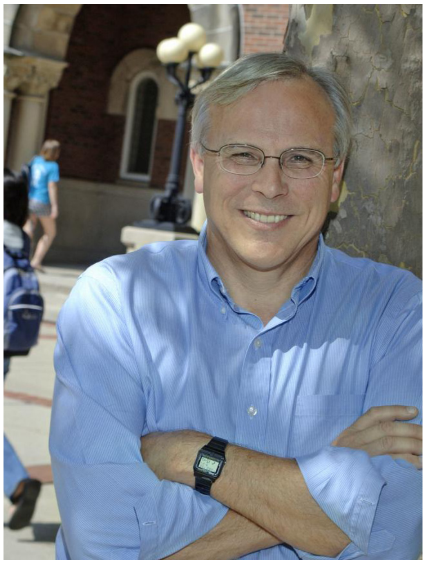
PHILOSOPHY LOGOS

2012 – 2013

IN THIS ISSUE

WORDS FROM THE **CHAIR**



Don Hubin, chair, Department of Philosophy

"That was it?! That was our whole summer?" I think faculty and students all had that reaction as we gathered back on campus in late August to begin Ohio State's first school year on the semester calendar in anyone's recollection.

The new calendar will take some getting used to by those who have been here for a while. Classes begin at irregular times throughout the day — "in order to maximize the efficient use of classroom space" we're told, though some harbor the suspicion that the change was designed simply to confound those who have grown accustomed to the old schedule. Far more disorienting, though, is the complete renumbering of all of our courses. I doubt that any of our faculty members are fluent in the new numbering system; perhaps a few could be labeled "minimally bilingual." Most of us are still at the "look it up in the foreign language phrase book" stage.

There will be other adjustments for us to make, of course. But, disruptive as the calendar conversion has been, it changes nothing about the core of what we do here: push forward the frontiers of knowledge and understanding, ignite in our students a life-long love of learning, develop their ability to critically examine the world around them, and train the next generation of professional philosophers to do these things even better. When you're in a classroom with a room full of inquisitive thinkers, the calendar change seems rather peripheral.

This autumn (or was it really late summer), we had the pleasure of welcoming to campus a wonderful new colleague and five very promising new graduate students. Professor Christopher Pincock joins us from the University of Missouri. Chris specializes in the philosophy of science, with strong research interests in the philosophy of mathematics and the history of analytic philosophy. His particular area of recent research is focused on the role of mathematics in science. Albert Einstein said, "The most incomprehensible thing about the world is that it is at all comprehensible." The way that we comprehend the world, at least at the most fundamental level, is through mathematics. In his recently published book, *Mathematics and Scientific Representation*, Chris explores the role that mathematics plays in our scientific knowledge through its role in scientific representations of the world.

THE OHIO STATE UNIVERSITY

Last year, the most highly-regarded ranking of philosophical departments, the *Philosophical Gourmet Report*, ranked The Ohio State University Department of Philosophy the best department in the world for the study of philosophy of mathematics. This achievement is the result of the highly significant research of Stewart Shapiro, Neil Tennant, and Lisa Shabel. Chris's research contributes to our department's research profile in this area, and adds new dimensions to it.

Chris's wife, Tansel Yilmazer, joins Ohio State as an assistant professor in the Department of Human Sciences. We're pleased to welcome both Chris and Tansel to Ohio State.

We also are delighted to welcome our new graduate students: Mauro Corneli (McGill University and Concordia University), who is interested especially in early analytic philosophy and the philosophy of mathematics; Jenni Ernst (University of Utah, University of Phoenix, and Arizona State University), whose main philosophical interests run toward metaethics, moral psychology, and philosophy of mind; Matt Souba (Franklin & Marshall, London School of Economics, University of St. Andrews), who is primarily interested in logic, the foundations of mathematics, formal epistemology, and decision theory; Evan Woods (Allegheny College), whose current interests include the history of analytic philosophy, philosophy of language, and logic; and Kevin Wutke (University of California, Davis), whose primary interests lie in moral philosophy and political and legal philosophy. This is a great incoming class and we look forward to the contributions they will make to the intellectual life of the department.

Last year was an active one for the department. In addition to the usual active colloquium series, we conducted or collaborated to produce other events. The department hosted a workshop on vagueness [see p. 12], which brought together leading linguists and philosophers to address the fascinating issues surrounding the semantics and pragmatics of vague terms. Other department-related activities of the year include the third annual Dan Farrell Undergraduate Retreat [see 11] and the annual Undergraduate Philosophy Conference [see 12]. And, those of us who are involved in the OSU Center for Ethics and Human Values Innovation Group oversaw an extraordinarily ambitious and, we're happy to say, successful year-long, university-wide "conversation" on immigration—the Immigration COMPAS [see 13].

This coming year promises to be philosophically bustling, as well. In addition to its regular colloquium series and the additional colloquia sponsored by the Center for Ethics and Human Values, the department will host a conference of the Society for Exact Philosophy [see p. 14] in mid October, and a mini-conference on Spinoza, organized by Tamar Rudavsky, late in October. We look forward to an exciting year.

Please let us hear from you; we are always interested in what our alumni are doing. If you have a chance to visit campus, we hope you will stop by the department for coffee and conversation. The welcome mat is always out!

Don

CURRENT UNDERGRADUATE **ABRAM FELDMAN**

Abram Feldman is going to be a fourth-year student in the Honors Program at Ohio State pursuing a major in philosophy and a minor in cognitive science. He says his time in the philosophy department "has been a pleasure."

Abram considers his decision to pursue philosophy in college a welcome but unexpected decision. "In high school, I was always most interested in math and physics," he says, and "everyone told me I should be an engineer." Unfortunately for them, and luckily for Abram and the philosophy department, Abram did not like to draw, which he felt would be an essential component to any engineering related job. He searched for a major that was different from his usual scientific pursuits, but that did not stray very far away from what really interested him: logic, cognition, and the brain.

In high school, he had read *The Mind's I* by Douglass Hofstadter and Daniel Dennett, and the topics in that book planted the seeds of philosophy in his mind. "I was always the child who would question everything — what should I be when I grow up, what is color, how do I think, what am I — but the introduction to philosophy of mind was both welcoming and terrifying," says Abram.

Abram Feldman

"Welcoming, because I knew it was something I could spend a long time reading about and studying, and terrifying because it almost assured me I would never receive a satisfying answer to all of my questions."

When Abram enrolled at Ohio State as a philosophy major, his decision about which class to take first was not hard to make. He chose Symbolic Logic with Lisa Shabel. "I could not have had a better introductory course to philosophy – the topics were so closely entwined to the math and physics I loved; Dr. Shabel was enthusiastic and a fantastic instructor, and it simply made sense," he says.

Lisa felt that Abram was a model student. She said, "Abram is a dream philosophy student. He is super smart, always engaged, and witty, to boot. I am so fortunate to have had him in three classes during his time here at Ohio State."

From there, philosophy only got better for Abram. He took two history of philosophy courses with Lisa, which reinforced how he felt about the major and about what a great teacher Lisa was. He considers Advanced Philosophy of Mind with Abe Roth the culmination of his philosophical experience: it was exactly what he was waiting for – an investigation of the mind!

> THE PHILOSOPHY PROGRAM ALSO HELPED HIM PREPARE FOR HIS FUTURE CAREER AS A PHYSICIAN. MEDICAL ETHICS, TAUGHT BY DR. NAKANO, FELT LIKE A TREAT TO HIM, "TALKING ABOUT BORDERLINE ETHICAL CASES IN MEDICINE IS SOMETHING I WOULD DO IN MY FREE TIME!" ABRAM SAID.

Abe said, "Abram was a great student. The advanced class he was in was conducted in a seminar style: less lecture, more open-ended discussion. Abram's contributions were fantastic, consistently on target, and thoughtful. He wasn't showy; just really interested in the material."

Then came philosophy of cognitive science with Richard Samuels, which was even more specifically what he was after. Richard says "He was a delight to teach: smart, intellectually curious, and hardworking. His contributions to class were always thoughtful, and I very much enjoyed our office hour conversations."

Abram considers all his courses useful and engaging. He took further logic coursework with Stewart Shapiro, history with Allan Silverman, and ethics with Justin D'Arms. The philosophy program also helped him prepare for his future career as a physician. Medical ethics, taught by Dr. Nakano, felt like a treat to him — "talking about borderline ethical cases in medicine is something I would do in my free time!" Abram said.

Beyond philosophy and formal education in general, Abram is involved in many activities. He is the former vice president of the Alpha Epsilon Pi fraternity and has been an event coordinator for the World's Longest Barbecue, hosted on the Ohio State campus for the last two years. Of the barbecue, he said that, "running it is both a lot of fun and very stressful; fundraising, marketing, and even making sure shifts are filled is quite difficult, but the experience as a whole has been very rewarding."

He has also participated in medical research, last year in cardiac electrophysiology at the Cleveland Clinic and this past year in family medicine and hepatology at MetroHealth Hospital in Cleveland.

For the last two years he also has worked at the Ohio State Hillel as a chef, cooking kosher food for all patrons of the café, and has been a general manager for the custom designed clothing company Azilli Ltd.

Two of his favorite non-academic activities are Friendship Circle and tutoring. Friendship Circle is a program run by Chabad that pairs college-age adults with children with disabilities to simply hang out and have fun. "It is very enjoyable every week to go with another student and hang out with our friend to do whatever he wants," Abram says.

As a tutor, he helps other Ohio State students in organic chemistry, chemistry, math, and philosophy — even when he's very busy with his classes, he still has a great time helping other people with the subjects he finds most interesting.■

FORMER UNDERGRADUATE
SETH ROKOSKY

Seth Rokosky came to Ohio State from Canton McKinley Senior High School to major in English because he wanted to improve his writing. During freshman orientation, his mother suggested that he enroll in an introductory philosophy course with Larry Sanger.

Sanger's class, which centered on Descartes, Locke, Berkeley, and Hume, convinced Seth within weeks to switch his major.

"My love for philosophy would not have begun if it were not for the incredible professors who nurtured it," Seth says. In Larry Sanger's class, for example, he developed a love-hate relationship with David Hume, and Hume's extreme skepticism continues to affect Seth's willingness to question even commonly-held assumptions.

Professor Don Hubin's normative ethics class introduced him to the devastating value of hypotheticals and counterexamples, as well as to the oddities of Jeremy Bentham's preserved body and the "forbidden donut."

Don recalls that Seth was in just his second quarter at Ohio State when he took Don's upper-division course in moral philosophy. "Despite being a relative newcomer to philosophy, and indeed to the university, Seth performed at the very top of a generally very strong class, one that included students much further along in their careers. Seth's enthusiasm and energy, combined with his keen intellect, made it a joy to have him in the course."

And Professor Ben Caplan's dogged emphasis on fluid concise writing vastly improved the clarity and logic of Seth's arguments.

"Seth and Kate [McFarland] were in my Studies in Twentieth-Century Philosophy," says Ben. "Now that's a talented class. I couldn't have asked for a better group to discuss the mode of being of impossible or otherwise nonexistent Meinongian objects with."

Perhaps his favorite philosophy experience was in Professor Lisa Downing's class on scientific realism, which examined the ontological status of unobservables.

Professor Downing spent a great deal of time on Thomas Kuhn's *The Structure of Scientific Revolutions* and his thesis that the history of science reveals a series of "paradigm shifts," rather than a progressive trend toward understanding unobservable phenomena.

In tension with this view was the "Argument from the Best Explanation," which essentially posits that science must be getting closer to truth because it is increasingly able to predict observable phenomena (i.e. how else could planes fly?).

Professor Downing exhibited what is, in Seth's view, the paradigmatic virtue of a philosopher: encouragement to think for oneself. Rather than constantly asserting her own arguments, Professor Downing carefully nurtured a combined group of philosophy and science majors, who think very differently, and helped them vet their own complicated theories about a simple topic they all could understand.

"Seth was a noteworthy presence in an especially fun class," Lisa states. "He showed the sort of genuine intellectual curiosity that one always hopes to find in one's students. He resolutely resisted the realist trend of the class, always in a polite, engaged, and reasoned way."

Professor Downing did not scoff when Seth presented his own "pixie dust" argument, which suggested that an infinite number of scientific theories can be reverse-engineered to account for any observable phenomenon—such as: rather than "gravity," the proportion of "blue" to "pink" pixie dust in an object determines the force it exerts on other objects.

If such a theory is equally possible and would account for "gravitational" phenomena, why assume science is getting closer to the truth, rather than merely choosing among a set of equally plausible descriptions of unobservables?

"I continue to discover that scientific realism is much more complicated than I thought. But Professor Downing's encouragement and intellectual jousting were integral in my development," said Seth. He suspects that most philosophy majors have had a similar experience.

After Seth graduated, Professor Downing wrote a letter of recommendation on Seth's behalf to the University of Pennsylvania Law School; he was accepted. At Penn, he quickly learned that his philosophy background was invaluable.

"Law school is filled with hypotheticals, class debate, and a thirst for crystal clear writing: essentially--my undergraduate philosophy experience in the legal context."

He particularly remembers his first day in criminal law, when they debated the law's ethical foundations. Should it be illegal to "eat" your fellow passengers if you're stranded on a dinghy in the ocean? What would a utilitarian say? A deontologist?

After Professor Hubin's class, these were elementary, so he raised his hand and asked, "Could you be more specific with the facts in your hypothetical?"

Seth describes himself as "fortunate to have been successful in law school," though that success would come as no surprise to his professors at Ohio State. Seth made law review and wrote a note on the history and potential application of the "forgotten" Ninth Amendment in a number of contexts. He became interested in appellate law, because more than any other area, it places a premium on argumentation in both oral debate and in writing.

BEING A LAW CLERK WAS IN MANY WAYS BEING A "PHILOSOPHER." SETH'S JOB, EVERY DAY, WAS TO SIT IN AN OFFICE, READ TWO SIDES' OPPOSING, LOGICAL ARGUMENTS, THINK DEEPLY ABOUT THEM, AND FORM A CONCLUSION. HE THEN HAD TO PRESENT HIS OWN VIEWS, BOTH ORAL AND WRITTEN, TO HIS CO-CLERKS AND THE JUDGE. "IF THIS WAS NOT A QUEST FOR 'TRUTH' AND 'KNOWLEDGE,' WHAT ELSE WOULD BE? AND I LOVED IT!" HE EXCLAIMED.

Again, these were just logical extensions of his philosophy background into the legal context. Rather than other areas of the law, which focus primarily on applying a given set of facts to the accepted legal framework, appellate cases more often involve debating the antecedent question about what the law *actually* is or *how* it should be construed.
After law school, he passed the notorious New York bar exam, half of which consisted of crazy hypotheticals that often had more than one possible correct answer.

But while many of his peers were vexed by the lack of objectively provable answers to the exam, he took comfort in knowing that he could analyze every question to its core.

Last year, Seth accepted a one-year clerkship with the Honorable Thomas M. Hardiman on the United States Court of Appeals for the Third Circuit (in Pittsburgh). Not only did this allow him to read and write about foundational issues in the law, but it also gave him an opportunity to debate them daily with a federal judge.

Seth quickly gained a reputation as the "skeptic," the "relativist," and the "bare-bones" writer. Go figure!

Being a law clerk was in many ways being a "philosopher." Seth's job, every day, was to sit in an office, read two sides' opposing, logical arguments, think deeply about them, and form a conclusion. He then had to present his own views, both oral and written, to his co-clerks and the Judge. "If this was not a quest for truth and knowledge," Seth said, "what else would be? And I loved it!"

Seth has recently completed his clerkship and moved to New York City in September to work for the law firm Gibson, Dunn, and Crutcher, LLP. He plans to focus primarily on appellate work and constitutional law.■

CURRENT GRADUATE STUDENT **KATE MCFARLAND**

Kate was introduced to philosophy in her first quarter as an undergraduate at Ohio State, when she enrolled in Joe Levine's H101 class (due to a lack of enrollment options for incoming freshman). She found the class surprisingly interesting and intellectually satisfying, and Joe encouraged her to major in the discipline.

Kate, however, had her own agenda: she would vacillate between such fields as sociology and comparative studies for a little while, and ultimately settled on a degree in mathematics — mainly because, as she claims, "I found math pretty easy and was, well, tired of reading and writing."

"STATS WAS FINE—BUT WHEN I THOUGHT BACK ON MY REASONS FOR CHOOSING A MAJOR, I FELT LIKE A REAL WUSS," SHE RECALLED. "SO I DECIDED TO SUBJECT MYSELF AGAIN TO THE MOST CHALLENGING AND DEMANDING FIELD OF THEM ALL: PHILOSOPHY."

As she neared graduation, however, Kate realized that she hadn't the foggiest idea what to do afterwards. So one day she walked down the hall to the statistics department and asked if they'd accept her into their graduate program. They agreed.

But, shortly after she began her graduate studies in statistics, Kate had a strange and somewhat masochistic impulse. "Stats was fine — but when I thought back on my reasons for choosing a major, I felt like a real wuss," she recalled. "So I decided to subject myself again to the most challenging and demanding field of them all: philosophy."

Thus, on a whim, she enrolled in Wayne Wu's Advanced Philosophy of Language, along with her statistics coursework. She had no prior exposure to philosophy of language, nor to any philosophy called "advanced," and really didn't know what to expect.

In the end, though, she liked it. Wayne said of Kate, "Kate was a breath of fresh air to have in class, motivated, clear in thought, and extremely intelligent. I thought she would be a very successful graduate student and am pleased she ended up in graduate school at Ohio State."

In fact, Kate found the experience sufficiently stimulating that she decided to enroll in only philosophy courses for the next quarter. Inspired by the positive reception she continued to receive, the quarter after that she was taking graduate seminars.

By the end of that academic year, Kate knew that she wanted to finish a PhD in philosophy. But, when autumn came, she did not feel prepared to apply to philosophy graduate programs. She was also on track to finish her master's in statistics that year, and she was loath to ask the philosophy department to accept her as one of theirs.

Fortunately, however, she didn't have to: when she hinted about her lack of prospects, Stewart Shapiro (whose seminar she was then taking) suggested that she apply. She did. And so it came to pass that Kate McFarland joined the 2009 cohort of incoming Ohio State philosophy graduate students.

Of Kate's acceptance to the department, Stewart said, "Normally, when we consider an applicant for our graduate program, all we have to go on are letters of recommendation (which are usually glowing), a transcript, and a small writing sample. So there is always a certain amount of uncertainty. With Kate there was no such doubt. We already knew of her fine analytic mind, because of her excellent performance in seminar after seminar."

Kate fit right in and excelled in classes. As Ben Caplan put it, "Kate took three classes from me, and I don't think I was able to teach her anything. I swear she knew the answer to every single question I ever asked. Well, except maybe for that one time, when she said something true that wasn't the answer I had been looking for."

KATE LIKES TO BREAK HER WORKDAYS (AND NON-WORK DAYS) WITH NON-SEDENTARY BEHAVIOR—USUALLY WALKING (SHE'S NOTED FOR COMMUTING TO CAMPUS BY FOOT FROM JUST NORTH OF GERMAN VILLAGE, A ONE HOUR WALK) OR SOMETHING SHE CALLS "INTERPRETIVE STEP AEROBICS."

Kate is now in the Dissertation Prospectus Exam phase of the graduate program, working with William Taschek, whom she met during her early forays into philosophy as a statistician. "I could tell right away that he was the kind of person I'd be happy to write a dissertation for," Kate said of her advisor. "So far I've been completely right about that."

William feels the same about having Kate as one of his students. He said,"Working with Kate is a great pleasure. She is in many ways the ideal dissertation student, immensely bright, analytically acute, philosophically original, self-motivated, diligent, and someone from whom I am always learning — probably more than she is learning from me!"

Kate's dissertation work is inspired by the treatment in philosophy of language of disagreement about matters of taste and, to some extent, "merely verbal" disputes.

She commented: "From a sociological and social psychological perspective, I find it rather interesting that speakers engage in such activities. When I started reading the portrayals in philosophy, though, I thought: 'What is this? This is just taking some made-up dialogues and received assumptions about sameness of meaning, speaker competence, and the sorts of disputes that are reasonable to have, and then fiddling with formal models. I need to fix this.' "

Kate likes to break her workdays (and non-work days) with non-sedentary behavior — usually walking (she's noted for commuting to campus by foot from just north of German Village, a one hour walk) or something she calls "interpretive step aerobics."

Kate continues to maintain that she's pursuing a PhD in philosophy in fulfillment of a personal challenge and denies that she has any definite career plans (although she enjoys selling stuff on eBay and Amazon Marketplace and often identifies internet-based retail as her dream job). ■

PAVING THE PATH TO LAW SCHOOL:

Like others before him, Seth Rokowsky found his BA in philosophy perfect preparation for law. The University of Pennsylvania Law School grad said Law school is filled with hypotheticals, class debate, and a thirst for crystal clear writing, essentially my undergraduate philosophy experience in the legal context.

PHILOSOPHERS HAVE FUN:

When Associate Professor Roy Cook, PhD, 2000, isn't working on philosophy, he is reading comics or writing about them. He co-founded the comics theory blog PencilPanelPage. He also is an enthusiastic member of the Adult Fan of LEGO (AFOL) community and on the coordinating committee for Brickworld Chicago, the largest AFOL fan convention in North America. He built a number of six-foot, 60,000+ piece architectural models for the Minnesota Historical Society and the Minnesota History Museum.

A Philosopher in Lego Land: Roy Cook creates architectural marvels

FORMER GRADUATE STUDENT **ROY COOK**

Roy T. Cook, a graduate student at Ohio State from 1994 to 2000, wrote his dissertation, *Logic and Modeling: A New Perspective on Foundations*, under the supervision of advisor Stewart Shapiro, Neil Tennant, and George Schumm.

While he completed coursework for a master's degree in mathematics, he never completed the required thesis, noting that "overextending myself remains a characteristic feature of my academic and personal life!"

In August 2000, he married, received his PhD in philosophy, and moved to St. Andrews Scotland to begin work as a postdoctoral research fellow at *Arché: The AHRC Centre for the Philosophy of Logic, Language, Mathematics, and Mind.* It was a busy year for Roy.

After his stay at *Arché*, Roy spent three years at Villanova University, before joining the University of Minnesota–Twin Cities where he is associate professor, resident fellow of the Minnesota Center for Philosophy of Science and an associate fellow of the Northern Institute of Philosophy at the University of Aberdeen.

Roy works on issues in the philosophy of mathematics and logic; the common thread is a deep and abiding interest in paradoxes. He is a prominent defender of Scottish Logicism, a modification of Gottlob Frege's original logicist project designed to withstand the challenges posed by the Russell paradox.

Closely connected to this is his extensive work on the history of analytic philosophy — he is part of a small team of researchers who have produced the first complete translation of Frege's important *Grundgesetze der Arithmetik*.

Former graduate student Roy Cook

In philosophy of logic he is developing his "Embracing Revenge" view, an account of the Liar paradox and the Revenge Problem taking seriously the idea that natural languages are indefinitely extensible.

He is working on a novel version of logical pluralism that allows for more than one correct, best, or legitimate logic while still judging many logics, including, standard classical logic, to be incorrect.

"Fortunately, I think that the foundational problems I work on are important," he said, "But parodoxes are so cool, I would probably work on them anyway!"

In addition to work on logic and mathematics, Roy is interested in the aesthetics of comics. He co-edited *The Art of Comics: A Philosophical Approach* (Wiley-Blackwell 2012, with Aaron Meskin, University of Leeds), the first-ever anthology on the philosophy of comics from an analytic perspective (Ohio State philosophy alumnus Henry Pratt is a contributor to the volume).

Ohio State University Libraries' Billy Ireland Cartoon Library and Museum is one of the nation's best academic collections of comics and comics-related research material, but Roy said he was unaware of this resource. "If I had known about this collection when I was in graduate school, I might not have ever finished writing my dissertation, since I would have been too busy borrowing comics!"

Roy is the author of *A Dictionary of Philosophical Logic* (Edinburgh University Press 2007), the editor of *The Arché Papers on the Mathematics of Abstraction* (Springer 2007), and has two monographs coming out in 2013: "Key Concepts in Philosophy: Paradoxes" (Polity Press) and "The Yablo Paradox: An Essay on Circularity" (Oxford University Press).

He has published over fifty articles in journals and anthologies, and given talks on these topics and others in over a dozen countries on four continents. Roy co-founded the comics theory blog PencilPanelPage (with Frank Bramlett, University of Nebraska - Omaha, Michael Johnson, University of Texas – Austin, and Qiana Whitted, University of South Carolina), which can be found at: pencilpanelpage.wordpress.com

ROY REMEMBERS HIS YEARS AT OHIO STATE FONDLY; HE ATTRIBUTES MUCH OF HIS SUCCESS TO THE SUPPORTIVE AND NURTURING ENVIRONMENT HE FOUND HERE. HE CREDITS HIS DISSERTATION COMMITTEE WITH TEACHING HIM EVERYTHING IMPORTANT HE KNOWS ABOUT LOGIC AND THE PHILOSOPHY OF MATHEMATICS; AND INSISTS THAT "ALL THE DUMB STUFF I SAY IS STILL MY OWN FAULT."

Roy remembers his years at Ohio State fondly; he attributes much of his success to the supportive and nurturing environment he found here. He credits his dissertation committee with teaching him everything important he knows about logic and the philosophy of mathematics; and insists that "all the dumb stuff I say is still my own fault."

But, it wasn't all smooth sailing — he notes a faculty member once told him he should work on "real" philosophy, not just become a "paradox-monger." "I'm pretty glad I ignored that particular piece of advice!"

Roy feels a special debt to George Schumm (now emeritus): "Although I learned a lot from my advisors and others, including Glenn Hartz, Robert Kraut, Lisa Shabel, and William Taschek, it was Schumm who really stressed the fundamental importance of clarity and precision in philosophical argument and academic writing. I think George might have been the best in-the-classroom teacher I ever had."

George said, "What most deeply impressed me about Roy was the professional mind-set he brought to his time here. He was a young colleague in my eyes, more so than any other graduate student I can recall. His subsequent academic success is wholly unsurprising."

When Roy isn't working on philosophy, he is reading comics or speaking about them and related matters at fan conventions — and playing with LEGOs.

An enthusiastic member of the Adult Fan of LEGO (AFOL) community and a member of the coordinating committee for Brickworld Chicago, the largest AFOL fan convention in North America, he has built a number of six-foot, 60,000+ piece architectural models for the Minnesota Historical Society and the Minnesota History Museum.

He lives in Minneapolis with his wife, Alice; two cats, Freckles and Mr. Prickley; and approximately two million LEGO bricks.■

DUBROVNIK CONFERENCE

At Dubrovnik: Janice Dowell, Diana Raffman, David Rey, Eric Snyder, Stewart Shapiro, Michael Glanzberg

The annual Ohio State/Maribor conference in Dubrovnik was held June 11-15. The event was co-sponsored with the Department of Linguistics. The topic, contextualism and relativism, produced a fruitful exchange between renowned linguists and philosophers of language from the United States, Western Europe, and Central Europe.

Craige Roberts and Stewart Shapiro from Ohio State were joined by two linguists, Chris Barker and Chris Kennedy, and philosophers Berit Brogaard, Janice Dowell, Michael Glanzberg, Max Kölbel, and Diana Raffman. From Central Europe, our old friends Boran Berčić and Nenad Miščevic gave papers.

In addition, this year, we had a series of talks by graduate students: Ezra Cook, Jeff Dauer, and David Rey; our own Joe Reich and Eric Snyder; and, from the area, Martina Blečić and Dušan Dožudić.

The conference was exciting. More importantly, all of the speakers showed deep respect for each other, despite deep areas of disagreement. The tone was more that of a joint search for the truth, rather than debate for the sake of debate, which made the discussion lively and productive for everyone. The papers will show improvement as a result of the exchanges.

In addition to the formal conference, there were opportunities for everyone to enjoy themselves in a beautiful and charming venue.

Plans are underway for a special issue of *Inquiry* devoted to papers from this conference.

We look forward to the 2013 conference, to be jointly sponsored (as usual) by Ohio State's Department of Philosophy and our counterparts in Croatia and Slovenia, which will be held in Dubrovnik, Croatia, the week of June 17-21.

The 2013 conference will address the intersection of metaphysics and the philosophy of art. It will be organized by Ben Caplan and David Sanson. The philosophy of art is broadly construed to include not only the fine arts, such as painting and sculpture, but also architecture, fiction, poetry, music, dance, and drama.

Suggested paper topics include:

- the ontology of art or some specific artform (e.g., the ontology of fictional characters, the ontology of musical works)
- the definition of art in general or some specific artform the place of artwork and artforms in the world
- the philosophical and metaphysical significance of conceptual art or other non-traditional artforms
- the nature and ground of truth in fiction or other representational artforms
- the metaphysics of fiction and fictionalist metaphysics
- the philosophical and metaphysical significance of our critical or interpretative engagement with artworks
- the intentionality of representational art
- the metaphysics of art and early analytic philosophy ■

UNDER THE TREES: **THIRD ANNUAL UNDERGRAD RETREAT**

The third annual Dan Farrell Undergraduate Philosophy Retreat was another big success.

Philosophy majors Dima Vinogradsky, Amanda Kaczmarek, Jordan Patton, Lucas La Tour, Daniel Williams, and Mark Riggleman joined Professor Tim Schroeder and PhD student Christa Johnson for three days out at Jeffers Tree Farm to talk about philosophy, go hiking, eat some great food, and watch some philosophically-themed movies. The theme for this year's retreat was the infamous "brain-in-a-vat" scenario. The celebrated philosophical texts, *The Matrix*, and *The Thirteenth Floor*, supplied some basic premises, and a chapter from Hilary Putnam's, *Reason, Truth, and History* added some further grist for the mill.

The Putnam chapter was sent to the students ahead of time to prime them for the weekend, while the films were shown during the trip. Students were welcomed Friday night with dinner and a showing of *The Matrix*. Without any further prompting, the conversation instantly blossomed.

The following day, the students were invited to go on hikes, take a swim, or just sit by the fire and chat. Throughout the day the students engaged each other, as well as Tim and Christa in discussions regarding the possibility of a matrix, and what that would mean for theories of consciousness, phenomenology, and even morality.

On the second night *The Thirteenth Floor was shown*. This film, unknown to many them, was appreciated for its "brain-in-a-vat" allusions. In this film, students were challenged with the possibility that purported persons in virtual realities may indeed be full-blown moral agents who have experiences as well as some sort of consciousness not unlike our own. Discussion of this film was just as fruitful as the first, providing lively philosophical conversation Sunday morning as participants prepared to depart. The students left excited to continue discussion of the themes on their drive home and encourage their fellow philosophy friends to consider the trip in the future (unless they themselves were allowed to be a part of the trip twice of course).

As always, the retreat was made possible by Jim Jeffers, who kindly donates use of his tree farm for this purpose every year, and by Mike Perkins, who kindly provides financial support. Both Jim and Mike are alumni of Ohio State's philosophy department. Their generosity is always greatly appreciated by all.■

Undergraduate participants at Under the Trees Retreat

VAGUENESS WORKSHOP

PHILOSPHY/LINGUISTICS LAUNCH SUCCESSFUL NEW INTERDISCIPLINARY WORKSHOP

Last February, *Something About Vagueness*, an interdisciplinary two-day workshop on vagueness brought together experts from different fields and perspectives to shed light on vagueness as a linguistic phenomenon. Co-organized by Ohio State's philosophy and linguistics departments, the workshop featured speakers and commentators from both fields.

Speakers included Chris Barker, linguistics, NYU, *Negotiating Temperature Standards;* Chris Kennedy, linguistics, Chicago, *Vagueness, Imprecision, and Tolerance;* Diana Raffman, philosophy, Toronto, *Vague Words: Competent Use as Evidence for a Semantics;* Stewart Shapiro, *Vagueness, Open-Texture, and Retrievability;* and Eric Snyder, *Vagueness and Gradability.*

Ben Caplan (on Barker); Joseph Frazee, linguistics, UT Austin (on Snyder); Craige Roberts (on Shapiro); and Kevin Sharpe (on Kennedy) provided commentary.

Organizers Craige Roberts, Stewart Shapiro, and Eric Snyder created a workshop that provided a unique mix of speakers and commentators from different fields with philosophers receiving commentary from linguists and vice versa. This provided everyone a perspective they would not normally be exposed to.

It also allowed attendees — faculty and students from diverse departments, including philosophy, linguistics, German, computer science, mathematics, and psychology — to hear a wide range of perspectives on large and difficult topics.

Receptions were held after each day's sessions: Craige Roberts hosted a reception at her house and the Department of Philosophy sponsored a reception at Figlio restaurant.

Because the workshop, the first such co-organized workshop of its kind, was highly successful, both departments will hold another, similarly-structured workshop in winter 2013. The hope is that the Vagueness Workshop will be the first of many annual, interdisciplinary conversations to come.

Top scholars in both philosophy and linguistics have agreed to participate.

The workshop, held in the Senate Room of the Ohio Student Union, was made possible in part with the help of the undergraduate Philosophy Club.

Greg Kierstad created a website for the workshop: go.osu.edu/vagueness ■

UNDERGRADUATE PHILOSOPHY CONFERENCE

The Undergraduate Philosophy Club held its Annual Undergraduate Philosophy Conference in the Ohio Union May 11 and 12, 2012. This conference has been held most years for the past 30 years, and has become quite a tradition. It attracts undergraduate papers from across the country.

Because of the quality of papers submitted, the club had a difficult task narrowing the number of papers to 12. Selected papers covered a wide-range of topics including a new reading of Husserl, a fresh regimentation of Aristotle's logic, and a topical paper on Schaffer's negative nominals and counterfactual dependence, among many others.

Presenters hailed from across the country. Universities represented included Reed College and Mills College on the West Coast and the University of Florida and Duquesne University on the East Coast.

New to the conference this year, the club added a spot for an exceptional graduate student to showcase her work: Teresa Kouri presented her stimulating work-in-progress "Indistinguishability in Physics and Math." The project is a development of her master's thesis. In it, she defends the position that two similar problems concerning identity in mathematics and physics are at their cores different, and thus require different solutions.

The Keynote Address was by Ohio State Professor Robert Kraut, who presented a chunk of his *No Exit* book project, in a stylistically captivating and content-rich way. So rich in fact that the questions he raised appeared and continued to reappear throughout the conference. Many of the presenters were forced to face up to the challenges raised by Professor Kraut. ■

CONTINUING CONVERSATIONS

Immigration, both legal and illegal, is a topic that engenders strong sentiments these days. In public discourse about the topic, these sentiments aren't always conveyed in civil terms or supported with strong evidence. Last year, the Ohio State University Center for Ethics and Human Values (CEHV) Innovation Group undertook an ambitious project to contribute to correcting these problems with our public debates concerning immigration. The CEHV led the entire university in a civil and informed "conversation" on the thorny issue of immigration.

With support from President Gee and College of Arts and Sciences Executive Dean and Vice Provost Joseph Steinmetz what began as a more modest project grew into a year-long, university-wide "conversation" that took place under the banner of COMPAS, Conversations on Morality, Politics, and Society. The COMPAS project, organized by Don Hubin and Piers Turner and two of our colleagues from political science, Eric MacGilvray and Michael Neblo, was extremely broad and multifaceted, involving activities for faculty, students, and the wider community.

Here are just a few events that were part of the year-long "conversation" (for a full listing, visit the Immigration COMPAS website at (immigration.osu.edu):

- Two interdisciplinary conferences that brought to Ohio State world-renowned researchers to discuss philosophical, social, economic, political, and historical aspects of immigration
- Six COMPAS Colloquia examining the immigration issue through different disciplinary lenses
- Two film series, one book discussion series, and an arts exhibition exploring the issue
- The selection of *Outcasts United*, for Ohio State's incoming first-year students to read and discuss, tells the compelling true story of the employment of sports to build a community among refugee immigrants; and much more

The Immigration COMPAS project was originally planned as a one-off event, but it quickly became apparent to the organizers that it could be a prototype for an ongoing program that would enrich the discussion of moral issues at Ohio State. Because the Immigration COMPAS was such an extraordinary success, the College of Arts and Sciences has committed to establishing it as an annual event, beginning in the 2013-14 year, to be organized by the CEHV.

While COMPAS will be the Ohio State "face" of the center in the near term, it is far from the only project of the CEHV. In addition to the Democratic Governance focus group, the center has focus groups addressing such issues as: *Ethics and the Emotions* (led by Justin D'Arms); *Distributive Justice and Health Care*, (led by Ohio State philosophy PhD and Professor of Nursing Pam Salsberry and Ohio State College of Medicine Clinical Assistant Professor Mariko Nakano); *Institutions and Ethics* (led by Ohio State Political Science Assistant Professor S. M. Amadae); and *Animal Worlds in the Arts, Sciences, and Humanities* (led by Ohio State Distinguished Professor of English David Herman). ■

COMPAS
Conversations on Morality, Politics, and Society

THE ANNUAL FINK AND BINGHAM AWARDS

THE FINK AWARD, named in honor of William H. Fink, is awarded annually for the best graduate paper in philosophy. The award comes with a cash prize of $1,000 and has been awarded since 1980. The 2012 Fink Award is shared by Daniel Pearlberg and Eric Snyder. Daniel's paper is titled, "Modifying the Interventionalist Solution to the Problem of Causal Exclusion;" Eric's is called, "Vagueness and Gradability."

THE BINGHAM AWARD, named after William Bingham, is awarded annually for the best undergraduate paper in philosophy. The award comes with a cash prize of $500 and has been awarded since 1921. Kirun Sankaran is the 2012 Bingham Award competition winner for his essay on "Inferentialism and Indeterminacy: Kripke, Brandom and Wilson."

SOCIETY FOR EXACT PHILOSOPHY CONFERENCE

The Department of Philosophy will host the annual meeting of the Society for Exact Philosophy from October 11–13, 2012. The Society for Exact Philosophy is dedicated to providing sustained discussion among researchers who believe that rigorous methods have a place in philosophical investigations. This year, the conference will be organized by Stewart Shapiro and Teresa Kouri (a philosophy PhD student). Invited speakers include Robin Jeshion from the University of Southern California, JC Beall from the University of Connecticut, and Michael Glanzberg from Northwestern University.

The conference website, go.osu.edu/sep, contains much more information. This conference is made possible in part by the generous support of The Ohio State University, the philosophy department, and the Language or Logic Society. The Language or Logic Society is a student organization in the Department of Philosophy at Ohio State. It was founded in 2011 and has as a goal the facilitation of philosophical discussion concerning language and logic.■

WORDS ABOUT **EMERITI**

George Pappas' article, "Certainty and Knowledge of Objects in Berkeley" was published in Timo Airaksinen & Bertil Belfrage, editors, *Berkeley's Lasting Legacy*, Cambridge Scholars Press, 2011.

He also presented "Knowledge of the Nature of Objects," at the University of Zurich, April 2011; "Idealism, Materialism, Competition," at Hampden Sydney College Capstone lecture, April 2012, and "Locke's Account of Perception," at West Chester University, April 2012.

Dan Farrell presented a paper in December 2011 at a conference at the University of Pennsylvania College of Law (the conference topic was a legal problem called "The Problem of Actio Libera in Causa"). His paper was entitled "What Should We Say about Contrived 'Self-defense' Defenses?." As a result of this conference, he now has a paper entitled "What Should We Say about Contrived 'Self-defense' Defenses?" forthcoming in the journal *Criminal Law and Philosophy.*

He has another paper forthcoming in *Criminal Law and Philosophy*: it's entitled "Using Wrongdoers Rightly: Tadros on the Justification of General Deterrence."

Lee Brown published two articles. "Armstrong, Crosby, Dylan, Flavor Flav: Can American popular vocal music escape the legacy of blackface minstrelsy?" forthcoming, *Journal of Aesthetics and Art Criticism*, and an entry for "Jazz" in the forthcoming second edition of the *Encyclopedia of Aesthetics*.■

UNDERGRAD UPDATES

Chelsea Pflum, Winter Quarter, 2012. She is taking the year off to travel, backpacking around South Africa for a month in August and then plans to live for six months in São Paulo, Brazil beginning in October.

Matthew Verdin, Spring Quarter, 2012. Currently, he is a summer intern at the San Francisco office of the law firm, Covington & Burling, LLP. He will attend Stanford Law School in the fall.

Kirun Sankaran, Spring Quarter, 2012. He will pursue a master's degree in philosophy at the University of Wisconsin-Milwaukee in the fall.

Scott Ijaz graduated in 2012. He will work at the Hastings Center in New York, then on his bioethical thesis at Yale and the University of Edinburgh.

Lucas DuSablon, Winter 2012. Currently, he is in charge of development for a local non-profit called Clean Fuels Ohio, dedicated to promoting the use of cleaner, domestic fuels and efficient vehicles to the transportation industry, government, and general public.■

WORDS ABOUT THE **STUDENTS**

AWARDS:

Wes Cray won the Department of Philosophy Graduate Student Teaching Award this past spring.

Teresa Kouri was awarded the Social Sciences and Research Council of Canada Fellowship.

James McGlothlin was an invited Visiting Scholar at the Center for Philosophy of Religion, at Notre Dame, autumn semester 2011.

Daniel Pearlberg and **Eric Snyder** were co-winners of the 2012 Fink Award. Eric also won the Best Essay Award for his paper, "Frege's Other Puzzle," at the Indiana Philosophical Association.

PUBLICATIONS AND PRESENTATIONS:

Wes Cray's article, "Fightin' Words: Sabbath Doesn't Need the Ozzman," is forthcoming later this year in *Black Sabbath and Philosophy: Mastering Reality* (William Irwin, ed.), Blackwell-Wiley. Wes also gave a number of presentations this past year. He gave comments on "Fiction and Pretense" by Dimitria Gatzia and Eric Sotnak, at the Ohio Philosophical Association, Cleveland State University, March 2012; In April, Wes presented "Inconstancy and Content," at the Wisconsin Philosophical Association, Oshkosh, Wisconsin; "Some Ideas About Ideas and the Idea Idea," was presented at the Rocky Mountain Division of the American Society for Aesthetics, Santa Fe, New Mexico, July 2012; and again at the British Society of Aesthetics, Queen's College, Oxford, September 2012. Wes debated Timothy O'Connor (chair of philosophy, Indiana University) on *Faith and Reason* through the Veritas Forum.

Tim Fuller's article, "Is scientific theory change similar to early cognitive development? Gopnik on science and childhood," was published in *Philosophical Psychology*, (2012); Tim gave a number of presentations over the past year. His paper, "Non-conceptual content: The richness argument and early visual processing," was given at the Southwestern Philosophical Society, Austin, November 2011. "The cognitive development of scientific inference," was presented at the Midwest Workshop in Philosophy of Science, Technology, Engineering, and Mathematics, Indiana-Purdue University, November 2011. In February 2012, Tim presented the paper, "Is scientific inference holistic in any sense that matters for cognitive science?" With Richard Samuels at the Central APA, March 2012, Tim read the paper, "Extended Scientific Minds and Population-level Theory Change," at the Midwest Workshop in Philosophy of Science, Technology, Engineering, and Mathematics, Indiana-Purdue University. In addition to successfully defending his dissertation this summer, Tim also presented the paper, "Do theories of scientific inference have implications for ordinary cognition? Fodor on holism and cognitive architecture," with Richard Samuels, at The Society for Philosophy and Psychology, in Colorado, July 2012.

Teresa Kouri commented on a paper at the Western Canadian Philosophical Association, October 22, 2012 entitled "Plato and the Virtues of Millitary Units" and was an invited speaker at the Undergraduate Philosophy Conference on May 11, 2012. Teresa also was the organizer of the 2012 Society for Exact Philosophy Conference held October 11-13, 2012.

James McGlothlin presented "Logical Contradiction and God's Omnipotence" at the Annual Evangelical Philosophical Society, San Francisco, CA, November 18, 2011.

Eric Snyder was co-organizer of the *Something About Vagueness* conference held this year at the Ohio Union February 23 and 24, 2012. At the conference, Eric presented his paper, "Gradability and Vagueness;" he also presented a paper, "Frege's Other Puzzle," at the Indiana Philosophical Association April 20-21, 2012.

Daniel Wilkenfeld's article, "Understanding as Representation Manipulability" was published in the online version of *Synthese*, December 2011.

Danny Pearlberg presented "Modifying the Interventionist Solution to the Problem of Causal Exclusion" at the Indiana Philosophical Association conference (April 20-21, 2012), the 14th annual Pitt-CMU graduate student philosophy conference (April 6-7, 2012) and the Society for Philosophy and Psychology (poster presentation, June 21-23, 2012). He presented "An armchair approach to the experimental philosophy of mental causation" at the Midsouth philosophy conference (February 24-25, 2012) and "Mechanistic explanation and the classicism-connectionism debate" at the conference for the Canadian Society for the History and Philosophy of Science (May 27-29, 2012). He also presented "Reasons, Causes, and the Extended Mind Hypothesis" (with Tim Schroeder) at *Minds, Bodies, and Problems*, a philosophy of mind conference hosted by Bilkent University (June 7-12, 2012).■

WORDS ABOUT THE **FACULTY**

Ben Caplan's, "Ontological Superpluralism" appeared in Philosophical Perspectives in late 2011. In spring 2012 he visited the Centre for the Study of Mind in Nature at the University of Oslo. He gave talks there, in Denmark (at a workshop at the University of Copenhagen), and in Hong Kong (at the *Art and Metaphysics* conference at Lingnan University). He also commented on papers at the Central APA, the Pacific APA, and the Vagueness Workshop at Ohio State. In November he will be giving a talk at the PERSP Space and Time Workshop on Time and Identity in Barcelona.

Justin D'Arms is a major participant in a grant from the John Templeton Foundation for a research project on "The Science of Ethics." Daniel Jacobson at the University of Michigan is the Project Director. The portion of the grant supporting D'Arms' work will bring approximately $120,000 to Ohio State over three years.

Lisa Downing's article, "Maupertuis on Attraction as an Inherent Property of Matter," appeared in *Interpreting Newton*, eds. Janiak and Schliesser (Cambridge 2012), 280-298. Prof. Downing presented "Locke contra Descartes on Mind, Body, and Dualism," Symposium, at the Pacific Division APA Meetings, Seattle, April 2012. Another paper "Locke Contra Descartes on Body and Extension," was presented at the Substance in Early Modern Philosophy: A Memorial Conference for Roger Woolhouse, York, England, June 30-July 2, 2012. "Locke Contra Cartesian Dualism" will be given at the *Conference on Locke and Cartesianism*, in Lille, France, organized by Philippe Hamou and Martine Pécharman, September 20-22, 2012.

Don Hubin's "Reproductive Interests: Puzzles at the Periphery of the Property Paradigm," appeared in *New Essays in Political and Social Philosophy*, and in *Social Philosophy & Policy*, 29:1 (Winter 2012). His entry on "Fatherhood" will appear in the *International Encyclopedia of Ethics*, scheduled to be published by Blackwell in 2012 and his paper "Fractured Fatherhood" is forthcoming in the *Journal of Family Theory & Review*.

Lisa Shabel's *Mathematics in Kant's Critical Philosophy* has been reissued in paperback and she is at work on a new book project on diagrammatic reasoning and Kant's "Schematism." In addition to giving several colloquia and comments, she gave a talk at a conference on *Kant's Philosophy of Mathematics* at the University of Pittsburgh hosted by former Ohio State philosopher Bob Batterman. Prof. Shabel won the Virginia Hull Research Award and also was awarded a Special Assignment (Research Leave) for autumn 2011.

Declan Smithies has co-edited a book with Daniel Stoljar, *Introspection and Consciousness*, which was published by Oxford University Press, June 2012. Declan has co-authored an editorial introduction with Daniel Stoljar, "Introspection and Consciousness: An Overview" and also has contributed a chapter, "A Simple Theory of Introspection." Meanwhile, Declan is working on various articles, including "The Phenomenal Basis of Epistemic Justification" for *Philosophical Perspectives* and "The Mental Lives of Zombies" for *New Waves in Philosophy of Mind*, a Routledge volume edited by Jesper Kallestrup and Mark Sprevak. Over the next few months, Declan will be giving presentations at Oberlin College, Harvard University, and the University of Cologne in Germany.

Neil Tennant's book, *Changes of Mind: An Essay on Rational Belief Revision*, has been published by Oxford University Press.

Piers Norris Turner continues to work primarily on the moral and political thought of John Stuart Mill. He gave papers at the 12th Conference of the International Society for Utilitarian Studies and at Case Western Reserve University. His article, "Authority, Progress, and the 'Assumption of Infallibility' in On Liberty" will be published in January 2013. He is a member of the innovation group to establish a Center for Ethics and Human Values at Ohio State, and was an organizer of the campus-wide COMPAS program on immigration, as part of the center's effort.■

WORDS ABOUT **ALUMNI**

Cathy Muller received her PhD, March 2012. She also gave comments at a conference in April (the Aesthetics Society of America conference, Eastern division). The comments were on Ira Newman's paper "Blue Tigers and Black Holes: Imagining Logical Impossibility in Borges's Fictional World."■

THANK YOU FOR READING LOGOS!

We welcome your input. Please let us hear from you.

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