

## CSB/SJU PHILOSOPHY DEPARTMENT

# THE GADFLY

Ex Nihilo Nihil Fit

VOLUME 4, ISSUE 2      MARCH, 2010

### PRE-ENROLL IN FALL UPPER-LEVEL PHILOSOPHY CLASSES!!!

The department will try an experiment for the fall 2010 semester. To maximize the seats our majors and minors can grab in our upper-level classes, you can pre-enroll in these courses. What do you need to do? E-mail Tony Cunningham (tcunningham@csbsju.edu) by noon on March 24th. Write "Philosophy Registration" in the subject line of the e-mail and list the courses you want, along with your name. You'll be enrolled in the course before registration even starts. If you have any doubts (say, because your final schedule may depend upon the other courses you need), you can always pre-enroll and then switch as needed. This deadline is a strict one, so once it passes, you'll have to try your luck with general registration (in other words, don't contact Cunningham). The upper-level lineup for the fall is as follows (below). The courses with "ES" next to them satisfy the Ethics Common Seminar requirement for juniors and seniors. All of these courses meet at SJU.

PHIL 321 Moral (ES) (Stonestreet) 9:40, 246

PHIL 321 Moral (ES) (Stonestreet) 11:20, 246

PHIL 333 Medieval (Robinson) 11:20, 135

PHIL 334 Modern (Wagner) 9:40, 135

PHIL 356 Aes Viol/Non-Viol (McGraw) 1:00, 135

PHIL 363 Phil Science (Esch) 2:40-4:10, 246

PHIL 368 Morality & Happiness (ES) (Farnham) 2:40, 135

PHIL 368 Morality & Happiness (ES) (Farnham) M, 6-9

### DANIEL FARNHAM JOINS PHILOSOPHY DEPARTMENT

The CSB/SJU Philosophy Department is pleased to announce that Daniel Farnham will be joining us as a Visiting Assistant Professor next year. Dan has a special interest in the virtues and eudaimonia. He will be on campus on Tuesday, March 23rd to do a talk entitled "Happiness as the Final End." The event will take place at 4:15 in Q343. Please come meet Dan and join in some friendly philosophical conversation. Refreshments will be served. Wahoo!



*I have my eye on you, so don't try any philosophical funny business.*



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## PBK CHAPTER GRANTED TO CSB/SJU

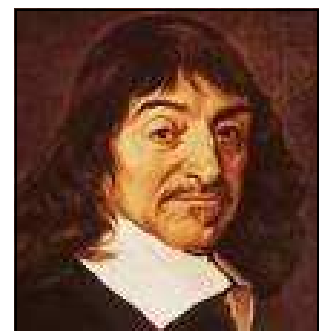
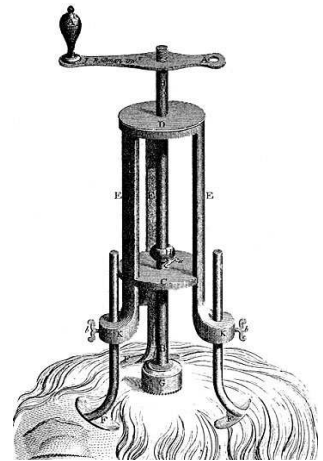
At the Triennial Council of Phi Beta Kappa this year, CSB/SJU were granted a new chapter of Phi Beta Kappa, designated as the Theta Chapter of Minnesota. PBK is the country's oldest honor society, founded in 1776 in the Raleigh Tavern in Williamsburg, Virginia. (Now, don't get any ideas about how drinking and studying go together.) The name Phi Beta Kappa derives from the society's fancy Greek motto, *philosophia biou kubernetes*: "love of wisdom is the guide of life." Which of course goes to show you that you chose the right major. Each spring, students who meet PBK's criteria will be invited to join the likes of Peyton Manning, Ralph Waldo Emerson, and your very own Erica Stonestreet (now the VP of the chapter), and learn the secret handshake (no kidding!).



## VISITING SPEAKER ON MENTAL CAUSATION

Assistant Professor Kevin Sharpe from St. Cloud State University will give a talk on mental causation on **Tuesday, March 16, at 4:30 p.m. in the Quad 349 at SJU**. The title of his talk will be *Standard Compatibilism and the Problem of Causal Exclusion*.

Here is an abstract of the talk: "Mental causation is a problem for non-reductive physicalists. As physicalists, they are committed to holding that all human actions have purely physical causes and they also believe that the mental cannot be reduced to the physical. This combination of views is problematic because it seems to imply that, barring widespread overdetermination, the mental does not cause anything to happen. So non-reductive physicalists face a dilemma: either reduce the mental to the physical or accept that the mental is causally idle. Either way, we have to give up a central feature of non-reductive physicalism. The causal exclusion argument, as this argument is often called, relies on a substantial assumption: if an event has more than one cause, then it is overdetermined. Many non-reductive physicalists contend that this assumption is false. These philosophers, often called causal compatibilists, hold that an event can have multiple causes without being overdetermined. In my paper I discuss this strategy for responding to the causal exclusion problem. I distinguish between two forms of compatibilism and offer reasons for thinking that the more popular version, what I call standard compatibilism, does not work. I then outline what I think it would take for a compatibilist solution to work. As I hope to show, the compatibilist's solution does not come cheap, but for those willing to pay the price, the problem of causal exclusion need not worry the non-reductive physicalist." Refreshments will be served. Wahoo!



"Oh, baby. This should be cool. I think you should definitely come."

### PHILOSOPHY CREDIT AND THE ETHICS COMMON SEMINAR DESIGNATION (ES)

All CSB/SJU students are required to take an Ethics Common Seminar course in the junior or senior year as part of the Common Curriculum. This requirement can be met with Ethics 390 courses or with departmental courses that bear the ES designation. Most of the Philosophy Department's upper-level "values" courses—Moral, Feminist Ethics, Political, Environmental Ethics, Business Ethics, Chinese, and some Special Topics courses—bear the ES designation. These courses satisfy the ECS requirement for junior and seniors. Sophomores who wish to take these courses can do so (see the notice about pre-enrolling in this issue), but they will only receive Humanities and Philosophy credit for the course. Please note that the Philosophy Department will also grant philosophy credit for Ethics 390 courses taught by Philosophy faculty.



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### LOTSA LOTSA HAPPINESS COMING NEXT FALL

On September 9-12, 2010, Project Logos will be hosting a conference called *Happiness: A Symposium* at St. John's. The goal of the conference is to provide a forum for faculty and scholars of diverse disciplines to come together to discuss topics related to the broad topic of happiness. Scholars from all four divisions discussing topics like relating to happiness. The biologist, neuroscientist and science writer, Robert Sapolsky, will speak at the conference. Dr. Sapolsky is a MacArthur "Genius" Fellow, a professor of biology and neurology at Stanford University, and a research associate with the Institute of Primate Research at the National Museum of Kenya. He is the author of several books, including *The Primate's Memoir* and *Why Zebras Don't get Ulcers*, and has written articles for magazines like *Discover* and *The New Yorker*. The Philosophy Department's Emily Esch is happily leading the charge on this conference, so if you have any questions, please see Professor Esch.



## GOOD LIBRARY BOOKS CORNER

Antonio Damasio. *Descartes' Error: Emotion, Reason, and the Human Brain* (Clemens, QP 401.D2 1994) —“Astonishing... a passionately erudite, penetrating tour through the human mind.” -- *San Francisco Chronicle*. “Crucial reading not only for neuroscientists and philosophers but for lay readers too.” -- *The New York Times Book Review*



I think you are and therefore you are, but only if I say so.

## NOTES FROM DE HIGH CHAIR

Jean Keller and Charles Wright will lead the CSB/SJU China program next fall, and Professor Keller will be on sabbatical in the spring.

Eugene Garver officially retired from teaching in December. If you see him around, give him two thumbs up for all his years of service to the department.

Tony Cunningham will be a Visiting Fellow at the *Institute for Philosophy in Public Life* in North Dakota next September for two weeks. He'll be working on a book project entitled *As Good as It Gets?* Keep an ear out for him on the radio show, *Why? Philosophical Discussions About Everyday Life*.

Steve Wagner will enjoy a course release next spring semester to conduct research on some Descartes stuff. Don't ask him about it because it's top secret stuff.

## MPS UNDERGRADUATE CONFERENCE

The Minnesota Undergraduate Philosophy Society Conference will take place at St. John's on Saturday, April 17th. The keynote speech, "Rationality and Concepts" will be delivered in the afternoon by Michael Shaffer of St. Cloud State University. Emily Esch is the organizer of the event and she badly needs commentators on papers. Please (please, please) consider volunteering. Commenting may not seem like a glamorous thing, but the experience is a valuable one. You get the chance to read a peer's work and to offer thoughts, questions, and advice. As hosts of this conference, we'd like to put our best foot forward and we really can't do so without your help. If you would like more information or if you think you'd like to volunteer, please contact Emily Esch. Go ahead and do it. You know you want to do it. Yeah, go ahead.

