

News from the Chair

As I begin my three year tenure as department chair, I first want to thank Dr. Woolfrey for her strong and consistent leadership over the past three years. (Please see her reflections on her term as chair on page 2.) The department has witnessed remarkable growth during this time, both in terms of new faculty and new course and program offerings. I would also like to thank the rest of my colleagues for their confidence in me. As I made clear from the beginning, I take on this task only because I know that we're a department that pulls together to share the load and support each other in the process!

This new year will definitely be a time of transition for our department, and not just in terms of the chair position. Our department is also moving this summer! Many of you have experienced first hand the overcrowding in Main Hall. With the recent growth in our department and in the College of Arts and Sciences as a whole, we were bursting at the seams! Philosophy will be moving to two suites of offices, one on the first and one on the third floor of Anderson Hall. With this move, the permanent faculty will have individual offices and we'll have more space for our adjuncts to settle in. We will be moved in by the beginning of fall

term, so please come visit us in our new digs!

Another very happy transition for us is the addition of three new tenure track faculty. Please join us in welcoming Dr. Tim Golden, Dr. Larry Udell, and Dr. Simon Ruchti (who will split her time between philosophy and Women's and Gender Studies)! Please see the information about these new department members in the faculty section.

In terms of my ongoing scholarship, I continue to work with Dr. Karin Gedge (WCU History Department) on "Documenting Diversity: Local Religious Perspectives in Oral History."

INTERSECTIONS



To Anderson Hall!

Rose Sykes, Department Secretary 108F
610-436-2841

- Dr. Schroepfer 108A
- Dr. Porritt 108B
- Dr. Woolfrey 108C
- Dr. Hoffman 108D
- Dr. Ruchti 108E

- Dr. Golden 106
- Dr. Forbes 332A
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Dr. Joan Woolfrey

Reflections as Former Chair

After three years of learning the ropes of chairing a department, I am happy to pass on those responsibilities to Helen Schroepfer. There were many rewards and some frustrations as anyone who has done administrative work will know. Connecting with alumni, signing up new majors and minors, advising current students, and supporting students endeavors were some of the most rewarding tasks. Working alongside our department secretary, Rose Sykes, and the rest of my colleagues in the department has also been a delight. Our Buddhist Ethics conference this past February was a great success--I enjoyed helping to organize and participate in that event. Dealing with the continuing budget crisis has been the most challenging aspect of the job.

While Pennsylvania is much better off than many other states, I know that the next few years are going to be critical ones in higher education generally and, for the humanities in particular. As I write, the state budget has yet to be finalized. We know that more cuts are coming--my deepest hope is that these cuts don't slice too deeply into the bone of this institution. Meanwhile, Dr. Schroepfer has all the tools she needs to continue building this department in productive directions. And, I look forward to working under her as we all pitch in to meet those challenges.

While taking on administrative work eats into the time one has for scholarship, I have been able to give a paper at my favorite society's conference every summer: the North American

Association for Social Philosophy. This July, it's in Milwaukee, and my paper attempts an analytic definition of the notion of "affirmation." And, I'm offering an on-line course this summer for the very first time, developed with the support of a College of Arts and Sciences grant. We're working steadily on the NSF grant as well. You can track our progress here: <http://www.sciethicsinteractive.com>.

I'm happy to continue to be a touchstone for the many alum I've connected with these last few years. You'll also want to make yourself known to Helen and let her know how the department can continue to be a resource for our alum. I'm looking forward to getting back in the classroom fulltime, and helping out around the department where I can.

Buddhist Ethics Conference

On February 11 and 12, West Chester hosted a symposium on Buddhist Ethics co-sponsored by the Philosophy Department and Ethnic Studies Program here at West Chester and by the Greater Philadelphia Philosophy Consortium (GPPC).

Major speakers included Dr. Jin Park from American University in Washington D.C., Dr. Charles Johnson from the University of Washington, and Dr. David Loy.

There were over one hundred attendees who heard Dr. Park speak on "The Ethics of Tension," Dr. Johnson's lecture on "Why Buddhism for Black America Now," and Dr. Loy discuss "Healing Ecology: Buddhist Reflections on the Eco-crisis."

Panelists from the GPPC included Dr. Ashok Gangadean, Dr. Justin McDaniel, Dr. Shigenori Nagatomo, Dr. Monte Hull, Dr. Alan Preti, Dr. William Grosnick, and our own Dr. Frank Hoffman.

The format of the symposium encouraged lively discussion among the speakers, the panelists, and those in attendance at this very successful event!



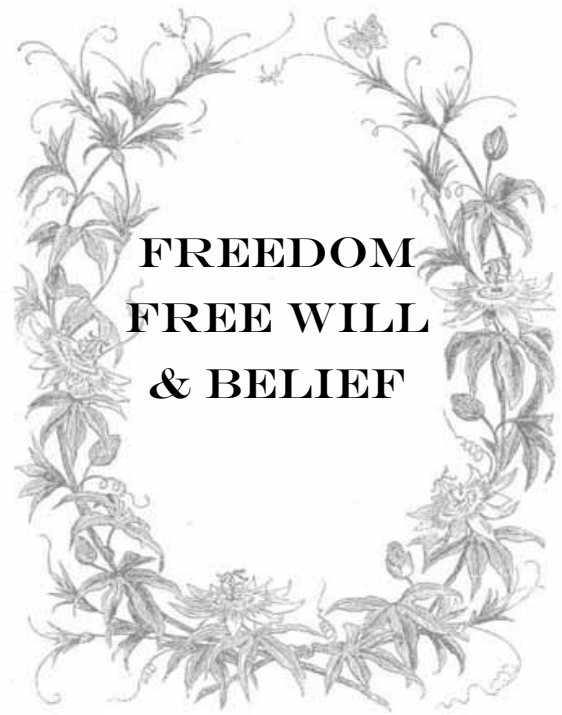
Dr. David Loy, Dr. Charles Johnson, and Dr. Jin Park



Dr. Justin McDaniel addresses the panel and audience.

**WEST CHESTER UNIVERSITY PHILOSOPHICAL
SOCIETY
6th ANNUAL GRADUATE STUDENT CONFERENCE**

Students from Haverford College, the University of Pennsylvania, the University of St. Thomas, Drexel University, Stony Brook, and the Free University of Amsterdam participated in the 6th annual Graduate Student Conference here at West Chester on March 5, 2011. The keynote speaker was West Chester alumnus Dr. Thomas Radice speaking on "Method Mourning: Zunzi on Ritual Performance." West Chester students Stacy Armstrong, Holly Metzler, Cass Lowry, Tim Burke and Harvey Greer presented papers at the conference.



Plato's Apology

Staging Philosophy

The Quintessence Theatre in Mount Airy, established in 2009 to stage classic works, brought Plato's *Apology* alive last November. The Philosophy Department organized a trip of about 30 undergraduate and graduate students, faculty and friends and took up a good quarter of the small theater-in-the-round space. Sam Tsoutsouvas, a veteran Broadway and TV actor, who also developed the script, captivated us with a Socrates who was bold and self-confident, and just a little arrogant, but, as one review put it, "otherwise a basic kind of guy without a real job."* The dramatization of a work with which most of us are so familiar was an opportunity to immerse ourselves in the unfolding of this historic event. To imagine that amphitheatre 2409 years ago, we perhaps mice in the corner, while one lone wise man eloquently defends himself before 500 of his peers--an evening well-spent.

*"The unexamined life is not worth
living for a human being..."*
Apology 38a

* Howard Shapiro, "Everyman Socrates, on Trial for his Life." Nov. 16, 2010 (http://articles.philly.com/2010-11-16/news/24952774_1_socrates-trial-track).

News from former department members

Dr. Tom Platt, Professor Emeritus

Dr. Platt, former department chair, taught a five week Introduction to the Philosophy of Science or "How to spot pseudo-science" in the Institute for Life-long Learning at the Exton campus of Widener University in the Winter Semester. He also mentored an Education for Ministry program (theological education for the laity) at Holy Trinity Church in West Chester. At the moment he's also doing some routine parish work filling in for the assistant who left Holy Trinity in the Spring.

Dr. Fred Struckmeyer, Professor Emeritus

Dr. Struckmeyer, former department chair, continues to enjoy bicycling and gardening. He's also been busy with mentoring of several different kinds. He is working with inmates at George Hill Prison in Delaware County in teaching decision-making skills. He also works with adult immigrants who want to improve their ESL abilities through his participation with the Volunteer English Program of Chester County.

Dr. Steve Croddy

Pursuing one's own intellectual interests and needs as opposed to academic professional ones continues to be liberating. I am currently studying the work of Jacqueline de Romilly on ancient Greek literature and Adorno on the music of Mahler while trying to comprehend Proust and Nietzsche. I would appreciate thoughts from anyone on any of the above topics. My address is STCRODDY@AOL.COM.

Current Faculty

Ruth Porritt

Ruth Porritt presented a paper on the Santa Clara Pueblo sculptor Rose Simpson at the Art of Gender VIII Conference. Simpson's work demonstrates how some young artists are meeting the challenge of retaining their authenticity as Native Peoples even as they are influenced by contemporary media culture. Their art work is generating a cultural hybridity that may be producing the best of both worlds, a new dynamic balance of aesthetic values. In addition to her philosophical work, Dr. Porritt attended the National Conference on College Student Grief II in order to learn more about how to support people who have undergone significant losses. She continues to advise the WCU chapter of National Students of Ailing Mothers and Fathers.

Frank Hoffman

Frank Hoffman presented a paper in the Fall Semester at the Mid-Atlantic Region Association for Asian, "Buddhist Ethics", **Pennsylvania State University**, October 23, 2010. On this "Asian and Comparative Philosophy Panel" the Panel Chair was WCU graduate Dr. Thomas Radice, Southern Connecticut State University, with papers by current WCU graduate students, Timothy Burke and Dan Herr. The Commentator was WCU student Harvey Greer.

Between the Fall 2010 and Spring 2011 semesters, Dr. Hoffman lectured in China. He gave a writing workshop at Fudan University in Shanghai with Prof. Yingjin Xu in the School of Philosophy, lecturing on How to Write a Philosophical Argument, Writing Asian and Comparative Philosophy, and How to Publish in Western Journals. At **Chinese University of Hong**, "2010 Cross-Straits Four Regions Conference on Buddhism and the Environment", Center for Humanistic Buddhism, Hoffman

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Matthew Pierlott

Dr. Matt Pierlott has continued to work with Dr. Woolfrey on the NSF EESE grant. Their team has created one module in the OpenSim virtual reality, and is preparing for the next module. Science faculty here at WCU and at several other institutions, including Cheyney, SUNY Empire State College, National University (Calif.), Coventry University (UK), and University of KwaZulu-Natal (S. Afr.), will participate in testing the modules in their classrooms.

In April at Creighton University, Dr. Pierlott presented a paper, "The Ends and Means of Price-Gouging," for the 37th Conference on Value Inquiry. Dr. Pierlott has continued his interest in philosophy in and for popular culture. He has two chapters in *Dr. Seuss and Philosophy - Oh, The Things You Can Think!*, edited by Jacob M. Held and published in June 2011 by Rowman & Littlefield. One chapter, "Socratic Seuss: Intellectual Integrity and Truth-Orientedness" ex-

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Dan Forbes

Dr. Forbes has kept his nose to the grindstone recently; since he finds this smarts awfully, he's going to try something else next time. This past year he taught courses in Introduction to Philosophy, Introduction to Ethics, History of Ancient Philosophy, History of Modern Philosophy, and a graduate course in the History of Epistemology. His recent scholarship has focused on issues of value. He presented a paper on "Kantian Absolutism and Moral Creativity" at the Fall 2010 meeting of the New Jersey Regional Philosophical Association, and a companion paper "Are Kantian Ethics and Care Ethics Incompatible?" in the spring at the 37th Conference for Value Inquiry at Creighton University in Nebraska. His article "The Aesthetic of Evil" was published this spring in the anthology *Vader, Voldemort and Other Villains*:

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Larry Udell

Larry Udell joins the faculty of the West Chester University Department of Philosophy after serving the department as an adjunct instructor since 1999. His BA, MA, and PhD in philosophy are from The Ohio State University. Among his areas of specialization are social and political philosophy, with an emphasis on the philosophy of economics; applied ethics, with an emphasis on business ethics; the philosophy of the social sciences; and the philosophy of law, which he is teaching this semester. His numerous professional presentations and publications include the book *Ten Philosophies that Shook the World: An Economical Introduction to Philosophy* (Kendall/Hunt, 2009). He is currently revising his paper "Taking Employment Seriously" for publication and writing a paper on Milton Friedman's business ethics. Dr. Udell is the current vice president of the Pennsylvania Interdisciplinary Association of Philosophy and Religious Studies.

Cassie Striblen

Dr. Striblen's first year included presenting a paper at an interdisciplinary conference in New Orleans titled "Obama and the Transformation of Group Narrative Identities." She also participated in the 5th Independent Arendt Circle conference in Cleveland, Ohio. Recently she submitted a book review on a new text in social and political philosophy, *Promises and Agreements*, out from Oxford University Press. On campus, Dr. Striblen taught introduction to philosophy, logic and symbolic logic, and a graduate course on Hannah Arendt. She co-authored (with Drs. Forbes and Udell) and was awarded two internal CAS grants, one to fund a graduate assistant and another to develop a hybrid version of the undergraduate logic course. Additionally, she was a panelist for WCU's Women's Education and Empowerment day on thriving in male-dominated disciplines. Dr. Striblen and her husband recently bought a fixer-upper near campus and are looking forward to hosting department parties next year.

Simon Ruchti

Elizabeth Simon Ruchti received her MA in Performance Studies from NYU and a Ph.D. in Interdisciplinary Arts from Ohio University. She has previously published on Mormon masculinity, the public display of corpses, and a review of a Sara Ahmed's *Queer Phenomenology*. Simon has presented at over twenty regional, national, and international conferences on topics such as Plato's theory of forms, drag performances, John Wayne's masculinity, transgender theory, pedagogy, and Brechtian Theatre. She has also given workshops on gender performance. Simon has been teaching her at WCU for four years now and has taught a variety of courses. Some of her favorite courses include Queer Theory, Gender Theory, Philosophy and Film, any course on performance and aesthetics, and Sexual Identity and Culture. Simon is also thrilled about her upcoming schedule of courses in which she will teach new courses, including Introduction to Ethics, Constructions of Identity (for the Women's and Gen-

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Tim Golden

Dr. Golden successfully defended his dissertation, "Onto-theology, Subjectivity, and the Alchemy of Transcendence," on March 28, 2011, and graduated from the University of Memphis with his Ph.D. in philosophy in May, 2011. His areas of specialization are 19th/20th Century Continental Philosophy, African-American Philosophy/Critical Race Theory, and Philosophy of Religion/Philosophical Theology. Dr. Golden's most recent publication, forthcoming in the *Journal of Religious Ethics*, "From Epistemology to Ethics: Theoretical and Practical Reason in Kant and Douglass," is a philosophical examination of the religious dimensions of Douglass's thought. He is working on two books: (1) a book on Frederick Douglass and the philosophy of religion, and (2) his dissertation. Dr. Golden is also writing an article on subjectivity in Douglass and Kierkegaard, and an article on the concept of addiction as

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Upcoming events:

- ~ Phi Sigma Tau induction ceremony: October 6, 3:00 PM, Phillips Autograph Library. Speaker: Tom Sparrow, PhD (West Chester Alumnus)
- ~ Spring 2012 Graduate Student conference: date TBA

Alumni News

Brian Pakpour (MA 2009) My wife gave birth to our first child last October. Her name is Layla. I'm entering my third and final year of law school at Santa Clara University School of Law, where I am on the Law Review Board. The Law Review is publishing an article I wrote about the discriminatory effects of standardized employment exams, and how Congress should amend Title VII to protect employers who throw out the results of these exams, thereby rebuking the Supreme Court's decision in the 2009 New Haven Firefighters case. I'm also president of the Middle Eastern Law Student Association. I spent last spring working for a community law center in San Jose, representing indigent clients with their consumer law cases. While there, I successfully argued the state court should set aside a credit card's company's default judgment against a disabled elderly man because the bank never notified him of the lawsuit. I currently work for a family law firm, preparing paperwork for customers who cannot afford a full-fledged attorney.

Matt Brown (BA 2005) I have spent the past three+ years touring as a professional musician. I have released four CDs under my own name, appeared on and produced several others, and performed everywhere from living rooms to The Kennedy Center. I'm moving to Chicago this fall from West Chester, where I hope to travel a little less, but remain very active as a musician, teacher, and record producer. AND, I use my philosophy training every day. I have fond memories of our 20th Century Philosophy class without a classroom that met in those conference rooms over in Sykes. It was one of my favorite classes at WCU. The occasional free food was a plus, too.

Tom Sparrow (MA 2004) I begin my new position at Slippery Rock this month and this week I signed a contract with SUNY for my first book! I've started an online journal called Singularum and am helping coordinate this year's meeting of the Pittsburgh Area Philosophy Colloquium.

Stephen Lahey (BA 1986) Thank you very much for your message. I've been awarded tenure (Department of Classics and Religious Studies, University of Nebraska), and have sent a third manuscript, a translation of John Wyclif's *Dialogus*, off to be published by Cambridge University Press.

Brian Jones (BA 2007, MA 2009) Currently, I am doing my clinical work in Brockton, MA and coursework in Brookline, MA at the Boston Graduate School of Psychoanalysis. I am completing a second masters in mental health counseling and psychotherapy. I am in the process of writing my thesis entitled: "The Ecology of Homelessness: Exploring the Dynamics of Environmental Engagement Amongst Homeless Adults."

Michael Jones (MA 1995) The biggest events in my academic life this year were my promotion to associate professor, the publication of a substantive entry on the Romanian philosopher Lucian Blaga in the *Internet Encyclopedia of Philosophy*, and the opportunity to respond to the paper "Diamond in the Rough: Rethinking Wittgensteinian 'Fideism,'" at the annual meeting of the Society for Philosophy of Religion in February of this year. This opportunity gave me cause to remember my studies at WCU, since my first exposure to Wittgenstein was in Dr. Streveler's Wittgenstein seminar back around 1995. On a less academic note, my wife and I celebrated our 25th anniversary with a three-week road trip to the Grand Canyon and other points of interest in the southwest, which was wonderful.



Dr. Daniel Forbes (l.) and M.A Grad Dan Herr at the Buddhist Ethics Conference.

Faculty News (cont'd)

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depicted in James Baldwin's short story, "Sonny's Blues."

This fall (2011), Dr. Golden will be teaching two sections of PHI 100 (Creating Meaning), a graduate seminar on Immanuel Kant, and an independent study on Emmanuel Levinas. He looks forward to teaching these courses, and to, beyond this fall, perhaps teaching PHI 349 (Ideas of the Bible). Dr. Golden intends to use his research on Frederick Douglass to develop a course on African-American Religion. He also looks forward to serving as a discussant with WCU graduate students this fall on a philosophy of religion panel at Princeton University.

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der Studies Program), a course on dialectics, and a course on the body.

When not teaching, advising students, or working on scholarship, Simon is chasing her two year-old son, Patrick, around. In fact, that chasing often takes place on campus. So, if you see a skinny toddler with a blonde Mohawk on the quad, Simon might very well be the haggard-looking person passed out twenty feet behind.

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Essays on Evil in Popular Media edited by Jamey Heit. He will have another essay published this fall in the forthcoming anthology *Inception and Philosophy: Because It's Never Just a Dream* edited by David Kyle Johnson; his essay examines the question of what it means to know other people, and what this says about knowledge of oneself. This coming fall Dr. Forbes will be returning to his research on Benedict de Spinoza. In his little spare time Dr. Forbes has been trying to develop his strategic skills at the board game *The Settlers of Catan*; however, while he enjoys playing, he finds he doesn't win very often.

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amines philosophical self-examination as a way to maintain intellectual integrity amidst our prevalent biases and self-deceptions. The other chapter, "It's Not Personal...It's Just Bizzyneuss: Business Ethics, the Company, Its Stakeholders" articulates the general framework of the stakeholder theory of the firm as a way of addressing the ethical dimensions of being a person acting within the corporate setting. He also has a chapter, "Sweatshops and Cynicism" in *Fashion - Philosophy for Everyone: Thinking with Style*, edited by Jeanette Kennett and Jessica Wolfendale coming out in September 2011 by Wiley. It explores how self-interest and fashion conventions for social recognition intermingle to perpetuate the exploitation of sweated workers. He also is currently working on a chapter for *Philosophy in Children's Literature*, edited by Peter Costello (Rowman & Littlefield), on Shel Silverstein's *The Missing Piece*, Plato's *Symposium*, and Lacan.

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gave a formal paper which will be published in the summer, titled "Unskillful Karma: Environmental Pollution as Ignorance in Action." At Shanghai Normal University, Nanjing Southeast University, Jand at University of Hong Kong, Hoffman gave versions of a his talk, "Buddhism and the Environment". In Mianyang Normal University in Sichuan Hoffman verified completion of a civic project done by Rotary Club of Shanghai and Rotary Club of Philadelphia. This was to build a Rotary Reading Room on campus in the aftermath of the Wenchuan-Beichuan earthquake.

In the Spring Semester Dr. Hoffman facilitated the appearance of WCU undergraduate students Micah Cook and Alex Hickman at the 6th Annual Greater Philadelphia Asian Studies Consortium (GPASC) Undergraduate Research Conference held at University of Pennsylvania on April 9. Hoffman is Vice Chair of GPASC and mentored the students with Dr. Jie Cai of the WCU Chinese Language Program. The students had recently returned from a WCU sponsored trip to Guizhou. Micah Cook's paper on ancient Chinese cosmology won the essay prize for the best paper in his section. Overall in the academic year 2010-11 Dr. Hoffman organized eight Ethnic Studies Seminars at which WCU faculty, regional, and national speakers appeared.

In April of 2011, Frank Hoffman was elected Chair of Greater Philadelphia Philosophy Consortium (GPPC) after serving a term of two years as Vice Chair. Hoffman's recent publications are three book reviews in CHOICE, the magazine of the American Library Association: review of Jan Westerhoff, *Twelve Examples of Illusion* in CHOICE April 2011; review of Richard K. Payne (ed.), *How Much is Enough: Buddhism, Consumerism, and the Human Environment* in CHOICE March 2011; and a review of Walsh, Michael J. *Sacred Economies: Buddhist Monasticism & Territoriality in Medieval China* in CHOICE September 2010.

Philosophy Graduates: 2010-11

B.A. in Philosophy

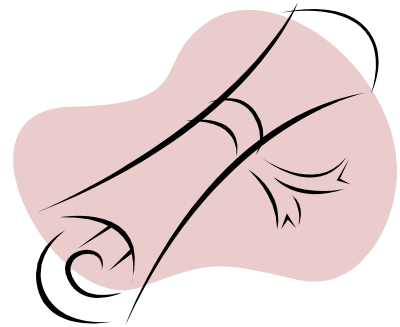
Kevin Basl
Carl Hannah
Andrew Lanni
Christopher Luneburg
Jesse Madera
Amy Marvin
Eric Margolis
Megan McCormick
Andrew Schweizer
Allan Taney

M.A. in Philosophy

Louis DiLello
Sara Fiorot
Corinne Lecourieux
Daniel Herr
Hilary Nunes

M.A. in Philosophy– Applied Ethics

Gabrielle Aruta



B.A. in Religious Studies

Katherine Lynde

New Minor in Applied Ethics!

A 2007 poll by Peter D. Hart Research Associates conducted on behalf of The Association of American Colleges and Universities identifies “a strong sense of ethics and integrity” as one of the ten key things employers look for in hiring new college graduates.* We want our students to be happy and confident competitors in the marketplace as well as in life, and we—as a department—want to continue to be a vital, contributing member of the campus community. A minor in Applied Ethics seemed like a perfect direction to be going, especially since our graduate program already offers that option. While an ethics curriculum does not purport to teach students to be more ethical (this a notoriously difficult result to assess), it does purport to teach students to see a greater level of complexity and ambiguity in ethical contexts, and to recognize and value more quickly the perspectives of others. While exploring these issues, students are by default learning more about their own values, and enhancing their ethical decision-making skills.

After an arduous but gratifying application process in these austere economic times, we are very pleased to begin Fall Term 2011 with a brand new offering for our students: a minor in Applied Ethics. Students will take the general education Intro to Ethics course, a logic or critical thinking course, a range of electives tailored to their needs and interests, and the 400-level Ethical Theories course, taught every fall.

We had a waiting list last spring of several students eager to embark on this journey. We look forward to serving them and attracting others to the department.



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