Philosophy and Religion Department Newsletter – Fall 2014

The 2013-2014 academic year was another busy and productive one in the Department. We graduated four philosophy majors last year. These were: Nicholas Havens; Laura Simmons; William “Kobe” Spencer; and Rebecca Templeton. Five students graduated with majors in religion. These were: Lucy Donaldson; Reid Olson; Diego Rodriguez; Laura Simmons; and William “Kobe” Spencer. All of these students will be missed in this and future academic years, but we hope they will stay in touch as they move on with the rest of their lives.

Philosophy News
Rebecca Templeton received the Eutsler Prize as the outstanding senior major in Philosophy. She also graduated with Honors in Philosophy, having successfully defended her senior honors thesis under the direction of McCabe Professor of Philosophy John Lemos. Rebecca’s honor’s thesis, “Kanean Dual-Willing and Its Effectiveness in Dealing with the Problem of Luck,” focused on the metaphysics of free will and responsibility. In the spring of last year, she and Laura Simmons presented papers at the annual Midwest Undergraduate Philosophy Conference at Creighton University in Omaha, NE. Rebecca presented a paper on the problem of divine foreknowledge and freedom of the will and Laura presented a paper on religious pluralism.

In the past school year Professor Jeff Hoover led a May Term to Italy along with Professor Emeritus Ed Burke. This course explored the birth of the Italian Renaissance during the rise of politically independent city-states. He also traveled to Berlin as an invited speaker at a conference on Pythagoreanism where he presented his work on the Renaissance thinker Leon Battista Alberti. Professor Hoover also continues his engagement with scholarship on subjectivity and self-consciousness, focusing recently on the links between bodily awareness and self-awareness.

Last year Professor Lemos presented four different papers at conferences; these were:

“Self-forming Acts and the Grounds of Responsibility” at the Tennessee Values and Agency Conference held at the University of Tennessee in November 2013;
“Morality, Self-interest, and Hedonism” at the Happiness and Virtues Conference at Viterbo University in April 2014;
“Comments on Joseph Campbell’s Free Will” at an author meets critics session of the American Philosophical Association in San Diego, CA in April 2014; and
“Aristotelian Moral Realism and Evolution” the keynote address to the annual conference of the North American Society for Value Inquiry held at Neumann University in Philadelphia, PA in May 2014.

Professor Lemos was honored as the 19th recipient of the James Wilbur Award for Extraordinary Contributions to the Appreciation and Advancement of Human Values. This award is given annually by the North American Society for Value Inquiry.

Professor Peter McCormick continues teaching courses in the Department. He spent a significant portion of last summer preparing a new course on environmental ethics.
Last year Stephen Campbell completed the second year of a two year Mellon Post-doctoral Fellowship in our Department. Professor Campbell taught several introductory philosophy courses for the Department during his time here, as well as courses on gender and race and environmental ethics. He has moved on to another two year post-doctoral position at the University of Pennsylvania. We will miss his presence in the department, and we wish him the best as he moves on.

**Religion News**
A lot has been happening on the Religion side of the Department as well. One of our religion majors, Tim Salis, was the recipient of the prestigious Clark Merit Award. This award is given annually by the College; it is a full-tuition scholarship for one academic year. This marks the second year in a row that a religion major has received the award – last year Chloe Reichelt received it. Last spring Allison DeArcangelis received the David Hay Memorial Research Award to support research she did this past summer on the relationship between Genesis and other ancient mythologies.


Chris also received an Edward S. Murray Grant from the College, funding research and travel related to his new translation project. This is a translation of a Tibetan text called the “Zermik,” which is a biography of Tonpa Shenrab, the founder of the Bon religious tradition in Tibet.

Assistant Professor Religion Meira Kensky has published another article and has two others forthcoming. These are:


“Getting Perspective: The Divine Courtroom in Tertullian of Carthage’s *Apologeticum,*” in *The Divine Courtroom in Comparative Perspective* (Shalom Holtz and Ari Mermelstein, eds.; Leiden: Brill, 2014), 94-127. (Forthcoming); and


**More on the Philosophy and Religion Class of 2014**

Religion major, Lucy Donaldson, is working for Americorps as a Promise Fellow with at-risk children in Minneapolis.

Religion major, Reid Olson, is attending the Masters of Divinity program at Vanderbilt University.

Religion major, Diego Rodriguez, is working as a high school football coach.

Philosophy and Religion major, Laura Simmons, is working in the field of hospice care.
Philosophy and Religion major, William “Kobe” Spencer, is working as a youth counselor at Tanager Place in Cedar Rapids.

Philosophy major, Rebecca Templeton, is living in Colorado and working at a physical therapy clinic as well as a home health care company which serves Alzheimer’s and dementia patients. She is also applying to medical schools.