Greetings from the Department Head:

I am pleased to send you this first edition of the new philosophy department newsletter. Taking our lead from this year's commencement speaker, Ival McMains '70, we have named this new publication *The Thinking Duck*. Talking about the importance of philosophy as background for his own successful career, McMains encouraged members of the class of 2002: “Rather than see yourself as a fighting duck, please visualize yourself as a thinking duck”.

This has been a banner year for the philosophy program at Oregon. Our major program continued to grow, now enrolling over 160 students (nearly double the number five years ago). We have received national recognition through our faculty (two faculty members are presenters at major summer institutes, others have been invited to present their work at campuses around the country and in Europe). Professor Naomi Zack, author of three books and coeditor of five others, joined the department this year. She will publish her fourth book, *Philosophy of Science and Race* (Routledge), later this year. Professor Mark Johnson, now in his eighth year as a senior member of the department was appointed Knight Professor of Liberal Arts and Sciences. Assistant Professor John Lysaker was promoted to associate professor with tenure and has just published his first book, *You Must Change Your Life: Poetry and the Birth of Sense* (Penn State Press). Finally, we initiated this year an effort to reconnect with our graduates—in part to provide an opportunity for you to carry on the philosophical conversation you began as a student here and in part to provide the present faculty a chance to learn from you about where philosophy can lead.

Josiah Royce, an American philosopher writing at the beginning of the last century, said this about the practice of philosophy: “You philosophize when you reflect critically upon what you are actually doing in the world. What you are doing of course is, in the first place, living. And life involves passions, faiths, doubts, and courage. The critical inquiry into what all these things mean and imply is philosophy.” Or, in short, be a thinking duck.

Scott L. Pratt, Department Head

www.uoregon.edu/~uophil/
Professor Don Levi to Retire

Professor Don Levi came to the University of Oregon in 1964 and, after 38 years of teaching, research, and service at Oregon, is retiring. We asked Dr. Levi to tell us something about his career and his relation to philosophy. Here's what he said:

"Philosophy, at its best, gets us to acknowledge how mysterious things are. My own career teaching philosophy at the University of Oregon is something of a mystery. A friend and colleague at San Jose State had come to Oregon, and I came to Oregon to join him, only to find that he had returned to San Jose State. Mysteriously, I stayed at Oregon. My job talk, before I was brought here to teach logic, questioned the value of what logic had to teach. My Ph.D. thesis was in mathematical logic, despite the fact that mathematics was a mystery to me. When I taught logic to beginning students, I tried to question the value of the lessons I was teaching, an approach which certainly mystified the students. And when I taught symbolic logic to advanced students, students found themselves mystified by the mathematics I was teaching, unless, as sometimes happened, a math GTF was taking the class and tried to help the philosophy students overcome their fear of math.

My choices of other classes to teach also may have seemed mysterious, including, as they did, authors courses on Berkeley, Freud, Wittgenstein, Austin, Quine, Davidson, Foucault, Nagarjuna, Chuang Tzu, Maimonides, and Spinoza; and classes on death, moral issues, ethics, epistemology, emotion, mind, language, Asian philosophy, and religion. My focus in recent years on comparative philosophy reflects my interest in trying to get at the mysteries of our existence by studying how other traditions confront these mysteries. I think such studies help to reveal some of the assumptions behind western philosophizing, although they may only reveal my own limitations in presuming to discuss philosophies that I cannot read in the original languages.

I like to think of philosophy as a difficult subject, perhaps because at its best it requires us to talk about what is ultimately mysterious. Somehow we are too close to the experiences about which we want to philosophize, experiences that have to do with our contact with the world, the nature of language and how we learn it, human agency, how to live as a person and a member of a community, and what to worship. When we try to get further away, we risk losing our subject matter. I have spent much of my time in philosophy talking about the dangers of being too removed from the experiences that are the subject of philosophizing, when what I really wanted to do was get just close enough to confront the mysterious nature of that experience."

2002 Commencement

Spring commencement was held on June 15. Thirty-nine majors and nineteen minors received bachelor of arts degrees in philosophy. The commencement speaker was Ival McMains, a Clark Honors College graduate, certified public accountant, and friend of the philosophy department.

Four Ph.D. degrees were awarded:

Peter Esser, "John Dewey's Art as Experience: A Treatise on the Art of Living." Esser completed his degree after a long career in business and plans to prepare his dissertation as a book manuscript.

Ken Kirby, "Fractured Vision: Myth and Discernment in Nietzsche's Birth of Tragedy." Kirby is teaching at Willamette University in Salem.

Vincent Mulier, "Pragmatism in the Columbia Basin: Laws, Values, and the Emergence of a Regional River Ethic." Mulier is now a staff member for Bill Bradbury's senatorial campaign.

Gary Wright, "Means, Ends, and Medical Care." Wright will continue to work as a pediatrician in Eugene.

Tim Adamson and Terry MacMullan are scheduled to defend their theses this summer. Adamson has accepted a tenure-track position at Iowa Wesleyan and MacMullan has accepted a tenure-track position at Eastern Washington.

Conferences

2002 North American Society for Social Philosophy Conference was held at the University of Oregon on July 18–20.

Recently, the department hosted two conferences, "Thinking the Traditions" in Fall 2001 and "Philosophical Collaborations" in Spring 2002. Our thanks to Ival McMains for making these conferences possible.

The Society for the Advancement of American Philosophy has announced that the 2003 Summer Institute will be held at the University of Oregon.
Faculty Notes

Mark Johnson has taken over the role of director of graduate studies from Don Levi. Mark was recently selected as Knight Professor of Liberal Arts and Sciences. He continues his research on the embodied and imaginative dimensions of human meaning, thought, and language. As part of his research on human imagination and understanding, he recently published two coauthored essays with cognitive psychologist Diego-Fernandez Duque on metaphors that guide attention research in psychology. He also authored an analysis of the role of metaphor in the formation of values in science that has just appeared in a volume on models in scientific reasoning. He recently wrote an article with Associate Professor Steve Larson in the UO School of Music on metaphors of musical space and motion. Mark has been busy with lectures and conferences this year. In the past four months he has given lectures or keynote addresses at Pomona College, Pacific Lutheran University, a conference on Mind and Imagination held in the Netherlands, and the Piaget Society meetings in Philadelphia.

John Lysaker, director of undergraduate studies in philosophy, has a book due out this fall, You Must Change Your Life: Poetry, Philosophy, and the Birth of Sense (Penn State Press). Lysaker recently received promotion to associate professor with tenure. He has been invited to present his work on schizophrenia at an international conference in Belgium this summer.

Scott L. Pratt’s recently published book, Native Pragmatism: Rethinking the Roots of American Philosophy (Indiana University Press), is a study of the early history of philosophy in America and the influence of Native American thought on its development. Pratt was also coeditor, with Leonard Harris and Ann Waters, of American Philosophies: An Anthology (Blackwell) and, with John Ryder, of The Philosophical Writings of Cadwallader Colden (Humanity Books). He will lead a course titled Native Pragmatism at the annual American Philosophy Summer Institute at the University of Vermont.

Peter Warnek has several articles forthcoming: “Saving the Last Word: Heidegger and the Concluding Myth of Plato’s Republic” (Philosophy Today), “Teiresius in Athens: Socrates as Educator and the Kinship of Physis in Plato’s Meno” (Epoché: A Journal in the History of Philosophy), and “Reading Schelling and Heidegger: the Freedom of Cryptic Dialogue” (in Schelling Now, ed. Wirth [Indiana University Press]). Warnek will also be teaching a weeklong course on Plato’s Sophist at the Collegium Phaenomenologicum in Città di Castello, Italy, this summer.

Naomi Zack’s book, Philosophy of Science and Race (Routledge), will soon be published, and a book chapter, “Race and Racial Discrimination” is forthcoming in the Oxford University Press Handbook on Practical Ethics, ed. Hugh LaFollette. Her recently published articles include “American Mixed Race: Theoretical and Legal Issues” (Harvard BlackLetter Law Journal) and “Philosophical Aspects of the 1996 American Anthropological Association Statement on Race” (Anthropological Theory). She is working on her next book, A New Theory of Mind, which is an existentialist approach to consciousness. Zack is supervising a minority recruitment initiative for graduate students and is on the President’s Council on Race and the executive board of the Center for the Study of Women in Society. She is also chair of the department’s placement committee and a member of the American Philosophical Association Committee on Inclusiveness.

2001–2 Philosophy Donors

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Alumni News

William Boyer '48, professor emeritus at University of Hawaii, is currently a writer and political activist.

John R. Cain ’52 has retired as financial adviser to Shell Oil and resides in Taos, New Mexico.

Myrla Dean ’55 is a retired high school teacher and currently writes children’s books.

Richard Bronaugh ’56 is in his fortieth year at University of Western Ontario teaching law and philosophy.

Gerald Lilje ’61 is retired from Washington State and “desperately trying to improve his pocket billiard skills.”

Ken Kedl, Ph.D. ’69, has returned to teaching after six years of sailing abroad on a small sailboat with his wife.

Caroline Miller Simon ’76 teaches at Hope College. Her essay “Philosophy, Feminism, and Faith” is coming out this year in an anthology from Indiana University Press.

Walter Sharon ’78 is a mask designer for Intel. He writes, “My only accomplishment is peace of mind”.

Steve Baldwin ’78 practices limited litigation and family law at his law practice in Eugene.

Nan Giddings Moring ’84 is director of planned giving and major gifts for the National Capitol Chapter of the American Red Cross in Washington, D.C.

Leland Patton ’89 is a director in American Regional Theater, Shakespeare workshop, at Royal Shakespeare Company, Stratford, and associate director of the opening ceremony of Expo ’02 in Switzerland.

Murray McAllister, M.A. ’93, is director of behavioral health at Medical Advanced Pain Specialists in St. Paul.

Philip Erwin ’97 is a shipwright and instructor at International Yacht Restoration School.


Send us your thoughts and updates so we can include them in the next issue of The Thinking Duck.

Name ____________________________

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