Greetings from the Department Head

The last couple of years have seen some changes in the department. We bid farewell to Andrew Arana, who now is on faculty at University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign and former department head Marcelo Sabates is now the Associate Provost for International Programs.

However, we are fortunate to welcome a number of new faculty members to the Kansas State Department of Philosophy: Last year we added Graham Leach-Krouse, who finished his PhD at Notre Dame and specializes in Logic; Rosa Terrazza, from the Australian National University has research interests in political philosophy; Elliott Wagner, a recent PhD recipient from UC Irvine specializes in Decision Theory and Evolutionary Game Theory, and Jon Herington, also a recent ANU PhD, specializes in Political Philosophy. We also added a new two-year appointment, filled by Amelia Hicks, who works in Ethics and joins us from Notre Dame.

We welcome all our new faculty and know that you will enjoy meeting them should you visit campus. Please feel free to drop by anytime, but if you know you are headed our way, shoot an email to glymour@ksu.edu.

We have also been working hard to create a new curriculum aimed at better preparing future graduates of the department for employment and graduate work in areas involving policy development and analysis. As part of this endeavor, I am a member of a team, along with Associate Professor Jon Mahoney and the Kansas State University Foundation, investigating internship opportunities that will expose our students to real-world uses of the critical thinking and analysis skills they learn in the program. If you think you might be able to aid our efforts, we would be delighted to hear from you about potential internship opportunities.

There are some special successes to trumpet. Elliott Wagner won the Popper Prize for his paper “Deterministic Chaos and the Evolution of Meaning.” And we couldn’t be prouder of Amy Lara, who has won the William L. Stamey Teaching Award for the second time.

Through the Department’s Scholarship Fund, several of our students were also able to avail themselves of the opportunity to study abroad (and several others received support for studies here). We thank all of those who contributed to our student funds—without alumni support we could not make these good things happen.

As always, we are grateful to all those who provide support, both within K-State and without, making our success possible. Peter Dorhout, the Dean of the College of Arts and Sciences, Provost April Mason, our outstanding faculty, and especially you, our alumni and donors, are vital to ensuring our future. In these times of tuition increases and diminishing state support, your generosity is more than important ever.

Whenever you are on campus, please let me know. I will be delighted to arrange for you to meet students and faculty or to visit classes or presentations by our own faculty and the distinguished guest speakers we welcome. Your involvement means a great deal to us, and we enjoy meeting new and old friends.

Remember too that you can keep up with department events, including talks given by faculty members or invited speakers, on our web site.

You can find us on facebook and twitter.

Happy Reasoning!
Student News

Current Majors

August Fitch, dual major in philosophy and chemistry, was one of ten Kansas State University students to present at the Kansas Undergraduate Research Day at the Capitol on February 12. His presentation to legislators and other state governmental leaders was a poster on "The Epistemology of Computer Simulations."

Andy Rodgers has had five papers accepted for 10 different conferences, including a paper co-authored with recent graduate Liz Jackson, which was accepted for presentation at a graduate conference on epistemology in Texas later this year. Andy has also just won the K-State Presidential Award for Distinguished Undergraduate Student in Research.

Recent Alums

Liz Jackson plans on attending the University of Notre Dame where she will focus on questions in epistemology and the philosophy of religion.

Ben Henke is at the University of Nebraska, Lincoln, where he has been awarded a prestigious Othmer fellowship. Last summer Ben attended the European Summer School of Logic, Language, and Information in Düsseldorf where, in one of these odd “small world” twists, he ended up taking a course offered by a recent addition to the K-State philosophy department, Professor Elliot Wagner.

Beth Mendenhall is in her 3rd year of a PhD program in Political Science at Johns Hopkins University. She has finished all her coursework and comprehensive exams and is working on a dissertation prospectus about ocean governance. She hopes eventually to work in Washington for the government, a think tank, or an NGO.

Joseph Savage, ’11, will receive his J.D. from the University of New Hampshire in 2015. He’s interested in sports and entertainment law and issues related to intellectual property, new media, and business. He remains interested in philosophy and has been blogging about philosophy and about video games in his spare time.

Ed Alvarado, ’13, is currently in Kansas City and volunteering at the Mexican Consulate and the International Visitors Council. He has just been accepted into a two-year Master’s program in Advanced International Studies at the Diplomatic Academy in Vienna focused on training graduates for careers in international organizations and public service. He’s especially looking forward to living in Austria and hopes to pick up another couple of languages while he’s there.

Justin Prelogar, ’12, was an intern in Senator Pat Roberts’ office in Washington and is now serving as an intern in the First Lady’s Press Office at the White House, where he does a variety of tasks including helping manage the First Lady’s Press inbox and assisting with media logistics during events. In the future, he plans on enrolling in a joint J.D./PhD program and working in politics or the foreign service.

We’d love to hear from you too!

Email us an update on what you’re up to, and we’ll include it in our next newsletter.

philalum@ksu.edu
K-State Philosophy: A World Focus

Over the last several years, Kansas State University’s Department of Philosophy has developed a strong international presence. Recently, veteran faculty members have been joined by new ones to further the department’s focus and influence on the world stage.

- K-State Philosophy Professors Amy Lara and Jon Mahoney organized a summer school in political philosophy in conjunction with the Philosophy Department at Bogazici University and the Scientific and Technological Research Council of Turkey. The program on "Liberalism, Libertarianism, and Democracy: Theory and Practice" was held at Bogazici University in Istanbul in the summer of 2012 and offered multiple seminars and workshops led by prominent political philosophers presenting new work on some of the most current topics in political philosophy. A second such workshop, on so-called abstraction principles, in logic and philosophy of mathematics, has been organized for June of 2014 by Salvatore Florio, in conjunction with the University of Oslo.

These collaborative projects were made possible by support from the Dean of the College of Arts and Sciences, the Provost’s office of Kansas State University, and the generous donors to the Philosophy faculty development fund.

- Developing ties forged during a recent Fulbright Scholarship, Professor Jon Mahoney has helped Kansas State University and the International University of Central Asia (IUCA) in Tokmok, Kyrgyzstan, broker an agreement leading to student exchanges and joint faculty research projects.

- Jim Hamilton spent a recent sabbatical year furthering his international presentations. He presented several papers in the United Kingdom including papers at the Universities of Kent, Manchester, and London, and at other European universities including the Universities of Stockholm and the Inter-University Centre in Dubrovnik, Croatia. He also traveled to Prague in the Czech Republic and then to Barcelona, Spain, to give talks at the European Society for Aesthetics and the International Federation of Theatre Research.

- Professor Charles Reagan was the keynote speaker at the Third Iberoamerican Congress on the Thought of Paul Ricoeur in Santiago, Chile.

- Continuing this tradition of international engagement new professors Salvatore Florio, Elliot Wagner, Rosa Terlazzo, and Johnathan Herington have also been involved in ongoing research projects abroad.

- Beyond the workshop mentioned above, Professor Florio is a member of the "Plurals, Predicates and Paradox" project hosting workshops, summer schools, and lecture series that feature leading philosophers and logicians involving a number of research groups across Europe and the US. He was in Paris last summer to give a talk and worked on a joint project with philosopher David Nicolas.

- Professor Elliot Wagner has recently completed postdoctoral study at the University of Amsterdam’s Institute for Logic, Language, and Computation and is currently closely involved in a large European Science Foundation project involving dozens of philosophers, linguists, and cognitive scientists from at least seven different countries: Communication in Context: Shared Understanding in a Complex World.

- Professor Wagner’s role focuses on using tools from evolutionary game theory to explain how it is possible for people to use symbols to communicate even when those people do not share the same cultural or contextual backgrounds. He has presented papers at the University of Sevilla, Spain; Lund University, Sweden; and The University of Amsterdam, The Netherlands; among others. He was also a member of the program committee for the 2013 Conference on Games, Interactive Rationality, and Learning held in Sweden at Lund University.

- Rosa Terlazzo joined us in the Fall of 2013 from the University of Birmingham in the United Kingdom having recently completed her doctorate at the Australian National University. While completing her PhD Professor Terlazzo was involved in a large scale project funded by the Australian Research Council, Measuring Poverty and Gender Disparity, that is actively engaged in ongoing debates in gender studies, development economics, and applied ethics, and in fieldwork on measuring poverty in over eighteen countries.

- Jonathan Herington, who has just been hired as a tenure-track faculty member, was an EU-funded research fellow at the University of Birmingham in the philosophy of security and public health. He has also served as the executive officer of the National Centre for Biosecurity at the University of Sydney and the Australian National University. In May 2014, he will convene an international workshop, funded by the Economic and Social Research Council of the United Kingdom, on the Ethics of Health Security at the University of Birmingham in May 2014.
In 2013, Kansas State University commemorated the 150th year of its founding. This seemed like a good moment to pause and take a look back – and to consider our future.

Until 1966, Kansas State University’s Department of Philosophy was part of the Department of History, Political Science and Philosophy. John Chalmers, then Dean of Arts and Sciences, hired Carl Hausman and Ben Tilghman to become heads of the new Department of Philosophy. The faculty included Gary Cagle, Rolf Eberle, Dick Hutchison, Cecil Miller (previously the only philosophy professor on campus), Charles Reagan, William Tremmel, Carl Vaught, and Hannah Zachs.

Over the next couple of years, Jim Hamilton, John Exdell and Dick Scheer joined the department. Over the next 25 years or so, the department grew, in fits and starts. In 2000, the department moved to its present home in Dickens Hall, and in had achieved sufficient visibility in 2001-2002, to be listed by the Philosophical Gourmet Review as among the strongest undergraduate philosophy departments in the country.

K-State’s Department of Philosophy now has 14 faculty members who teach more than 1,100 students in 56 classes each year. Between 40 and 60 students major in Philosophy, preparing for careers in academia, law, medicine, and science. Over the last 20 years, K-Sate philosophy majors have had an acceptance rate of over 96% at law schools, and we regularly place students in top-tier graduate programs.

With the 2010 launching of Kansas State’s 2025 strategic plan, the Department of Philosophy is committed to K-State’s continuing growth and achievement. In the future, the department hopes to:

- Expand its undergraduate program to between 80 and 100 students
- Increase national and international internship opportunities for students
- Boost scholarships for undergraduates and secure funding for graduate students
- Add a graduate, master’s level program graduating five master’s students annually
- Expand tenured or tenure-track faculty from 13 to 15

Your support counts!

Your generosity to the Department of Philosophy helps to support these important efforts. In these times of government cutbacks and increased tuition, gifts from alumni and friends -- those who value the role of philosophy in education -- makes an extraordinary difference in what K-State can offer. Scholarships, in particular, help us attract the best students and ensure that we can give them the support they need to succeed.

To donate to the Department of Philosophy or to discuss the endowing of a scholarship, please contact Interim Head Bruce Glymour (785-532-0369), or donate directly at:

Philosophy Faculty Development & Philosophy Student Scholarships