

PHILOSOPHY AT GUSTAVUS

November, 2006

WELCOME TO OUR INAUGURAL EDITION

Greetings to Gustavus philosophy grads!

Over the years, many of you have kept in touch with us in the philosophy department through an occasional letter or email. We especially appreciate it when you take the time to stop by the department for a chat. Some of us have even been here long enough that we're now seeing you at a second Gustavus graduation, as your child graduates from the college.

We have long talked about the idea of sending out an occasional newsletter to our grads. Like a lot of good intentions, our plans failed to materialize. This year is different. With the help of three of our current majors, Megan Buckingham, Jonathan Olson, and Andi Twiton, we are sending you the inaugural edition of the Philosophy Department newsletter.

Last year, after many years bouncing from one office space to another, we finally moved into a renovated Old Main. We're still on the first floor, but we moved diagonally across the building, and now have beautiful views of the valley.

Our department remains deeply involved in the life of the college. We have an especially strong group of majors and minors. Our faculty are involved in many programs outside the department, such as Women's Studies and Environmental Studies. We now have two recipients of the college's Carlson Award for excellence in teaching, Doug and Lisa. Doug returned to Gustavus this fall from a trip to India where he lectured on Wittgenstein, and I spent August in Peru, where I spoke at several universities on sustainability and global warming. Peg continues to be one of the college's leaders, as chair of the Women's Studies Program. George is enjoying a much deserved sabbatical this fall during which he is doing even more reading and writing than usual. We look forward to his return.

We hope you enjoy this newsletter. And please do stay in touch.

Deane Curtin

Professor of Philosophy, Chair

ABROAD TRIPS

Philosophy majors have been keeping themselves busy at Gustavus and some have chosen to study abroad. By studying abroad through the numerous programs offered at Gustavus students are provided with experiences that broaden their perspective. According the Department of International Education over 50% of Gustavus students study abroad. Here is a list of philosophy majors (and minors) who have studied abroad in the past two years.

Fall 2005

Elizabeth Harri studied abroad in Senegal through the School for International Training.

Desiree Danielzuk studied Buddhist practices in India through Antioch College

Megan Buckingham studied abroad in Spain through the Institute for the International Education of Students

Fall 2006

Drew Hood is currently studying in England through Butler University

May Vang is currently studying in Thailand through the Council on International Educational Exchange



Our friend, Socrates, found a new home among the department's new office decorations.

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This edition of Philosophy at Gustavus was written and edited by:
Megan Buckingham, Jon Olson,
and Andi Twiton

MEET THE FACULTY



From Left to Right: Doug Huff, Peter Shea, Lisa Heldke, Peg O'Connor, and Deane Curtin

Doug Huff

As both a philosopher and a playwright, Doug Huff's recent work includes a talk on "Emil's Enemies," an original play, at Oxford University last January. In August he spoke on the nature of historical drama at the Theatre Academy in Bangalore India. Along the lines of philosophic work, Huff gave a paper, "Wittgenstein and the Paradox of Consciousness" in Calcutta, India last July. Huff is currently teaching courses on ancient philosophy, existentialism and the philosophy senior seminar. Huff was also elected a visiting fellow at Oxford University for 2007-08.

Lisa Heldke

Lisa Heldke was recently appointed Sponberg Chair in Ethics and was invited to be a presenter at the annual Institute in American Philosophy last summer. Her recent publications include several papers including "The Unexamined Meal is Not Worth Eating," and "A DuBoisean Proposal for Persistently White Colleges" as well as *Exotic Appetites: Ruminations of a Food Adventurer*. Current research includes examining the notion of "radical listening" and the continuation of a long term project on the notion of cosmopolitanism versus localism considered through the frame of food and agriculture. Heldke is currently teaching American Philosophy, Modern Philosophy, Racism and Sexism, a Curriculum II course entitled Individual and Society, School and Society and a seminar on Philosophy of Food.

Peter Shea

Peter Shea is a visiting professor from the University of Minnesota teaching two sections of Racism and Sexism at Gustavus for the semester. He has just finished his thesis entitled "The Arguments of Our Lives: the Role of Lives in Moral Reflection and Moral Teaching." Over the years he's also been involved in the production of a regional cable show, *The Bat of Minerva*, which consists of one hour life history interview with philosophically engaging people. In addition, Shea has been working on an experimental course called "Lives Worth Living: Questions of the Self, Vocation, and Community" through the University of Minnesota. Current research interests include the traditions of democratic process, philosophic work with children, various literatures and their philosophic importance, museums as tools for inquiry and ethical reflection and the possibility that the philosophic inquiry was one thread in the thinking of Jesus.

Deane Curtin

Deane Curtin, the current chair of the philosophy department, continues to work on a range of philosophical topics including philosophy of the environment. Recent publications include a book entitled *Environmental Ethics for a Postcolonial World*, published (See "Meet the Faculty" on page 4)

SPEAKING EVENTS AT GUSTAVUS

The Philosophy department continues to contribute to the college by sponsoring a number of speaking events. Gustavus students have been invited to events featuring scholars from other schools and, in the near future, events where they can hear the work of their fellow classmates. In short, the department has made sure that students have plenty of chances to see philosophy being done outside of the classroom.

In the past year and a half, the department sponsored five opportunities to see professional thinkers at work. Arthur Fine of the University of Washington came in connection with the 2005 Nobel Conference: The Legacy of Einstein. Fine's talk was entitled "What was he thinking? Einstein's Struggle with the Quantum." During that same fall semester, Elizabeth Spellman of Smith College delivered a lecture on some of her recent intellectual pursuits called "Two Concepts of Abundance." Sean D. Kirkland gave a lecture, "Letting the Good Appear More Clearly: The Phenomenological Ethics of Aristotle's RHETORIC," later that school year. Kirkland, a Gustavus Alum, is now at DePaul University. In the spring of 2006, the



Martin Gunderson delivered a talk on human rights during this fall semester.

Moe Lectureship brought activist and scholar Angela Davis to Gustavus from the University of California, Santa Cruz. Davis spoke to over 500 people in Alumni Hall on diversity, immigration, and prison reform. Most recently, the 2006 Nobel Conference centered around Medicine caused the philosophy department to invite Martin Gunderson of Macalester College to speak. "Human Rights and Genetic Enhancements" was the title of Gunderson's lecture.

Gustavus students will get a shot at presenting their own ideas to their fellow students beginning this fall. The idea is to provide a speaking venue for students to share some of their works in progress. Senior Philosophy major, Elizabeth Harri, hopes to be the first of many to present their recent thoughts in this fashion. Harri's topic will be "Critique of Oral Reason and Placing the work of Mamoussé Diagne in Context," which stems from her time abroad in Senegal. Philosophy Chair, Deane Curtin, hopes this new opportunity will demonstrate that the work of philosophy is being done right here by Gustavus students, that it does not always have to come from another school.



Angela Davis visited campus in the spring of '06 to share an evening with Gustavus Students.

WHAT'S NEW IN OLD MAIN?

When it came time to renovate Old Main, the architects began with two old drawings from the college archives. The caption on the one read "Plan for a Swede College" and back in 1876 this drawing started the process of what would become the college's first building. In the 130 years since that idea became a building, Old Main has evolved from the all-purpose, lone building on campus to the nameless "Main Building" amidst the expanding college, from the magnificent and historic building speckled with window air-conditioning units to a building where lights turn on automatically when a person enters the room. The latest news is that the new renovations to the ever-flexible Old Main are now done and the building has been rededicated as of October 8th, 2005. Since then, the changes have been well received and the building well used.

Although work was done to the outside of the building, the most noticeable changes happened inside. Besides a new paint job, the building now has two staircases, an elevator, and central air-conditioning among other things. In response to the renovations, Professor Doug Huff said that for the first time in all his years at Gustavus "the inside of Old Main looks as dignified as the outside." Or maybe he just likes that his new office overlooks the valley.

After being scattered about the campus for the duration of the changes, professors are now settled back in and classes are again being held in Old Main. The Classics and Philosophy departments even have a bit of a competition going between them to see who can best decorate their new office space. Classics got off to a quick start but the Philosophy department did some catching up over the summer when Doug Huff, after some prodding from Lisa Heldke, did a little bit of decorating. A visitor to the office will now be greeted by a bust of Socrates and posters of Hypatia, Wittgenstein, Russell, Kant, Kierkegaard, Hume, and of Raphael's painting *The School of Athens*. There's no word yet as to whether Classics will counter or not.



The newly renovated Old Main. It's hard to see the renovations from here. You should stop by to see the inside!

READY FOR SOME FUN?

Do you want to play around with some philosophy to remind you of your time at Gustavus? Try this logic problem.

The Surprise Test: One day the professor came into the class and announced, "Next week I will give you a surprise test. It will be a surprise, because you won't be able to figure out on which day it will occur until the class meets on the day of the test. It could happen on Monday, Tuesday, Wednesday, Thursday, or Friday, but I won't tell you which day."

The class was clever. They reasoned as follows: "She can't give the test on Friday, because then it wouldn't be a surprise; we'd know after class on Thursday that the test hadn't yet occurred, and hence we'd figure out that it would have to be on Friday. So we know the test can't be on Friday. But then it can't be on Thursday either, because if it were, we would know after class on Wednesday that it would have to be on Thursday, since it wouldn't have happened yet, and we have already shown that it can't be on Friday." Reasoning in this manner, the students concluded that the test could not occur on Wednesday either, nor on Tuesday, nor on Monday. Having concluded that a surprise test was impossible, the students didn't study. They were very disappointed and very surprised on Wednesday when they got a test. Where did the students' reasoning go wrong?

American Philosopher W.V. Quine found a solution to this problem. You can test your solution against his at the website below.

<http://www.rochester.edu/College/PHL/puzzle-answers.html>

For more problems like this one you can visit:

<http://www.rochester.edu/College/PHL/puzzles.html>

MEET THE FACULTY (CONT'D FROM P. 2)

in 2005. Curtin is also working on a forthcoming book *Postcolonial Environmental Ethics*. In August, he presented "Educating for Sustainability: An Ethical Imperative," at a number of Peruvian universities including Cesar Vallejo University in Trujillo, Peru. Curtin is currently teaching Individual and Community, Ethical Theory, Philosophy of the Environment and a seminar on Spinoza and Dogen.

Peg O'Connor

A philosopher by trade and also the chair of the Women's Studies Program, Peg O'Connor has been teaching courses in philosophy at Gustavus for a number of years. This fall she was officially recognized as a member of the philosophy department faculty. In 2004-05, O'Connor was a fellow at the University of Connecticut Humanities Institute, working on a book entitled *Morality and Our Complicated Form of Life*. Recently published work includes *Oppression and Responsibility*, and the co-edited volume *Feminist Interpretations of Wittgenstein*.

George Georgacarakos

Because he's on sabbatical for fall and January Term, we didn't want to bother George Georgacarakos to find out what he's been up to lately.

THANK YOU

First of all, thank you for reading.

Next,

WE WANT TO KNOW WHAT YOU ARE UP TO!

Please see the attached sheet for how to contact us.

We do hope you will stop to see us sometime.

Take care.

GUSTAVUS 
GUSTAVUS ADOLPHUS COLLEGE

FUTURE EDITIONS AND ALUMNI OPPORTUNITIES

Alumni Notes in Future Editions

The department knows that graduates are currently doing amazing things. Here's a quick and very incomplete list of how Gustavus philosophy graduates are currently gainfully employed: social workers, small business owners, librarians, woodworkers, doctors, American Sign Language interpreters, clinical researchers, pastors, engineers, sales and service representatives, primary and secondary schoolteachers, lawyers, radio correspondents, financial analysts, physical therapists, project managers, realtors, ecological educators, bankers, nurses, and, yes, philosophy professors.

We hope to provide several opportunities to highlight our Alumni in events like the one below and in future editions of this newsletter in a section called Alumni Notes. Please send us updates on all you are up to.

“MOM, DAD...I’M A PHILOSOPHY MAJOR!”

Over the course of the past two semesters the philosophy department has started a new series of events called “Mom, Dad...I’m a philosophy major!” Graduates of the Gustavus philosophy department have returned to St. Peter to chat with current students and faculty about their lives after college and how their philosophy major has served them in their varied endeavors.

In the spring of 2006, four alumni of the department met with Gusties in St. Peter for pizza and conversation. Students were able to get a glimpse of the diverse applications of a degree in philosophy from alumni Randy Morris-Ostrom, a lawyer, Kaaren Williamson-Garbey, the director of Carlton’s Gender and Sexuality Center, Kristi Brown, a family therapist and Bethany Mueller, a staff coordinator at Holden Village.

This fall Gusties got the opportunity to have dinner with Steve Bloom, the owner and CEO of successful business/accounting firm Pragmatek. Bloom spoke about the importance of his philosophy major for the development of key skills he relies on in the business world.

If you’re interested in participating in this series please contact the philosophy department.

Drop Us a Quick Note

The department would really appreciate hearing from you. You can do this by returning this form to us by mail, sending us an email covering the same information, or you can just stop by to chat sometime. We do not care how it gets to us so long as we get an update somehow.

The following information would be particularly helpful:

Name and Graduating Class:

What have you been up to lately? Any recent news for future Alumni Notes?

Would you be interested in speaking at a “Mom, Dad... I’m a Philosophy Major” event?

Yes No

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