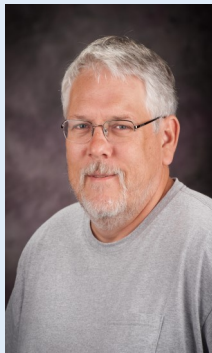

Kansas State University

Department of Philosophy Newsletter July 2016

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Greetings from the Department Head

Greetings Philosophers! Welcome to our periodic newsletter. We have much to report.

Amy Lara has resigned from the department to pursue a second career as a novelist. Apparently, she decided that rather than encouraging others to maximize happiness, she'd just do it directly. We wish her all the best, but the impact of her loss cannot be overstated. She is a two-time winner of the College's teaching award, a long-time contributor to various Research Experience for Undergraduates ethics programs on campus, and has played a central role in the development of the department over the last decade and more. Miss her though we will, we do look forward to her forthcoming novels.

Sadly, Amy is not the only one to leave us this year. Salvatore Florio has taken a job in England. This is all very, very good for him, as he and his wife are now finally on the same continent, but very sad for us. And Jason Konek informs us that he will be leaving for England as well, halfway through the coming year. We'll miss both, but wish them well.

On the happy side, our students have once again had an incredibly successful year in and out of the classroom. First, let me congratulate all of our graduates, both majors and minors. We bid them all a fond farewell and a well done! I also want give a yell to Patrick Kenney, who presented work at two undergraduate conferences. Patrick has also secured admission to summer workshop in philosophy, no mean feat. Chelsie Crook has done likewise, and will attend the CMU summer workshop in formal philosophy. All of these accomplishments were partly underwritten by your generous dona-

tions to our scholarship and general use funds, and we are extremely grateful. Please accept our heartfelt thanks for those contributions.

Happy Reasoning!



Research Spotlight

The department continues its strong emphasis on research.

Professor Terlazzo has been awarded a faculty fellowship at the Center for Ethics and Public Affairs at Tulane University for the 2016-17 academic year. These prestigious fellowships are awarded to faculty working on practical issues in moral and political philosophy.

Professors Herington and Wagner have embarked on an ambitious project of research into the "dual use" problem.

Most scientific research is done with the intent to benefit us all, but some experiments, such as those on highly pathogenic infectious diseases, also have the potential to cause catastrophic harm through unintended accidents or deliberate misuse.

This is known as a "dual-use" problem, and it present us with a dilemma: how do we protect our society from the risks of such experiments, without strangling scientific innovation? Professors Herington and Wagner want to provide an answer to the second part of this question.

Using formal, computational models of scientific networks, their goal is to analyze the impact on scientific knowledge production of placing restrictions on the conduct of certain experiments and the communication of certain results. By performing a concrete analysis of proposed dual-use regulatory schemes they aim to provide immediately applicable, timely information to policymakers and help scientific discoveries protect the health and wellbeing of every American.

IN THEIR OWN WORDS

We have a number of new students and, as always, others who are moving on and this year some faculty who are leaving us for pastures new. We asked some of them to comment on life in the department. Here are their remarks in their own words:



Eileen Johnson (Class of 2017)

Prior to coming to K-State, I had already obtained a degree from Montana State University and had worked as a paramedic for three years. My goal is to become a doctor, but to accomplish this I had to return to school so as to obtain the classes necessary for application to medical school. When I first arrived I chose to be a kinesiology major, but I quickly realized that major was not for me. I took an honors introduction to moral philosophy class and was immediately hooked. I enjoyed every moment of the class and fell in love with philosophy. My other favorite class so far has been symbolic logic. I greatly enjoyed the content of the class and the instructor made every session interesting and fun. I was honestly sad when the semester ended because I enjoyed the class so much.

Becoming a philosophy major was by far the best decision I have made since returning to school. I learn so much in each class and I also think that I have grown as a person as well. Writing is generally one of my weakest skills, but each philosophy class I take markedly improves my writing. Every semester I notice how much my confidence has grown in my writing, which is something I'll be forever grateful for and utilize.



Jessica Long (Class of 2016)

I added Philosophy as a second major after taking an intro to moral philosophy class. I had only enrolled in the class to satisfy a GE requirement and throughout the entire semester I thought I would fail the course miserably but the instructor taught me that I could do philosophy and I found I enjoyed learning how to deconstruct arguments and having my intuitions challenged.

Although I enjoyed all of my classes in the philosophy department the one that sticks out the most is an upper-level moral philosophy class on consequentialism. Although I am more sympathetic to deontotology, it was interesting and fun to take a deeper look at this alternative. Studying philosophy has helped me develop critical analytic skills and greatly improved my writing, skills which will serve me well in the future at graduate school.

I have now accepted a GTA position at the University of Arizona in German Studies. I would highly recommend our philosophy program to incoming students! The professors genuinely care about the students, and are extremely approachable (despite being incredibly brilliant). They also continually support their students in their future plans and prepare them for awesome future careers.



Professor Amy Lara (KSU faculty 2004-2016)

After twelve years in the department, Amy Lara has decided to leave the academic world to pursue her dream of becoming a full-time fiction writer and part-time fiber artist. She says, "I'll miss the philosophy department and the students at K-State very much. It's been a great privilege to have had such a supportive home for researching and teaching moral philosophy. If I've managed to convince at least a few students that reading Kant doesn't count as cruel and unusual punishment, then my work here is done." Amy is planning to move to Minnesota, where she'll sit in front of a fire and spin yarns both literal and metaphorical.



KSU Philosophy Abroad

Professor Mahoney was awarded a Fulbright Grant for 2014-2015 to research and teach in Central Asia. During that year, he taught courses in human rights, religion and politics at the International University of Central Asia in Tokmok and at Kyrgyz-Turkish Manas University in Bishkek. He also co-organized a conference at Manas University and edited a collection of essays devoted to politics, prospects for democracy and religious extremism in Central Asia.

One of the highlights of Professor Mahoney's time in Asia was a Fulbright conference in Hyderabad, India, held in March 2014, where other Fulbright scholars in Central Asia, South Asia and India presented their research.

But it wasn't all work for Dr. Mahoney. One of the most important goals of the Fulbright Scholar Program is "to increase mutual understanding between the people of the United States and the people of other countries."

During his year-long stay in Central Asia, Professor Mahoney did just that. He joined the Kyrgyzstan Trekking Union, a weekly hiking group of locals, tourists and foreigners who live and work in Kyrgyzstan. He stayed with an Uzbek family in Isfana, located on the Kyrgyz-Tajik border in a remote area in Southern Kyrgyzstan, and lived briefly with a Kyrgyz family in Arslanbob. He volunteered at a camp which brought middle-school-aged children from different ethnic groups together to foster cultural understanding. "I never had more fun playing Frisbee than playing Frisbee with those kids in the mountains," said Professor Mahoney.



Now, thanks to K-State Office of International Programs grant, Professor Mahoney will continue his work in international philosophy, politics and international education. Students in his fall courses (Democracy and Religious Freedom and Political Philosophy) will Skype with students in Bishkek to discuss religious freedom. He is working with Peace Corps volunteers to coordinate a Skype chat between his students and students learning English in Kyrgyzstan. He will also converse via Skype with the Central Asian director of International Crisis Group, a nonprofit organization dedicated to preventing and resolving deadly conflict.

Your support counts!

Your generosity to the Department of Philosophy helps to support our 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 -- make 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:

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