

CSB/SJU PHILOSOPHY DEPARTMENT

THE GADFLY

Ex Nihilo Nihil Fit

VOLUME 4, ISSUE 1 OCTOBER, 2009

UNVEILED: REVAMPED DEPARTMENT WEBSITE

Emily Esch and Laura Schmitz have worked wonders with the Philosophy Department website. Now you can find out all sorts of fascinating stuff from our site. Do you know that philosophy majors are tied for the highest percent change in salary from start to mid-career? Would you like to see Dennis Beach on a horse? How about Charles Wright doing his best Lawrence of Arabia imitation? Or Gene Garver whizzing along on his mountain bike through a desert in Africa? Find out all kinds of interesting tidbits about your profs—things like who can recite Rilke's "Zum Einschlafen Zu Sagen" by heart, who taught junior high math, who worked at a paper mill, who lived on Mt. Hood for a year, and who planned on playing professional baseball. Look up info on graduate schools for philosophy. Yuck it up with some philosophical humor. Prepare yourself for the next Great American Think-Off. You can do it all on or from the wham-bam Philosophy website.

UPCOMING PHILOSOPHICAL CAGEFIGHT

Tim Robinson and Tony Cunningham will square off in a departmental debate on Tuesday, October 20th at 4:15 in Quad 343. The title for the occasion will be "Kant: Got Consolation?" Cunningham will try to convince listeners about all of the following: (1) Kant thought there was always a right thing to do in every situation, (2) Kant thought you could always do that right thing, (3) Kant thought that doing that right thing wouldn't necessarily be easy, but you could always have the ultimate consolation of knowing that you'd stuck by what matters most, and last but not least, (4) Kant is all wrong about all this stuff. Robinson will take 20 mighty whacks at Cunningham. Then the occasion becomes a tag-team match with the audience. Yep, jump in there and have at it. Watch out for Robinson though. He's one of them Southern dirty-fighters. Scratch yer eyes out and such. As you might expect, there will be some refreshments, interesting ideas, and good conversation. Come one and all, and bring yourself a friend. If you haven't any, you might find yourself one at such an event. Hey, there's always hope, just no consolation. Wahoo!



I see you. You don't think I do, but I do. Be careful. Very, very careful.



INSIDE THIS ISSUE:

DEAD GUYS	2
CAPSTONE	3
NUTS &	3
DE HIGH	4
GOOD BOOK	4
WHY?	4
SEE YA	4

SIMON CRITCHLEY'S TOP 10 PHILOSOPHER DEATHS

1. Heracleitus (540-480 BC) - Heracleitus became such a hater of humanity that he wandered in the mountains and lived on a diet of grass and herbs. But malnutrition gave him dropsy and he returned to the city to seek a cure, asking to be covered in cow dung, which he believed would draw the bad humours out of his body. In the first version of the story, the cow dung is wet and the weeping philosopher drowns; in the second, it is dry and he is baked to death in the Ionian sun. **2. Diogenes (d.320 BC)** - Once described as "a Socrates gone mad", Diogenes asked to be buried face down "because after a little time down will be converted into up". He is said to have been nearly 90 when he died, either after eating raw octopus or by committing suicide by holding his breath. **3. Chrysippus (280-207BC)** - There are two stories of his death, both involving alcohol. In the first, he took a draught of sweet wine unmixed with water, was seized with dizziness and died five days later. But the second is even better: after an ass had eaten his figs, he cried out to an old woman, "Now give the ass a drink of pure wine to wash down the figs". Thereupon, he laughed so heartily that he died. **4. Avicenna (980-1037)** - Towards the end of *The Life of Avicenna*, his disciple Al-Juzajani writes "The Master was vigorous in all his faculties, the sexual faculty being the most vigorous and dominant of his concupiscible faculties, and he exercised it often". However, Avicenna's priapic performances caused a case of what his disciple vaguely calls "colic". "Therefore," Al-Juzajani continues, "he administered an enema to himself eight times in one day, to the point that some of his intestines ulcerated and an abrasion broke out on him." **5. Thomas Aquinas (1224/5-1274)** - On 6 December 1273 during mass in Naples, something devastating happened to Aquinas that some commentators see as a mystical experience and others see as a cerebral stroke. Either way, he was afterwards unwilling or unable to write and the massive labour of his *Summa Theologiae* was suspended at Part 3, Question 90, Article 4. Yet, despite his transformation, he was summoned by the Pope to attend the Council of Lyons. On the way, he was injured by the bough of a tree and died at the age of 49... **6. Francis Bacon (1561-1626)** - During a particularly cold winter, Bacon was travelling with a Scottish physician and fell upon the idea that flesh might as well be preserved in snow as in salt. They got out of the carriage at the foot of Highgate Hill and bought a hen from a poor woman who lived there. Bacon then stuffed the hen with snow and was immediately taken ill with a chill. Unable to return home, he was put to bed...Sadly, the bed was so damp that his condition worsened and, according to Hobbes, "in 2 or 3 days, he dyed of Suffocation". **7. De la Mettrie (1709-1751)** - The author of the materialist manifesto, *The Man-Machine*, died after eating a huge dinner at the house of the French ambassador to Berlin, Monsieur Tirconnel. Apparently, La Mettrie expired from the effects of indigestion caused by eating a huge amount of slightly dodgy truffle pâté... **8. Denis Diderot (1713-1784)** - After an exhausting return trip from St Petersburg, at the invitation of his patron Catherine the Great of Russia, Diderot became ill, took to his bed, and decided to stop speaking. He enjoyed a brief respite from his illness ...He ate soup, boiled mutton and chicory and then took an apricot (some sources claim it was a strawberry). His daughter, Angélique, takes up the story, "My mother wanted to stop him from eating that fruit. 'But what the devil kind of harm do you expect it to do to me?' He ate it, leaned his elbow on the table to eat a compote of cherries, coughed gently. My mother asked him a question; since he remained silent, she raised her head, looked at him, he was no more." **9. AJ Ayer (1910-1989)** - The year before he died, after recovering from pneumonia...Ayer choked on a piece of salmon, lost consciousness and technically died. His heart stopped for four minutes until he was revived. A day later, he had recovered and was talking happily about what had taken place during his death...**10. Michel Foucault (1926-1984)** - Foucault was first hospitalized...with the symptoms of a nasty and persistent flu, fatigue, terrible coughing and migraine. "...But he carried on working until the end on the second and third volumes of *The History of Sexuality*, which appeared shortly before his death. Although he was a very early victim of the virus, it seems that Foucault knew that he had Aids. Foucault was fond of reading Seneca towards the end and died on 25 June like a classical philosopher. (From *The Book of Dead Philosophers* by Simon Critchley)

THE NEW PHILOSOPHY CAPSTONE—PHILOSOPHY 388

The Philosophy Department has been developing a capstone course over the last two years in order to meet the requirements of the new Common Curriculum. This course (Philosophy 388) will be a requirement for all senior philosophy majors in 2010-11. Steve Wagner will teach the course in the spring of 2011 and he will probably focus on Descartes and issues in Modern Philosophy. This spring (2010), Tony Cunningham will be teaching a version of Philosophy 388 on Monday nights. Though the course is not a requirement, senior majors are strongly encouraged to take the class. The class will focus on Bernard Williams' influential *Ethics and the Limits of Philosophy*. This class will provide an opportunity for a small group of majors to get together to discuss and think about complex, important questions in ethics. Senior philosophy minors are also welcome.

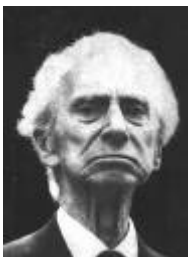
**REVOLUTION
CYCLE and SKI**



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

PLANNING A PHILOSOPHY MAJOR—NUTS & BOLTS

The new Common Curriculum affects a prospective philosophy major in some important ways. Most of the department's "value" courses (e.g., Moral Philosophy, Feminist Ethics, Business Ethics, Political Philosophy) will usually be cross-listed with the new Ethics Common Seminar (Ethics 390). The really good news here is that philosophy majors will be able to hit two birds with one carefully-aimed stone—taking one of these courses will satisfy the ECS requirement *and* count toward the philosophy major. The bad news is that these cross-listed courses will only be open to juniors and seniors. To deal with this thorny complication, the department plans on offering a section of Moral Philosophy that is not cross-listed each fall (Steve Wagner is teaching such a section this fall and Erica Stonestreet will do a section next fall). This section of Moral Philosophy will be reserved for philosophy majors, minors, and prospective majors/minors, and registration will be by permission of the instructor. Please note that both Moral Philosophy and Ancient Philosophy are strongly encouraged as a first upper-level course after an introductory philosophy course. Of course, prospective majors are free to take any other upper-level philosophy courses after an intro course, but experience suggests that Moral and Ancient are particularly good as first upper-level philosophy courses. Keep in mind that the Philosophy Capstone, Philosophy 388, will be a requirement for the philosophy major beginning in 2010-11. This course will be offered each year in the spring and it will be a requirement for graduating senior philosophy majors. The content of the course will vary depending upon the instructor, but the course will be designed to provide an integrative learning experience with opportunities for independent work.



Me again. You thought you were rid of me after page 1, didn't you? Well, I don't go away that easily. I still have my eye on you, so watch it. I mean it. Really.

Look, pay no attention to that old geezer on the left. You'll only encourage him if he thinks you are taking any notice of him. Just leave him be and you'll be just fine.



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*)



Do you know that reason is and always must be the slave of the passions? So let me have a cookie! Cookie!!!

NOTES FROM DE HIGH CHAIR

Here is our spring 2010 lineup. For 100-level courses, Charles Wright will do *Social Philosophy* (135, 11:20) and Rene McGraw will do *Philosophy of Human Nature* (135, 11:20). On the upper level, Tim Robinson will do *Ancient Philosophy* (135, 11:20), Rene McGraw will do *Continental Philosophy* (135, 1:00), Emily Esch will do *Philosophy of Mind* (246, 2:40), and Tony Cunningham will do the *Philosophy Capstone* (Monday, 6-9, senior majors & minors). We'll also have a number of courses cross-listed with Ethics 390. You can get credit for your Ethics Common Seminar and Philosophy for these courses: Steve Wagner's *Moral Philosophy* (246, 9:40 & 11:20), Charles Wright's *Political Philosophy* (246, 9:40), Jean Keller's *Feminist Ethics* (135, 2:40), and Erica Stonestreet's *Business Ethics* (246, 1:00 & 2:40). Jean Keller, Tim Robinson, and Steve Wagner will also teach regular sections of Ethics 390 (no cross-list), and Tony Cunningham will teach Honors Ethics 390.

WHY?—THE PHILOSOPHICAL RADIO SHOW

Why? Philosophical Discussions About Everyday Life may be the world's first call-in philosophy show. Its mission is to create a large-scale conversation between philosophical professionals and the general public. Even moreso, however, the show was created to illustrate how day-to-day life is steeped in deep philosophical commitments and to provide a venue for exploration of those same commitments. Hosted by Jack Russell Weinstein, *Why?* features a range of guests who either work in academic philosophy or whose professions are ideal for bringing out philosophical issues and assumption. Each episode begins with a monologue-style discussion of current events as seen through a philosophical lens then features a discussion with the guest about their work and how it relates to general audiences. Then the questions come in. Anyone is welcome to call, but those with philosophical expertise are asked to show how their questions, no matter how obscure, relate to ordinary experience. *Why?* can be heard live on *Prairie Public* radio stations across the state, in Winnipeg (on Shaw Cable, 107.9), and online anywhere in the world. Questions can be submitted in advance or during the show via the internet (askwhy@und.edu). They can also be asked live on the air by calling 888-755-6377. *Why?* is funded by the *Institute for Philosophy in Public Life* and *Prairie Public Radio*. The Institute is itself the result of a partnership between the University of North Dakota College of Arts & Sciences and the North Dakota Humanities Council. (This information was taken from the *IPPL* website.)

SEE YA!