



Philosophy

Department Newsletter

University of Colorado at Boulder

Fall 2015



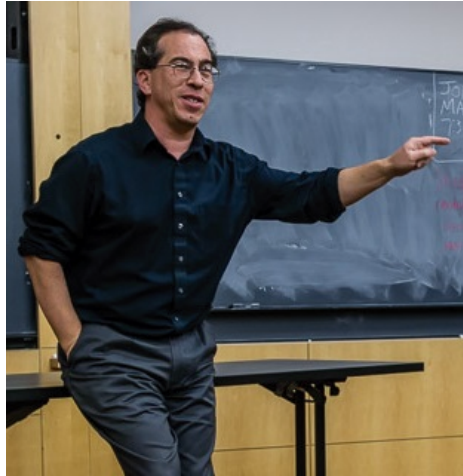
Letter from the Chair

Dear students, alumni, friends and colleagues:

After spending the last five years as Associate Dean for Arts and Humanities, I have returned full-time to the Philosophy Department and am serving again as its Chair. I've only been back in the position for a few months now, but it's already clear to me that this is a particularly exciting and important time for the Department. After going through some considerable difficulties in the previous year or two, we have emerged with a renewed commitment of support from our administration and a heightened sense of purpose among ourselves: not just to sustain the level of excellence that recently seemed to be temporarily threatened, but to surpass it both in terms of our teaching and research, and in terms of making the Department an inclusive and welcoming place to work and study.

Evidence of the administration's support for our renewal can be seen in two important developments that occurred over the past summer. First, the College approved our request to do a national search this year to hire a new faculty member at the senior level. This is a coveted perk that departments frequently ask for and rarely receive, and the search that we are currently conducting has the potential to significantly enhance our national reputation. In addition, the senior scholar we hire will come in and serve at least one three-year term as our next Department Chair, helping to ensure that as we continue to move forward we will benefit from an infusion of new ideas and fresh perspectives.

Second, for the first time in decades, the College has provided the Department with new funds to increase the strength of our Center for Values and Social Policy. The Center has already begun to make good use of these funds. Two scholars from other universities will visit us over the course of



David Boonin, Department Chair

this academic year as Center Fellows – for example, conducting research, giving talks, and doing guest lectures in some of our classes. This is the first time in many years that the Center has been able to sponsor such Fellows. We expect to have more to report about this exciting development in next year's newsletter.

In the meantime, evidence of the strong and widespread commitment among our faculty and students to making this Department the best it can be can be found throughout this issue of our Newsletter, in the reports on recent faculty and student accomplishments – for example, in the story about Professor Wingo's unique collaborative research project with former graduate student Dan Demetriou, and in the joint interview with new department members Iskra Fileva and Raul Saucedo. Since returning as Chair, I have also seen evidence of this commitment in the enthusiasm with which so many members of the Department have offered their assistance in moving forward on a wide variety of Departmental matters and in the thoughtful and rigorous way they continue to discuss the many nuances involved in figuring out the best ways forward.

As a result of everything that I have seen since returning full-time to the Department,

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Faculty Activities 2014-2015

David Boonin completed his fifth and final year as Associate Dean for Arts and Humanities during the 2014-15 academic year and then returned full-time to the Philosophy Department. While mostly focused on administrative work during this period, Boonin also continued to do research. His book, *The Non-Identity Problem and the Ethics of Future People*, was published by Oxford University Press, he completed an article on the subject of posthumous harm, and he continued to work on a book manuscript on that subject. He also celebrated the end of his tenure as Associate Dean by taking a 12-day, 3,000-mile road trip that included visits to four National Parks and brought the total number of states he's traveled in to 49. He is pleased to report that North Dakota wasn't nearly as boring as he thought it would be.

Carol Cleland published a co-authored paper on ethical issues

I am convinced that the Department is currently an excellent place to be and that it is going to continue to get even better. I hope you will keep yourself updated on the Department's activities by visiting our web page at www.colorado.edu/philosophy, and by getting in touch with me if you have any questions, comments, or concerns at 303-

492-7527 or david.boonin@colorado.edu. I especially encourage alumni who are in the area to keep an eye on the calendar of events on our web page and attend any talks or other events that fit your schedule.

David Boonin
Chair, Department of Philosophy □

Interview with Two New Faculty

Raul Saucedo and Iskra Fileva both joined the tenure-track faculty as new assistant professors last year. David Boonin spoke with them over the summer.

David: Tell me a bit about growing up. What were you like as a child?

Iskra: I was a child who knew a lot of fairy tales and liked coming up with new ones as well. In kindergarten, other children would gather around me, waiting for a story. It was difficult for my parents because I wanted ten tales before bed and would refuse to fall asleep if I did not get what I wanted.

When I was 5 or so, I decided that I had to learn to read so I could have unlimited access to children's books. There was a newspaper my parents received every day, and I knew the name of it. It occurred to me that very likely, every letter in the title I see corresponds to a letter in the title as I hear it. I deciphered the letters in that title, and I learned to write them (ineptly). Then I did the same with the titles of another newspaper and a book. Gradually, I had all the letters in the alphabet down.



Professor Iskra Fileva

I remember the sense of victory when my parents saw me reading for the first time. They had never taught me how to do it, so they looked at the page to make sure I was really reading and not just reciting from memory or inventing the lines. . . . They tried but could not fathom what I'd done. When I revealed my secret to them, I felt doubly victorious – I had not only come up with a way of teaching myself the alphabet, I had thought of a way my parents could not think of.

This story is the first thing I think of when I look back on my childhood. That and loving raspberries.

Raul: I grew up in a small colonial town in the foothills of two volcanoes southeast of Mexico City. My mother is a chemical engineer of mixed Criollo and Yaqui descent; my late father was a businessman of Basque ancestry. The sciences, the arts, and to a lesser extent the humanities always had a strong presence at home. My mom tried to instill love of music, dance, history, and literature in my sister and me as much as she tried to inculcate mathematical and scientific curiosity.

Although there was a strong emphasis on education, it was often with an eye towards practicality. Mexican society is extremely classist and both my parents had a poor or lower middle class upbringing; they worked very hard to secure a situation of less disadvantage for their children. Hence they would concernedly ask about philosophy: "But what can you do with that?" I'm still working

in astrobiology and is now finishing the last two chapters of her book, *The Quest for a Universal Theory of Life* (Cambridge, forthcoming). She gave a keynote talk ("Life without Definitions") at a conference in Sweden and an invited talk ("Lessons from Earth: The Moral Status of Non-human Organisms") at the Library of Congress. She also gave invited talks on philosophical issues in the historical sciences at the University of Paris Sorbonne, Indiana University, the University of Pennsylvania, and the University of Illinois. Her most memorable presentation ("Scientism and the Curious Case of Possible Worlds Semantics," at CUNY) incurred the wrath of participants who couldn't believe that an invited speaker would have the audacity to argue that possible worlds semantics is just as well supported by evidence as leading contemporary theories of physics!

Iskra Fileva's paper "Will Retributivism Die and Will Neuroscience Kill It?" (co-authored with Jon Tresan) was accepted by *Cognitive Systems Research* for a special issue on philosophical approaches to social neuroscience. She presented "What Does Truth Have to Do with Belief?" at St. Joseph's University and at the Central APA meeting, gave comments on Julia Driver's "Undermining Promises" at the seventh RoME conference at CU, and managed to collect all final drafts for her forthcoming anthology, *Perspectives on Character* (Oxford Univ. Press). This year, she also began writing fiction.

Graeme Forbes gave talks in Frankfurt, Vienna, Göttingen, and Hamburg. He wishes to record his sincere thanks to the German taxpayer. He also participated in author-meets-critics panels at two APA meetings. One panel he had hoped merely to organize, but a late withdrawal by one of the critics put Forbes and his opinions up front. Here in Boulder, after several years in department administration, he is

on that one.

David: How did you become interested in philosophy?

Iskra: When I heard the word “philosopher” for the first time, it attracted me. There was some quiet power about it, and a person referred to as “philosopher” just sounded fascinating. I was very young then, 4 or 5.

I asked my father what “philosopher” meant. He paused for a while, then said, “A philosopher is someone who, if two people are arguing, he or she can explain to them why both have a point, but both are wrong.” I thought to myself, “I want to do that.” I started saying I was going to be a philosopher. My elder brother began calling me “my little Socrates” some time later.

Then I started school and forgot about philosophy for many years. There were many subjects I was interested in – math, physics, English, literature, psychology. When it came time to choose a college major, I didn’t know what to choose. It seemed to me that no matter what I chose, I would be betraying my other interests. One night, I read some information about the philosophy department at my alma mater, Sofia University, and that put an end to all my doubts – philosophy was exactly what I wanted to study.

I remember one day, in the beginning of my philosophy studies, I was reading in the national library, and I felt so happy to have found philosophy that tears started falling from my eyes. I thought it almost difficult to believe that I could now spend the whole day reading exactly what I wanted to read. For the first time, what I wanted aligned perfectly with what the world expected of me.

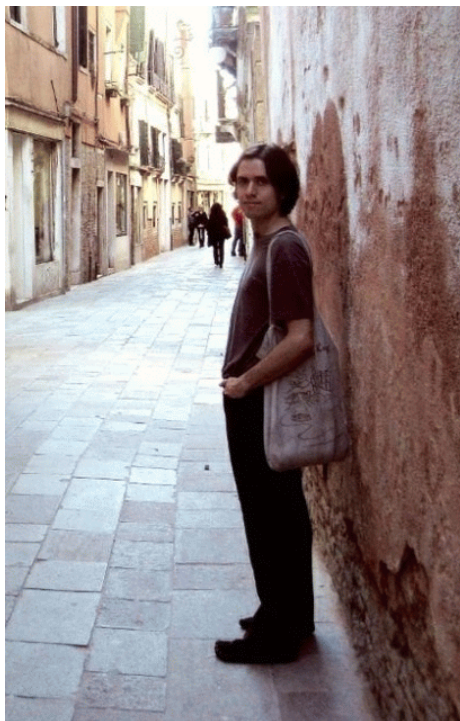
I don’t think I ever chose to pursue philosophy professionally, in the sense of thinking about it and coming to the conclusion that this was my choice. I just wasn’t going to leave philosophy after a few short years – at the time that was something unthinkable. And unthinkable options don’t get rejected – they are simply never considered.

Raul: I was lucky to attend a high school where philosophy was part of the curriculum. Year-long courses in logic and ethics were required. Having completely fallen for the subject by the beginning of my senior year, I took year-long electives on aesthetics and the

history of philosophy. I remember immediately getting hooked on Anaxagoras’ notion of *apeiron* [the unlimited] as ultimate reality, on the Platonic question of what goodness itself could be, on the idea that per the paradoxes the very concept of truth is incoherent, on the existentialist claim that existence is prior to essence. I was on track to study physics in college, but philosophy had enough of what felt like a life-changing effect on me that I switched entirely. After doing my first two years at UNAM [the National Autonomous University of Mexico], I went to UC Berkeley on a scholarship to do my last two. At the time grad school simply seemed like the next thing to do to keep doing philosophy. Not until my second or third year at Cornell did the idea of academic philosophy as a profession really start setting in.

David: Tell me something about your main areas of philosophical interest and your current research.

Iskra: My main interests are in moral psychology and issues at the border between philosophy and psychology, and philosophy and psychiatry. I am interested in why people do the things they do, as well as in the boundary between rational and irrational behavior, between sanity and



Professor Raul Saucedo

looking forward to an upcoming sabbatical.

Chris Heathwood published four papers: “Subjective Theories of Well-Being” in the *Cambridge Companion to Utilitarianism*, “Faring Well and Getting What You Want” in *The Ethical Life* (Oxford), “Monism and Pluralism about Value” in the *Oxford Handbook of Value Theory*, and “Irreducibly Normative Properties” in *Oxford Studies in Metaethics*. He gave talks at the Kansas Workshop on Well-Being, a panel on religion and ethics at the Watershed School in Boulder, the Colorado Affective Sciences Laboratories at CU, the Virginia Commonwealth University, and York University. He started as the department’s Director of Undergraduate Studies in Fall 2014. And in the first departmental beginning-of-the-school-year kickball game, with two runners on and two outs in the bottom of the ninth, his team down by two runs, he hit a walkoff home run. Also scoring on the play: Tommy Pasnau and Philosophy Club President Jay LeCavalier.

Michael Huemer published papers on the failure of conceptual analysis and on irrationality in political beliefs. Still forthcoming are some papers on legal ethics, the design of constitutions, the role of seemings in inference, and the (very low!) probability that he is a brain in a vat. He finished a new book, *Approaching Infinity* (forthcoming from Palgrave Macmillan), which explains the nature of infinity and solves seventeen paradoxes of the infinite. Having become a darling of the libertarian movement, he gave some talks at libertarian meetings and conferences. As admissions committee chair, he helped recruit 2015’s awesome incoming grad class. Finally, despite enormous burdens, he edited the exceptionally beautiful and well-arranged newsletter now in your hands.

Alison Jaggar’s edited volume, *Gender and Global Justice*, was

insanity, and between clusters of character traits, on the one hand, and mental disorders, on the other.

My current research interests came after a long intellectual evolution. I think I gradually came to appreciate the fact that philosophy is not the only discipline worth studying, and that other fields such as psychology and psychiatry (good literature as well) can give me insights into the issues that interest me as well.

Raul: I'm mainly interested in metaphysics, in very general questions about the nature and structure of reality. At the moment I'm



Chapel in Tlalmanalco, Mexico

working on a project trying to make sense of the idea that some entities taken collectively are ontologically prior to those entities taken individually, that facts about some things taken together metaphysically underlie facts about those things taken separately. I think the idea is of critical interest to a variety of central debates. For example, it bears on a series of questions about parts and wholes (e.g., the issue of atomism versus holism about fundamental reality and the issue over the infinite divisibility and infinite extensibility of matter and spacetime), on questions about the nature and grounds of relations, and on structuralist ontologies in philosophy of physics and philosophy of mathematics.

David: You were both born outside of this country. What first brought you to the United States? And how has your origin impacted your experiences as a philosopher?

Iskra: I was thinking of staying at my home university in Sofia after getting my undergraduate degree, but it gradually became clear that it would take years till I could get a spot

in the doctoral program there. Doctoral students had to apply for the particular subfield that interested them—e.g., epistemology—and they had to wait till there were stipends for that particular subfield. I came to the U.S. for the trivial reason that at the time I decided to apply abroad, I had missed the deadlines for all European universities. There were five I could still apply for in the U.S., since I needed something with a June deadline. But I found a place.

After a year or two, I got to really like the graduate programs in the U.S., and the country more generally—the optimism, the respect for privacy (unmatched by any European country, with the possible exception of Switzerland)—and I did not want to move anywhere else.

I believe that being from another country has helped me, because it made me seem different and more relatable in the eyes of students. It put me at a disadvantage at first, because I did not have a good sense of what my students knew, but I gradually developed that sense over time, so I think I overcame the disadvantage but retained the advantage.

Raul: I think it has helped me develop a more patient and ecumenical temperament as a philosopher. At UNAM, philosophical approaches that are unpopular in the English-speaking world are more the norm than the exception. History of philosophy occupies a central place. An upper-level course on political philosophy may focus on themes from Marx and Adorno. One on metaphysics may focus on Heidegger's criticisms of Plato and Aristotle. An open topics one may focus on Mayan thought. I tend to think there's great philosophical value in very different approaches to the discipline. That tendency may well be due to the fact that I started doing philosophy elsewhere.

Being a non-white immigrant has also helped me understand some of the issues facing students and colleagues from underrepresented groups in philosophy and academia generally. That has made me more committed to doing something about the structural issues underlying such underrep-

published in 2014. She also produced several other articles discussing global justice and ideal/non-ideal methodology in political philosophy. In June 2014, she ended seven years as a Visiting Research Professor at the University of Oslo, leaving with great appreciation for Norwegian public and private hospitality. In May 2015, she began a similar position as Distinguished Research Professor at the University of Birmingham, UK. Over this period, she gave a number of invited lectures, most excitingly in Cameroon, where colleague Ajume Wingo hosted her and her partner with boundless generosity and introduced them to his Nso culture. A highlight of 2014 was the conference organized in her honor by a large group of former students. The theme was "In the Unjust Meantime," a phrase she has often used. Listening to terrific presentations by former students, she felt simultaneously proud and humbled.

Mitzi Lee edited a collection of recent papers by prominent scholars in ancient philosophy, *Strategies of Argument: Essays in Ancient Ethics, Epistemology, and Logic* (Oxford, 2014). She won an NEH fellowship, which she will take in 2015-16, for her project on justice in Aristotle's moral and political philosophy. She is now working on a book on this concept in Aristotle. She gave talks based on her book at Ohio State, the University of Toronto, the Pacific APA in Vancouver, and the University of Kansas. She served as director of placement—helping graduate students to find academic jobs in philosophy—for 2014-15.

Alastair Norcross organized and presented talks at the analytic philosophy conference on ethics, in Bled, Slovenia, and the Rocky Mountain Ethics Congress in Boulder. He gave several invited talks and conference presentations, wrote some papers about ethics, and came ever closer to

resentation, which is detrimental not only to the relevant groups but to our profession.

Many of my classmates at UNAM weren't as lucky as I was. Some grew up in extreme poverty in a region a day's walk from the closest town with basic services; their siblings had died from easily preventable diseases. Some didn't learn to read and write until their teens. Some in urban areas had lived in the sewers and worked on the streets from childhood. Some had been sold as sex slaves for tourists.

Many of my classmates from those backgrounds were not only exceptional human beings but also exceptionally promising students. But the game was rigged against them from the get-go, so in most cases they didn't graduate. "Merit", "effort", and "talent" had little to do with it. It's just that the playing field wasn't equal to begin with.

The context is different in the U.S. in a variety of ways, but the underlying structures are not that dissimilar. Many things we do unwittingly, as academics and members of the profession, play into the kind of marginalization underlying underrepresentation, leading to further marginalization and in turn to further underrepresentation. Those of us lucky enough to be in a position of relative privilege have an obligation to do what we can to help address it at the roots and mitigate its effects.

David: You each just finished your first year as the newest members of our department. How did it go?

Iskra: I tremendously enjoyed my first year at CU. My students got really interested in the material. This is no doubt partly because the courses I taught – moral psychology, philosophical issues in psychology – are of interest to most thoughtful people. Whatever the reason, it was a wonderful experience. I looked forward to every class with both my graduate and my undergraduate students. Some of my students stayed in touch with me after grades were turned in and sought advice on plans for the future.

I greatly enjoyed my colleagues as well. Everyone has been truly welcoming, and the quality of discussion after department talks has been consistently excellent. I have been

to many departments that I thought were overrated. The philosophy department at Boulder is probably the first that left me with the opposite impression – the impression it should be more highly ranked (although it is already highly ranked). I feel proud to be a part of such a friendly and intellectually vibrant community.



Silistra, Bulgaria

Raul: I thought it went very well, the move, change in jobs, birth of my first child, and transitions in our department notwithstanding. I love my new colleagues and students; everyone has been exceedingly warm and welcoming. (Which is not to say that I don't miss my former colleagues and students at Yale!) I'm looking forward to many more years of working together.

The grad seminar I taught last fall was particularly memorable. I was impressed by our graduate students and learned a ton from them; every session they had one insightful thing to say after another. In seminars I try to foster creative, propositional philosophical thinking on big-picture issues over critical back-and-forths, and the grad students certainly gave me more than a good run for my money in that regard.

I'm also excited about our incoming class. Having been on grad admissions, I know they're outstanding philosophers with lots to contribute to the department. I'm really looking forward to my module with them in the M&E proseminar this fall (on Frege's metaphysics of meaning) and to having some of them in my Buddhist philosophy class (where I'll even have them meditate a bit, in the course of systematically examining some core Buddhist ideas about fundamental reality). □

finishing his book on scalar consequentialism. In addition to two marathons, he ran his first track mile race at a meet at CU, where he only lost to a 13-year-old boy by 2 seconds. Once again, he beat every woman over the age of 70 and every child under 10 at the Boulder Boulder. He was the stage director for the Christmas Revels Irish show at the Boulder Theatre, for which he wrote, directed, and acted in a play involving St. George, a Sea Dragon, and a (legally) pot-smoking doctor who survived being swallowed by a whale.

Graham Oddie gave invited papers on metaphysics, value theory and epistemology at conferences and workshops in the UK (London), Canada (Montreal), Switzerland (Geneva), Germany (Saarbrücken), New Zealand (Christchurch) and the United States (Madison and Dallas). In Spring 2015 he organized a two-day Morris Colloquium at CU on Cognitive Values. He developed a new graduate course on the metaphysics of value, and two new undergraduate courses, one on aesthetics and another on early twentieth century philosophy.

Robert Pasnau spent the spring of 2014 at Oxford University, giving the Isaiah Berlin Lectures in the History of Ideas. This past summer, he directed a four-week NEH Institute on the origins of modern philosophy. Meanwhile, he and his wife are trying to weather the storm of two teenagers under one roof.

Rob Rupert spent his summer as a Professorial Fellow at the University of Edinburgh. He gave talks there, as well as at the Sorbonne, at conferences at Bochum and Indiana U., and at a summer school in Montreal; and he participated in a week-long workshop at the Frankfurt Institute for Advanced Studies. He published two papers and wrote a few others, and he became an Associate Editor of the *British*

Interview with Two Alumni

Josh and Lynn (Acker) Lannin were philosophy majors at CU-Boulder in the 1990's. Josh is now Senior Director of Product Management at Workday, and Lynn is Director of Professional Services at Vertiba. Professor Mitzi Lee interviewed them in 2014.

Mitzi: What led you to major in philosophy?

Josh: I enjoyed reading philosophy in high school. My dad was a physics professor at Penn State, but he read a lot of philosophy, and there were a lot of philosophy books lying around the house.

Lynn: I started as an anthropology major, but took a couple of philosophy classes in my junior year and was hooked. Because I had almost finished my anthropology major, I ended up doing a double major, doing all philosophy classes in my junior and senior year. One of the first classes I took was Professor Christopher Shields' symbolic logic class – I loved it. It's the single most important class I took at CU. Josh and I met in that class; we had a study group, and a bunch of us became friends through that.

Mitzi: What were some of your most memorable classes and teachers?

Lynn: Chris Shields was a big influence – his logic class, and his ancient philosophy class. I took Major Social Theories with Claudia Mills – that was a great class. I ended up writing a thesis with Gary Stahl. This was in 1996-7, during the AIDS epidemic, when they were still on the search for drugs to treat it. My thesis was on living authentically with the knowledge that you will die; it drew on Nietzsche, Kierkegaard, the existentialists.

Josh: I really liked Michael Tooley's metaphysics class. It wasn't for everyone, but I really loved how systematic and clear he was. He was really good at critiquing papers too.

Lynn: What I loved about philosophy was mapping arguments, applying logic to big philosophical arguments and texts. Those are skills that I still use.

Mitzi: What did you do after graduating?

Josh: My father was diagnosed with brain



Josh Lannin

cancer, so I spent the year at our family home to help care for him.

After that, I started looking for a job. I had always been interested in computers, and had built some websites in college. For example, I built a Nietzsche aphorism website – you could click a button and get a Nietzsche quote! [See this similar site: <http://existentialcomics.com/>. –ml] I found a job in South Denver at a web startup. I moved companies a couple of times, and ended up at a larger firm, BEA, which was bought out by Oracle.

My advice to students is to develop marketable skills in your interests outside of philosophy, especially if you could see yourself pursuing a career in that field. I would advise against focusing on how much money you make right out the gate when picking a job opportunity. Find a good place to work, in a field that's growing, in a company that's growing. The worst is to start with a moderately well-paying job in a stagnant dead-end field or company. It's better to find a job that may not be very well-paying at the beginning, but has a lot of growth potential. With your education you will do best in a place your skills and intelligence can help a growing company fill the positions they need, and lateral moves in a growing company can provide you a path to greater income and job satisfaction. Look for opportunities – I was lucky to be there in the early days of the web.

Mitzi: How did you learn how to program?

Journal for the Philosophy of Science. He continued in his role as Director of Graduate Studies in Philosophy and as the Chair of the Curriculum Committee of the College of Arts and Sciences, and he was elected Chair of the Arts and Sciences Council.

Raul Saucedo relocated last year to start a new job at the department and became a new dad along the way. The adjustment to a new environment and the demands of new fatherhood notwithstanding, he completed three new papers (currently under review) and has continued to work on a monograph project on the ontological priority of individuality and collectivity. He taught a seminar to an impressive group of graduate students, co-organized a reading group on the metaphysics of sociality, served in a departmental as well as a university committees, and participated in a number of professional conferences. He loves his new job, colleagues, students, and of course Boulder.

Michael Tooley gave talks at other universities on philosophical skepticism, sexual harassment, and temporal asymmetry. He took part in debates on the theory of evolution, on euthanasia, on atheism versus Christianity, and on the supposed crisis concerning sexual assault on campuses. He published a contribution to the anthology *Science and Religion: Five Questions*, an article on abortion for *The Cambridge Companion to Life and Death*, and a paper on “Solutions to the New Threats to Academic Freedom?” in *Bioethics*. He completed a book on causation and an article on the temporal asymmetry of the laws of electrodynamics. To test his theories about how one can acquire a sound golf swing in a relatively short time, he is currently teaching himself a left-handed golf swing. □

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Josh: I was self-taught.

Mitzi: Is that still possible?

Josh: Yes, it's still possible to teach yourself programming. Nowadays I'm in product management, and not programming anymore. But it was good to have experience on the technical side and now I complement that with more focus on writing specifications and communicating with customers.

Mitzi: Did it help to have a philosophy degree?

Josh: When I started interviewing, my potential employers all knew I had a philosophy degree – but of course I also had practical experience programming to get my foot in the door. Generally, I've found that people have a lot of respect for the philosophy degree. In my area, I have a lot of successful colleagues who started out as math majors, music majors, philosophy majors – something about those fields attracts good people.

Lynn: I think all companies should have some philosophy majors! Getting smart people is very hard, and it's not a matter of credentials. When you're hiring, and looking for smart people, it's not a matter of having a business degree, or computer science degree – you want people who are smart, who can think creatively and well.

Mitzi: What do you look for in a job candidate?

Lynn: I do behavioral and situational interviews – giving them problems and seeing how they think about them. In technology consulting, you have to listen to clients, know how to ask them about what they're doing, how they do it. For example, right now my current client is in the education industry. I don't know much about the business of education, but I ask a lot of questions, map processes, and figure out how to apply software to solve their problems. You need to be engaging, and you need to know how to ask a good line of questions. You need to steer the conversation with the client in the right direction. We will hire people without much technical experience, as long as the candidate can think on his or her feet.

Mitzi: What did you do after graduating from CU?

Lynn: I had zero computer skills coming from CU. I went to a temp agency after graduating, and got a job at an operations center for a telecommunications company. This gave me an understanding of data, how it works, and of enterprise systems for big companies.

After two years of doing the same very tactical work, I was

ready to move on. So I went back to school, to the Interdisciplinary Telecom Program at CU's engineering school, and got a master's degree. The program blended classes in law, policy, engineering, and business. It was basically a program to train managers for telecommunications companies. I won a competitive fellowship from Andersen Consulting (now Accenture) in my first semester, which paid my second semester tuition and was followed by a great summer internship. So I had a job right away.

Mitzi: How did you win it?

Lynn: It was an essay competition followed by a fairly intensive behavioral-style interview. With my philosophy background, I had a huge advantage in my writing as compared to the engineering and business students in the program!

Technology consulting is actually a great career path for philosophy majors. As a consultant, you're the bridge between a business and IT – it can be technical, but it's not all about

coding. Here's where the symbolic logic course really pays off. You talk to the people in the business, and you translate what they need into something that the people in IT can understand. You need to be good at analysis – you map a business process, and you have to detect when a logical end point is missing, or when there is a gap – when, literally, an “and” or an “or” is missing!

When you're consulting, you're working on a new project every few months; there are fresh problems, constant new and interesting challenges. I have worked with big companies like Qwest and AT&T, implementing software applications and operations centers for them.

Mitzi: After graduating from the master's program, where did you work?

Lynn: My fellowship led directly to a job, and I ended up working at Accenture for five years. In consulting, you work on team projects; the partners sell the work, and the team delivers the project. I followed some of my favorite colleagues at Accenture to Cognizant Technology Solutions for 7 years, after having my first daughter. Currently, I am working at a Boulder start-up, Vertiba; we partner with Salesforce to implement or build systems using the Salesforce platform for clients. It involves a lot of logical reasoning and thought leadership – that is why it's a field in which philosophy majors can excel.

Mitzi: Do you have any advice for philosophy majors who are interested in your field?

Lynn: Gain an understanding of a targeted industry, and



Lynn Lannin

perhaps augment your education with a business or computer science class. You can also get specific certifications on your own in hot areas: the Salesforce.com or Google Apps Administration certification are good examples. Chris Shields told me as I was applying to graduate school that philosophy majors don't make as much money as other majors might make out of the gate after graduation – but within 2 years, they are typically bypassing students in other areas. I think this is true. But you do need practical industry knowledge and some base skills.

Josh: You shouldn't have high salary expectations right after graduating – you have to get your foot in the door. You might have to move – though in fact, Boulder is a very good area with an excellent entrepreneurial scene, with lots of technology companies and start-ups.

Lynn: Also, an advanced degree in a technology field is possible even without an engineering BS.

Mitzi: Was it difficult with only a philosophy degree?

Lynn: I had some aptitude for the technical courses, and my two years of work experience helped. I also befriended some electrical engineering majors who could help with technical studies – and I helped them out when they had to write essays!

Mitzi: What would be an ideal education for someone who wanted to do your kind of work?

Lynn: I think a double major in philosophy and economics would be great. It would give you some math background, and a great combination of business and social theory. Symbolic logic is the best course to take. In addition, you could take some computer science classes. It would be great to develop a philosophy/business track for the major. Philosophy is really great for developing your ability to analyze problems, to reason well. And the business community needs great thinkers!

Josh: There are so many hot areas right

now where philosophy majors could find interesting work. For example, health care and bioethics.

Mitzi: Is your area good for women?

Lynn: Yes, it is. Though in consulting you have to travel a lot, and I see many women drop out to have children. I myself am now working at a local company with local clients so I don't have to travel so much anymore.

Mitzi: Josh, do you have any advice for philosophy majors looking to work in your area?

Josh: There is a burgeoning start-up scene here that attracts many young people. They are not exclusively looking for coders who have engineering degrees. Look at some lean start-ups that are looking to grow, and see what they're doing. There are Boulder technology meet-ups on campus; there's also a Boulder Start-up Week. Check those out. Visit local businesses, see what they're doing. Some events put teams together to build a prototype for a product in two days, and then need someone to go around and find out whether anyone would be interested in their product and gather customer feedback.

People study philosophy because they want to have an impact, they want to study something fulfilling. After graduating, look for something interesting you can do with the training you've received. It's not just business and technology. In healthcare, there's a great need for people who can think clearly about quality of life issues, about ethics.

Lynn: Philosophy gives you a great foundation for any career. When you're a philosophy major, you may feel like there isn't a clear path, and you may feel very uncertain about what you can do after graduating. But there are so many areas that need smart, engaged, curious people. If you have an interest in business or technology, there are jobs for you. □

University Funds Origins Project

In every academic department, research and teaching aims at increased understanding. In many cases, the understanding that is sought is fundamentally historical in nature. In these cases, researchers seek to explain phenomena, not through appeals to general principles, but through an understanding of particular origins. Questions about origins span the disciplines, from the natural sciences (e.g., the origin of life, the origin of water on Mars, the cause of the little ice age), the social sciences (e.g., the origin of language, the origin of human civilization, the origin of modern democracies), and the humanities (e.g., Enlightenment theories of the origin of language, the origin of the concept of romantic love, and Native American myths of tribal origins). In the spring of 2015, Carol Cleland (Philosophy) and Andrew Cowell (Linguistics) submitted an ambitious proposal, under CU's Grand Challenge initiative, for a multidisciplinary project focusing on understanding how different disciplines investigate questions about origins. Their proposal has been accepted for funding. Because their project is unique – no other university has assembled a team of natural scientists, social scientists, and humanities scholars dedicated to exploring the diversity, nature, and justification of theories of origins across the disciplines – Cleland and Cowell anticipate that the project will develop into a nationally recognized Center for the Study of Origins. □



Earth and Mars: two things that had origins

Graduate Student Accomplishments

2014-2015

CU has a nationally ranked graduate program in philosophy (number thirty-one in the nation, according to <http://www.philosophicalgourmet.com>). Our students distinguish themselves in many ways, winning awards and fellowships, presenting their work at conferences, organizing their own conferences, publishing academic articles, and taking academic posts around the country. Here are some of their recent activities.

Paul Bowman presented a talk at the department's Center for Values & Social Policy, and won a one-semester Departmental Dissertation Fellowship for AY15-16.

Rebecca Chan won a Templeton Fellowship for AY14-15, won the prize for Best Graduate Student Paper at the Midwest Conference of the Society of Christian Philosophers, was selected as a participant for the Summer Seminar on the Value and Evaluation of Faith, and was an invited participant for the Animals and the Kingdom of God Workshop at Calvin College. She had papers accepted at the Formal Epistemology Workshop and at the Logos 2015 Workshop. She gave talks at the Northwestern Epistemology Brown Bag Series, the Arizona State Graduate Philosophy Conference, and the Canadian Society for Epistemology.

Andrew Chapman presented "The Existential Dimension of Morality" at the Center for Values & Social Policy, presented "When It Comes to Justification, We're All Foundationalists" to the Undergraduate Philosophy Club, and won the Morrision Teaching Award for best GPTI, AY14-15.

Daniel Coren was invited to present "Making Sense of the Sentence: NE 1094a18-22" at a workshop on infinite regress arguments at Durham University, and had "Anthropocentric Biocentrism in a Hybrid" accepted for publication in

Ethics and the Environment.

Jay Geyer presented "Toward a Better Precautionary Principle" at the conference on Uncertainty in Climate Science and its Impact on Decision-Making at the Sorbonne.

Shane Gronholz presented "Welfare: Does Thinking Make it So?" at the Center for Values & Social Policy.

Sofia Huerter presented "A Sneaking Suspicion about the Replaceability Argument: Ideal Theory and Evaluative Bias" to the Undergraduate Philosophy Club. She will present "A Suspicion about the Replaceability Argument: Ideal Theory and Evaluative Bias" at Michigan State University's Workshop on Food Justice.

Anthony Kelley won a Visiting Fellowship in the Centre for Moral and Political Philosophy at the Hebrew University of Jerusalem for Summer 2015.

Zak Kopeikin published "Problems of Specificity: An Indirect Argument for Chwang's Position" in the *American Journal of Bioethics*, and "Off on the Wrong Foot: Sentience and the Capacity for Painful or Pleasurable Experiences as Distinct Concepts" in the *American Journal of Bioethics: Neuroscience*. He presented papers at the South Eastern Graduate Philosophy Conference at the University of Florida, at the Northwest Student Philosophy Conference at Western Washington University, and at the SoCal Philosophy Conference at San Diego State University, and at the West Michigan University Medical Humanities Conference. Still forthcoming: "Good Arguments, Wrong Target" in the *American Journal of Bioethics*, and "Predictive Brain Implants" in the *American Journal of Bioethics: Neuroscience*.

Eric Lee won a one-semester Departmental Dissertation Fellowship for AY15-16.

Daniel Lowe served as Graduate Student Co-President for AY14-15, presented "Why You Don't Own Yourself" to the Undergraduate Philosophy Club, and won a Summer Graduate School Fellowship for 2014.

Tucker Marks was the first winner of the Wille Family MA Scholarship for Graduate Studies in the Humanities.

Matthew Pike presented "Time and Neuroscience: An Objection to Tensed Theories of Time" at the 2014 Mountain Plains Philosophy Conference, won the 2014-2015 Graduate Student Teaching Excellence Award from the Graduate School, and won the 2014 "Best Should Teach" Silver Teaching Award from the Graduate Teacher Program, where he served as Lead Graduate Teacher.

Rebecca Renninger won a one-semester Graduate School Dissertation Completion Fellowship for AY15-16.

Benjamin Rohrs presented a Work-in-Progress Talk, "Supervaluationism and Propositional Content."

Jonathan Spelman presented papers to the Gateway Graduate Conference at the University of Missouri–St. Louis, to the Undergraduate Philosophy Club, and to the Center for Values and Social Policy. He won a one-semester Department Dissertation Fellowship for AY15-16.

Joseph Stenberg served as Graduate Student Co-President for the AY14-15, won a Thomas Edwin Devaney Dissertation Fellowship for AY15-16, and won a Chateaubriand Fellowship, to be hosted at the Sorbonne for four months. He presented "Happiness on Earth (kind of) as it is in Heaven" at the Center for Values and Social Policy and published "Divine Properties, Parts, and Parity" in the *International Journal of Philosophy and Theology*.

Kelly Weirich won a Thomas Edwin Devaney Dissertation Fellowship for AY14-15, and subsequently defended her dissertation on indicative conditionals, "Truth and Consequence." She presented her Jentzsch Prize-winning paper "Conditional Flexibility" as a departmental colloquium, and as a colloquium on the main program at the Pacific APA.

Alex Zambrano won the Claudia Mills teaching award for best TA, AY14-15.

□

Civic Immortality Project

In April 2014, Professor Ajume Wingo and alumnus Dan Demetriou ('09 PhD graduate, now Associate Professor at the University of Minnesota, Morris) won a \$100,000 Templeton Immortality grant for their project, *Civic Immortality: Honoring Liberal Heroics in Africa and Abroad*. In the monograph they are co-authoring on the topic, they elaborate on the this-worldly immortality that civic heroes enjoy and the essential role civic honor plays in maintaining vibrant democratic societies.

In liberal societies, civic immortality is granted to citizens who resist the threats and temptations of tyranny. A major barrier for liberalization is that it is usually materially irrational – i.e., irrational from the perspective of physical life and material wellbeing – for individuals to resist authoritarian regimes. Resistance is obviously materially irrational for common citizens, since authoritarians are fairly efficient at discovering and punishing dissidents and their loved ones. But following liberal ideals is also irrational for those at the top: relinquishing power exposes leaders and their families to reprisals from successors and enemies, and the pecuniary benefits of plundering state coffers are enormous.

Demetriou and Wingo draw on historical and anthropological sources to argue that the reward of civic immortality is a sufficiently powerful incentive for resisting the temptations and threats of authoritarianism. Historians increasingly note that the American democracy was

driven and stabilized in large measure by the Founders' concern that they be remembered as liberal republicans. Honor is also a society's most inexpensive, ungovernable, and democratic means of rewarding citizens who, like Edward Snowden, uphold liberal values and rule of law when established liberal institutions fail.

Modern sub-Saharan Africa is notable for the weakness of its liberal institutions, and there is little debate that Africa has much to learn from the West in that regard. But Wingo and Demetriou make the more controversial point that the West has something to learn from Africa as well. Though not liberal, indigenous African societies have unique and vibrant traditions of citizenship and civic immortality, such as those suffusing Nelson Mandela's remarkably successful philosophy of leadership and civic duty.

Wingo and Demetriou's Immortality grant funded travel to societies representing importantly different responses to liberalism in Africa. In the summer of 2014, they interviewed African royalty, tribal elders, academics, civic leaders, and villagers in Cameroon, Ghana, and South Africa to learn more about African views of immortality and the prospects for civic immortality there. They traced the footsteps of Africa's greatest civic hero, Nelson Mandela, to see how his legacy is being preserved and whether his memory is inspiring future leaders to promote

democratic reform and rule of law. They discussed African governance and leadership with representatives of the Mo Ibrahim Foundation in London, and studied the contrasting approaches to immortalizing civic heroes in Britain, the U.S., indigenous rural Africa, and modern African cities.

In their book, Demetriou and Wingo hope to articulate a vision of a culture immortalizing liberal heroics with which Africans could identify, and yet one that can also revitalize our commitment to civic immortality in the West, where the loss of honor traditions is discouraging would-be liberal heroes. *Civic Immortality* will include a philosophical anthropology of honor cultures, a historical review of civic immortality's role in classical republicanism, and meditations on the civic importance of "makers of surprises" – and the "life in death" they earn through their heroic creativity on behalf of their people. Also discussed will be the tensions between myth-building vs. freedom of expression, indigenous vs. Western religious conceptions of immortality, and aristocratic vs. democratic conceptions of honor.

In May of 2015 they presented their preliminary results at the Immortality Project's capstone conference at UC Riverside. They were invited to contribute independent pieces on the themes of the project in an upcoming issue of the *Journal of Ethics*. □

Department Welcomes Awe-Inspiring New Students

After a year on hiatus, graduate admissions was reopened last spring, and we are pleased to welcome an amazingly smart and interesting incoming class this fall. Here are some of the new graduate students joining the Department.

Cheryl Abbate transferred from Marquette University to Boulder's PhD program in the Spring of 2015. She received her BA at the University of St.

Thomas in Minnesota and her MA at Colorado State University. Her primary philosophical interest is animal ethics, including the intersection of animal ethics and feminist theory, bioethics, and normative theory. She has six publications in print. A seventh, "Higher and Lower Political Animals," based on her term paper for Mitzi Lee's seminar this past spring, is forthcoming from the

Journal of Animal Ethics.

Aitor Aizpitarte joins the philosophy department's MA program this fall, after completing his undergraduate studies at the University of Barcelona in Spain. He also completed a 6-month exchange program in Bologna, Italy, where he studied aesthetics. Disappointed with the continental approach in Europe, he has come to Boulder in search of a

university where his approach to philosophy would be more valued. He focuses mainly on political philosophy and ethics, with additional interests in epistemology and metaphysics.

Mark Boespflug joins the MA program this fall, after earning a BA in philosophy from Geneva College in Pittsburgh. Some of his philosophical interests include the ethics of belief, the early modern period, and issues in applied ethics. He intends to pursue each of these areas at CU. He has presented at RoME 2013 and Scientiae 2015 and has published an article in *Religious Studies* entitled "Is Augustinian Faith Rational?" Mark lives on a horse ranch outside Boulder with his wife and daughter. He enjoys playing piano and guitar, soccer, and the outdoors.

Jasmine Carter joins the PhD program this fall after earning her BS in Psychology/Cognitive Neuroscience, with a double minor in Philosophy and

Biology, from the University of Denver in Fall 2014. Her interests lie in legal and political philosophy, especially issues surrounding justice, liberty, and the proper role of the state. The debate between paternalism and autonomy in contemporary moral philosophy also interests her, along with biomedical issues, particularly medical ethics and how science (and neuroscience) can inform them.

Alexandra Lloyd looks forward to starting her PhD in Philosophy at Boulder this fall. She holds a BA in Philosophy and Political Science from the University of Toronto (near her hometown of Barrie, Ontario). During her undergraduate studies, she spent an eye-opening year abroad attending Sciences-Po in Paris, allowing her to ameliorate her French language skills. Alex most recently completed her MSc in Philosophy and Public Policy at the London School of Economics, where she wrote a dissertation on Social Justice

and Transport Networks. Her main areas of interest are political philosophy and applied ethics.

Erich Riesen studied philosophy and psychology at the University of San Diego. He just completed his MA in philosophy at Northern Illinois University. His primary interests lie in philosophy of mind and cognitive science; however, he is also interested in ethical theory and applied ethics. He joins the PhD program this fall.

Maggie Taylor's interest in philosophy stems from a background in public policy and political theory. She will be joining the PhD program this fall, after earning her MA in philosophy and social policy from George Washington University, where she focused on rights theory and distributive justice. Maggie is interested in continuing her research in ethical theory and applied ethics, particularly as these relate to issues of autonomy. □

Philosophy Graduation, 2015

Retiring Philosopher Michael Zimmerman gave the graduation address on May 8, 2015. The following degrees and awards were presented.

Bachelor of Arts

Alexander Abram
Michael Asnes
Erno Berdy
James Bush
Michael Butryn
Christopher Chang
Joseph Chapman
Alexa Cluney
Rebecca Combest*
Alyssa Davies
Hanna DeJarnett
Kathleen Dempsey
Jasvinder Dhesi
Christopher Dinkel
Charles Dunlap IV
Charles England III
Naveed Esslam
Samantha Fleming
Kelly Frost*
Mitzi Futro
Jonathan Glendinning
Kathryn Greenfield

Benjamin Gregory
Mara Gwin
Arthur Hamill
Richard Hansen
Benjamin Hause*
Aran Kagen
Ian Kamlet
Yune Kim
Steven King
Taylor Mangan†
Samuel Manning
Kylie McMahon
Marshall McStraw
Catherine Montgomery
Steffen Myers
Georgia Nelson
Jenasy Newton
Charles Nicholson
Tausha Ostrander*
Benjamin Peterson
Patrick Pulis
Spenser Raymond
Rachel Reich

Wyeth Rietveld
Eileen Sherman†
Nathan Simmons
Alexander Skladanowski
Kayla Stearns*
Bryan Steinhurst*
Olesia Stockhold
Bianca Thomas
Casey Vaez
Devon Viart
Jasmine Vojdani*
Daniel Weimer
Daniel West

* *with Distinction*
† *with honors: magna cum laude*

Master of Arts

Erlantz Etxeberria Altuna

Doctor of Philosophy

Andrew Chapman
Kelly Weirich

Jentzsch Prize

Tyler Huismann

Stahl Prize

Spencer Case

Mills Teaching Award (Best TA)

Alex Zambrano

Morrison Teaching Award (Best GPTI)

Andrew Chapman





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- \$400,000 Endow the Center for Values & Social Policy
- \$400,000 Endow Center for History & Phil. of Science
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- \$2,000,000 Endow a chair of philosophy
- \$10,000,000 Naming rights for the Department ☺

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