

Spring 2019 Newsletter

Department of Philosophy and Religion

A word from Department Chair Dr. John Wall:

Welcome to Spring 2019 and to the first-ever Department of Philosophy and Religion newsletter! We hope that it helps in building our already thriving community and that you find here some interesting and useful information about the department and its students and faculty. If you have any news or information you'd like to share for the next issue, feel free to send it along to any faculty member. Here's looking forward to a successful Spring semester for us all!



Dr. Nicole Karapanagiotis recently won the Helen Crovetto Award for Excellence in the Study of New Religious Movements with ties to South Asia for her essay, “Of Digital Images and Digital Media: Approaches to Marketing in American ISKCON” (<http://nr.ucpress.edu/content/21/3/74>). Here is a brief interview with her about the essay:

Q: Congratulations on the well-deserved recognition! Can you give our readers the gist of your essay?

A: My article looks at the digital marketing of two Hindu temples in the United States. My central claim is that by paying attention to the different ways in which these two temples market themselves online, we can learn about an ideological divide that characterizes the broader tradition from which they stem. This divide has to do with how potential newcomers are believed to become attracted to the tradition.

Q: What was the most surprising thing you learned in writing this essay?

A: Beyond the marketing discussed in this particular article, I've been surprised by just how much religious groups tailor their messages, rituals, and even their sacred spaces to appeal to the perceived existential tastes of those they aim to attract. Studies that examine this supplier side of religion are relatively uncommon in scholarship, but I think that looking at the methods and motivations of religious suppliers can teach us a lot about our religious landscape: how it came to be what it is, and also how to understand the differences that comprise it, even differences within individual religious traditions.

Q: How is all of this relevant for our everyday lives?

A: Studying religion and marketing is important because it allows us to reflect on the ways in which religious groups engage in complex practices of ‘impression management’ so that they can more effectively promote themselves to, and attract, potential converts. Reflecting in this way also makes us better interpreters of media more generally, as it gives us a set of tools by which to see how the information we get from a variety of sources—not just religious ones—is often deliberately crafted to shape how we think about the world around us.

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Q: What’s next for you?

A: I am currently wrapping up a book manuscript that explores many of the issues I’ve just discussed. After that, I hope to look at a few other religious groups through the lens of marketing, in order to get a more comparative

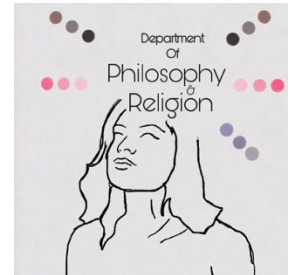
perspective. I'm also planning more ethnographic work on Hinduism in the United States and India, as well as a biographical essay about Sheikh MR Bawa Muhaiyaddeen, a Sufi saint from Sri Lanka who started a vibrant Sufi community and mosque right here in Philadelphia.



Dr. Melissa Yates and **Dr. Nicole Karapanagiotis** hosted the Department's Reflections on Elections event on November 7 of last fall, the day after the election. Students and faculty gathered to discuss big-picture questions about democracy and elections. Should the US join other countries in lowering the voting age to 16? Should felons be allowed to vote? Has politics become a sport? Here's **Dr. Wall** leading a discussion of the electoral rights of children—one of many vibrant discussions that day!

Check out the newest Philosophy and Religion tee shirt! The Department received stellar tee-shirt ideas from a number of students, and, after careful deliberation, the Department picked this design by Khalia Sandoval for this year's Department tee shirt.

Congrats Khalia, for keeping the Department in stylish threads!



It was a busy fall in the Department. Here's what our faculty have been up to:

Dr. Craig Agule published his paper "Distinctive Duress" (<https://philpapers.org/rec/AGUDD-2>). He gave four paper talks: "Distinctive Duress" at the Rocky Mountain Ethics Congress, "The Reasoning-Corrective Account of Desert" at the Central States Philosophical Society Annual Meeting, "Forgiving and Forgetting" for Rowan University's Theorizing lecture series, and "Blaming Kids" at the American Philosophical Association's Eastern Division meeting. Dr. Agule was a critic at an author-meets-critics session for Dr. Leo Zaibert's Rethinking Punishment at the American Philosophical Association's Eastern Division meeting, and he gave comments on Mustafa Aghahosseini's "Frankfurt-Style Cases and Responsibility for Omissions: A Response to Swenson" at the Central States Philosophical Association Annual Meeting and on Dr. Jay Odenbaugh's "Whither Sentimentalism and Psychopathy?" at the Rocky Mountain Ethics Congress. He also developed a new course, Philosophy 190: Reading Seminar, where students this spring are reading and discussing Dr. Erin Kelly's The Limits of Blame. In Fall 2019, the Reading Seminar will read the brand-new text, What is Race? Four Philosophical Views.



Dr. Margaret Betz has a chapter coming out in the book Inside Joke: Feminist Perspectives on Humor and Laughter; her chapter is entitled "Lighten Up! Life as a Feminist Vegetarian, or The Most Uptight Person in the World." Dr. Betz is also at work on a monograph entitled The Spectre of Nat Turner: An Exploration of the Political Justification for Resistance Violence, a book developed from her conference talks.

Dr. Stuart Charmé is completing the final pages of his new book Authentically Jewish: Constructing Origins, Culture, and Identity. It explores authenticity as a misused and misunderstood concept in the analysis of modern Jewish life. Dr. Charmé, who is also Director of the Masters of Arts in Liberal Studies program, has announced the creation of four new concentrations now available in the MALS program: American Studies, Creative Arts and Literature, Philosophy and Religion, and World History and Politics. These concentrations will enable MALS students to enjoy both the interdisciplinary breadth of the MALS program and also the possibility of more-focused work in a cluster of interrelated fields.

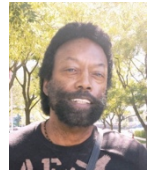
Dr. Eric Chwang was awarded tenure. Congrats Dr. Chwang! He continues to work on his book on consent, and he is currently thinking about the paradox of prenatal injury: supposing that abortion is okay, why shouldn't we think that prenatal injury is also okay?



Dr. Patrick Denehy continues to develop his Self and Identity course. A host of traditional theories about personal identity focus on something abstract: the soul, the internal mind, memories, or something equally privatizing. Dr. Denehy is more interested in theories that explore our physical, historical, and even technological embodiment and its contribution to a sense of selfhood. Without those, it's difficult to understand how gender, ethnicity, or race, for example, are important to a person's identity. So, in the course, we explore some traditional theories, but then shift to ideas of embodiment that seem both more relevant and promising.

Dr. Nicole Karapanagiotis won the Helen Crovetto Award for Excellence in the Study of New Religious Movements with ties to South Asia, presented at the annual meeting of the American Academy of Religion. The award recognized Dr. Karapanagiotis's recent essay, "Of Digital Images and Digital Media: Approaches to Marketing in American ISKCON" (see the interview above for more information). Dr. Karapanagiotis also presented on similar material at the American Academy of Religion conference, participating in the panel "Minority and Emerging Religious Communities." She spoke about respecting religious difference on Fox 29's Good Day Weekend for a segment called "eRace the Hate" (<http://www.fox29.com/370534069-video>). Dr. Karapanagiotis has been developing a number of new courses. She developed and taught "Cults and New Religious Movements," and she is working with the Office of Civic Engagement and the Office of Diversity and Inclusion to develop a course called "Podcasting Religious Difference." And, last but certainly not least, she finished her book manuscript!

Dr. Robert Miller developed a new course this year, "Exploring Media, Religion and American Pop Culture." That class looks at how popular culture influences religion and at how religion influences popular culture. Does advertising and the spiritual side of pop culture challenge the "traditional values" supported by religion? Could fashion be an alternative political conduit to provoke ethical behavior in a pop-culture environment?



Dr. John Wall has published three peer-reviewed journal articles on various issues related to children's global citizenship and the concept of childism this year. He continues to work on his latest book, Transsensus: Theorizing Global Citizenship. Dr. Wall is giving scholarly talks in Copenhagen, Salzburg, and Cambridge, Massachusetts, and he gave a talk here at Rutgers on child migration rights. Dr. Wall is consulting on scholarly projects in Denmark and Australia, he is co-founding a multiple-year collaborative research project in Denmark on his theories of childism, and he is chairing two doctoral theses. Dr. Wall helped develop and launch the new Global Studies joint BA program at Rutgers-Camden (<https://globalstudies.camden.rutgers.edu>), and he finished leading a three-year campus-wide grant project on Exploring Interdisciplinary Global Studies.

The Philosophy Society has a busy spring planned. The Society is hosting student-led discussions throughout the semester. In the first half of the semester, the members met to discuss the ethics of immigration, capitalism and socialism, the philosophy of mind and artificial intelligence, and bioethics and human enhancement. The Society has three remaining meetings this spring:

Monday, April 8 at 11:20 am – Climate Change
Wednesday, April 24 at 11:20 am – Ethics of War
Monday, May 6 at 11:20 – To Be Determined!

The meetings are held in the 429 Cooper Street Seminar Room. All are welcome! Free pizza!

We've got exciting courses on the slate for Fall 2019! Registration begins on April 8.

PHILOSOPHY (730)		Instructor	Time	Gen Ed
101	Intro to Logic, Reasoning, Persuasion	Agule	MW 12:30-1:50	LQR
111:01	Intro to Philosophy	Agule	MW 9:35-10:55	EAV
111:02	Intro to Philosophy	Staff	MW 12:30-1:50	EAV
111:03	Intro to Philosophy	Staff	MW 2:05-3:25	EAV
190	Reading Seminar (1 credit)	Agule	Every other M 2:30-4:20	
211:01	History of Philosophy I	Staff	T*Th 11:10-12:30	HAC
211:02	History of Philosophy I	Staff	T*Th 2:00-3:20	HAC
218:90	American Philosophy	Rooney	online	USW
222	Self and Identity	Denchy	T*Th 9:35-10:55	EAV
226	Ethics	Chwang	MW 2:05-3:25	EAV
249:90	Biomedical Ethics	Yates	online	EAV
249:91	Biomedical Ethics	Yates	online	EAV
249:92	Biomedical Ethics	Yates	online	EAV
249:93	Biomedical Ethics	Gentzel	online	EAV
249:94	Biomedical Ethics	Gentzel	online	EAV
249:95	Biomedical Ethics	Young	online	EAV
249:96	Biomedical Ethics	Young	online	EAV
249:H1	Biomedical Ethics	Chwang	MW 12:30-1:50	EAV
251:90	Ethics and Business	Sacks	online	EAV
252	Eating Right	Betz	T*Th 11:10-12:30	EAV
264:90	Philosophical Ideas in Film	Young	online	AAI
329	Ethics and the Future of Humanity	Gentzel	F 12:30-3:20	EAV
343	Social Philosophy	Betz	T*Th 2:00-3:20	EAV+DIV
389, 390	Independent Study in Philosophy	Staff		
RELIGION (840)		Instructor	Time	Gen Ed
103	Intro to World Religions	Karapanagiotis	MW 12:30-1:50	ECL+GCM
108	Religion and Contemporary Culture	Banner	T*Th 8:00-9:20	EAV
110	Intro to the Bible	Wall	T*Th 2:00-3:20	HAC
111	Asian Religions	McCauley	W 6:00-8:50	GCM
216	African-American Religion	Ibn-Ziyad	T*Th 3:35-4:55	EAV+USW+DIV
270	Gender, Sexuality and Religion	Charme	MW 12:30-1:50	HAC
278	Death and Dying in World Religions	Gilmore-Clough	MW 3:45-5:05	GCM+DIV
318	Religion and Law	Walker	M 6:00-8:50	
339	Gods and Monsters: Understanding Power	Salyer	online	EAV
363:90	Magic and Ritual Power	Banner	online	HAC+USW
366:H1	Cults and New Religious Movements	Karapanagiotis	MW 9:35-10:55	USW
389, 390	Independent Study in Religion	Staff		

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