were able to provide extra funding for Winter '21 course preparation for faculty and grad student instructors. When trying to replace a whole routine and infrastructure in one go, flawless execution is not going to be in the cards, but at the end of the day I'm proud of how we pulled the whole thing off. Our instructional faculty and our amazing grad student teachers are the ones who made this happen.

Meanwhile, our undergraduates were doing unprecedented work of their own to build and maintain ties with their fellow majors. Perhaps because the physical distance between us

all was so palpable, students were especially motivated to plug in and organize philosophical activities.

Both semesters, we continued the successful *Comet Chats* series of video philosophy discussions, organized as before by **philosophy and biology double major Veronica Sikora** and co-hosted by Veronica and myself. This series spotlighted philosophical guests from several UM units: **Jim Joyce from our own department, Aderemi Artis from UM Flint Philosophy, and Mika Lavaque-Manty from Political Science.** Topics included rationality and decision-making, the aesthetics of video games, and human biomedical enhancement, respectively. We closed out the *Comet* season with a final meeting on the ethics of nuclear weapons. Thanks to Veronica's adept moderation, our dynamic group of guests and a thoughtful group of students from multiple UM programs, these turned out to be some of the best philosophical discussions I've ever had.

*Comet* came about as a spin-off from our *Meteorite* undergraduate journal, and *Meteorite* itself has remained healthy through the pandemic. A new issue was published, highlighting new work from undergraduates in Canada and Turkey as well as the United States. Congratulations to **Meteorite editor-in-chief Charlotte Meltzer, managing editors Veronica Sikora and Tristan Sirls, and editors Zuzanna Lutrzykowska, Gavin Amezaga, Mrinalini Gupta, Derik Hendriksen, Andrew Kovacs, Shihua Lu, Nick Preuth, and Ellen Sirower.**

In addition to the new 2021 issue, our *Meteorite* editors put together an amazing event in the first ever **UM Meteorite Undergraduate Philosophy Conference, chaired by Zuzanna Lutrzykowska**, which was held online April 10. The student authors published in the 2021 issue presented their papers, then *Meteorite* editors gave comments on each. The comments, by **UM student editors Veronica Sikora, Tristan Sirls, Mrinalini Gupta, Andrew Kovacs, Zuzanna Lutrzykowska, Derik Hendriksen and Shihua Lu**, were uniformly excellent, as were the papers. To me, it felt more like a graduate student conference than an undergraduate event. *Meteorite* has become a phenomenal UM institution and a consistent opportunity for our students

to gain experience in professionalism, organizational skills, and of course in philosophical discourse.

Our philosophy **peer advisors Marley Hornewer and Mahdi Osman** also deserve special thanks for making their expertise in the major available to other students.

It also bears mentioning that this has been an unusually strong year for new and recent Michigan philosophy graduates applying to graduate school. This is despite an unusually difficult year that faced grad school applicants overall, with many programs either skipping a year of admissions or else reducing their class sizes due to financial constraints from the pandemic. In Fall 2021, **Fareah Fysudeen** will begin a PhD in Islamic studies at Columbia, and **Colton Karpman** will begin the philosophy PhD at Oxford, **William Grant Ray** (also a PPE major) at Stanford, and **Bess Rothman** at MIT. What a year for UM! (It isn't always possible to keep close tabs on alumni graduate admissions, since many students apply a year or more after they graduate, so it is entirely possible I'm leaving someone out here—apologies if so!)

Given this remarkable concentration of philosophical skill in our 2021 class, you might expect a bumper crop of **senior honors theses**, and indeed, you would not be disappointed. This year the following majors defended senior theses in philosophy:

- **Gavin Amezaga**, "A Preference Theory of Dignity." Advisor: Ishani Maitra; Second Reader: James Joyce
- **Ivy Cai**, "Nietzsche the Skeptic: Saying 'Yes' to Uncertainty." Advisor: James Tappenden; Second Reader: Sarah Buss
- **Niquelle Cassador**, "The Connections We Make: Friendship as the Path from Moral Disorientation." Advisor: Dan Lowe; Second Reader: Ami Harbin (Oakland University)
- **Fareah Fysudeen**, "Modernity and the (Im)Possibility of Transcendence--A Cognitive Map for Liberation: From Nietzsche and Modern Binaries to Ghazalian Noetics." Advisor: Daniel Herwitz; Second Reader: Alexander Knysh
- **Zuzanna Lutrzykowska**, "The Role of Biomedical Enhancements in the Kantian Duty to Self-Perfect." Advisor: Janum Sethi; Second Reader: David Baker
- **Nicholas Preuth**, "International Treaties and Moral Promises." Advisor: Mika Lavaque-Manty; Second Reader: Daniel Little
- **Bess Rothman**, "To Eat or Not to Eat: Philosophical Questions About the Animal Dead." Advisor: Laura Ruetsche; Second Reader: Daniel Herwitz
- **Trey Smith**, "Evolutionary Epistemology: Popper, Peirce, and Multi-Level Selection." Advisor: David Baker; Second Reader: Gordon Belot
- **Xilin Yang**, "Justice in Policymaking: An Overview of the Tradeoffs in the Pandemic." Advisor: Peter Railton; Second Reader: Daniel Herwitz

In addition, philosophy majors **William Grant Ray and Alexander Satola** defended theses on political philosophy under the auspices of their PPE double-majors (which you can read about in the PPE article in this very newsletter).



The annual graduation, held online this year, was an occasion to award our annual undergraduate prizes. The **Haller Term Prize**, awarded every Fall and Winter semester, recognizes outstanding work done by an undergraduate in our 400-level philosophy courses. (Because there isn't time to evaluate candidates between exams and graduation, the Winter term prizes are awarded in the following academic year.)

**In Winter 2020, Bess Rothman received the Haller.** Bess was nominated by Janum Sethi for her work in Janum's upper-level Kant course. The **Fall 2020 Haller Prize went to Spencer Schmid**, for his work in Scott Spector's course on German intellectual history.

Additionally, the **Haller Paper Prize** is occasionally awarded for an unusually strong essay written for an upper-level philosophy course. **Micah Pollens-Dempsey** received this prize for an excellent paper on David Lewis's philosophy of language, written for Rich Thomason's Fall 2020 philosophy of language course.

Last but far from least, the **William K. Frankena Prize** acknowledges graduating majors who exemplify excellence throughout their time at Michigan. Normally we aim to award this prize to a single student. This year, we had far too many remarkable graduating majors to do that. In what I believe is a new record, the **Frankena was split between four students: Gavin Amezaga, Fareah Fysudeen, William Grant Ray and Bess Rothman.**

Let me close with a quote from one of our graduating seniors, written in response to our annual survey. I think it nicely embodies the mindset of our remarkable 2021 class, and of the many generations of philosophy alumni who've now passed through Angell Hall:

*I definitely fall into the "philosophy is intrinsically valuable" camp when justifying my philosophy major in my heart. The critical thinking, reading, and writing skills are definitely helpful and will be put to good use, but ultimately I picked philosophy because I care about philosophy. I will always value the time I spent at Michigan because of how much I learned here.*



**Bess Rothman**, recipient of W '20 Haller Prize and William K. Frankena Prize. Bess is pursuing her PhD at MIT and notes: "When I finish my PhD, I hope to become a professor as excellent as the ones I've had at Michigan. (Though 'half as excellent' is perhaps a more reasonable goal, I can't much help my ambition.)"



**Spencer Schmid**, recipient of F '20 Haller Prize, is currently working full-time as an MCAT tutor/content creator and is in the process of applying to joint MD-PhD programs, intending on earning the PhD in philosophy.



**Micah Pollens-Dempsey**, Philosophy and English double honors major, and recipient of the Haller Paper Prize for "*David Lewis' Use Theory and Figurative Language*," advised by Professor Rich Thomason.



**Gavin Amezaga** was one of the four recipients this year to be awarded the William K. Frankena Prize. He was advised by Professors Ishani Maitra and Jim Joyce for his honors thesis: "A Preference Theory of Dignity."



**Fareah Fysudeen**, recipient of the William K. Frankena Prize, is pursuing her MA in Islamic Studies & Muslim Civilization at Columbia. "This wouldn't have been possible without my philosophy background at UMich."



**William Grant Ray**, Philosophy and PPE double-major, and recipient of the William K. Frankena Prize. His PPE honors thesis, "Parents & Peers: Toward a Kantian Theory of Moral Development," was advised by Prof. Elizabeth Anderson.

### Congratulations Class of 2021!

Elizabeth Abreu, Gavin Amezaga, Bridget Anscombe, Diego Arvelo, Alexander Ball, Alexa Bates, Gabriel Bornstein, Graham Branton, Ivy Cai, Niquelle Cassador, Yichuan Chen, Diane Choi, Elizabeth Clark, Teresa Clark, Blake Coleman, Rhea Dhingra, Emma Doettling, Zachary English, Nathan Fialkoff, Fareah Fysudeen, Rebecca Gao, Austin Gardner, Gregory Gautz, Desmond Giddens, Christina Gleaton, Willa Hart, Derik Hendriksen, Matthew Iamarino, Christine Jegarl, Zekun Jia, Kyle Johnson, Victoria Johnson, Andrew Kovacs, Cass Kramer, Elizabeth Larky-Savin, Tommy Lee, Athena Lewandowski, Gloria Liu, Shihua Lu, Zuzanna Lutrzykowska, Ryan-Simone McCants, Kevin McCortney, Charlotte Meltzer, Brandon Montalvo, Jordan Moore-Willis, Saveri Nandigama, Ugochinyere Ndupu, Julia Ochoa-Corante, Kevin Philips, Micah Pollens-Dempsey, Sofie Pontre, Lucas Preuth, Nicholas Preuth, William Grant Ray, Lauren Reyes, Emily Ross, Bess Rothman, Dante Rugerio, Spencer Schmid, Rafael Skrobola, Kevin Sorstokke, Trey Smith, Kai Wang, Xilin Yang, Shannon Yeung, Agron Ziberi

## PHILOSOPHY SUMMER 2021 INTERN

### DOMINIQUE GASTON



This past summer, I was the **Program Expansion Intern at the nonprofit Communities Assisting Residential Elders (CARE)**. I facilitated the development of CARE's support of inclusive volunteering, which is the volunteering of people with disabilities. The all-encompassing property of my job pushed me to grow in new and uncomfortable ways. Writing a research essay on the benefits of inclusive volunteering was the most familiar. However, the transformation of that research into grants and reaching out to secure and set up connections with organizations that work with people with disabilities opened me up to aspects of the world that were previously unknown to me. Having begun to understand the disparaging on the ground reality of social work, I've come away from this experience moved by the urgency of the lack of societal support for the underprivileged. I hope to work to help change the state of the social support network for the better when I graduate.

## PHILOSOPHY VIRTUAL GRADUATION 2021

### GUEST SPEAKER

## PROFESSOR L.A. PAUL (YALE)

MILLSTONE FAMILY PROFESSOR OF  
PHILOSOPHY AND COGNITIVE SCIENCE



**The Program in Philosophy, Politics and Economics** has continued to thrive through our year of remote education, educating some of UM’s most promising students in the field of political economy. One of the things I like best about our PPE curriculum is its flexibility. PPE students are given a vast selection of courses to satisfy their requirements, allowing each student to customize their major to fit their own specific interests under the expansive purview of how society and the economy interact. By my count, our PPE majors had 51 different classes to choose from when selecting their Fall ’21 schedule!

Along these same lines, our PPE majors are taking full advantage of the program’s flexible theme requirement to explore adjoining areas of scholarship in ways that inform their study of political economy. For their theme, each student takes a series of three connected advanced courses on a single topic.

Among the themes declared by PPE majors this year were:

- Ethical and political concerns in regulating financial markets
- The influence of law and policy on the economy
- The persistence and permutations of inequality in the U.S.
- Business and law
- Gender inequality in the workplace

**The PPE Club** was especially active this academic year, with several meetings having interesting themes. For the first meeting, **presidents Nick Colucci and Julia Stavreva** put together a program in which new PPE majors met online with me to discuss the basics of the program, and also with Graduate Employees’ Organization stewards Rebecca Harrison and Adam Waggoner to discuss the GSI strike that was going on at the time. The second meeting had a “life after PPE” theme. Alumni Nina Mozeheim and Joanna Leung came to discuss their experiences in law school; Bosco Yeung to discuss graduate school; Megan Crane on careers in political campaigning; Josh Musicant on non-profit work; Philip Schermer on consulting; and Patrick Baumhart on investment management. Another meeting covered PPE honors thesis writing, with UM Honors Program director Mika LaVaque-Manty and recent thesis student/alum Sabrina Inoue as guests.

Julia and Nick also circulated an excellent (and visually well-designed!) club newsletter at regular intervals, and helped the steering committee with some aspects of the program website, including helping us compile a list of courses students had used in their themes. I can’t thank these two motivated, energetic majors enough for their service to the PPE program!

As with the philosophy department, 2021 was a remarkably productive year for PPE honors theses. The following PPE majors defended theses at the end of the ‘20/’21 academic year:

- **Charles Butz**, “Disconnect: Recommendations, Personalization, and the Challenges of Decision Making in Digitally-Curated Spaces.” Advisor: James Joyce; Second Reader: Eric Lormand
- **Sarah Caywood**, “Drawing Out Subliminal Political Philosophies: A Philosophic Review of the Current Debate over the Electoral Mode for United States President.” Advisor: Lisa Disch; Second Reader: Ishani Maitra
- **Maya Chamra**, “Sexual Violence on College Campuses: The Effects of State Sexual Violence Laws on University Reporting Rates.” Advisor: Charles Shipan; Second Reader: Brian Min
- **Jordyn Houle**, “From Repression to Right.” Advisor: Mika LaVaque; Second Reader: Brian Min
- **Elias Houry II**, “Crime/Immigration Coverage and Anti-Immigrant Sentiment: the Effect of the Media on Support for AfD.” Advisor: Dan Slater; Second Reader: Brian Min
- **William Grant Ray**, “Parents & Peers: Toward a Kantian Theory of Moral Development.” Advisor: Elizabeth Anderson; Second Reader: Konstantin Pollak
- **Alex Satola**, “Technology, Domination, and Liberty: Liberalism and Republicanism Confronted with Technological Change.” Advisor: Mika Lavaque-Manty; Second Reader: David Baker
- **Jordan Schuler**, “Examining Key Narratives Surrounding Public Opinion on Redistricting Reform: A Case Study of Michigan’s Proposition 2 (2018).” Advisor: Jowei Chen; Second Reader: Brian Min
- **Julia Stavreva**, “Nationalism’s Victims: A Case Study of Barriers to Integration for the Roma of Bulgaria.” Advisor: Pauline Jones; Second Reader: Brian Min

## Congratulations Class of 2021!

Jacob Broder, Samuel Bunis, Charles Butz, Sarah Caywood, Maya Chamra, Natalie Chen, Haleigh Cotton, Grace Dellorto, Lydia Dunn, Mackenzie Fleming, Gabriella Franco, Gabriele Garfinkel, Clare Godfryd, Sarah Hill, Jordyn Houle, Thom Hourani Jr., Lauren Jacobs, Elizabeth James, Sarah Jeng, Phoebe Johnson, Daniela Kabeth, Elias Houry II, Damon Klein, Thomas Lacombe, Jordan Li, Angelina Little, Alison Lo, Kent Lui, Rabi Olabi, Andrew Pluta, Nicholas Porter, Henry Raffel, William Grant Ray, Pallab Saha, Alexander Satola, Jordan Schuler, Rafael Skrobola, Conor Smith, Julia Stavreva, Joshua Stotzky, Sevrin Williams, Soraya Zrikem

## PPE VIRTUAL GRADUATION 2021

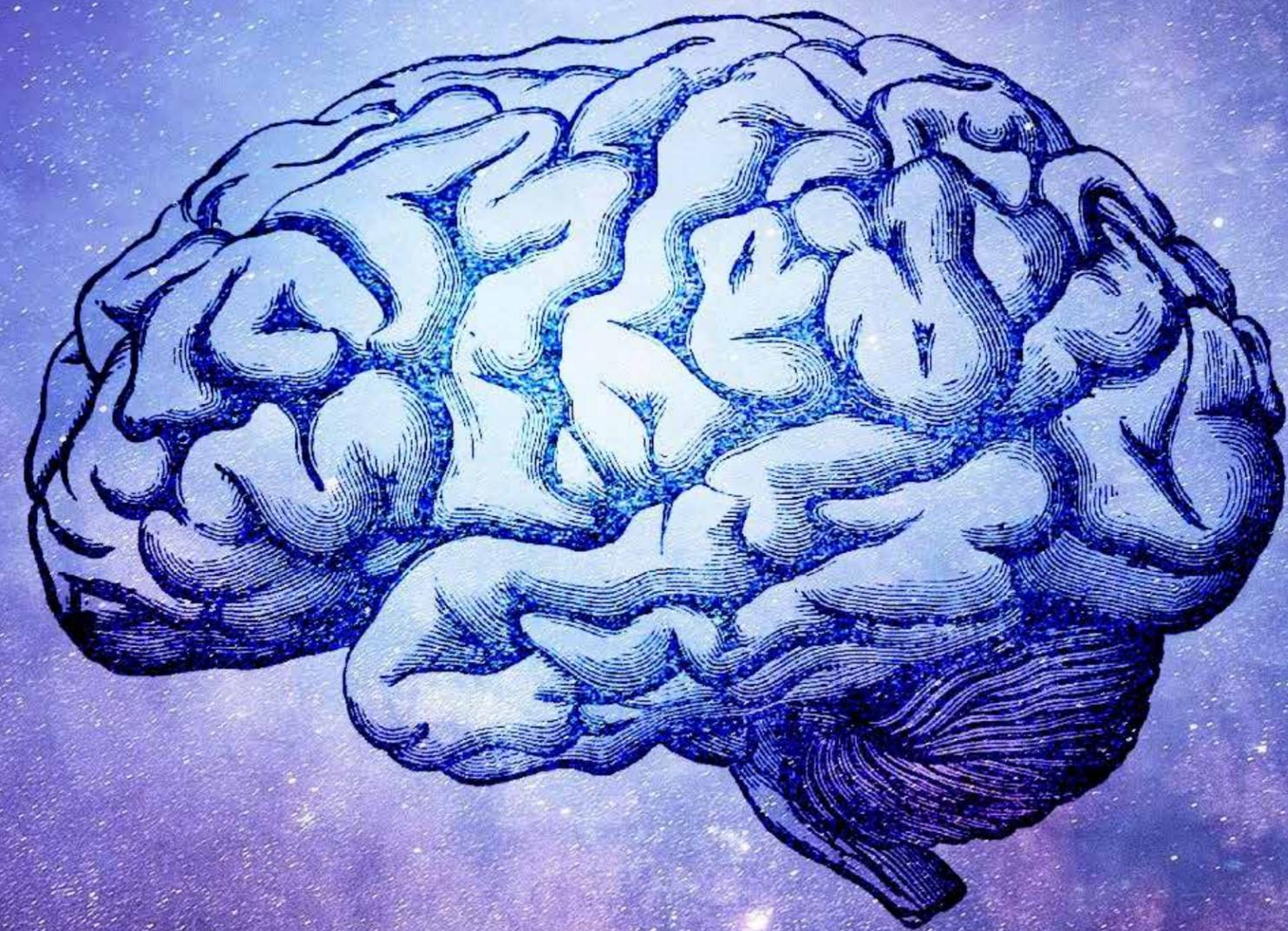
GUEST SPEAKER

## PROFESSOR ANTHONY APPIAH (NYU)

PROFESSOR OF PHILOSOPHY AND LAW



# BOLTZMANN BRAINS?



## Introduction

Perhaps the world is as we usually take it to be, and a fair number of our beliefs are knowledge. Or perhaps the world is very different from how we usually take it to be. Maybe I am not a human, but a butterfly dreaming that I am human (Zhuangzi). Or, though human and awake, maybe I am about to enter a state that stands to wakefulness as wakefulness stands to dreaming (al-Ghazali). Or maybe I am the victim of a deceitful demon (Descartes). Or maybe I and the world around me only came into existence five minutes ago (Russell). Then we would have much less knowledge than we typically presume.



Professor Belot's primary interests are in philosophy of physics, philosophy of science, metaphysics, and epistemology. Courses he teaches include Intro to Symbolic Logic, Logic and Artificial Intelligence, and Philosophy of Science

Such skeptical scenarios pose a problem for anyone interested in understanding our everyday concept of knowledge: it is usually thought that a good account of that concept should imply that if the world is as we normally suppose, then the predicament of unhappy inhabitants of far-fetched possibilities does little to undermine the credentials of our claims to knowledge.

Of course, the challenge posed by skeptical scenarios just mentioned would be considerably sharper if we discovered that our world had been created five minutes ago or was full of deceiving demons, of insects having utterly convincing anthropomorphic dreams, or of humans experiencing supra-wakeful states. It is not at all obvious that our ordinary claims to knowledge would survive such a discovery.

In recent years cosmologists have worried that they have hit upon a skeptical scenario of this radical and realistic type: a combination of theoretical considerations and observational discoveries have driven them towards the conclusion that our world should contain many near-perfect duplicates of you and your current environment—and that almost all of these near-perfect duplicates of you should have far fewer true beliefs about the past and future than we normally take ourselves to have. So unless you have some reason to think that you are one of the lucky ones, you have a very concrete reason to worry that you know far less about the past and future than you hope.

## Warmup: Boxes of Gas

We will be interested in some aspects of the large-scale behavior of physical systems with many component parts. These are customarily illustrated by considering a simple model of a box containing a diffuse gas. We assume that the gas consists of a large number of identical tiny perfect spheres, which interact with one another only through collisions (between collisions, each moves along a straight line). Rather than worrying about how molecules rebound off the walls of the box, we assume that the box is rectangular in shape and that, as in an old-fashioned video game, whenever a molecule reaches one of the walls of the box it disappears and reappears at the corresponding point on the opposite wall, with its velocity unchanged.

BY GORDON BELOT, LAWRENCE SKLAR COLLEGIATE PROFESSOR OF PHILOSOPHY

For systems of this kind, we distinguish between micro-states and macro-states. A micro-state of the gas is specified by specifying the precise location and velocity of each molecule. Specifying a macro-state involves much less information: perhaps just, up to a small margin of error, the temperature, pressure, and density of the gas within each of some family of macroscopic sub-regions of the box. So specifying the micro-state at a time suffices to determine the macro-state at that time, but not vice versa. Further, the dynamical laws are micro-deterministic: given the micro-state at any initial time, the laws determine the micro-state at all subsequent times.

The most basic fact about systems of this kind is that they have special macro-states—so-called equilibrium macro-states—in which the gas molecules are more or less evenly spread out in the box and their velocities are distributed according to a simple rule (essentially, a bell-curve). The equilibrium macro-state is maximally disordered. In particular, such a state is devoid of life, since living organisms need to extract energy from their environment, and in the equilibrium macro-state there is no reliable way to do so. At the same time, the equilibrium macro-state of a system is dynamically privileged: no matter what micro-state the system starts in, if you wait long enough, you will find the system in its equilibrium macro-state—and it will remain in that macro-state for the vast majority of future times.

Another important fact: for any reasonable sense of *as similar as you like*, and for any micro-state, if the system is initially in that micro-state then, if you wait a very long time, the system will eventually be in a state as similar as you like to its initial state. Call this phenomenon *global recurrence*.

Further: for any initial micro-state of the system and for any sub-region of the box, if the system is initially in that state, then if you wait long enough,

the system will eventually be in a micro-state as similar as you like to a state that looks just like the given initial state within the given region, but which looks like the equilibrium macro-state throughout the vast majority of the portion of the box external to that region. Call this phenomenon *local recurrence*.

One more key fact: if you are interested in a relatively small portion of the box, then the amount of time that you need to wait for local recurrence, although enormous, is enormously smaller than the amount of time that you would need to wait for global recurrence.

We have considered a very special and unrealistic model of a many-particle system. But many more realistic models share its important qualitative features: the existence of a macro-equilibrium state in which the system spends almost all of its time, interrupted by occasional fluctuations; and the phenomena of global and local recurrence, with time required for a global recurrence being enormously longer than the time required for a local recurrence.

### Cosmology

Here is the picture of our universe presented by modern cosmology. The part of the universe that we can observe is very different from what it would look like if the universe were in a macro-equilibrium state (life is possible, for one thing).

And we assume that at any time, the universe looks roughly the same at each location. So the universe as a whole is currently not in equilibrium.

Theory and observation allow us to trace the history of our universe backwards to an epoch thirteen-plus billion years ago. At that time the universe was in a very highly-organized state, very far indeed from macro-equilibrium. What, if anything, happened before that epoch, we do not know.



Ludwig Eduard Boltzmann 1844-1906  
*It is important to note that while philosophical moves of this kind force one to be more careful in setting up the threat of Boltzmann brains, they do not resolve the underlying problem.*  
 - Prof. Gordon

What will the future of our universe be like? If we assume that a box of gas provides a good model of the universe, then we expect that the universe will exist eternally towards the future and that it will eventually reach macro-equilibrium. All life and all traces of life will be extinguished. Occasionally, a small region of the universe will fluctuate into a moderately organized state as similar as you like to the state of your current local environment. Much more rarely, a small region will fluctuate into a highly-organized state as similar as you like to the one that occurred thirteen billion years ago

or the entire universe will fluctuate into a state as similar as you like to its current state. Most rarely of all, the entire universe will fluctuate into a state as similar as you like to the highly organized state it was in thirteen billion years ago.

It follows that the vast majority of beings who find themselves in the sort of situation you are currently in—with essentially the same brain state

and memories and surrounded by essentially the same books and photographs and so on—inhabit relatively small regions of organization in a sea of cosmic disorder. Their memories, books, and photographs are the results of a random statistical fluctuation rather than genuine records of the past. They may *think* that they remember their childhood, that they have seen the fossil remains of extinct giant beavers, and that they have studied the evidence for the standard cosmological account of our universe. But those are very unlikely to be genuine memories because most of the beings in question inhabit relatively small regions of partial organization, too short-lived to contain veridical records of those beings' childhood (and among exceptional fluctuations long-lived enough for this, most will be far too short to contain veridical records of the Pleistocene era or of the gradual evolution of the universe from its initial highly-organized state). Further, the vast majority of these beings inhabit pockets of order that are about to be reabsorbed forthwith into cosmic disorder. So their beliefs about the future are just as liable as their beliefs about the past to be sadly mistaken.

Now you should be getting worried. What makes you think that you are so special? If almost all beings in situations essentially just like your own are wallowing in false memories of the past and false expectations about the future, what right have you to assume that you are one of the very rare examples of one who inhabits a long-lived enough fluctuation for it to be possible that what you believe about your own history, the history of life on Earth, and the history of the Universe is true? This is the problem of Boltzmann Brains.

### 'Boltzmann Brains'?

When physicists talk about this problem, they often raise the specter of a brain that has fluctuated out of cosmic soup a fraction of a second ago, is about to be reabsorbed in another fraction of a second, and which by happenstance has all of the beliefs and evidence that you currently have.

Philosophers thinking about this topic tend to be more cautious. The point of the swampman thought experiment—in which lightning strikes, Donald Davidson is vaporized, and, by chance, a molecule-by-molecule duplicate of him is assembled out of swamp matter—is that it follows from a fairly anodyne externalism about content that the brand-new swampman cannot have all the same beliefs as Davidson did (since, e.g., it doesn't have the right sort of causal history to be able to entertain singular propositions about Davidson's family). By the same token, many philosophers will doubt that a brain inhabiting an ultra-short-lived fluctuation from equilibrium could share all of your current beliefs.

Some philosophers go much further. Teleosemanticists tie meaning to biological function and tie biological function to evolutionary history. For them, lacking the right sort of evolutionary history, swampman has no thoughts and no brain. On this view, nothing that inhabits a fluctuation from equilibrium that endures for less than several millions of years could be a brain or have a thought.

It is important to note that while philosophical moves of this kind force one to be more careful in setting up the threat of Boltzmann brains, they do not resolve the underlying problem. The problem manifests itself so long there exist ordered regions of spacetime that persist long enough to support the existence of thinking beings who are near-duplicates of us. For then there will be many more such beings who are just about to be dissolved than there are ones who go on to live lives of the sort we expect. So unless we can somehow tell which situation we are in, we have reason to worry that our expectations about the future will be badly disappointed.

### Does Expansion Save Us?

When the problem of Boltzmann brains was first

articulated in the 1930s it was thought to have a straightforward solution. The combination of observation with the general theory of relativity strongly suggest that the universe is more like a box that is eternally expanding than a box of fixed size. There can be no state of macro-equilibrium for a set of particles in an eternally expanding box (what would the equilibrium density of particles be?). And such systems are not expected to exhibit local or global recurrence behavior. So for many years it was thought that the discovery of the expansion of the universe had dissolved this skeptical worry.

Then a couple of things happened. First, for reasons deriving from the study of black holes, many physicists became convinced of the *Principle of Observer Complementarity* which says, roughly, that the job of physics is to describe the region of spacetime with which some given observer is in causal contact and that (surprisingly) this region is a closed system (no information can leave or enter it). Second, it was discovered that our universe is undergoing accelerated expansion—the rate of expansion is exponentially increasing—from which it follows that, to a good approximation, in the future the region with which any given observer will be in causal contact can be treated as a box of fixed size. So all the pieces for the puzzle of Boltzmann brains are back on the table.

### Where Does that Leave Us?

We are left with the following options.

- (1) We could revisit the developments of modern physics that resuscitated the problem of Boltzmann brains: the Principle of Observer Complementarity and the accelerated expansion of the universe.
- (2) We could revisit the other observational and theoretical parts of the story sketched above. A number of physicists have suggested, for instance, that the lesson of the problem of Boltzmann brains is that our universe cannot have an eternal future

—and that we should be trying to understand the mechanism by which it will be destroyed. It has also been suggested that this is the rare instance in which your choice of interpretation of quantum mechanics can make a difference to the physical conclusions that you reach.

(3) We could attempt to undermine the step from *most beings with our brain states are in situation X* to *we should suspect that we are in situation X*.

(4) Or we could learn to live with the idea that we have many more false beliefs about the past and future than we usually take ourselves to have. But it is hard not to worry about the route by which we reach this conclusion: our reasoning was guided by what we believe about physics and about the history of the universe; but many of those beliefs are based on what we remember and what we read—and the conclusion of our line of reasoning is that we have no grounds for believing what we remember and what we read.

### Reading

The ground covered above is covered more thoroughly in my forthcoming book, *Lambda*. Elements of the problem of Boltzmann brains can be found in Ludwig Boltzmann, "On Certain Questions of the Theory of Gases," *Nature* 51 (1895) 413–415. The problem was first developed fully in Arthur Eddington, "The End of the World (From the Standpoint of Mathematical Physics)" *The Mathematical Gazette* 15 (1931) 316–324. Its modern resuscitation is due to Lisa Dyson *et al.*, "Disturbing Implications of a Cosmological Constant" *Journal of High Energy Physics* (2002) 10.011. For swampman, see Donald Davidson, "Knowing One's Own Mind" *Proceedings and Addresses of the American Philosophical Association* 60 (1987) 441–458. On the teleosemantic response to swampman, see Ruth Millikan, "On Knowing the Meaning" *Mind* 119 (2010) 43–81. For the relevance of interpretations of quantum mechanics, see Kimberley Boddy *et al.*, "De Sitter Space without Quantum Fluctuations" *Foundations of Physics* 46 (2016) 702–735. For an outstanding account of the puzzles surrounding the notions of typicality and self-locating belief, see my colleague David Manley's unpublished paper, "On Being a Random Sample" (available from his website).



## COURSE REPORT

# METAPHYSICS: ART & ONTOLOGY (PHIL 298)

BY MAEGAN FAIRCHILD, ASSOCIATE PROFESSOR OF PHILOSOPHY

ART OBJECTS ENRICH OUR UNDERSTANDING OF THE THEORIES THAT  
WE'RE TRYING TO BUILD IN METAPHYSICS...  
IS A SCULPTURE DIFFERENT FROM THE MATTER THAT IT'S MADE OUT OF?

Metaphysics (put somewhat grandly) aims to understand *the structure of reality*. Where the natural and social sciences aim to describe particular parts of the world (physical entities, biological organisms, human brains, markets, societies), metaphysicians tend to be interested in finding answers to much more abstract questions. Among them: What things exist? Are there only material things, like trees, minivans, and llamas? Or are there also things like numbers, properties, and events? What is the relationship between material things and the matter that makes them up? What does it take for objects to persist from one time to another, and what kinds of changes can ordinary things survive?

This year, I had the chance to work with The University of Michigan Museum of Art to develop a new kind of introductory metaphysics course. **Metaphysics: Art & Ontology** was selected as one of seven courses for the pilot year of UMMA's *Curriculum/Collection*; an exhibition built as a collaboration between the museum and university faculty. *Curriculum/Collection* aims to enrich UM courses by putting them in conversation with UMMA's extensive collection, while in turn creating a public-facing curriculum for museum visitors. My aim with Art & Ontology was similar: to challenge students with concrete applications of otherwise *highly* abstract questions and to encourage exploration across disciplinary boundaries.

Throughout the semester, we used sixteen pieces from the collection to conduct a sprawling exploration into what art objects, artistic practices, and recent research in the philosophy of art could teach us about the central problems of metaphysics. On our first day, students tackled the metaphysics of *holes*, putting Hatakama Noire's woven sculpture "6 Holes" in conversation with David and Stephanie

Lewis's *delightful* paper "[Holes](#)". In another unit, we debated views about mereological composition using Judy Chicago's interactive sculpture "Cubes and Cylinders" as a test case. (The piece itself is a collection of 24 gold-plated geometric shapes meant to be rearranged by museum visitors, but due to museum policy and COVID is not actually manipulable.) Later, using a series of Sol Lewitt's lithographs (created by a semi-automatic process from a series of very simple instructions), we explored the individuation of actions, the metaphysics of paradigmatic performance pieces like musical works, and what all of *that* could teach us about (surprise!) the metaphysics of computer software.

In each case the pieces served as illustrative touchstones while also giving the students a chance to explore the limitations of some more traditional approaches in metaphysics. It is one thing to ask questions

about parthood and persistence when we're talking about tigers and tables, but an *entirely* different thing when it comes to modern conceptual art. One reason for this, of course, is the special role of the artist. As Sherri Irvin argues in "The Artist's Sanction" the public pronouncements of artists play a special role in determining the features of artworks -- which bits are parts of the work and which are not, what *kind* of thing the work is, and so on. With this in mind, the students were especially eager to talk to the people on the other side of the exhibition: the artists themselves. Through *UMMA* we were able to host guest speakers from Stamps School of Art & Design as well as artists whose works were featured in our exhibition. Artists talked with us about the conditions under which a piece is *complete*, what it means to destroy a work of art, and whether they think of themselves as having any special authority over the pieces they create.



Assistant Professor Maegan Fairchild's primary interests are in metaphysics and philosophical logic. She joined the department in 2018 as an LSA Collegiate Fellow.

These discussions also turned out to be a great opportunity for the students to pursue one of the major learning goals of the class. As a 200-level topics course, it was especially important to me that the students get experience explaining unfamiliar philosophical material to new audiences. They exceeded my expectations during these visits, clearly and enthusiastically explaining course content to the visitors, and prompting some *really* exciting philosophical conversations. They continued to challenge themselves when facing similar assignments in the class. In the final projects, for example, I asked students to design an art piece that could serve as an illustration of a challenge for one of the views covered in the course, to be accompanied by an essay introducing the relevant debate to imagined museum goers. Projects ranged from melting basketball sculptures, to conceptual jazz, to installation pieces composed of takeout bags that had accumulated during quarantine, with essays discussing persistence through time, the identity conditions of abstract objects, and whether intention matters for creation.

Teaching this course was a thoroughly enriching experience for me both pedagogically and intellectually, especially during the difficult year of online teaching. I am delighted by how much I learned from my students under such challenging circumstances and by how much they grew as philosophers during the semester. I credit that to two things: first, to the *extraordinary* efforts Michigan students put in to make the most of this year and, second, to the broadening of the standard curriculum made possible by the *Curriculum/Collection* project. Both combined to yield a really special semester and helped build the foundation for a course that I look forward to developing in the future.

## UMMA Course Description and Works Included in This Collection

Contemporary metaphysicians are interested in questions having to do with the nature of objects. How can art objects help us better understand the material world? How much change can physical objects survive? Are there only things that are made up of physical objects or are there “abstract” objects, like properties or numbers? This course uses art objects to raise (and complicate) some of these questions. Students will consider the works on display as case studies to better understand central debates in metaphysics and as opportunities to examine how these questions might be better approached through the rich metaphysics of art objects.



**Endless Line Series II 6 Holes**  
Hatakeyama Norie



**Number 3, from "Numbers"**  
Robert Indiana



**Untitled (White)**  
John Gaspar



**Yellow-Black-Red, from "Sixteen Lithographs in Color"**  
Sol LeWitt



**Yellow-Black-Blue, from "Sixteen Lithographs in Color"**  
Sol LeWitt



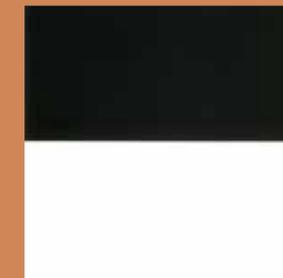
**Eternal Hexagon**  
Robert Indiana



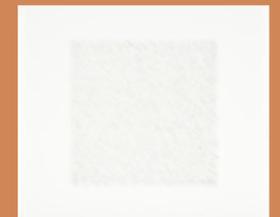
**Emergence XIV**  
Dominick Labino



**Untitled**  
John A. Chamberlain



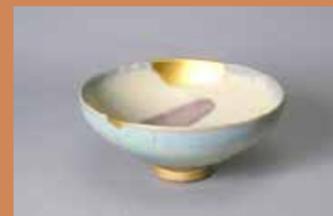
**Untitled**  
Ellsworth Kelly



**Yellow-Blue, from "Sixteen Lithographs in Color"**  
Sol LeWitt



**Composite Page, from "Sixteen Lithographs in Color"**  
Sol LeWitt



**Bowl**  
Chinese



**Untitled**  
John A. Chamberlain



**Cubes and Cylinders**  
Judy Chicago



**Untitled, from Suspended Sphere Series**  
Todd Hoyer

## DEPARTMENTAL HISTORY

# CLAUDE SHANNON and PHILOSOPHY 114

BY JAMIE TAPPENDEN, PROFESSOR OF PHILOSOPHY

DID THE FATHER OF INFORMATION THEORY LEARN SYMBOLIC LOGIC IN  
PHIL 114, A CLASS WHICH INTRODUCED HIM TO BOOLEAN ALGEBRA?  
AND OTHER FASCINATING FACTS ON THIS MICHIGAN NATIVE

Statue  
Eugene Daub  
2001; Bronze, Granite; Sculpture  
North Campus; West Entrance to Electrical Engineering and Computer Sciences Building

48

According to a [University College Cork website](#), (the academic home of George Boole), while studying electrical engineering at Michigan, Claude Shannon had attended a philosophy class which introduced him to Boolean algebra. Shannon commented some time later that "it just happened that no one else was familiar with both fields at the same time." Shannon saw that the binary character "yes/no" or "one/zero" of Boolean logic could be applied to laying out electrical switching circuits, and this later became the subject of his 1937 master's thesis. A native of Gaylord, MI, Shannon had an aptitude for science and mathematics, even constructing a barbed-wire telegraph system a half mile long. Shannon's childhood hero was Thomas Edison, who he later learned was a distant cousin. But what is his connection to the UM Philosophy Department and did PHIL 133 shape his understanding of Boolean algebra? To help solve this mystery, we asked our resident historian of logic/mathematics, **Professor Jamie Tappenden**, for his insights:

Michigan's philosophy department is well-known to have played an important role in the development of modern computers, notably in the work of Michigan PhD and professor Arthur Burks (1915–2008; PhD 1941) who joined the faculty in 1946. It's less well known that Michigan philosophy played a small but key role even earlier, in the work of Claude Shannon (1916-2001; B.S.Math/E.E. '36) "the father of information theory".

In addition to his math and engineering courses at Michigan, Shannon took a philosophy course in which he learned about symbolic logic. Comparing the course guides for those years with Shannon's reminisces, it appears he took the introductory course in logic, which in those years was a quite remarkable course indeed. Michigan philosophy has a long tradition of research in logic, and those were particularly rich years. Three different faculty members had written important books on logic, each with a profoundly different approach. The accomplished mathematical logician Cooper Langford's *Symbolic Logic* (co-written with C.I. Lewis) presented a detailed technical exposition of the symbolic approach to logic, while the renowned metaphysician Roy Wood Sellars' *The Principles of Logic* embedded formal logic within a broader theory of reasoning and empirical knowledge, and the eclectic Andrew Paul Ushenko's *The Problems of Logic* is an informal approach critically viewing symbolic systems as limited in their application. Remarkably, the intro logic course was co-taught by all three professors, ensuring a many-faceted approach. This was a venue in which symbolic logic was not only laid out and practiced, but also critically probed and debated.

The first of Shannon's many pivotal discoveries was his recognition that the propositional logic he studied – the same that we study today in courses like PHIL 180 and 303

– provides all the resources needed for a complete mathematical analysis of the complex circuits making up telephone exchanges and calculating machines. The connection rests on two simple observations. First, the basic units for both circuits and propositional sentences are binary: With no third option, a switch is either on or off, a sentence is either true or false. Second, complex circuits and sentences in propositional logic match one another exactly and systematically. Examples: Two switches A and B in parallel form a new circuit that lets current pass if and only if either A or B is set to on. A and B in series is on if and only if both A and B are on. The propositional analogues are exact: If  $A^*$  and  $B^*$  are sentences that say, respectively, that A and B are on, then the disjunction  $A^* \vee B^*$  is true if and only if  $A^*$  is true or  $B^*$  is true, and the conjunction  $A^* \& B^*$  is true if and only if  $A^*$  and  $B^*$  are both true. Developing this foothold led Shannon to a complete mathematical theory of circuits (using a form of propositional logic called "Boolean Algebra" structured like arithmetic.) He was able to show that for every circuit, no matter how complicated, there is a sentence in propositional logic that is true exactly when the circuit is on and will let current pass. Among other things, this made it possible to easily simplify circuits by performing logical operations on sentences.

This is one of those "obvious when someone's pointed it out, but hard to see for the first time" strokes of genius. Shannon noted that the initial discovery was slow to be uncovered because at the time so few people engaged with the nuts and bolts of circuit analysis also happened to know technical logic. The logicians at Michigan philosophy, though, made sure Shannon's mind was prepared for his breakthrough.



Jamie Tappenden, Professor of Philosophy and Graduate Placement Chair, has published on paradoxes, negation, vagueness, analytic truth, Frege's philosophy of mathematics and logic, and mathematical explanation. His many forthcoming publications include "Frege on Mechanical and Creative Thinking: Herbart, Fischer and 'Aggregative Mechanical Thinking'" forthcoming in *British Journal for the History of Philosophy* and "Reflections on Mathematical Explanation (Why do Elliptic Functions have Two Periods?)" in preparation.



**ELIZABETH S. ANDERSON** was appointed the *inaugural Max Mendel Shaye Professorship in Public Philosophy, Politics, and Economics*. The Max Shaye Professorship in Public Philosophy, Politics, and Economics was established in December 2020 as a result of a generous gift from Robert K. Shaye. The gift reflects Shaye's commitment to issues of justice, democracy, public policy, and ethical conduct in political affairs and offices of public trust. Professor Anderson's current research for her MacArthur Fellowship is right in line with the goals of the Shaye Professorship. In particular, her research focuses on the timely question of how to bridge political, ideological and social divides in public discourse. Professor Anderson has much to contribute to the attempt to find answers to this important question. At her inaugural Shaye Lecture, "Can We Talk?", Professor Anderson will address the challenges of fostering constructive moral discourse in an era of deeply polarized politics. This lecture will serve to highlight the importance of public philosophy for the consideration of pressing social issues.

***Congratulations, Liz!***



**EMMALON DAVIS**, Assistant Professor of Philosophy, joins our faculty this fall as a tenure-track faculty member, after having been an LSA Collegiate Fellow and, before then, a faculty member at the New School in New York. Emmalon specializes in ethics, social and political philosophy, and epistemology, and has a special interest in where these areas intersect with philosophy of race and feminist philosophy. Much of her work examines the epistemic exclusion of diverse practitioners within the academy. With a special focus on the underrepresentation of women and people of color in academic philosophy, her research aims to identify and ameliorate the epistemic challenges facing diverse practitioners in philosophy and in academic settings more generally.

***Congratulations, Emmalon!***



**ALLAN GIBBARD**, Richard B. Brandt Distinguished University Professor Emeritus, has been named a 2022 John Dewey Lecturer from the American Philosophical Association, an award given to a senior philosopher who is invited to reflect broadly and in an autobiographical spirit on philosophy in America as seen from the perspective of a personal intellectual journey. Allan has been one of the world's leaders in developing the metaethical view known as expressivism. During his long and distinguished career, almost entirely at the University of Michigan, he was at the core of a remarkable group of ethicists who trained generations of now-prominent moral philosophers. He served as the APA's Central Division President, is a member of the American Academy of Arts and Sciences, and a member of the National Academy of Sciences. He has written widely in ethical theory and the theory of normative concepts more widely, and has contributed to theories of voting, decision meaning, conditionals, and identity. His book *Meaning and Normativity* (2012) treats meaning as a normative concept, explained by a form of expressivism.

***Congratulations, Allan!***



**ISHANI MAITRA** was promoted to the rank of Full Professor. Professor Maitra joined the department in 2012. Her main area of research is philosophy of language. She has co-authored (with Mary Kate McGowan [Wellesley]) *Speech and Harm* (Oxford U Press, 2012), a major anthology on this new work. She is currently working with McGowan on a textbook, *Words in Action* (forthcoming from Oxford U Press), which promises to be the most prominent introduction to the emerging field of social and political philosophy of language. Maitra herself is perhaps best known for her article, "Subordinating Speech" (published in *Speech and Harm*), which provides a framework for understanding the social mechanisms of authority and subordination in speech. This work has drawn considerable attention not only from philosophers but also from social scientists.

***Congratulations, Ishani!***



**SARAH E. MOSS** was awarded a *William Wilhartz Professorship* which honors exceptional contributions in the field of humanities, was established by U-M Regents in December 1981 as a result of a generous gift from Edna and Norman Freehling and is intended for senior-level faculty members. In recent years, Professor Moss has explored further the applications of her views on language and mind to issues in moral, political and legal philosophy. She has been awarded a Michigan Humanities Award (November, 2020) to write a series of papers that serve as the core of a monograph on the notion of "moral encroachment". According to this notion, whether our mental states have certain features, such as being intentional, free, reasonable, and something that constitute knowledge, depends crucially on moral facts. What Prof. Moss promises is a rigorous and unified account of the nature of this dependence. This account includes a treatment of the relevance of moral encroachment for debates in jurisprudence and political theory.

***Congratulations, Sarah!***

# DOTSON NAMED UNIVERSITY DIVERSITY AND SOCIAL TRANSFORMATION PROFESSOR

BY LAUREN LOVE  
UNIVERSITY RECORD 9/23/21



**KRISTIE DOTSON** has joined the department as a **Professor of Philosophy**. She also holds a joint appointment with the Department of Afroamerican and African Studies. Kristie specializes in epistemology and feminist philosophy, with a particular focus on Black feminism and Women of Color feminisms, as well as critical philosophy of race in nineteenth and early-twentieth century America, but she is perhaps best known for her work in epistemology that focuses on the notion of “epistemic oppression.” Her courageous 2012 article “How is this Paper Philosophy?” helped to rapidly establish her as a nationally visible scholar. She has a voluminous record of publications, in both peer-reviewed academic journals and for-public venues. She has written dozens of articles, and, in addition, she has two manuscripts in progress that attest to her range as a scholar and activist: *Bad Magic: Normative Epistemology in a World of Difference* and *A Love Politic: Black Feminist Love Letters in the 21st Century*.

**Welcome Kristie!**

**RENÉE JORGENSEN** has joined the department as an **Assistant Professor of Philosophy**. Her research interests are in social & political philosophy and philosophy of language as well as ethics, epistemology and philosophy of law. Just three years from her PhD, she has published (or has forthcoming) 14 articles and book chapters, with several more under review or in progress. The articles have appeared in top general-interest journals such as *Noûs* and *Philosophy and Phenomenological Research*, and the *Journal of Political Philosophy*. The American Council of Learned Societies awarded her with a residential fellowship at the Edmund J. Safra Center for Ethics at Harvard for 21/22. She was also a Research Fellow in the School of Philosophy in the Research School of Social Sciences at the Australian National University during 2017-2019, and she also has a part-time (June-July) appointment as a Research Fellow at the Dianola Institute of Philosophy at the Australian Catholic University, which runs through 2022.

**Welcome Renée and congratulations!**

**Kristie Dotson, Professor of Philosophy and Afroamerican Studies in LSA, has been appointed a University Diversity and Social Transformation Professor.**

University Diversity and Social Transformation Professorships recognize and reward faculty for outstanding contributions to excellence through their commitments to promoting diversity, equity and inclusion.

The Board of Regents approved her appointment Sept. 23.

“Dotson is an outstanding scholar with exceptional contributions to diversity, equity and inclusion through her research, teaching and service,” said Susan M. Collins, provost and executive vice president for academic affairs.

“Her commitment to inclusivity is reflected not only in her teaching, which encourages students to work together in the cause of knowledge production, but also in her considerable community service, which involves advocacy for incorporation of women of color on social and racial justice agendas. We are pleased to recognize her multifaceted contributions by naming her a University Diversity and Social Transformation Professor.”

Dotson will maintain the appointment for five

years. She also will receive special faculty fellow status at the National Center for Institutional Diversity and will spend at least one semester as a faculty fellow-in-residence.

“The University Diversity and Social Transformation Professors are exceptionally accomplished senior scholars who, throughout their careers as faculty, have made significant contributions to knowledge innovation and production,” said NCID Director Tabbye Chavous, professor of psychology and education. “They are also leaders and innovators who are transforming their fields, communities and the campus through their contributions to diversity, equity and inclusion.”

Dotson’s research is focused in the areas of feminist philosophy and epistemology. Her scholarship has prompted a reconsideration of the racial and sexist biases that undergird philosophy as an intellectual field, and generated a conceptual tool-kit for combatting overt and insidious racisms and forms of “othering.”

Dotson teaches complex philosophical concepts to diverse students through DEI-informed, inclusive methods that allow students to see how “epistemic exclusions” are created, perpetuated, and can be combated through intellectual work and collective praxis, above all, in relation to communities that have endured oppression and violence.

## TANNER REPORT

By: Abdul Ansari (3rd year)

A global pandemic in the 21st century strains not only political and economic institutions, but human values as well. Novel ethical questions have confronted the world over these last two years. Who ought to count as an essential worker? Is essential work during COVID-19 something heroic and courageous? Should we expect essential workers to put their welfare on the line for public health and/or the preservation of institutions that would otherwise have collapsed under the pandemic's weight? How much moral import should be afforded to preserving public health and social institutions, anyways? Does the value of "flattening the curve" through extended, isolating quarantine periods end up outweighing the goodness of social connectivity?

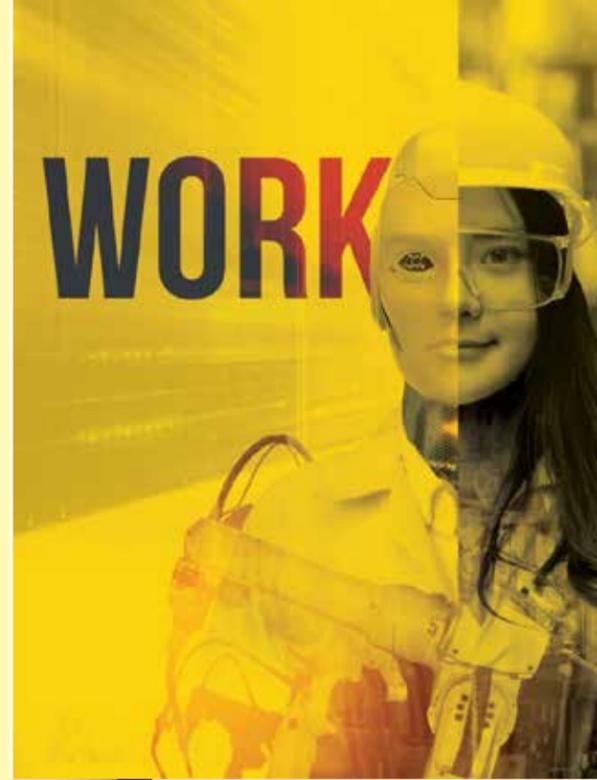
In the 2021 Tanner Lecture on Human Values here at the University of Michigan, the moral and political philosopher Kwame Anthony Appiah helps us grapple with such moral complexities. Not many other ethicists are well positioned to do so. Professor of Philosophy and Law at New York University, Professor Appiah is a philosopher with many hats. For decades he has been writing on topics of global concern, such as cosmopolitanism, social identity, navigating cross-cultural differences at the level of ethical beliefs and sensibilities, the ways in which specific ethical belief systems can change and progress—*inter alia*. Professor Appiah also runs a column for the New York Times, *The Ethicist*, in which he answers readers' questions about particular ethical dilemmas, ranging from the mundane to the profound: from questions about the permissibility of recording certain Tik Tok videos to end-of-life decisions for aging parents.

In the 2021 Tanner Lecture, Professor Appiah offers a framework for thinking through a range of ethical questions that confront policy makers thinking about who should be required to work during the pandemic, about who, really, is an essential worker. During a health emergency where thousands of lives are at stake, either as a result of the disease itself or a potentially

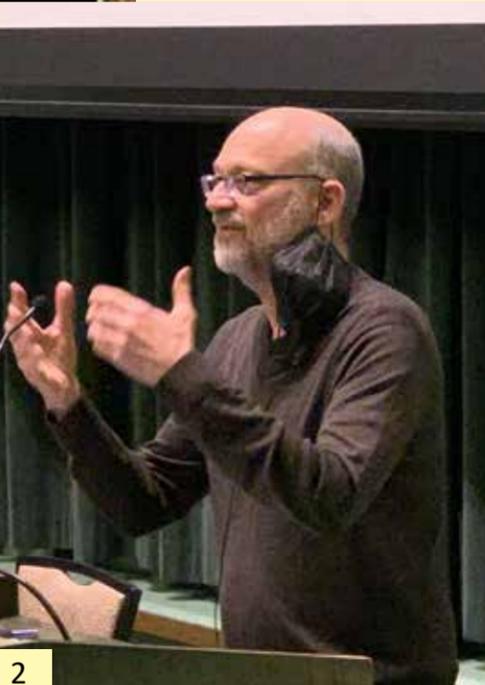
overwhelmed healthcare system, what values ought to guide a decision to declare a particular profession and worker *essential*?

Professor Appiah does not settle for proposing a stark cost-benefit analysis, where the basic unit of measure is the aggregate effects on general quality of life, which implies that judgments about so-and-so being essential work comes down to whether that kind of work stands to better overall quality of life. Instead, Professor Appiah proposes that we think about essential work in terms of how a particular role or vocation fares along the dimensions of reducing overall suffering, on the one hand, while remaining meaningful and estimable during a pandemic. Professor Appiah proposes, further, that we think about whether a vocation or role stands to reduce suffering and be meaningful and estimable in terms of (what he calls) an *ethical modularity*. An ethical modularity, Professor Appiah explains, narrows and specifies a subset of values, such that whatever doesn't fall within the modularity fails to be a relevant, guiding value for those bound to the modularity. A role or profession counts as an ethical modularity, according to Appiah, so the right way to think about whether particular work is essential comes down to wondering about whether the relevant values associated with that profession's modularity are liable to reduce suffering and count as meaningful or estimable.

On that note, moral philosophy's guiding values concern insightful ways and methods to think about real, pressing dilemmas so that decision makers in concrete situations can better understand how to solve the problems they face. Surely, that kind of work is a balm for the agonizing suffering wrought by hard moral decision-making; this work is also meaningful and estimable. In effect, Professor Appiah has highlighted a live way that moral philosophy can be essential work, too.



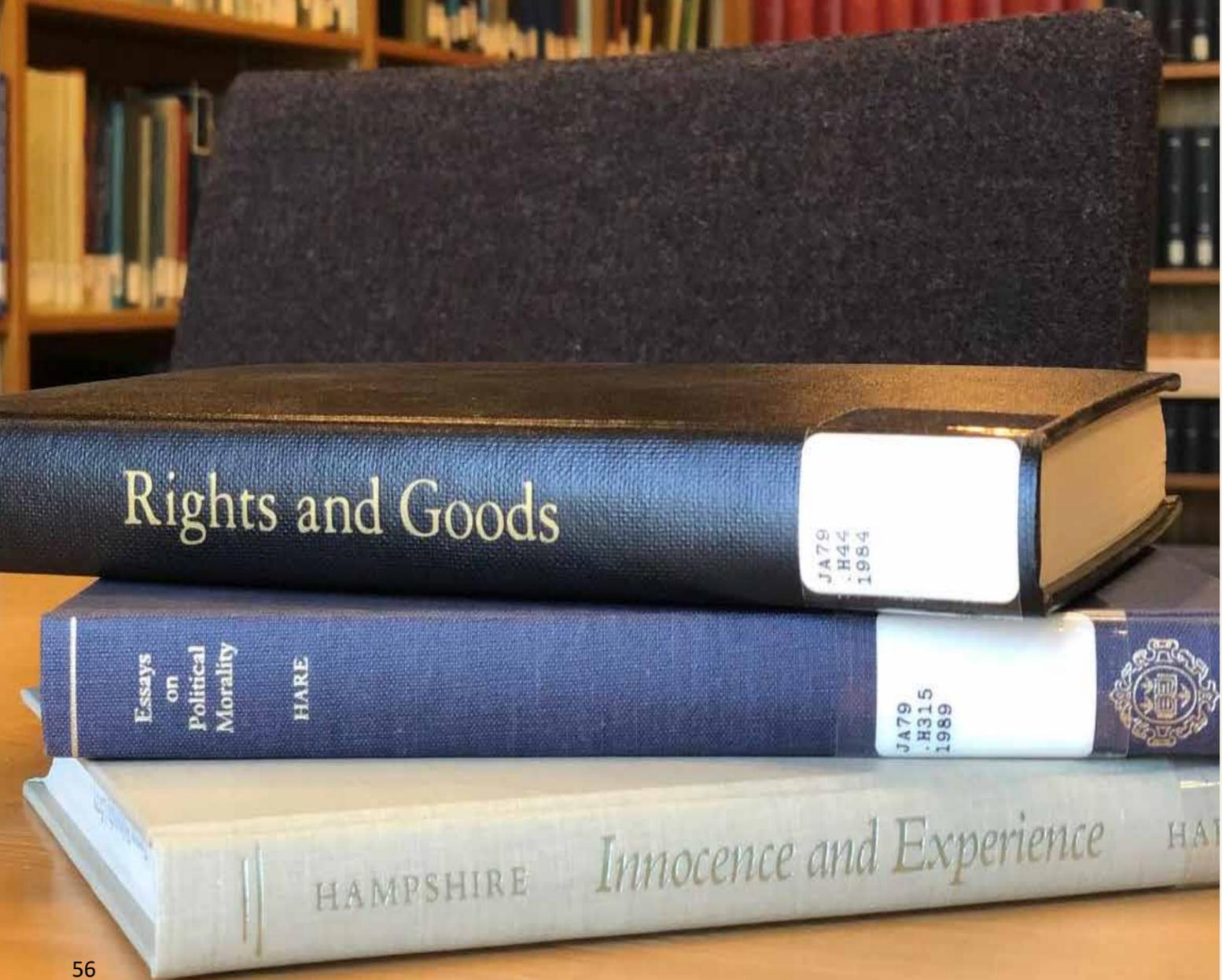
At our Tanner Symposium the next day, a distinguished panel of professors commented on Professor Appiah's lecture: 1. Andrea Veltman, Interim Unit Head, Professor of Philosophy (James Madison U); 2. Joshua Cohen, Distinguished Senior Fellow, UC Berkeley School of Law (Apple University); 3. Juliana Bidadanure, Assistant Professor of Philosophy (Stanford); and moderated by Scott Hershovitz, Thomas G. and Mabel Long Professor of Law, Professor of Philosophy (UMich Law). Many of our graduate students asked insightful and wonderful questions to further the vibrant and thought-provoking discussion as was the case following Professor Appiah's lecture.



# TANNER LIBRARY HAPPENINGS

BY STEPHEN HAYDEN, TANNER LIBRARY MANAGER

While the 20/21 academic year proved challenging to many, that did not deter our library manager in his quest to improve Tanner in some big ways



## Dear UM Philosophy and Friends of UM Philosophy

The Tanner Library has missed you, and if a moment of anthropomorphization can be permitted, it is excited to see you again. I, over the course of the last two years, have been the Tanner Library's manager and the library assistant to the department. There have been a lot of changes throughout the 2019-2020, and 2020-2021 academic years, though hopefully none too disruptive! To briefly list the changes undergone last year, 1) a new catalog platform has been implemented, 2) expanded collaboration with University Libraries to facilitate quick access to e-resources, and 3) better searchability for an expanded set of periodical resources.

Before these advances are further outlined, it is important to restate that the Tanner Library is a tool and resource first and foremost for you, University of Michigan's philosophers and friends of UM Philosophy, such that each change's primary goal is to improve the library toward that end. Tanner is, and always will be, open to comments, questions, and suggestions about organization, arrangement, content, etc., so if there is any way you feel the library could be further fine tuned for this community, please reach out to [tanner-library@umich.edu](mailto:tanner-library@umich.edu).

The first of those changes, the catalog platform, is equally as drastic as it is visible. Near the end of the 2019-2020 academic year, it was determined that Tanner's past Integrated Library System / Online Public Accessible Catalog (ILS/OPAC) was insufficient, particularly when it came to the way LibraryThing presents periodical metadata. Metadata, the data about the data -- a book's title, date, publisher, all of the information about an item that is separate from the actual item's content -- is pretty consistent when it comes to books, which do, admittedly, make up the bulk of Tanner's ~8,000 items. Because of that majority, LibraryThing's rigidity worked perfectly fine for those books, where a new item could be cataloged according to a set series of metadata fields corresponding to what is needed for a book. This does mean, however, that when cataloging a journal issue the non corresponding metadata

had to be entered in either misc. notes sections, or in misnamed fields. Where books have ISBNs, periodicals have ISSN, and while books can be part of a larger series, journals have specific series, volume, and issue metadata, none of which were properly supported by LibraryThing. This was a particularly sticky point, because the collated nature of journals make them naturally harder to locate, where journals are indexed by title but are most often desired for specific articles, such that having as accurate metadata as possible is the goal for items which do genuinely get used.



According to Stephen, "This is not to say that the Tanner Library is any sort of complete or immutable work of librarian art. There is still work to be done in finding ways to organize physical journals such that they fit user needs, or providing further access to e-resources."

It was to this end that LibraryWorld was identified as LibraryThing's successor, whose records are based on the skeleton of a MARC record. MARC being MACHine Readable Catalog, the standard format in which library records are encoded, such that when creating a record it is possible to make a much more diverse entry than before, where we can include ISSN, volumes, and issues explicitly. This modularity also allows for linking to e-books, the Library of Congress, and larger record series in a way that was not possible before, which will be described further in section #2 on the expansion of access to e-resources.

To briefly describe the migration process, the raw MARC was exported from LibraryThing and could then be uploaded to LibraryWorld, such that the migration took ~45 minutes total. Technically. Opening the newly imported library, it was quickly evident that there was still work to be done. Despite the best efforts of the auto-importer, the new catalog was full of encoding errors, where the code behind special characters in one platform is different than the next, such that the new catalog represented each instance of "Descartes, René" as "Descartes, RenÃce." Here, the code behind "é" in LibraryThing was different from the code that LibraryWorld uses to represent "é," such that the new catalog read the old code and spit out its best, but ultimately incorrect, guess. This happened for nearly every instance of a special character, with a current total of 99 individual character misinterpretations.

COMING MARCH 29 & 30, 2023

# TANNER LECTURE ON HUMAN VALUES with Professor Sally Haslanger (MIT)

Ford Professor of Philosophy and Women's and Gender Studies



Professor Haslanger has published in metaphysics, epistemology, feminist theory, and critical race theory. Broadly speaking, her work links issues of social justice with contemporary work in epistemology, metaphysics, philosophy of language, and philosophy of mind. A collection of her papers that represent this effort over twenty years was collected in *Resisting Reality: Social Construction and Social Critique* (Oxford 2012), and it received the Joseph B. Gittler award for outstanding work in philosophy of the social sciences. In addition to her research on social justice, Haslanger is deeply committed to promoting diversity in philosophy and beyond. She was the founder and convener of the Women in Philosophy Task Force, and co-founded PIKSI-Boston, a summer philosophy institute for undergraduates from under-represented groups.

**DETAILS COMING SOON**

\*\*Lecture and Symposium are free and open to the public\*\*  
Wheelchair and handicap accessible. ASL Interpreted.

of Utah, and many more are now available. Additionally, a number of dissertations have been linked out of DeepBlue, University of Michigan's data repository. Then, while not available online, undergraduate PPE and Honors Philosophy theses have been added to the catalog such that they're now findable when searching. [Click here to view the document detailing the new revivals in our catalog.](#)

This is not to say that the Tanner Library is any sort of complete or immutable work of librarian art. There is still work to be done in finding ways to organize physical journals such that they fit user needs, or providing further access to e-resources.

I would now take a moment to speak personally. I will say adamantly that it has been an honor and a privilege to work on the Tanner Library and to serve the PHIL community for these last two years. While I was only able to spend the 2019-2020 academic year in person with you all, from my first day I felt welcomed, supported, and valued. I know that whomever is next in charge of Tanner will receive that same warmth, and I hope they're able to return it as I've tried to. Additionally, I equally hope they're able to pick up as much philosophy through brown bag lunches as I did. I have completed my Master's of Science in Information from UMSI and will no longer be Tanner's manager, so I have to go now to put the lessons I've learned here into further practice, but am, as always, happy to talk, answer questions, or keep learning.

Thank you!

Stephen Hayden  
UMSI | MSI 2021

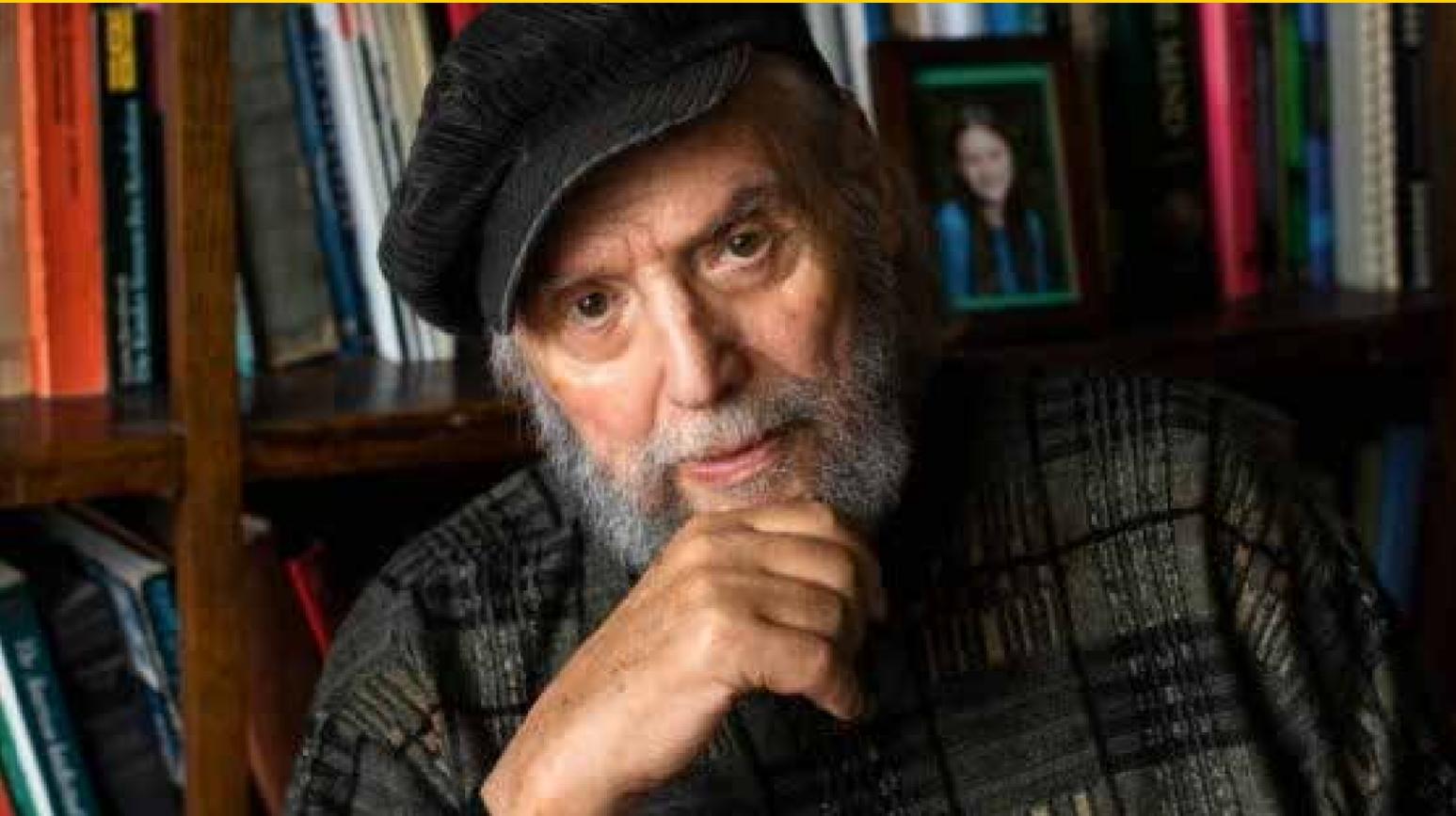
Beyond that, the new catalog occasionally did not represent items with multiple contributors properly, so to ensure proper attribution a Python web scraping project was undertaken using BeautifulSoup4 and Selenium to look through the old catalog and identify every item with multiple authors which could then be written to a spreadsheet, such that it was possible to cross reference that list to the new catalog, without having to comb through the old catalog item-by-item to know which records might be missing an author. Work continued in this vein throughout the bulk of this academic year, ensuring that attribution was present and searching was not hampered by encoding errors.

Onto that teased second change: e-resources. Around 1000 new links have been added to the catalog for both books and periodicals to allow remote or otherwise online access. These links are almost exclusively courtesy of University Libraries, such that so long as you're prepared with your UM credentials, the items are freely available. While this endeavour's primary objective was ameliorating use during entirely remote learning circumstances, more avenues to accessibility are always better than fewer. The number of online accessible items will additionally keep growing as Tanner and University libraries collaborate to ensure that the University of Michigan philosophy community has as many resources, both online and in print, as possible.

Finally, beyond adding the additional metadata possible in LibraryWorld, a number of journals which had previously been unavailable have been recovered as active parts of Tanner's catalog. *The Philosophical Topics* series out of the University of Arkansas, *Hypatia: A Journal of Feminist Philosophy*, The Tanner Lecture series out of the University



# IN MEMORIAM: FRITHJOF BERGMANN (1930-2021)



**Frithjof Bergmann**, Professor Emeritus of Philosophy, passed away on May 24 in Ann Arbor. He was 90 years old.

Born in 1930, Bergmann came to the US from Germany as a student, and received his PhD in Philosophy from Princeton University in 1959. He joined the University of Michigan, where he spent the majority of his academic career, in 1961. Bergmann also taught at the University of California, Berkeley, Stanford University, and the University of California, Santa Cruz.

As a scholar, Bergmann's interests included continental philosophy, existentialism, social and political philosophy, philosophical anthropology, and philosophy of culture. Particularly engaged with Hegel, Nietzsche, and Sartre, he articulated a novel and influential theory of freedom of the will in his best-known academic work, *On Being Free* (1977).

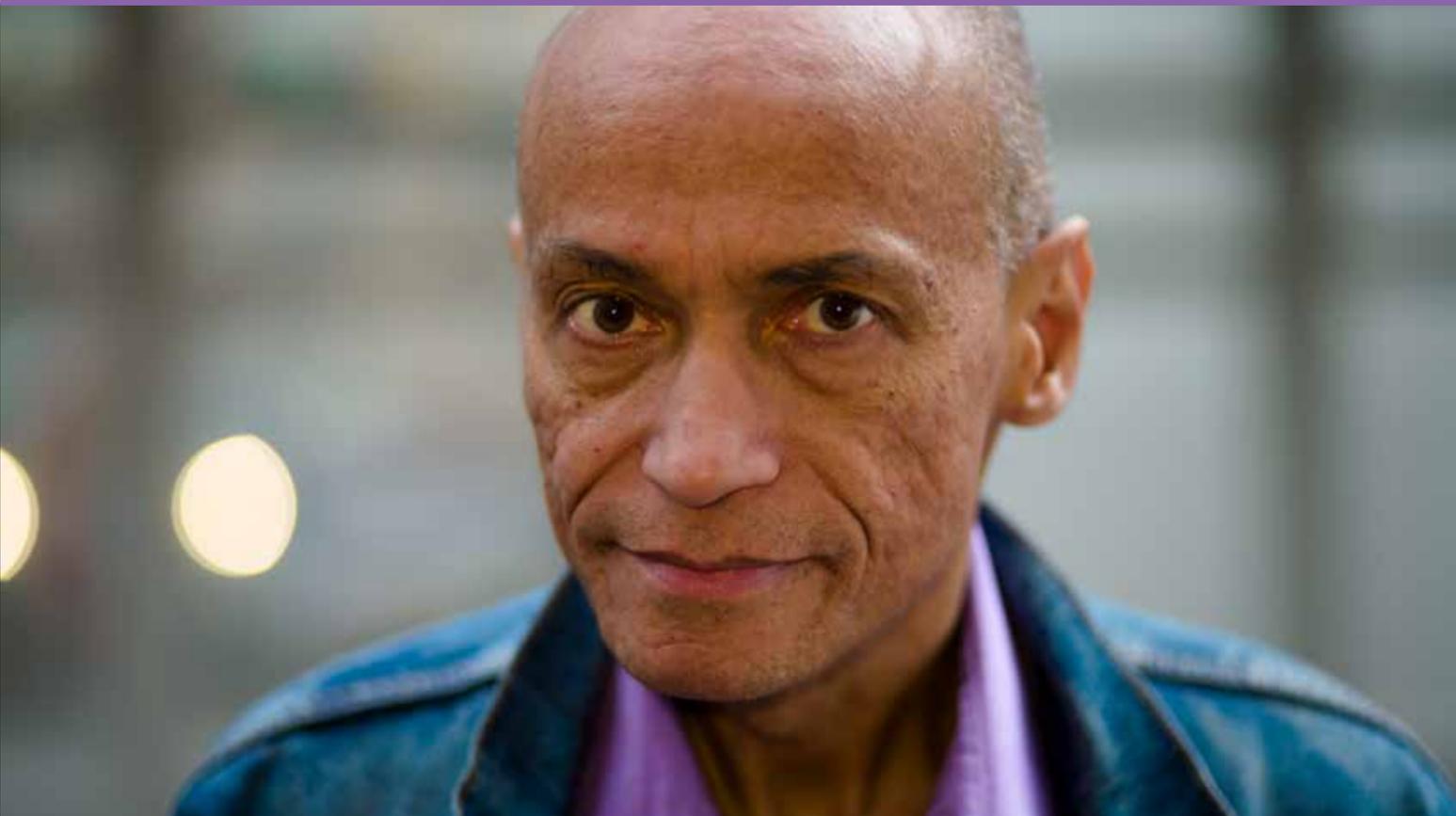
Bergmann was also known for his political activism; he led one of the earliest known "teach-ins" at Michigan in 1965, and remained active in anti-war movements throughout his life.

In the later portion of his career, Bergmann turned his attention to his "New Work" movement, which addresses the relationship between work, self-realization, freedom, and technological and social change. In 1981, he founded the Center for New Work in Flint, MI, which sought to foster dialogue about ameliorating the impacts of auto-industry layoffs in the community.

After his retirement in 1999, Bergmann continued to write and lecture on the practical, social, and cultural implications of philosophical thought. In 2018, he published *New Work, New Culture*, which recounts the development of his ideas and proposes an alternative framework to the modern "job system."

**Known for his writing on Nietzsche, Hegel, and existentialism, and for founding the New Work movement, Bergmann sought to develop alternative models of work that prioritize human freedom and self-realization.**

# IN MEMORIAM: CHARLES W. MILLS (1951-2021)



From DAILYNOUS, by Justin Weinberg

**CHARLES W. MILLS, Distinguished Professor of Philosophy at the Graduate Center of the City University of New York (CUNY)**, died September 20, 2021.

Professor Mills was well known for his work in social and political philosophy, African-American and Africana philosophy, critical philosophy of race, ethics, and Marxist thought. He is the author of over 100 journal articles, chapters, and commentaries, as well as six books: *The Racial Contract*; *Blackness Visible: Essays on Philosophy and Race*; *From Class to Race: Essays in White Marxism and Black Radicalism*; *Contract and Domination* (co-authored with Carole Pateman); *Radical Theory, Caribbean Reality*; and *Black Rights/White Wrongs: The Critique of Racial Liberalism*.

Mills was appointed professor of philosophy at CUNY in 2016. Prior to that, he spent a decade on the faculty at Northwestern University (2007-2016) and before that, 17 years at the University of Illinois, Chicago (1990-2007).

Earlier appointments were at the University of Oklahoma, the University of Toronto, Campion College and the College of Arts and Sciences in Kingston, Jamaica (as a physics lecturer). He earned his PhD from the University of Toronto and his undergraduate degree from the University of the West Indies.

He was honored by the profession, particularly over the past dozen years, in various ways, including being elected to the presidency of the Central Division of the American Philosophical Association (APA), being selected to give the APA's John Dewey Lectureship, becoming a fellow of the American Academy of Arts and Sciences, and **delivering the 2020 Tanner Lecture on Human Values at the University of Michigan**.

*Please join the UM Philosophy Community as we mourn the too soon passing of this renowned scholar, prolific writer, and friend. His legacy will endure not only in his many articles and books, but also through the many philosophers and political theorists that he mentored and trained, expanding the critical study of race and racism.*

# IN MEMORIAM: CAROLYN TANNER IRISH (1940-2021)

Carolyn Tanner Irish, who went from Mormonism to becoming the first woman to lead Utah's Episcopal Diocese, dies

The Salt Lake Tribune, Peggy Fletcher Stack, June 29, 2021 <https://www.sltrib.com/religion/2021/06/29/first-woman-lead-utahs/>

The religious journey of Carolyn Tanner Irish, a pioneer in the pulpit who became the first female bishop of Utah's Episcopal Diocese, was launched by tragedy — the accidental death of a brother — and a pivotal conversation.

Irish, who died Tuesday at 81, watched as her younger brother was hit by a car at a Utah ski resort in 1948. A well-meaning Latter-day Saint bishop, who stopped at the Tanner home later to express sympathy, wondered aloud what the family had done to merit such terrible divine retribution. Irish's father, Utah entrepreneur and philanthropist Obert C. Tanner, a member of The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, escorted the man to the door with these words: "I cannot see the hand of God in this. I rather think God is weeping with us today." Young Carolyn, who was 8 at the time, clung to the image of a "God who weeps with us." From that day forth, she embarked on a spiritual quest to find and understand God in the midst of human suffering.

It took her to Stanford University (where she met and married Leon Irish) and then the **University of Michigan (where she earned a bachelor's in philosophy in 1962)**, the University of Oxford in England (where she earned a master of letters in moral philosophy), and through Mormonism to motherhood, divorce and ordination to the Episcopal priesthood in 1984 and a position at the faith's Washington National Cathedral in D.C. Ultimately, Irish came full circle. The Salt Lake City native was

elected the 10th bishop of the then-6,000-member diocese back in the Beehive State. Irish was "proud to be inspired by the pioneer spirit — both because she was from a long-established pioneer Utah family and because she was a pioneer among women bishops in the Episcopal Church," current Episcopal Bishop Scott Hayashi said Tuesday. "She always said with a smile that she was the first woman Episcopal bishop west of the Potomac River. She was the fourth woman bishop in the church."

A PREACHING PROGRESSIVE Irish's June 1996 consecration ceremony at Abravanel Hall in Salt Lake City included a two-story wooden cross, dozens of symbol-filled banners, a table-size altar, a velvet

armchair, trash cans spewing incense and red-robed bishops, transforming a musical venue into a spiritual sanctuary much like the metamorphosis of Irish herself — from a homegrown Latter-day Saint into a leading voice in the Episcopal Church. "I was taught by the LDS Church to love Jesus," Irish said at the time. "I came out of that wonderful, kind, different wing of the family of Christ." While leading the Utah diocese, Irish used her position and influence to speak out on progressive issues — against war and capital punishment and for immigration, the environment, LGBTQ rights and, of course, feminism. In Irish's homily at a confirmation

***While leading the Utah diocese, Irish used her position and influence to speak out on progressive issues — against war and capital punishment and for immigration, the environment, LGBTQ rights and, of course, feminism.***

service that included new member Jeff Laver, she noted that "the Episcopal Church tried to remain neutral when slavery was dividing our nation," Laver recalled. "She added that Episcopalians were not going to make that mistake again and that we would stand firmly for the rights of LGBT people."

A number of people from various parishes were being confirmed that day, he said. "We had all been prepared in our own parish and, as far as I know, I was the only queer person being confirmed.

I doubt that Carolyn even knew that I was gay. I was touched to be openly included in the Episcopal message that all are welcome and all are equal. She was a firm supporter of women, racial minorities and queers." Irish also was an ever-present

ally on interfaith issues, earning the respect of Catholic bishops, Latter-day Saint apostles and other religious leaders.

OVERCOMING ALCOHOLISM Irish also faced her own rubicon and emerged stronger and more resilient. At the diocese's annual convention in 1999, Irish was forced to announce her struggle with alcoholism and left immediately for an out-of-state treatment program. She returned to her responsibilities as a bishop part time the following April. A year later, she was back full time. "Alcoholism is an isolating condition," Irish said in a 2000 interview.

"Therefore you are left to your imagination and you can imagine the worst." Even under the best of circumstances, leading an Episcopal diocese is a demanding, multifaceted job. "Nobody is born knowing how to be bishop," she said. "And being bishop is not a straightforward job description."

Ultimately, Irish thrived in her leadership, building bridges to other faiths and supporting many causes inside and outside the church. In 2001, she married the Rev. Frederick Quinn, a retired foreign service officer and author of several books. Throughout her church service and thereafter, Irish continued her generosity toward the community, her leadership of the worldwide O.C. Tanner Co. (started by her humanitarian father) and the University of Utah, which named the Carolyn Tanner Irish Humanities Building in her honor and sponsored **the annual Tanner Lectures on Human Values.**

In 2010, she became the first woman to be given the designation "Giant in Our City" by Salt Lake City's civic leaders. Bishop Irish will be missed by many, many people within the Episcopal Church and the wider community," Hayashi said. "She was one of the most generous and giving persons I have ever had the privilege to know." From tragedy to triumph, Irish "dearly loved Utah," the bishop said. "Though she could have chosen to live anywhere she desired, she chose Utah because this was her home."



## PHILOSOPHY CONTRIBUTIONS

The Department acknowledges with gratitude the following individuals who made contributions during the period July 1, 2020 through June 30, 2021. We are most especially grateful this Academic Year.

### ***In support of the Ilene Goldman Block Memorial Fund for program enhancement for undergraduate studies***

Dr. Raymond A. (AB '69; MD '73) & Vivian Bass  
Charles Berk & Debra Caplowe  
Marsha A. Bishop  
Jerry Block  
Joseph G. Block (AB '69)  
Howard Blumenthal  
Joseph C. (AB '98) Burak  
& Elisabeth W. Burak  
Lindsay D. Chaney (AB '73)  
& Mary F. Kasdan  
Erin S. Cikanek (AB '07)  
William D. Coston (AB '72)  
& Barbara Carney-Coston  
Virginia Dean  
Todd Edelman & Marisa Nightingale  
Michael W. (AM '89; JD '89) Ellison  
& Jesse A. Ellison  
Jonathan Feiger & Nancy Laben Gift Fund of the Fidelity Charitable Gift Fund  
John F. (AB '69) & Virginia W. Gajewski  
Debra Garrin  
Ben Giliberti  
Carol B. & Will Herrup  
Thomas Kelly & Colleen Kennedy  
Marny & Kenneth Kravenas  
Dr. Edward A. (AM '72) & Lois C. Langerak  
Henry Lerner (AB '70)  
Howard S. & Sandy Marks  
John & Carole Nannes Charitable Fund  
Andrew N. Nederveld (AB '91)  
Elizabeth Nightingale & Andrew R. Herrup  
William Pasfield  
Dr. Richard M. Perloff (AB '72)  
& Dr. Julia A. Krevans  
Prof. Peter A. Railton & Prof. Rebecca J. Scott  
Michael T. (AB '93) & Patricia Reid  
Mark L. Rosenberg (AB '69) & Betty Adler  
Dr. Andrew & Melanie Rosenbloom  
Janet & Michael Rosenbloom  
Andrew E. Rubin  
Edward G. Sloan (AB '11)

Robert & Dauphine Sloan Charitable Fund  
Prof. David M. Uhlmann  
& Prof. Virginia E. Murphy  
Jennifer S. Walker (AB '07; JD '12)

### ***Allan Gibbard Fund***

Prof. Michael S. Davis (AB '68/PhD '72)  
Guha Krishnamurthi (BS '04; MS '05)  
Ann Mongoven (BS '79)  
& Prof. Bradley C. Karkkainen

### ***Denise Philosophy Endowment***

Dean Patricia D. White (AB '71; JD '74)  
& James W. Nickel

### ***Chinese Philosophy Fund***

Jan C. Berris (AB '66; AM '67)

### ***The Candace Bolter Memorial Scholarship Fund***

Dr. David Jacobi  
& Professor Elizabeth S. Anderson  
Dr. Charles E. Dunlop

### ***Louis E. Loeb Fund for the History of Philosophy***

Beth M. Coleman (AB '88) & John O'Shea  
Richard B. Dyer (AB '90)  
Louis M. Guenin (AB '72)  
Leonard W. Hersh (AB '82)  
Michael Kump (AB '76; AM '79)  
Albert S. Lacy (AB '79)  
Prof. Louis E. Loeb  
Dr. Reed M. (AB '86; MS '91)  
& Amy E. Perkins

### ***Tanner Library Cornerstones for Invaluable Support of the Tanner Philosophy Library***

Bruce & Merlee Bartman Memorial Fund of the Ann Arbor Area Community Foundation  
Jacob Brown  
Benjamin R. (AB '04) & Heidi H. Dryden  
Leonard W. Hersh (AB '82)  
Michael R. Hall (AB '77) & Tim M. Smith  
Timothy J. (AB '74) & Janice L. Howard  
George A. (AM '74) & Wendy M. Martinez

### ***Philosophy Sustaining Fund***

David E. (AM '93; JD '99)  
& Mary-Margaret M. Aman, Jr.  
Mark D. (A.B. '84) & Maura Basile  
Profs. Victor M. & Ruth R. Caston  
Michael (AB '78) & Jill Hollenbach  
Timothy J. (AB '74) & Janice L. Howard  
Judith M. Riley (AB '67)  
& Ronald W. Citkowski  
Craig & Sharon Rowley Charitable Fund  
The MK Salkin Fund of the Vanguard Charitable Endowment Program  
Dr. Virginia L. Warren (AB '70; PhD '79)

### ***Philosophy Strategic Fund***

Dr. Richard M. Adler (BS '74)  
& Mrs. Denise F. Konicek  
David E. (AM '93; JD '99)  
& Mary-Margaret M. Aman, Jr.  
William D. (AB '92) & Sharon S. Baird  
James T. Bork (AB '86)  
Martha & Dennis R. Braddock, Jr.  
Jim A. (A.M. '75) & Emily Brown  
John D. Carson (BBA '06; AB '06)  
& Sarah Simpson  
John F. Cooney  
Susan E. Couzens Trust  
Dr. Nancy J. Crown & Dr. Samuel K. Weisman  
Mark E. Furlan (AB '87)  
Jeffry A. Giardina (AB '62)  
Dr. John T. (AM '63; PhD '66)  
& Ms. Jennifer Granrose  
Andrew E. (AB '79) & Diane C. Green  
James Henle (AB '76)  
Leonard W. Hersh (AB '82)  
Wendy G. & Michael B. Hill  
Martin J. Korchak (AB '64)  
Aaron R. Krauss (AB '88)  
Michael Kump (AB '76; AM '79)  
Dr. James E. (AB '54) & Ellen J. Labes  
Albert S. & Virginia D. Lacy  
Roger A. (AB '84) & Nancy R. Lane  
Jerold D. (AB '63) & Judith Lax  
Daniel A. Lee (AB '92)  
Dr. Wayne H. (PhD '76) & Deborah G. MacVey

Stewart H. (JD '68)  
& Stephanie H. McConaughy  
Theodore N. (AB '64) & Donna Miller  
Dr. James L. (PhD '71) & Alda Muyskens  
Angelina E. Overvold (AM '74)  
Henry & Sarah Paulson Charitable Fund  
Dr. Donald H. Regan (PhD '80)  
& Dr. Elizabeth R. Axelson  
Emily M. Santer (MHSA '84)  
& Prof. James M. Joyce  
Barry H. Silverblatt (AB '66)  
Juana & Keith A. Sotiroff  
Stephen G. Van Meter (AB '83)  
Dr. Kenneth A. Vatz (BS '65)  
Brian H. (BS '91) & Katharina Way  
Howard J. Wetters  
& Juliann Chamberlain-Wetters

### ***PPE Internship Fund***

Justine & F. David Segal

### ***PPE Strategic Fund***

Apollo Global Management LLC  
Samuel M. Bloch (AB '17)  
Andrew E. Green (AB '79)  
Harry C. Freedman (AB '17)  
James Henle (AB '76)  
John M. Jennings (AB '85)  
Michael G. Kubik (AB '16)  
Bryon K. Roberts (AB '85)  
& S. Marnise Limbrick-Roberts  
Barry H. Silverblatt (AB '66)  
Hanna E. Wetters (AB '15)  
Howard J. Wetters  
& Juliann Chamberlain-Wetters

**DEPARTMENTAL FACULTY**

Elizabeth Anderson - John Dewey Distinguished University Professor of Philosophy and Women's Studies, Arthur F. Thurnau Professor, Max Shaye Professor of Public Philosophy, Politics, and Economics, Professor of Philosophy and Women's and Gender Studies, College of Literature, Science, and the Arts; Moral and Political Philosophy, Epistemology, Feminist Theory, Philosophy of Social Science

David Baker - Associate Professor and James B. and Grace J. Nelson Fellow; Philosophy of Physics, Philosophy of Science

Gordon Belot - Lawrence Sklar Collegiate Professor of Philosophy and James B. and Grace J. Nelson Fellow; Philosophy of Physics, Philosophy of Science

Sarah Buss - Professor and James B. and Grace J. Nelson Fellow; Ethics, Action Theory, Moral Psychology

Victor Caston - Professor and James B. and Grace J. Nelson Fellow; Ancient Philosophy, Medieval Philosophy, Austrian Philosophy, Philosophy of Mind, Metaphysics

Emmalon Davis - Assistant Professor

Kristie Dotson - Professor of Philosophy; Professor, Department of Afroamerican and African Studies; University Diversity and Social Transformation Professor

Anna Edmonds - LEO Lecturer I

Maegan Fairchild - Assistant Professor

Daniel Herwitz - Frederick G. L. Huetwell Professor; Aesthetics, Film, Philosophical Essay, Transitional Societies

Renée Jorgensen - Assistant Professor

James Joyce - Cooper Harold Langford Collegiate Professor; Decision Theory, Epistemology, Philosophy of Science

Eric Lormand - Associate Professor and James B. and Grace J. Nelson Fellow; Philosophy of Mind, Philosophy of Cognitive Science, Language

Daniel Lowe - LEO Lecturer I

Ishani Maitra - Professor and James B. and Grace J. Nelson Fellow; Philosophy of Language, Feminist Philosophy, Philosophy of Law

David Manley - Associate Professor and James B. and Grace J. Nelson Fellow; Metaphysics, Philosophy of Language, Epistemology

Sarah Moss - William Wilhartz Professor of Philosophy and James B. and Grace J. Nelson Fellow; Philosophy of Language, Metaphysics, Epistemology

Wade Munroe - Adjunct Lecturer in Philosophy; Research Fellow

Sonya Özbey - Assistant Professor and Denise Research Fellow; Chinese Philosophy

Peter Railton - Gregory S. Kavka Distinguished University Professor; John Stephenson Perrin Professor; Arthur F. Thurnau Professor; Ethics, Philosophy of Science, Political Philosophy, Moral Psychology, Aesthetics

Laura Ruetsche - Louis Loeb Collegiate Professor and James B. and Grace J. Nelson Fellow; Philosophy of Physics, Philosophy of Science

Tad Schmaltz - Department Chair, Professor and James B. and Grace J. Nelson Fellow; History of Early Modern, History of Philosophy of Science

Janum Sethi - Assistant Professor and Denise Research Fellow; Kant, History of Modern Philosophy, Aesthetics

Chandra Sripada - Assistant Professor and James B. and Grace J. Nelson Fellow; Ethics, Moral Psychology, Mind, Cognitive Science

Eric Swanson - Professor and James B. and Grace J. Nelson Fellow; Philosophy of Language, Philosophy of Mind, Metaphysics, Formal Epistemology

James Tappenden - Professor and James B. and Grace J. Nelson Fellow; Philosophy of Language, Philosophy and History of Mathematics, Philosophical Logic

Richmond Thomason - Professor and James B. and Grace J. Nelson Fellow; Logic, Philosophy of Language, Linguistics, Artificial Intelligence

Brian Weatherson - Marshall M. Weinberg Professor; Epistemology, Philosophy of Language

**AFFILIATED FACULTY**

Linda A.W. Brakel - Research Associate; Adjunct Clinical Associate Professor of Psychiatry, Medical School

Nicolas Cornell - Professor of Law and Philosophy, UM Law School

Daniel Fryer - Assistant Professor of Law, UM Law School

Scott Hershovitz - Professor of Philosophy of Law, Ethics, Political Philosophy; Thomas G. & Mabel Long Professor of Law, UM Law School

Ezra Keshet - Associate Professor of Philosophy; Associate Professor of Linguistics

Mika LaVaque-Manty - Associate Professor of Philosophy, Arthur F. Thurnau Professor, Associate Professor of Political Science

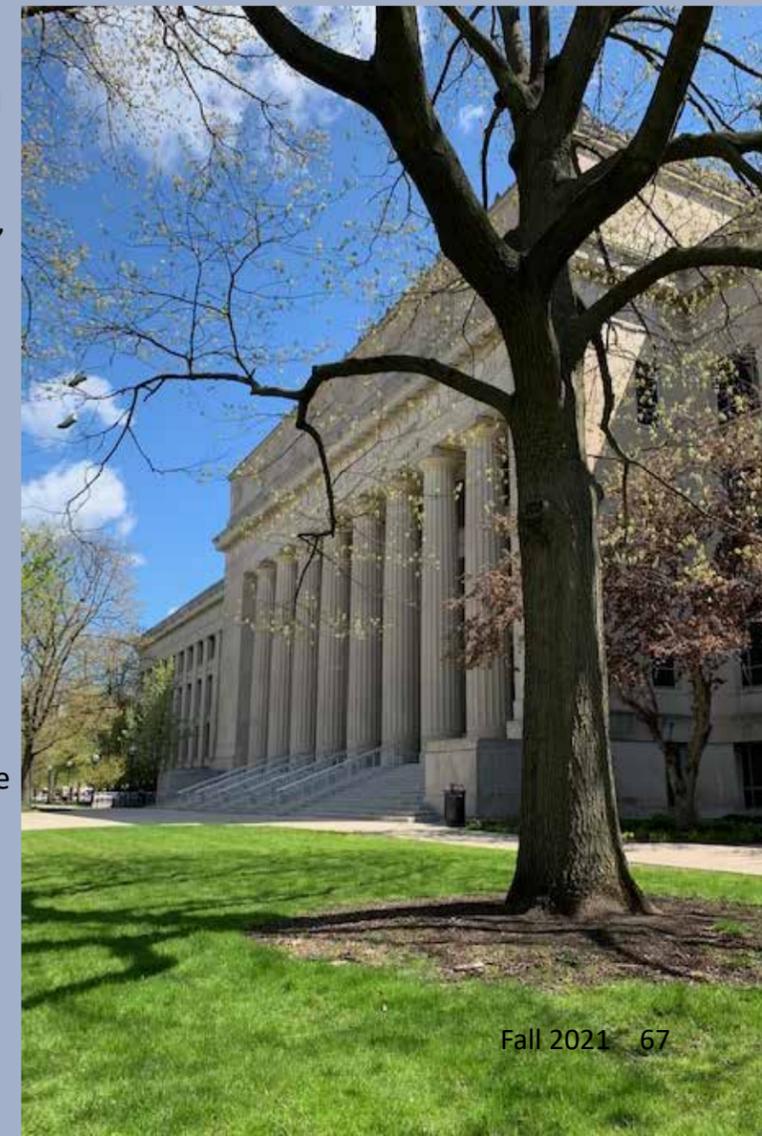
George Mashour - Adjunct Research Associate of Philosophy; Robert B. Sweet Professor of Anesthesiology, Chair, Department of Anesthesiology; Adjunct Professor of Psychology

Gabe Mendlow - Professor of Philosophy; Professor of Law, UM Law School

Donald Regan - Professor of Philosophy; William W. Bishop, Jr. Collegiate Professor of Law

**EMERITUS FACULTY**

Edwin Curley  
 Stephen Darwall  
 Allan Gibbard  
 Louis Loeb  
 Donald Munro  
 Lawrence Sklar  
 Kendall Walton  
 Nicholas White



While 20/21 brought us many challenges and adjustments, our normally socially active department had to find other ways to stay connected.



Staff outing to UM North Campus Wave Field



Philosophy Annual Solstice Party



Grad Student Picnics



Staff Zoom Holiday Cookie Baking



No Solstice Party is complete without the Annual Ugly Sweater Contest!

This year's winners:

Ugliest: Anna Edmonds - Moray Eel

Uglier (??): Angela Sun featuring her adorable dog

Ugly: Malte Hendrickx - Starry Night



Snow Day fun complete with hot cocoa





**Welcome Jessica Hobbs!** Jessica graduated from the University of Michigan in 2020 where she studied History and Sustainability. She currently serves as the **Events and Communications Coordinator** for the Women’s and Gender Studies and Philosophy Departments. Previously she worked for the property management company, CBRE, as part of their account with Ford in Dearborn. When she is not at work, she is seeing as much of Michigan as she can with her partner and his husky, reading Bon Appetit recipes, combing through local thrift stores, tending to her ever growing compost bin, and talking to her family back home in New England. Jessica aspires to return to the University to pursue her Master’s in Urban Planning and/or Sustainability and hopes to bring her passion for conservation, innovation, and community to her work with the department.



**Welcome Summer Mengarelli!** Summer is a 1st-year master’s student studying librarianship at the School of Information. She is interested in academic librarianship, which makes Tanner Library a perfect fit to gain experience while at UM. She is especially interested in library instruction, libraries for student success, and information access and ethics. Summer triple-majored in philosophy, history, and Spanish at Greenville University (Greenville, IL), graduating in 2019. Her studies in philosophy were primarily in ethics, phenomenology, decolonialism, and critical theory. At Tanner, Summer is excited to continue her predecessor’s project of migrating the library’s catalog and cleaning up its records, and she is interested in some projects of her own. So far, she has gotten to speak with the current undergraduate honors class about their thesis research and hopes to continue to be a source of support for the students in their work. As her interests include support for student research, she would like to explore new ways that Tanner can help, and otherwise continue, to provide a peaceful and quiet space for scholarship.

*Michigan Philosophy News/"The GRUE"*  
 Department of Philosophy  
 2215 Angell Hall / 435 S. State Street  
 Ann Arbor MI 48109-1003

I WOULD LIKE TO MAKE A DONATION:

Name \_\_\_\_\_

Address \_\_\_\_\_

City, State, Zip \_\_\_\_\_

Phone \_\_\_\_\_

Email \_\_\_\_\_

UM Alum? Yes/No \_\_\_\_\_

CHOOSE YOUR GIFT:

One-Time Gift: \$ \_\_\_\_\_

OR

Monthly Gift: \$ \_\_\_\_\_ per month (10th of each month)

F: \_\_\_\_\_ ID: \_\_\_\_\_ A: 5852

CHOOSE YOUR AREA TO SUPPORT:

\$ \_\_\_\_\_ Strategic Fund (308224)

\$ \_\_\_\_\_ Sustaining Fund (362222)

\$ \_\_\_\_\_ PPE Strategic Fund (321156)

\$ \_\_\_\_\_ Block Memorial Fund (323749)

\$ \_\_\_\_\_ Louis E. Loeb Fund (798580)

\$ \_\_\_\_\_ Allan Gibbard Fund (799483)

If no fund is selected, your gift will be used where it is needed most

For 2020 charitable deductions, credit card gifts by mail must reach us by December 8. Your gift by check must be postmarked by December 31. Or, you can donate online or by phone: <http://www.lsa.umich.edu/philosophy/>

(888) 518-7888 toll free  
 (734) 647-6179 local  
 M-F 9 AM – 4 PM EST

CHOOSE YOUR PAYMENT METHOD:

Credit Card::

MC Visa AmEx Disc

Acct. # \_\_\_\_\_

Exp. Date \_\_\_\_/\_\_\_\_/\_\_\_\_

Signature Required \_\_\_\_\_

Check (Payable to University of Michigan)

PRINT, CUT OUT & MAIL THIS FORM TO:

University of Michigan  
 LSA Department of Philosophy  
 2215 Angell Hall  
 435 South State Street  
 Ann Arbor, MI 48109-1003

*YOUR GIFT IS GREATLY APPRECIATED!!*

THE REGENTS OF THE UNIVERSITY OF MICHIGAN

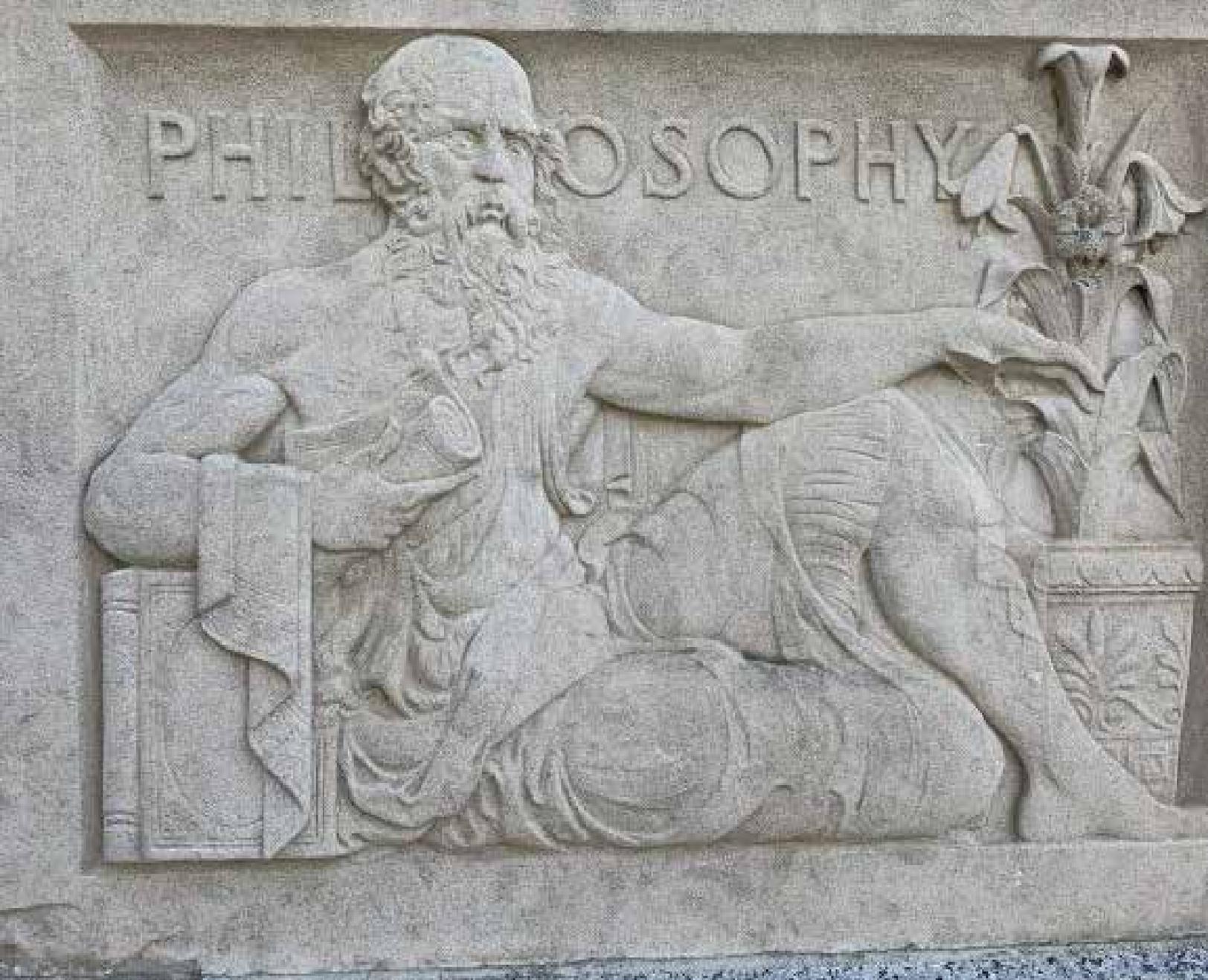
- Jordan B. Acker
- Michael J. Behm
- Mark J. Bernstein
- Paul W. Brown
- Sarah Hubbard
- Denise Ilitch
- Ron Weiser
- Katherine E. White
- Mark S. Schlissel (ex officio)

The University of Michigan, as an equal opportunity/affirmative action employer, complies with all applicable federal and state laws regarding nondiscrimination and affirmative action. The University of Michigan is committed to a policy of equal opportunity for all persons and does not discriminate on the basis of race, color, national origin, age, marital status, sex, sexual orientation, gender identity, gender expression, disability, religion, height, weight, or veteran status in employment, educational programs and activities, and admissions. Inquiries or complaints may be addressed to the Senior Director for Institutional Equity and Title IX/Section 504/ADA Coordinator, Office for Institutional Equity, 2072 Administrative Services Building, Ann Arbor, Michigan 48109-1432, 734-763-0235, TTY 734-647-1388. For other University information, please call 734-764-1817.

DEPARTMENT OF PHILOSOPHY STAFF

- Judith Beck - Undergraduate Coordinator
- Carson Maynard - Graduate Coordinator
- Shelley Anzalone - Executive Assistant; Newsletter Editor
- Jessica Hobbs - Events and Publicity Coordinator
- Kelly Campbell - Chief Administrator

Contact us at:  
[philosophy.staff@umich.edu](mailto:philosophy.staff@umich.edu)



<https://www.facebook.com/UMPhilosophy/>



<https://www.instagram.com/uofmphilosophy/>



<https://twitter.com/umphilosophy>

or our website <https://lsa.umich.edu/philosophy>