



# Philosophile

## Letter from the Chair



A warm welcome to all readers of this, the first issue of **Philosophile**, the Department of Philosophy Newsletter. I thank Robert Burch for agreeing to serve as its first editor, and to Jessica Moore for her tireless design and production work. We plan to make *Philosophile* an annual event that allows you to keep in touch with developments in our department.

Another annual event that we hope keeps you in touch with the department is our new **Annual Public Lecture in Philosophy**. The inaugural lecture will be given by Adam Morton on **April 8 at 3:30** and is entitled "**Anguish, Despair, Acceptance**". Everyone is welcome to both it and the reception which follows. Details can be found below.

The last few years have seen dramatic changes to the make-up of the department. **W. David Sharp**, former department Chair, retired in 2007 after 36 years at the University of Alberta. A retirement party was held at the home of **Glenn Griener**, full of speeches, reminiscences, and gifts. **Allen Carlson** decided to retire in June 2008 after 39 years on staff, but opted to take a 2 year half-time post-retirement arrangement that has kept him busy teaching and helping out around the department.

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## Public Lecture: Adam Morton

We are pleased to announce the first Annual Public Lecture in Philosophy. This inaugural lecture, entitled "**Anguish, Despair, Acceptance**," will be given by Adam Morton, on April 8, 3:30 pm. It will be held in the Biological Sciences Building, Microbiology Wing M-145, on Saskatchewan Drive. The lecture is free and open to the public, with a reception to follow. We hope to see you there! This lecture is made possible through the sponsorship of the Alberta Foundation for the Arts.



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## Research Profile: Rob Wilson



Rob's work ranges across the philosophy of mind, cognitive science, philosophy of biology, the history of modern philosophy, and disability studies. Since his move to Alberta in 2000, his research has focused on the "individual in the fragile sciences" project, which so far has produced *Boundaries of the Mind* (Cambridge University Press, 2004) and *Genes and the Agents of Life* (Cambridge University Press, 2005). His major individual research project for the next few years is to complete a third book in this series that is focused on kinship and sociality in the social sciences. Rob has also initiated several large-scale, community-oriented research projects associated with the What Sorts Network ([www.whatsorts.net](http://www.whatsorts.net)), whose work is focused on understanding the nature of human diversity and variation, our ability to influence this variation, and what this means for social policy and communal living. Rob is the principal investigator for the recently CURA-funded, 5-year project Living Archives on Eugenics in

Western Canada, leading a team of 24 researchers and community activists. Rob also directs Philosophy for Children Alberta ([www.ualberta.ca/~phil4c](http://www.ualberta.ca/~phil4c)), promoting the teaching of critical thinking skills through philosophical dialogue in Alberta schools. Further details can be found at his website ([www.arts.ualberta.ca/robwilson](http://www.arts.ualberta.ca/robwilson)). Rob is a Fellow of the Royal Society of Canada.

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## Research Profile: Jenny Welchman



Jennifer's interests are in ethical theory, the history of ethics in the empiricist tradition, and environmental ethics. As an historian, Jennifer is perhaps best known for her work in pragmatic moral theory, including her book, *Dewey's Ethical Thought*, as a major text in the field. She has also edited a collection on virtue ethics, *The Practice of Virtue*, which provides readings from five classical thinkers together with new essays from contemporary thinkers on applied topics in virtue ethics. Jennifer's current research is in the area of environmental stewardship. Although in the public sphere stewardship has become an accepted way of conceptualizing morally decent conduct towards the environment, critics claim that this approach is morally problematic. Some argue that it is inherently sexist, speciesist, or anthropocentric. Others argue that stewardship of nature is a wholly impractical role to try to adopt because we cannot 'manage' nature and/or be held accountable by future generations if we fail to do so. Jennifer believes these criticisms are surmountable. Despite its origins in morally questionable social systems, environmental stewardship, like 'democracy' (another concept with equally questionable historical associations) has undergone important modifications of meaning in recent decades. Drawing upon contemporary environmental advocacy and public

policy literature, Jennifer aims to present and defend a conception of environmental stewardship that is not vulnerable to such objections.

## Karen Pilkington



Karen Pilkington was a much-loved teacher and colleague in the Department, serving as a sessional instructor from 1996-1999. She was a gifted teacher, with a verve and passion for philosophy that could not help inspiring those around her. She died of leukemia in 2000, and we felt and feel her loss deeply.

In the days before her death, with a grace and integrity and self-possession that would humble a Stoic, Karen helped us to think about how we might honor her memory. Please consider supporting the **Karen Pilkington Memorial Scholarship in the History of Philosophy**, which supports a bi-annual undergraduate prize.

Karen also recorded an interview, from her hospital bed, about how she came to philosophy, what she loved about it, and the advice she'd have for those new to the discipline. You can listen to this interview at: [www.arts.ualberta.ca/~whyphil](http://www.arts.ualberta.ca/~whyphil)



## Anna Kessler

Anna Kessler was working towards her PhD in Philosophy when she passed away suddenly in March 2005. Her research interests included Kant, Kierkegaard, and Ethics, which helped inform her brilliant reviews of recording artists, such as Nick Cave, in *See Magazine*. Anna's paper, "Faith, Doubt, and the Imagination: Nick Cave and the Divine-Human Encounter" appeared in *Call Me the Seeker: Listening to Religion in Popular Music*, edited by Michael J. Gilmour (New York: Continuum).

On July 21, 2006 a dedicatory tree was planted and a bench installed in Anna's memory on the south lawn of the Humanities Centre. Anna's PhD degree was granted posthumously at the November 2005 Convocation.

## Letter from the Chair

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**Wesley Cooper** likewise decided to retire in June 2009 after 38 years, and also opted for the 2 year half-time post-retirement arrangement. We'll be holding retirement parties for each and urge all of you to send greetings and any reminiscences you have to **Anita Theroux** ([anita.theroux@ualberta.ca](mailto:anita.theroux@ualberta.ca)), our department administrator.

Meanwhile, new regular staff members continue to join the department and keep it interesting: **Philip Corkum** in 2005, **Marie-Eve Morin** in 2007, **Katalin Bimbó**, **Ingo Brigandt**, and **Geoffrey Rockwell** in 2008, and **Chloë Taylor**, **Neil Dalal**, and **Howard Nye** in 2009. Details about them and their research can be found in *Newer Faculty* on page 5. We also welcome back **F. Jeffry Pelletier** who will be well known to many of you. Jeff retired after 32 years at the U of A in 2003 to take up a Tier I Canada Research Chair in Linguistics and Philosophy at Simon Fraser, but returned to Alberta in 2009 as a long term Visiting Professor.

Department members continue to receive honours and awards for their teaching and research. Of particular note is the recent election of **Robert Wilson and Jeff Pelletier** as **Fellows of the Royal Society of Canada**, one of the greatest honours that an academic can receive in Canada. Congratulations are in order to them as they join **Adam Morton** in that august body.

We hope that you enjoy reading more below about our students and colleagues and their activities and achievements. We intend this newsletter for you; please stay in touch and share your news with us. And please visit our web page:

[www.uofaweb.ualberta.ca/philosophy](http://www.uofaweb.ualberta.ca/philosophy)



## Recent Graduates

- Jenny Woo (MA) “Understanding National Authenticity” sup. Donald Ipperciel
- Edwin Etiyibo (PhD) “David Gauthier’s Moral Contractarianism and the Problem of Secession” sup. Wes Cooper
- Shaheen Islam (PhD) “Stuff, Universals, and Things: some themes from metaphysics” sup. Adam Morton
- Julian Fowke (MA) “Rule-Forming, Meaning, and Thinking About Thought” sup. Bruce Hunter
- Justin Jalea (MA) “Calibrating Intuition: A Defense of Standard Philosophical Analysis” sup. Adam Morton
- Aristotle Hadjiantoniou (MA) “Many-Sorted Free Logic” sup. Adam Morton
- Jaclyn Rohel (MA) “Food and Philosophy: Eating as a Way of Life” sup. Cressida Heyes and Jennifer Welchman
- Andrew Ross (MA) “AD/HD, Ethics, and Social Justice” sup. Jennifer Welchman

## Philosophy for Children

Philosophy for Children Alberta (P4CA) was formed in May 2008 in the Department of Philosophy by Professor Rob Wilson and 13 graduate students with the aim of facilitating the introduction of philosophical dialogue and active learning strategies as a basis for developing critical thinking skills in students and building communities of inquiry in Alberta classrooms. Montclair State University’s novel-based Philosophy for Children Program—a complete methodology and set of instructional materials for teaching philosophy in schools—has proven effective in achieving these goals in many other jurisdictions, and so has been our initial focus. P4CA has begun achieving its mission in four important ways:

### ***The uptake of the Philosophy for Children program by Alberta***

***schools.*** Since initially offering training and support to educators outside the Department of Philosophy in January 2009 the program is now being used in eight schools throughout the province, including in all grades at Indus School in the Rocky View School District, and is being reviewed for widespread adoption by the Edmonton Public School Board. With the exposure that the program will gain through invited sessions at both major Edmonton-area teacher conventions in February it is a reasonable expectation that the number of participating schools will grow rapidly over the next twelve months. Over the past 6 months, P4C Alberta has introduced over 400 teachers in the public and separate school systems to this curriculum and methodology.

### ***The creation of a summer day-camp based on the programs being used in schools.***

Called EUREKAMP!, this camp was offered for the first time in July 2009. Recognizing that young people would not be interested in

attending a day-camp that appeared to be even remotely based on reading, a program was developed that used activities and games to promote philosophical inquiry. The results of the one-week trial were so encouraging that the Edmonton Community Foundation initiated a partnership and has already donated \$3000 towards covering the registration costs of youth who would not otherwise be able to benefit from the educational experience offered by EUREKAMP!

### ***The introduction of a P4C variant of Philosophy 101.***

This class exposes participants and teaching assistants to collaborative methods of critical inquiry by

making these approaches the primary method of instruction within the class. This places skill development at the forefront of the class for stu-

dents and teaching assistants. The first version of this class was offered in the Fall 2009 by John Simpson, an award-winning instructor. A revised version, complete with a community service learning component, is being offered currently.

### ***The development of the Philosopher in Residence Program.***

Led by Philosophy Professors Wilson, Morin, and Nye and PhD Candidate John Simpson, this program will provide participating Alberta schools with an immersion in philosophy for children throughout the month of May. By working together with students and teachers over a full week and meeting with parent groups and other stakeholders, faculty and trainee graduate students will significantly advance project goals. Three of the four weeks to be initially offered were booked by principals who had attended training workshops within a week of simply proposing the possibility of the program.

[www.ualberta.ca/~phil4c](http://www.ualberta.ca/~phil4c)



## Newer Faculty

**Katalin Bimbó:** Katalin Bimbo joined our Department in 2008, having received a Diploma in philosophy from Moscow State University in 1986, a doctorate in logic from Eötvös Loránd University, Hungary, in 1994, and a PhD in philosophy and cognitive science in 1999 from Indiana University, Bloomington. Her main research area is logic, with a special interest in nonclassical logics, including relevance and substructural logics, combinatory logics and  $\lambda$ -calculi. She has recently published with J. Michael Dunn a book on the relational semantics of nonclassical logical calculi, K. Bimbó and J. M. Dunn, *Generalized Galois Logics. Relational Semantics of Nonclassical Logical Calculi*, CSLI Lecture Notes, v. 188, CSLI, Stanford, CA, 2008.

**Ingo Brigandt:** Upon completing his Ph.D. at the University of Pittsburgh, Ingo Brigandt came to the University of Alberta in 2006. After the tenure of an Killam Post-doctoral Fellowship, he has been Assistant Professor of Philosophy since 2008. While his speciality is the philosophy of biology, his research ties into epistemology and the philosophy of mind and language, as he studies the rationality of semantic change in the history of biology and how the context-sensitive use of biological terms supports successful scientific practice. Ingo Brigandt is principal investigator of the 2008–2011 SSHRC project ‘Integrating different biological approaches: a philosophical contribution’, a collaborative project involving several philosophers and biologists.

**Phil Corkum:** Phil Corkum works on, and teaches, ancient philosophy and metaphysics. His current project, funded by a Social Sciences and Humanities Research Council of Canada Standard Research Grant, concerns Aristotle’s ontology and touches on issues in the philosophy of language, philosophy of mind and philosophy of logic. Corkum has graduate degrees in Classics from Dalhousie, and in Philosophy from King’s College London and UCLA. He taught at the University of Colorado, Boulder, before joining the University of Alberta in 2005.

**Neil Dalal:** Neil Dalal joined the faculty of the University of Alberta as an Assistant Professor in July of 2009 with a cross-appointment in the Department of Philosophy and the Religious Studies Program. He recently graduated from the Department of Asian Studies at the University of Texas at Austin with a Ph.D. in Asian Cultures and Languages. Professor Dalal’s main area of research interest is philosophy and religious thought in classical India. His research focuses on theories of liberation, religious experience, and the intersections of textual study and contemplative practice in the Advaita Vedanta philosophy. Dalal has lived and conducted research in India for approximately four years, where he studied Sanskrit philosophical texts and worked with traditional scholars and monks .

**Marie-Eve Morin:** Marie-Eve Morin received her Ph.D. from the University of Freiburg in Germany in 2005. She then spent two years teaching at the University of Winnipeg before joining the University of Alberta in 2007. She specializes in recent continental philosophy, more precisely existentialism and phenomenology (Husserl, Heidegger, Sartre) and criticisms of that tradition by “post-structuralist” or “post-phenomenological” thinkers (Derrida, Levinas, Blanchot, Lyotard, Nancy). Her doctoral research dealt with questions of alterity, selfhood and community and her current research focuses on the ontology of the world and globalization. She teaches courses in phenomenology, post-structuralism and philosophy and literature .

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## Newer Faculty

*Continued from page 5*

**Howard Nye:** Howard Nye joined the Philosophy Department at the University of Alberta as an Assistant Professor in July of 2009, after having received a BA (philosophy major; mathematics minor) from Columbia University (2003) and a PhD in philosophy from the University of Michigan in 2009. His doctoral research (*Ethics, Fitting Attitudes, and Practical Reason: A Theory of Normative Facts*) examined such questions as, what is it for ethical judgments to be correct? how can we determine the right answers to ethical questions? arguing that we can analyze ethical concepts in terms of the rationality of specific motivationally laden attitudes. Howard's main areas of research interest include: Meta-ethics, Moral Psychology, Normative Ethics, Political Philosophy, and Applied Ethics.

**Geoffrey Rockwell:** Geoffrey Rockwell joined the faculty at the University of Alberta in 2008 as a Professor of Philosophy and Humanities Computing. He received a B.A. in philosophy from Haverford College, an M.A. and Ph.D. in Philosophy from the University of Toronto and worked at the University of Toronto as a Senior Instructional Technology Specialist. From 1994 to 2008 he was at McMaster University where he was the Director of the Humanities Media and Computing Centre (1994 - 2004) and he led the development of an undergraduate Multimedia program funded through the Ontario Access To Opportunities Program. He has published and presented papers in the area of philosophical dialogue, textual visualization and analysis, humanities computing, instructional technology, computer games and multimedia. He is the project leader for the CFI (Canada Foundation for Innovation) funded project TAPoR, a Text Analysis Portal for Research, which has developed a text tool portal for researchers who work with electronic texts and he organized a SSHRC funded conference, The Face of Text in 2004. He has published a book "Defining Dialogue: From Socrates to the Internet" with Humanity Books.

**Chloë Taylor:** Chloë Taylor joined the Philosophy Department at the University of Alberta as an Assistant Professor in July of 2009. Previously she taught in the Philosophy department at the University of North Florida, at McGill University (where she had a postdoctoral fellowship) and at the University of Toronto (where she did her Ph.D.). She also has a Masters degree in Art History. Professor Taylor works in the areas of 20<sup>th</sup>-century French philosophy, especially the work of Michel Foucault; feminist philosophy and the philosophy of sexuality; animal ethics and the philosophy of food. She also has interests in the philosophy of art and literature and the history of philosophy. This year she is teaching Values and Society, Knowledge and Reality, Philosophy of Food (Current Research in Philosophy), Philosophies of Oppression (Fourth Year Honours Seminar), and Philosophy of Sexuality (Third Year Honours Seminar).



## Graduate Awards

We would like to acknowledge the outstanding achievements of our Graduate Students (current and entering graduate students) 2009:

- **John Kardosh** received a SSHRC Foreign Study Supplement, which allowed him to visit Harvard University.
- **Jordan Glass, Natalie Helberg, Brent Vizeau and Greg Weber** received 2009 Joseph-Armand Bombardier Canada Graduate Scholarship—Master’s (SSHRC).
- **Andrei Buleandra and Joel Buening** received SSHRC Doctoral Fellowships and the President’s Doctoral Prize of Distinction.
- **Ben McMahan** received a University of Alberta Master’s Scholarship.
- **Sara Weaver, David Pitcher, Michael Flood, John Kardosh, and Peter Buijs** received Queen Elizabeth II Graduate Scholarship—Master’s.
- **Bart Lenart and Mike Lockhart** received Queen Elizabeth II Graduate Scholarships—Doctoral.
- **Joel Buening** received an Andrew Stewart Memorial Graduate Prize
- **David Pitcher** received the John Macdonald Scholarship in Philosophy.
- **Rachel Loewen Walker** received a 2009 Joseph-Armand Bombardier Canada Graduate Scholarship—Doctoral (SSHRC).
- **Hasan Masoud** received a 2009 Provost Doctoral Entrance Award.

## Thank-you to our Donors!

We are sincerely grateful for continued donations to the Department of Philosophy. Such donations help in vital ways to sustain and improve the life of the Department and to support philosophical activities and events that, for want of such support, would have to be foregone.

We would like in particular to thank our 2009-2010 donors: **Mrs. Elizabeth King-Farlow; Mr. Henry Parker and Mrs. Sonia Parker; Mr. Larry Buchinski and Ms. Delmarie Sadoway**, and our donors to the fund in Memory of H. J. Lyndon Irwin: **Mrs. Cecily McLaughlin; Anne S. de Villars of Jones de Villars; Mrs. Hedy Denham and Dr. Ross Denham; The Hon Justice Catherine A. Fraser and Richard C. Fraser, QC; Mrs. Christina Gawne; Mr. Gilbert Heise and Mrs. Marilyn Heise; Ms. Susan McGinn; Mr. R Joseph Montpetit and Mrs. Varlyne Montpetit; Law Society of Alberta; Ms. Paulette Lawczynski and Mr. Peter Lawczynski; Mr. Gary Frohlich; Miss Martha Henderek; Judge Hugh W. A. Fuller; Mr. K. H. Bell; Events Edmonton; Mr. James Toplensky; Ms. Sandra Petersson.**

### How To Donate

If you are interested in donating to the Department of Philosophy, or would simply like more information about donating, please contact:

Anita Theroux, Administrator, Department of Philosophy, Assiniboia Hall 2-40,  
(780) 492-4102, [anita.theroux@ualberta.ca](mailto:anita.theroux@ualberta.ca)

Donations to the Department of Philosophy are tax deductible. Please make cheques payable to the University of Alberta. Alternately, you may donate via Electronic Fund Transfer (bank withdrawal, void cheque) or credit card (MC/VISA/Amex).

### Izaak Walton Killam Memorial Postdoctoral Fellowship

The Department has a remarkable record of securing young Killam Fellows over the years: **Gillian Russell** (Princeton) and **Yujin Nagasawa** (Australian National University) in 2004; **Gabriella Coleman** (Chicago) and **Ingo Brigandt** (Pittsburgh) in 2006; **Joanne Faulkner** (LaTrobe) in 2007; **Robert Nichols** (Toronto) in 2009, and currently **Georg Theiner** (Indiana). Only 5-8 Fellowships are awarded annually in a university wide competition, and, with only about 2% of the university’s faculty members, the department’s record in attracting Fellows is a testament to the quality and international reputation of our researchers.

Our current Killam Fellow is Vienna born philosopher, Georg Theiner. After undergraduate work at the University of Vienna, Georg earned his Ph.D. in Philosophy and in Cognitive Science at Indiana University Bloomington (2008), from which he received an Outstanding Dissertation Award for his thesis “From Extended Minds to Group Minds.” Building on his doctoral research, Georg’s Killam project is to articulate a conceptual framework that makes sense of the idea of group cognition, taken to encompass a wide range of phenomena such as collective decision-making, transactive and organisational memory, distributed problem-solving, collaborative learning, group creativity, and swarm intelligence.



*“A warm welcome to all readers of **Philosophile**, the Department of Philosophy Newsletter”*

In the summer of 2008 the Department of Philosophy relocated from the fourth floor of the Humanities Centre, where it had been since 1972, to the historic Assiniboia Hall on the University’s main quadrangle. With our current permanent compliment of 16 full-time and 3 cross-unit appointments, we offer a well-rounded program in many areas of philosophy. These include the traditional areas of metaphysics, epistemology, ethics, logic and the history of philosophy. In addition, we have particular strengths in the philosophy of science, philosophy of mind, aesthetics, feminist and political philosophy, biomedical ethics, and certain areas of modern and 20th century philosophy in both the Anglo-American and European traditions.

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