

## CSB/SJU PHILOSOPHY DEPARTMENT

# THE GADFLY

Ex Nihilo Nihil Fit

VOLUME 3, ISSUE 3      MARCH, 2009

### NEL NODDINGS FOR SCHOLARSHIP & CREATIVITY DAY

Nel Noddings, Lee Jacks Professor of Education Emerita, Stanford University, will give an address entitled "Critical Self-Knowledge" at 1:00 at CSB on Scholarship & Creativity Day, Wednesday, April 22<sup>nd</sup>. Professor Noddings' work has included an analysis of caring and its place in ethics (*Caring: A Feminine Approach to Ethics and Moral Education* - 1984), a rethinking of evil from the perspective of women (*Women and Evil* - 1989) and a series of books exploring the implications of caring in education (*The Challenge to Care in Schools* - 1992; *Educating Moral People* - 2002; *Happiness and Education* - 2003). Over a long, distinguished career, Nel Noddings has sought to encourage people to engage philosophically with education (*Philosophy of Education, Educating for Intelligent Belief or Unbelief* - 1995), and she has explored the social implications if caring is placed at the center of our social policies and institutions (*Starting at Home: Caring and Social Policy* - 2002).



### Visiting Speaker: Professor Omar Mirza

The CSB/SJU Philosophy Club will bring Professor Omar Mirza (St. Cloud State University) to campus on March 31st at 5 o'clock for a public lecture. The title of his talk is "Naturalism, Evolution, and Self-Defeat." Professor Mirza gives the following description of his talk: "Metaphysical naturalism is the belief that there is no God, and nobody like God. It is usually thought that modern evolutionary theory supports naturalism. In this presentation, we will introduce a fascinating argument, due to the eminent philosopher of religion Alvin Plantinga, which challenges this common assumption: Plantinga's conclusion is that the combination of naturalism and evolutionary theory is self-defeating, because it leads to universal skepticism about all our beliefs. We will look at how Plantinga tries to reach this startling conclusion, and some of the objections to his argument that have been proposed." Refreshments will be served. Bring a friend, your mind, and an appetite!

#### INSIDE THIS ISSUE:

NEW NUMBERS	2
MAJOR KUDOS	2
PHIL. OF LAW	3
WIFFLE!	3
ETHICS SEMINAR	4
MAJOR PLAN	4
GOOD BOOK	4

## NEW NUMBERS FOR PHILOSOPHY COURSES

The Philosophy Department is pulling a switcheroo on some its course numbers next year. The new lineup will look like this.

**PHIL 120's: Basic and General Introductory Courses:** PHIL 110: Logic; PHIL 121: Great Issues in Philosophy; PHIL 123: Philosophy of Human Nature; PHIL 125: Social Philosophy (formerly 130).

**PHIL 140-150's: Topic-based Introductory Courses:** PHIL 146: Philosophy of Religion; PHIL 150: Philosophy in Literature; PHIL 153: Philosophy and Gender; PHIL 156: Asian Philosophy.

**PHIL 320's: Value Area Upper-Level Courses:** PHIL 321: Moral Philosophy; PHIL 322: Environmental Ethics; PHIL 323: Biomedical Ethics; PHIL 324: Business Ethics; PHIL 325: Feminist Ethics; PHIL 326: Political Philosophy.

**PHIL 330's-340's: Historical Courses:** PHIL 331: Ancient Philosophy; PHIL 333: Medieval Philosophy; PHIL 334: Modern Philosophy; PHIL 336: 19th Century European Philosophers; PHIL 337: Analytic Philosophers; PHIL 338: American Philosophers; PHIL 339: Chinese Philosophy; PHIL 341: 20th Century Continental Philosophers.

**350's: Advanced Social/Ethical Topic Areas:** PHIL 355: Philosophies of Violence/Non-Violence; PHIL 356: Aesthetics of Violence/Non-Violence; PHIL 358: Philosophy of Law.

**PHIL 360's Advanced General Philosophical Areas:** PHIL 363: Topics in the Philosophy of Science; PHIL 364: Philosophy of Knowledge; PHIL 365: Metaphysics.

**PHIL 360-398: Institution-Determined Numbers:** PHIL 368: Special Topics; PHIL 371: Independent Study; PHIL 388: Philosophy Capstone; PHIL 398: Honors Senior Essay/Thesis/Research.

## Major Kudos!

A round of applause is in order for junior major Ben Hansberry and senior major Regan Becker. Ben has been awarded a summer grant to work on his philosophy thesis project, "Phenomenology and Practices of Music Analysis." So if you see him loafing about this summer, be sure to tell him to get to work since he'll be on the payroll. Regan Becker, who is doing a senior thesis on Hume's discussion of miracles, will present his work at the Upper Midwest Honors Conference at Southwest State University, on April 2-4 and again on Scholarship & Creativity Day on April 22<sup>nd</sup> from 10:30-11:45 in Quad 361. Hurrah for both!



Nietzsche says,  
"Hey, excellent  
job. Way to go,  
dudes!"

"How we spend our days is, of course, how we spend our lives."

~Annie Dillard

Spring is springing. Emerge from your philosophical cave. Move your body while you still have it. Just look how happy a bit of cycling made the guy on the right. He used to be all bummed out from reading Schopenhauer and his kind. Then he got on his bike and started moving his legs. Pretty soon, those dark thoughts were left in the dust. Grab a friend and git goin’.



“Whoa baby! This is like the first time I read Plato!”

**REVOLUTION  
CYCLE and SKI**



160 29th Avenue South, St. Cloud—320-251-BIKE

**NEWS**

**Last Chance!**

Regents Professor Gene Garver will be retiring at the end of the 2009 fall semester. If you haven’t taken Gene’s Philosophy of Law course, this fall’s edition will be your very last chance. The course meets on odd days at 1:00 at SJU. The word on the street is that he’s going to give out all the answers to all the *really* hard questions in his final run. So get wise and give it a go. Wahoo!

**Cunningham Parole Denied**

Tony Cunningham was recently appointed to another three-year term as grand exalted chair of the Philosophy Department despite his fiery protests (just like Socrates insisting he wasn’t fit to rule). Yes, you are stuck with him. So if you need something, he’s the man to ring. Sorry about that.

**WIFFLE! WIFFLE! WIFFLE!**

Whoa! Keep the Friday, May 1st date reserved for the wiffleball & barbeque action. Start your stretching and practice your best insults for the historians. We need to be on top of our game this year after last year’s bitter defeat. If the weather cooperates, we may move from the Old MetroGymDome to an outdoor venue. We’ll see. Anyhow, please remember: Friday, May 1<sup>st</sup>, 4-6:30. If you don’t come, you are a big weenie. So says Steve Wagner. If you don’t like it, take it up with him.



**NO FOOLING AROUND THIS YEAR!**

## Good Library Books Corner

Kwame Anthony Appiah. *Experiments in Ethics* (Alcuin, BJ37.A67 2008) Appiah has produced an elegant and well-written volume at the intersection of psychology and moral philosophy. Appiah presents a reasonable case that philosophy traditionally has been informed by scientific inquiry, and should continue to welcome it; but at the same time he is clear that the questions of moral philosophy are not themselves scientific questions.

--S. Satris (*Choice*)



*Yes? What do you want? Can't you see that I'm very busy? I'm about to eat me peas. Actually, I pity me peas. No individuality at all. None. They're all jumbled in there together, each one looking like the other. Just once I'd like to see a pea break away from the pack. Maybe today I'll have a pea with a wee hat or a sardonic smile on its pea face.*

## A NOTE FROM DE HIGH CHAIR

### Plotting a Philosophy Major Strategy: A Great Start

Most philosophy majors and minors stumble into philosophy. After all, few students entering college have a high school background in philosophy, so most college students in an introductory philosophy class find themselves in new territory. The Philosophy Department encourages you to take all and any of its course offerings, but the department reckons that Moral Philosophy and Ancient Philosophy are particularly good courses to consider after taking an introductory class. Next year, Steve Wagner's fall Moral Philosophy and Tim Robinson's spring Ancient Philosophy will carry a "permission of the instructor" tag for registration. The department would like to make sure that majors and prospective majors/minors get first crack at these courses. Steve's Moral Philosophy will be the only section of the course open to sophomores next year (see the lowdown on the Ethics Seminar in this issue). [If you desire a spot in this course, e-mail Tony Cunningham as soon as possible for a spot.](#) A call will be made next fall for Tim's spring section of Ancient. Not only can you guarantee yourself a spot in these classes, but hopefully we can maximize the number of majors and minors in these two sections for a *SUPER-WAHOO!* experience with like-minded classmates.

## COMMON CURRICULUM IMPLICATIONS: THE ETHICS SEMINAR

Next fall the new Ethics Seminar will come on line in the Common Curriculum. Juniors and seniors will be able to satisfy their Core Curriculum (seniors) or Common Curriculum (juniors) requirements with either a Senior Seminar or an Ethics Seminar (Ethics 390). Most of our ethics / values courses will be cross-listed with the Ethics Seminar. Thus, Moral Philosophy (Phil 321), Environmental Ethics (Phil 322), Business Ethics (Phil 324), and Political Philosophy (Phil 326) will all be cross-listed with Ethics 390 (with the exception of Steve Wagner's section of Moral Philosophy in the fall). If you wish to take one of these classes, you will have to sign up under Ethics 390. Note a distinct advantage in doing so: The course can count for your Senior Seminar / Ethics 390 requirement and count as a course toward the philosophy major/minor (only sections of Ethics 390 cross-listed with philosophy courses will fit this bill).