

Fall 2019 Newsletter

Rutgers University-Camden

A word from Department Chair Dr. John Wall:

Welcome to the Department of Philosophy and Religion's Fall 2019 newsletter. We are having an exciting and event-filled year! If any of our students, faculty, or staff have news for our Spring 2020 newsletter, please forward it to me or any department member. Good luck with the rest of the semester!



McCall Evans graduated with a philosophy degree from Rutgers–Camden this past year. Her outstanding written work, sharp philosophical acumen, and stellar grades earned her the Department's Sybil S. Cohen award, awarded annually by faculty vote to the student who has best demonstrated excellence in philosophy.

Q: Tell us about your path to studying philosophy at Rutgers-Camden.

A: My path to philosophy has been anything but linear. If you asked me thirty years ago about epistemology, I would have asked if you wanted it with cream and sugar. As a young mother with some college education, my life was turned upside down with the birth of my two disabled children. I spent the next two decades fighting for their civil rights. It was undeniably difficult work, but they are so worth it. Within that great struggle, my passion for advocacy was born. I set a goal that once their adult services were settled, I would go to law school. To that end, philosophy was the obvious choice. The relentless examination of ethics, reasoning, and argumentation coupled with the careful instruction of Rutgers' faculty has not only been inspirational, but transformative.

Q: What did you find particularly challenging in studying philosophy?

A: Reading dense material from philosophers like Kant, Kierkegaard, and Rawls was especially intimidating. Adding insult to injury, I had to write essays about arguments that seemed to defy comprehension. With the help of some very patient professors, I improved my reading comprehension and learned the fine art of comparing disparate arguments within an essay. Eventually my skills evolved to the point where I completed an independent study project incorporating over thirty resources and comparing the works of several authors, "Foucault, Butler and the (In)securitization of Gender." It was a monumental achievement for someone with such humble beginnings.

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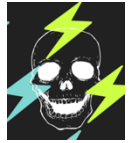
Q: Now that you've graduated, what's next?

A: I am in the process of putting together my applications to various law schools, including Rutgers. Although some people might find the prospect of being one of the oldest students in law school off-putting, I find the whole process terribly exciting. As far as what type of law I am going to practice, I am leaning toward civil rights law, but I look forward to exploring all of my options before making a final decision.

Q: What advice do you have for current Rutgers–Camden students?

A: My advice is epitomized in the actions of my youngest son: Diagnosed with autism and unable to recognize numbers and letters at age eight, he now drives his own car, is on the college Dean's List, and has an enviable social life. Never, never, never give up!

The Department has the Halloween spirit(s)! The Department is participating in *The History and Culture of Halloween* on October 30 during the free period (11:20-12:20) in the West ABC Conference Room of the Campus Center. **Dr. Nicole Karapanagiotis** will moderate as **Dr. Stuart Charmé**, **Dr. John Wall**, and Dr. Richard Demirjian (History) discuss Halloween, gender, children, and evil!



This fall marks the start of PARSNIPS, the Philosophy And Religion Series for New and In-Progress Scholarship! In these talks, our faculty present their current research, the rest of us see cutting-edge work, and the faculty member gets valuable feedback. The talks are open to all, and lunch will be provided.

Our first talk is “How to Untangle the Knot of Abortion and Prenatal Injury, Thomson-Style,” by **Dr. Eric Chwang** on November 18, during the free period (11:20–12:20), in the Department’s seminar room.

Extra! Extra! Read all about it! **Dr. Stuart Charmé** published an opinion piece in the *Philadelphia Inquirer* critiquing gender norms in Halloween costumes, pointing out the harm of costumes like ‘Sexy Mr. Rogers’ (<https://tinyurl.com/y4czzzwf>), and **Dr. Patrick Denehy** published an opinion piece, also in the *Inquirer*, posing a striking thought experiment regarding Pennsylvania’s potential heartbeat bill (<https://tinyurl.com/yym64gx4>).

The Department participated in October’s Cooper Street Showcase, celebrating the 30th anniversary of Cooper Street and the Cooper–Grant neighborhood’s designation on the National Register of Historic Places. **Dr. Nicole Karapanagiotis** and **Dr. John Wall** hosted “Philosophy and Religion Jeopardy,” testing the public’s knowledge of deep, fundamental truths—and awarding Department tee-shirts!



Dr. Nicole Karapanagiotis, **Dr. Eric Chwang**, and the Rutgers–Camden Bioethics Center kicked off *The Year of Suffering*, an interdisciplinary, cross-campus series focusing on what suffering is, what it means to us, and what we can do about it. To start *The Year of Suffering*, Dr. Candi K. Cann of Baylor University gave a lecture entitled “Digital Death,” speaking about how technology has changed the ways that we take care of and remember our dead.

The Year of Suffering continues with further talks and events, including a faculty panel in the spring. Dr. Chwang and Dr. Karapanagiotis invite students and student groups interested in participating to contact them.

The Department started the new year with a “Welcome (Back) Lunch” in September. This was a chance to meet other majors and minors, chat with faculty, kick off the new year, and get to know one another over pizza, salad, and cookies—social, intellectual, and gustatorial nourishment to sustain us through the productive work ahead!

The Rutgers–Camden Bioethics Center and *Public Affairs Quarterly* hosted the “Blame, Punishment, and Health” workshop last spring. Researchers from San Jose State, the University of North Carolina, Loyola University of New Orleans, Utica College, and the United States Naval Academy workshopped papers examining how our practices of blame and punishment should take into account the mental and physical conditions of those we blame and punish.

We’ve been busy! Here are some highlights of our faculty’s work:

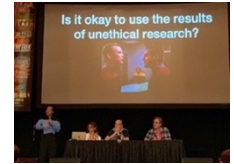


Dr. Craig Agule gave three paper talks: “Blaming Kids” at the Blame, Punishment, and Health Workshop here at Rutgers–Camden and at the Annual Congress of the Canadian Philosophical Association and “Being Sympathetic to Bad-History Wrongdoers” at the Emotions & Punishment Conference at the University of Kent. He was a discussant for Marcia Baron’s [Self-Defense, Reason, and the Law](#) at the Jean Beer Blumenfeld Center for Ethics at Georgia State University, and he was the commentator for Natalia Stelmak Schabner’s “Engagement with Fiction: Active Reconstruction and Emotional Dissonance” at the American Society for Aesthetics, Eastern

Meeting. His Reading Seminar continues this fall with What is Race? Four Philosophical Views. In the spring, the Reading Seminar will take up Kate Manne's Down Girl: The Logic of Misogyny.

Dr. Margaret Betz took up two new roles in the Department: she is now Assistant Teaching Professor and Undergraduate Program Coordinator. Congratulations! Dr. Betz gave two talks: "The Spectre of Nat Turner: A Philosophical Analysis of the Justification of Revolutionary Violence" at the North American Society for Social Philosophy's Annual Conference and "The Last Shall be First: A Philosophical Analysis of African American Resistance Violence" at Villanova University's Annual Conference for the Society of Ethics Across the Curriculum, *Race and Justice in America*.

Dr. Eric Chwang has been working diligently on a paper on abortion and prenatal injury, as a way of procrastinating his book on consent. He presented the ideas of the abortion paper at the Rocky Mountain Ethics Congress in Boulder, Colorado. Dr. Chwang also was on a panel at the annual Star Trek convention in Las Vegas, organized by a former PhD student from his time at the University of Colorado. He estimates that presentation was the most well-attended he's ever given, by an order of magnitude, because the panelists also included two Star Trek actors.



Kipp Gilmore-Clough is spending the fall semester talking about death and dying with Rutgers–Camden students; as ever, he remains impressed by their thoughtfulness. He wrote a review of Andrew Ventimiglia's Copyrighting God: Ownership of the Sacred in Modern Religion. He is currently balancing pastoral work, teaching, and sanity and general well-being. To the latter end, he has a batch of Scotch Strong Ale fermenting in his basement.

Dr. Mahdi Ibn-Ziyad presented at several forums with area civic, social, and religious organizations: "The Three Great Evils: Racism, Militarism and Poverty," "The Spiritual Strivings of Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr.: Peace and Happiness of the People," "The Path Forward in Support of Congressional Legislative Bills on Reparations for Slavery," and "Celebrating Marcus M. Garvey: Improvising a 21st Century Garvey Inspired Civil Religion Method for African American Political Autonomy." Dr. Ibn-Zayid was appointed to the Executive Committee of the Camden County NAACP as Youth and College Division Advisor, he participated in the Interfaith Chaplain's Advisory Council annual reorganization meeting with Rutgers-Camden's Office of Diversity & Inclusion, and he co-organized "A Memorial of Afro-Puerto Rican Slave Revolts 1795-1868, El Grito de Lares" with the Camden City African-American Commission. Finally, Dr. Ibn-Zayid published an article on unsung 1960's Civil Rights Activist Willie Ricks's visit to Camden's Victory Baptist Church.

Dr. Nicole Karapanagiotis has a book chapter, "Automatic Rituals and Inadvertent Audiences: ISKCON, Krishna and the Ritual Mechanics of Facebook" coming out in Digital Hinduism with Routledge Press in 2020. She is presenting "Packaging Hinduism for Global Consumption" at the Penn India Research Symposium Conference this month, and her paper "The Agency of Digital Images of Krishna within the ISKCON Movement" has been accepted for the Annual Conference on South Asia at the University of Wisconsin-Madison for later this academic year. Dr. Karapanagiotis gave a talk entitled "Marketing Bhakti (Devotion) for a (More) Global Audience: A Case Study" at the Department of Religion at Rutgers–New Brunswick last spring. Dr. Karapanagiotis is the new Faculty Advisor for the Rutgers–Camden Muslim Students Association, and she is teaching "Cults and New Religious Movements" in the Honors College this fall. Finally, Dr. Karapanagiotis was elected to the American Academy of Religion's Steering Committee for Hinduism.

Bryan Sacks is teaching "Digital Media Ethics" in the Masters of Communication and Media program at Rutgers–New Brunswick's School of Communication & Information, and he was elected to the Part-Time Lecturer Faculty Chapter Executive Board as an at-large representative.

Dr. Nate Walker published a book and two essays: The First Amendment and State Bans on Teachers' Religious Garb with Routledge, "Political Contempt and Religion" in The Oxford Encyclopedia of Politics and Religion, and "Diversity Over Uniformity: Teachers, Religious Garb and Public Schools" in a special edition of *Social Education*. He gave several talks, including "Educational Promises and Legal Parameters of Religious Literacy Pedagogies" at the annual meeting of the American Academy of Religion and "Religion and Political Contempt," the keynote for a

symposium at the University of Mary Washington. Dr. Walker led a fundraising campaign for the Foundation for Religious Literacy, and he continues to teach Religion and Law in our Honors College.

Dr. John Wall published an article on “Theorizing Children’s Global Citizenship: Reconstructionism and the Politics of Deep Interdependence,” and he has another article forthcoming on “From Childhood Studies to Childism: Reconstructing the Scholarly and Social Imaginations.” He is writing a book on children and voting. In July, Dr. Wall received a grant of \$10,000 for “Global Studies Across the Curriculum at Rutgers–Camden,” for which he is co-PI with professors Carla Giaudrone and Jean-Louis Hippolyte. He chairs a dissertation by Elisabeth Yang on “The Moral Agency of Infants in Late Nineteenth Century Medical Pedagogies,” and he is a member of the committee for Diana Garcia’s dissertation on “Children’s Participation in Post-Conflict Peace-Building in Columbia.” Dr. Wall is also co-organizing a spring 2019 media project called “Hostile Terrain 94,” part of an international art installation in which Rutgers–Camden students, faculty, and staff will be invited to fill out toe tags of immigrants who died crossing the US southern border and pin them to a map.

We’ve got exciting courses on the slate for Spring 2020! Registration begins Monday, November 4.

PHILOSOPHY (730)		Instructor	Time	Gen Ed
105	Intro Current Moral and Social Issues	Chwang	T*Th 2:00–3:20	EAV
111:01	Introduction to Philosophy	Gentzel	F 12:30–3:20	EAV
111:02	Introduction to Philosophy	Rooney	T*Th 9:35–10:55	EAV
190	Reading Seminar (1 credit)	Agule	Every other M 2:30–4:20	
201	Symbolic Logic	Agule	MW 9:35–10:55	LQR
212	History of Philosophy II	Betz	MW 12:30–1:50	HAC
218	American Philosophy	Rooney	online	USW
221	Nature of Mind	Li	T 6:00–8:50	EAV
240	Debating Ethical Issues	Betz and Moran	T*Th 11:10–12:30	EAV
249:01	Biomedical Ethics	Chwang	T*Th 3:35–4:55	EAV
249:90, 91	Biomedical Ethics	Gentzel	online	EAV
249:92, 93	Biomedical Ethics	Young	online	EAV
249:94, 95	Biomedical Ethics	Denehy	online	EAV
249:96, 97	Biomedical Ethics	Sacks	online	EAV
250	Environmental Ethics	Betz	MW 2:05–3:25	EAV
251	Ethics and Business	Young	online	EAV
389, 390	Independent Study in Philosophy			
RELIGION (840)		Instructor	Time	Gen Ed
101:01	Introduction to Religious Studies	Karapanagiotis	T*Th 9:35–10:55	GCM
101:02	Introduction to Religious Studies	Karapanagiotis	T*Th 11:10–12:30	GCM
103	Introduction to World Religions	Gilmore-Clough	MW 2:05–3:25	HAC
110	Introduction to the Bible	Ratzman	MW 6:00–7:20	HAC
112	Jews, Christians, and Muslims	Banner	T*Th 8:00–9:20	HAC
123	Myth and Symbol	Salyer	online	AAI
266	Race, Politics, and Religion	Miller	MW 9:35–10:55	EAV
267	Justice, Forgiveness, and Reparations	Ziyad	T*Th 3:35–4:55	EAV+DIV
288	Religion and Science	McCauley	W 6:00–8:50	PLS
389, 390	Independent Study in Religion			

To receive future newsletters, write craig.agule@rutgers.edu with the subject line “Department Newsletter.”