Thinking about a major?

Major in Thinking.
MAJOR IN PHILOSOPHY philosophy.gsu.edu
On my walk from the parking deck to my office here in 25 Park Place, I’ve watched the progress in the construction of the Classroom South extension. As I saw a worker welding some vents one day, I pictured myself leading a philosophy class discussion in that room someday, cooled by that vent. It really struck me then how much infrastructure is in place here at GSU to allow teachers and students to do what we do, such as studying philosophical debates. And it’s not just physical buildings. It takes a lot of human resources to keep things running, from our wonderful office staff (Claire Kooy, Felicia Thomas, and Lauren Cooper), to professors doing service work (like Sandy Dwyer and Tim O’Keefe preparing our grad students to teach thousands of undergrads each year), to administrators and their staff. Now that I have taken over from the chair who kept things running here in philosophy for 17 years, the much-missed George Rainbolt, I better understand the resources required to keep this massive university (of 53,000 students!), and our department, running. And I’ll do my best to do my part.

We are lucky to live in a nation and state that constructs nice buildings in which we can teach and learn about ideas from African-American Studies to Zoology and everything in between. Outdoor discussions like Socrates had with the youth of Athens are not so great in August.

Alas, after feeling good about the prospect of discussing free will or the evolution of morality with bright young students in a new building, I saw this headline: “Most Republicans Think Colleges Are Bad for the Country.” Only 36% of Republicans think colleges and universities have a positive effect on the nation, down from over 60% in 2010. Among Democrats, the positive view has gone up slightly, from 65% to 72%. This—but another—partisan divide in beliefs about what is good and bad for our country is troubling. Americans cannot even agree on what was once seen as an American Dream: sending your kids to college. Those of us in higher education must find ways to reverse this trend, and not only because taxpayer funding for public colleges—which has dropped 20% in Georgia since 2008—will likely decrease further if only half the voters think what we do is good for the nation.

I’m not sure how to solve this problem, but I think philosophy is surprisingly well-situated to help (surprising since I predict, from the armchair, that the proportion of Republicans who think college *philosophy* is good for the country is even lower).

Central questions philosophers address are: How should we live? Even more pressing: how should we live together? And what, and whom, should we believe? We cannot live together well if we do not share trust in some common sources of information. If people on different sides of political debates cannot even agree on some basic facts and on some ground rules for collective reasoning, we will not find common ground. To the extent that philosophy can help us discover rules for reasoning, abstracted from messy political and moral disagreements, it can help provide productive ground rules for democratic debate.

Furthermore, philosophers, when doing things right, use the principle of charity. That means we aim to understand our opponents’ arguments in their strongest form and we try to set aside concerns about the motives driving our opponents towards their conclusions. Needless to say, we could use more application of this principle in our political and moral discourse, perhaps especially when we do think our opponents’ motives are suspect.

Not every philosophical issue can be, or should be, taught from an unbiased or “neutral” position (if such a position exists). But in our courses we often aim to present the strongest arguments for each position and to teach the students methods to judge their merits. I feel I’ve done a good job when I poll my students after teaching competing arguments—e.g., for and against the existence of God, or the possibility of robot consciousness, or libertarianism—and they split evenly on what they think I actually think about the questions. It would be nice if competing political parties presented their strongest arguments and let citizens judge their merits, ideally drawing on well-researched facts from reliable sources, and on reasoning skills developed in our education system. And even when those of us in academia feel we do not deserve the distrust, even contempt, of those who think colleges are bad for America, we need to deploy the principle of charity to better understand the arguments (as well as the motives) of those who do not share the (predominantly liberal) political values of most professors and college students.

Ultimately, we’ll need to figure out not only how to make college a place more people can send their kids but also a place more people want to send their kids.

2 https://www.cbpp.org/research/state-budget-and-tax/funding-down-tuition-up
**ANDREW ALTMAN**  
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**ANDREW I. COHEN**  
**Associate Professor**  
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Andrew I. Cohen continues to lead an NEH-funded research project on moral injury among members of the armed services.

**ANDREW J. COHEN**  
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**JESSICA BERRY**  
**Associate Professor**  
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Last spring, Jessica Berry gave a paper, “Sextan Skepticism and the Rise and Fall of German Idealism,” at University of California at Berkeley workshop on “Epistemology After Sextus Empiricus.” The workshop was organized by Katia Vogt (Columbia University) and colleagues at Berkeley, and featured talks by Professor Vogt, Sergio Tenenbaum (Toronto), Richard Bett (Johns Hopkins), and others. In September, Berry will travel to Bath, UK to present her paper, “Nietzsche’s Antichrist as a Skeptical Treatise” as a plenary address to the 23rd International Conference of the Friedrich Nietzsche Society of Great Britain.
GEORGE GRAHAM
Professor  ggraham@gsu.edu
Two papers co-authored by George Graham have been reprinted in the Second Edition of The Blackwell Companion to Consciousness. Graham has published a paper on psychopathy and moral responsibility in an MIT Press collection on moral psychology. He has helped to publish a paper on addiction and pharmaceutics in a book in the Springer series on philosophy and medicine.

TIM O’KEEFE
Associate Professor  tokeefe@gsu.edu
Tim O’Keefe’s paper “The Annicerean Cyrenaeans on Friendship and Habitual Good Will,” was published in Phronesis, and he presented a paper, “The Normativity of Nature in Epicurean Ethics,” at the annual University of Toronto Workshop in ancient philosophy.

NEIL VAN LEEUWEN
Associate Professor  nvan@gsu.edu
Neil Van Leeuwen published two articles this fall, one in Cognition and the other in Philosophical Explorations. Van Leeuwen’s paper, co-authored with Michiel van Elk (Psychology, University of Amsterdams), was accepted at Religion, Brains & Behavior. Lastly, he is the new faculty advisor of the GSU Philosophers’ Guild.

EDDY NAHMIAS
Professor & Chair  enahmias@gsu.edu
Eddy Nahmias’ article with Oisin Deery, “Defeating Manipulation Arguments: Interventionist Causation and Compatibilist Sourcehood,” was published in Philosophical Studies (May 2017). He has recently given talks on free will at Duke University, Hebrew University in Jerusalem, and Université Catholique de Louvain in Belgium, and on punishment at University of Connecticut and University of Alabama-Birmingham. His article with Eyal Aharoni “Communicative Theories of Punishment and the Impact of Apology and Recidivism” was published in Rethinking Punishment in the Era of Mass Incarceration. “Why We Have Free Will” and was republished in a special edition of Scientific American in July 2017.

DAN WEISKOPF
Associate Professor  dweiskopf@gsu.edu
Dan Weiskopf published “An ideal disorder? Autism as a psychiatric kind” in a special issue of Philosophical Explorations. He also delivered a talk entitled “Making it Real” at the Southern Society for Philosophy and Psychology conference as part of an author-meets-critics session on Larry Shapiro and Tom Polger’s The Multiple Realization Book. Having received a National Endowment for the Humanities Summer Stipend, he has been working on a book on concepts and the structure of higher cognition, tentatively entitled Vehicles of Thought.

ERIC WILSON
Associate Professor  ewilson30@gsu.edu
Eric Wilson presented a paper called “Self-Defense Desire: Kant’s Concept of the Passions” this spring at an invited APA symposium on Kant and Weakness of Will. Forthcoming publications include “Kant and Hume on Moral Philosophy” for the Stanford Encyclopedia of Philosophy.”
FALL SEMESTER BEGINS 
AUGUST 21
Welcome Back!

LABOR DAY HOLIDAY 
SEPTEMBER 4
University Closed

PHILOSOPHERS’ GUILD 
SEPTEMBER 13
Film screening: MEMENTO
Time: 5:30 PM
Location: Urban Life Building, Rm. 220

GUEST SPEAKER 
SEPTEMBER 21
Neurophilosophy Forum
Eric Schwitzgebel (University of California, Riverside)
Title: The Pragmatic Metaphysics of Belief
4:00 PM, Conference Rm. 1618

PHILOSOPHERS’ GUILD 
SEPTEMBER 27
Meeting (Free Food)
5:00 PM- 6:00 PM
Seminar Room, Rm. 1642

SEMESTER MIDPOINT 
OCTOBER 10
Last day to withdraw

PHILOSOPHERS’ GUILD 
OCTOBER 11
“Philosophy: Food for Thought” Discussion with Dr. Jessica Berry
FREE PIZZA
12:00 PM-1:00 PM
Conference Room, Rm. 1618

GUEST SPEAKER
OCTOBER 13
Brains & Behavior (B&B) 
Distinguished Lecture
Adinas Roskies (Dartmouth College)
Title: Disorders of Consciousness: Neurotechnologies and Neuroethics
10:00 AM, Speakers Auditorium

OCTOBER 20
“Philosophy: Food for Thought”
FREE PIZZA
12:00 pm-1:00 PM
Conference Room, Rm. 1618

GUEST SPEAKER
OCTOBER 25
Neurophilosophy Forum
Kathryn Tabb (Columbia University)
Title: Can Psychiatry be Precise?
3:00 PM, Conference Rm. 1618

PHILOSOPHERS’ GUILD 
NOVEMBER 1
Meeting (Free Food)
5:00 pm-6:00 PM
Seminar Room, Rm. 1642

PIZZA FRIDAY 
NOVEMBER 10
“Philosophy: Food for Thought”
12:00 PM
Computer Lab, Rm. 1646
Sponsored by Phi Sigma Tau

GUEST SPEAKER 
NOVEMBER 10
Michael Gill (University of Arizona)
Title: Hume and Smith on Moral Motivation
3:00 PM, Conference Rm. 1618

THANKSGIVING BREAK 
NOVEMBER 20 - NOVEMBER 24
No classes | University Closed

PHILOSOPHERS’ GUILD 
NOVEMBER 29
“Philosophy: Food for Thought”
FREE PIZZA
12:00 pm-1:00 PM
Conference Room, Rm. 1618

SEMESTER ENDS 
DECEMBER 4
Last day of classes

FINAL EXAMS 
DECEMBER 5 - 12
Dr. Andrea Scarantino earned the 2017 Herbert A. Simon Award. This award is given by the International Association of Computing and Philosophy to a scholar “at an early stage of their academic career who is likely to reshape debates at the nexus of Computing and Philosophy by their original research.”

Dr. Sandra Dwyer is a finalist of the first ever American Philosophical Association (APA) Prize for Excellence in Philosophy Teaching. The Prize “recognizes a philosophy teacher who has had an outstanding impact on the student learning of philosophy in undergraduate and/or pre-college settings.” Dr. Dwyer directs the Department’s program to train our graduate students in how to teach.

Dr. Neil Van Leeuwen has been promoted to Associate Professor with tenure. He is also the Faculty Advisor for the undergraduate student group, the Philosophers’ Guild.

Dr. Eric Wilson has been appointed as the Director of Undergraduate Studies.

JOIN THE LISTSERV

Join the Friends of Philosophy listserv and get announcements about talks, conferences, and social events in the Department.

To join, send an email to listserv@listserv.gsu.edu

In the body of the message, include only two words: subscribe philfriends
Introducing the Philosophy, Political Science, and Economics (PPE) program at GSU! The PPE program helps students become familiar with and capable of contributing to ongoing debates about the nature of good political and economic institutions, develop the intellectual skills of both the social scientist, who seeks to understand how the social world operates, and the moral philosopher, who seeks to critically evaluate the social world in relation to how it ought to be.

Major in PPE!

To become a PPE major, visit [http://cas.gsu.edu/undergraduate/student-advising/interested-interdisciplinary-major/bis-checklist/](http://cas.gsu.edu/undergraduate/student-advising/interested-interdisciplinary-major/bis-checklist/)

For more information, contact:
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Dr. Michael Evans, Political Science Liaison, mevans33@gsu.edu | 404-413-6136
Dr. Shelby Frost, Economics Liaison, sfrost@gsu.edu | 404-413-0155

philosophy.gsu.edu/ppe

Careers Options

Law
Government
Public Service
Entrepreneur
The Jean Beer Blumenfeld Center for Ethics is gearing up for another busy year. This past summer, affiliates from the Center workshoped a manuscript on territory by Annie Stilz (Princeton). Guest discussants included David Lefkowitz (Richmond), John Simmons (UVA), and Laura Valentini (LSE). The Center will cohost the annual ethics-in-film movie series, and is planning topical programs on themes such as cultural appropriation and the ethics of reintegrating veterans after they serve. This fall the Center will sponsor a team from Georgia State University to compete in the annual southeast regional ethics bowl, where teams from the southeast spend the semester preparing for a collaborative competition in presenting compelling arguments on important cases in practical and applied ethics. Next spring, the Center will workshop a manuscript on gendered labor by Gina Schouten (Harvard), and feature distinguished guest discussants. The Center is also planning a major international conference in 2018; stay tuned for the announcement.

Ethics in Film Series

POSTPONED

6:00 PM in the Lofts Learning Center
Pizza and discussion following the movie
Nonresidents: enter by classroom door on Edgewood (front of building, nearest to corner with Courtland.
Sponsored by the Center for Ethics Student Forum, GSU Housing, and the Jean Beer Blumenfeld Center for Ethics

New date to be announced. Visit http://ethics.gsu.edu/services/news-events/
**Brennan Neal Wins 2017 Munster Award**
Brennan has been chosen as the winner of the 2017 Ralf F. Munster Award. This award is offered to a graduate student who will be continuing in the program in the subsequent year, on the basis of academic excellence, including (but not limited to) course grades, courses taken, and participation in academically-oriented departmental activities. In addition, Brennan’s paper, “Epistemic Exploitation and the Necessity of Inquiry,” was accepted to the APA Central conference.

**Shaila Bora (MA ‘17)**
Shaila is the 2017 winner of the Outstanding Grad Student Teaching Award. This award goes to the one or more graduate students for excellence in teaching, including (but not limited to) faculty teaching reviews, student evaluations, student performance, and innovative course design.

**James Gillard**
James is the 2017 winner of the Outstanding Grad Student Research Award. This award goes to the one or more graduate students completing their MA thesis in the academic year of the award, for excellence in research, including (but not limited to) MA thesis work, research papers, conference presentations, and participation in faculty-led research projects.

**Stephen Marrone**
Stephen’s paper, “Attention, Deliberation, and Having ‘One Thought Too Many,’” has been accepted for presentation at the APA Central conference in February.

**Katie Kirkland**
Katie’s paper, “Feminist Aims and a Trans-Inclusive Definition of ‘Woman’”’ was accepted to the Georgia Philosophical Society Meeting.

**Katie Rivers**
Katie will present her paper, “Global Workspace Theory: Situated for Failure” at the Mind and Brain Annual Conference hosted by the Center for Cognition and Neuroethics at the University of Michigan-Flint in September.

**Meagan Malone, Peter Nenning, Patrick Jolley**

**Leo Feldblum**
Leo’s paper, “Nietzsche’s Interest in Cultures of Breeding” was accepted to present at the APA Central conference.

**Caleb Hazelwood**
Caleb’s paper, “Extended Evolutionary Individuality: Revisiting the Problem of Biological Individuality within the Extended Evolutionary Synthesis” was accepted into the Workshop on Holobionts in Bordeaux.

**Marie K. Le Blevennec**
Marie is presenting “The Limits of Toleration: Cultural Rights Without Individual Oppression” at the MANCEPT Conference (Manchester Centre for Political Theory) in September.

**Dan Kemp**
Dan is presenting “Annas on Aristotle’s Appeal to Nature and the Internal Point of View” at SAGP (Society for Ancient Greek Philosophy) Annual Meeting at Fordham University Lincoln Center in October.

**Peter Nenning**
Peter is presenting “Mechanical Memory and the Speculative Sentence: The Importance of Language for Hegel in the Phenomenology and Encyclopedia” at the Central Division meeting in Chicago in February.

**Daniel Schwartz**
Daniel’s paper, “With Friends Like These, Who Needs Relatives? Why Civil Society Does Not Presuppose the Family in the Philosophy of Right,” has been accepted for presentation at the Georgia Philosophical Society conference in January 2018.
GSU Alumni Return to Atlanta for the wedding of Sam Sims (MA ‘10) and Toni Adleberg (MA ‘11)

Pictured (From L to R): Carson Young (MA ‘13) is attending the University of Pennsylvania earning a PhD in Business Ethics, Cleo Young (MA ‘11) is a Project Manager of Corporate Development for a company called Ethypharm, Crawford Crews (MA ‘14) is teaching in New Orleans, Anais Fern (MA ‘12) is earning a PhD in psychology at Emory University, Dr. Eddy Nahmias, Sam Sims (Groom) is getting PhD in philosophy at FSU, Toni Adleberg (Bride) works for Animal Charity Evaluators, James “JP” Messina (MA ‘13) is pursuing a PhD at UCSD, Morgan Thompson (MA ‘11) is getting PhD at Pittsburgh’s HPS program, Brian Wilson (MA ‘14) a recent graduate of Emory Law School, has taken the bar exam with the State Bar of Georgia and is currently a law clerk for a metro Atlanta judge, Zack Hopper (MA ’13) is teaching at a high school and he also got into a PhD program at the University of Kansas in social and cultural studies in education.

Calling all Alumni!

We want to hear from you! Send your updates to Felicia Thomas at fthomas@gsu.edu.

Casey Fowler (BA ‘14)

Casey is a Senior Technical Writer with Salesforce. Casey writes: My philosophy degree definitely made me a better tech writer. In her spare time, Casey enjoys powerlifting and reading about sailing. She plans to learn how to sail in the Spring.

Matt Andler (MA ‘15)

Matt published an article in Ethics, perhaps the foremost journal in the field. To view the article, go to http://www.journals.uchicago.edu/doi/abs/10.1086/691583

Bobby Bingle (MA ‘16)

Bobby is currently pursuing his PhD at Duke University. His paper “Stoicism Meets Strawson” was accepted to the APA Central conference.

Chris Dobbs (MA ‘15)

Chris is the assistant editor of the New Georgia Encyclopedia, which is the state encyclopedia of Georgia and a joint project of the Georgia Humanities Council, UGA Press, GALILEO, and the Office of the Governor. Chris’s daily tasks include updating the encyclopedia (e.g. adding death dates and updating agricultural stats), commissioning and editing new articles, and responding to user comments.

Zak Pearsall (MA ‘16)

Zak is a history teacher at Amphitheater High School in Tucson, AZ.

Jason Shepard (MA ‘09)

Jason earned his PhD in psychology from Emory University and is currently a Visiting Lecturer in the Department of Psychology here at GSU.

PHILOSOPHY PHILE | FALL 2017
GIVING

GSU’s Department sponsors several special funds that are used to pay for departmental events and activities. They’re an excellent way to express your support.

Our faculty are receiving national recognition for the quality of their research and the excellence of their teaching. Our students are taking their place on the national stage - presenting papers at national conferences, receiving prestigious scholarships, and finding new ways to connect their learning with the world around them.

Your generosity makes this vital work possible. Alumni and friends support every aspect of Department life, making it possible for us to deal with present needs, and to plan for the future. You can help us attract and retain outstanding students and faculty, enhance quality teaching and research, and bring distinguished speakers to campus.

If you would like to give to the Department of Philosophy, visit our website at www.gsu.edu/philosophy and click on the “Connections” tab.