

# PhiloNews

Newsletter of the University of Guelph Department of Philosophy

ΦΙΛΟΝΟΥΣ



July 2009

## Report from the Department Chair

For this issue of *PhiloNews* I offer a round-up of the past year in the Philosophy department.

The main leitmotif for the year has been the recurring theme of budgetary woe and fiscal restraint for the institution and the College, as well as the economy as a whole. Members of the Philosophy department community have felt the effects of this—and will continue to feel the effects for the next few years—through substantial reductions to the number of Sessional Instructor contracts that we are able to fill (and a corresponding shrinkage in the number of undergraduate courses being offered), a meaningful reduction in the amount of graduate support we can offer (and thus a decrease in Teaching Assistant support for instructors), and a certain amount of belt-tightening around our, already very economical, office expenses.

Nevertheless, despite these difficult conditions, I think it is a tribute to the quality and commitment of the people who make up this community that the core business of the department—our high-quality undergraduate and graduate programs and our research—have continued apace, and that in fact we have found ways to continue to innovate and expand over the past year.

On the scholarly side, in addition to the continuing productivity of the individual members of the department, we have inaugurated a new series of high-profile annual lectures—The Guelph Lecture in Philosophy—which got off to a fabulous start with the visit of Princeton bioethicist Peter Singer in March. Singer spent two days interacting with the members of the Philosophy department, and talking with us about his latest book, and with faculty and students from all across campus including the College of Biological Sci-

ences, the Veterinary College and the Agricultural College. His public lecture was—literally—a standing-room only affair, with close to 500 attendees. An audio recording of the talk can be accessed through the Guelph Lecture website:

[www.guelphlectureinphilosophy.ca](http://www.guelphlectureinphilosophy.ca)

Planning for the next Guelph Lecture, in 2010, is already under way.

The American Association of Philosophy Teachers held their biennial conference here last summer. We have also recently hosted three graduate student conferences and an international workshop-conference on Conceptual Issues on fMRI Interpretation. In October the Canadian Society for Women in Philosophy will be holding an international conference at Guelph on moral, political and epistemic responsibility. In addition, we have increased our presence in the university and the Guelph community. Faculty members have taken their research to the public in the biannual *Philosophy Goes Public!* series of talks at the Guelph Public Library, and in the Café Scientifique hosted by the Bookshelf downtown. We have also been active in talking to, and working with, our colleagues in diverse other regions of the university, such as biology, history, marketing, physics, psychology, and the veterinary school. As Dr. Kevin Hall, the new VP Research, likes to say, “every research project should have a philosopher!”

None of this is to downplay the importance of individual philosophical scholarship, of course. As usual, the department made a good showing at the Campus Author event in 2008—an annual event commemorating books published by members of the university—and the across-the-board schol-

arly productivity of the faculty was very noticeable at the latest performance evaluation process. On a related note, I recently had occasion to calculate that Philosophy department faculty received over \$1,100,000 in external operating research funding, not included travel grants and publication subventions, between 2002 and 2009; this trend continues, with two of our faculty holding SSHRC Standard Research Grants in 2009–10 (and several more rated 4A in the most recent competitions).

On the undergraduate teaching front, we were delighted that one of our faculty members, Karen Houle, was honoured with the College of Arts Teaching Excellence Award for 2008. I am impressed every semester by the glowing comments our students make about their teachers in their course evaluations, and this past semester was no exception. And the Undergraduate Program Committee continues to intelligently and carefully introduce incremental and innovative improvements to our undergraduate curriculum: this year, they rationalized the use of Directed Studies courses and introduced a new, intensive Philosophy Field Course. Having said that, the time may be due for a more systematic review of our undergraduate offerings next year: stay tuned!

For the graduate programs, this was a year of consolidation. This was the first year of the new stand-alone PhD program, and we revised and reformulated the program regulations for maximum clarity and completeness. We have

almost finished preparing the Brief for the periodic external review of our graduate programs, and the picture that is revealed is very encouraging: per capita funding levels for our students have been steadily increasing in recent years, and the outcomes for our graduating students look very good—for example, more than half of our MA students go on to good doctoral programs, virtually all of our PhD students have professional publications arising from their research, and more than 80% of our doctoral graduates in the past decade have already gained *permanent or tenure-track academic* positions.

We more or less held the line on graduate student funding in 2008–09, despite the budgetary situation, and even here there has been room for new initiatives. New scholarships endowed by late faculty member Jay Newman were offered this year. And we have been gathering funds for a new departmental graduate student travel award to provide additional support for those of our students presenting at professional occasions, which we will be able to introduce next year.

The most exciting prospect in the coming year is the hire of a senior Canada Research Chair into the department. This process has been churning steadily, if rather slowly, onwards, and we plan to have a nomination ready for the Fall, and for the successful nominee—an academic with a world-class reputation—to join the department in summer 2010.

*Professor Andrew Bailey*

## Report from the Graduate Studies Coordinator

It is the end of June and the end of my two-year term as the Graduate Coordinator. It has been a challenging journey, which started with a sharp learning curve: learning about forms, rules and regulations. In addition to learning a lot about this important aspect of the department's life and offerings, I also had the opportunity to learn about all the graduate students, who came to the program, who worked on their degree requirements and who completed and achieved their final goal. The following is a list of students to give you an idea what has passed over this past two years.

### Completed in 2007:

- Evan Clarke, MA, “Inertia of the negative: the generic set in Alain Badiou’s *Being and Event*”.
- Richard Duchalski, MA, “Exploring charm and its moral implications for relationship ethics”.
- Christopher Parsons, MA, “Technology, communication and western pluralistic Democracies”.
- Jennifer Rinaldi, MA, “The point at which the Canadian same-sex marriage policy should be beyond deliberation”.
- Ileana Szymanski, PhD, “Sense-perception as an unusual sort of alteration in Aristotle’s *De Anima* II.5”.

### Completed in 2008:

- Nathan Harron, MA, “Monism disguised: scientific pluralism in Philip Kitcher’s modest realism”.
- Gregory Kirk, MA, “Striving for *eudaimonia*: friendship and the cultivation of character in Aristotle’s *Nicomachean Ethics*”.
- Brynna Loppe, MA, “Who gets priority? Examining the ethical role of wait times in assessing health care in Canada”.
- Ian Mathers, MA, “Art as intentional object or generative performance: investigating the ontologies of Roman Ingarden and David Davies”.
- Boyana Peric, MA, “Latour and social constructivism: problems in ‘taking one more turn’ after the social turn.”
- Adam Schneider, MA, “A formulation of Jonsonian metabolic ontology and an argument for technology as an ectosomatic metabolite”.

### Completed in 2009:

- Jared Babin, MA, “Truth, experience, and the work of art: an interpretation of Heidegger’s notion of truth in the age of enframing”.

- Charlene Elsby, MA, “On the concept of intentional being”.
- Jing Long, PhD, “Identity and the I”.
- Stephanie Zubcic, PhD, “Hannah Arendt’s phenomenology of responsibility”.

As for our current students, they are hard at work on their degree requirements, but they are also presenting papers at conferences, submitting them to journals and organizing professional events. During the past two years, they

## Guelph Lecture in Philosophy

On March 21st, Peter Singer, who most consider the founder of the Animal Rights movement, spoke at the Department’s Inaugural Guelph Lecture in Philosophy. Rozanski Hall was packed with people sitting in the aisles, the stairways, and crowding at the back of the room. Though Singer recently published a new book, *The Life You Can Save*, undoubtedly, the majority of the people in the room knew Singer for his work on Animal Ethics. Singer didn’t disappoint the packed room and spoke about the need to consider the interests of animals in our ethical deliberation. Although familiar to most of the people who have studied philosophy in the room, Singer was able to provide more depth to the material while presenting it in a way that catered to the largely non-philosophical audience. The talk culminated in a vibrant discussion that left many in the audience wanting more.

Dr. Singer was able to spend some time with members of the department on a more personal basis the day before the talk and for lunch before heading into Rozanski. I had the

## Graduate student research projects

Here are brief summaries, written by our graduate students, of the research projects they are pursuing. Some are in preliminary stages, others near completion. The range and originality of them is impressive.

### MA students

**Lauren Elliott** My research considers feminist responses to cosmetic surgery, and, in particular, the tension feminists encounter in critiquing this practice without condemning or victimizing individual women who undergo it. Whereas some liberal feminists suggest that cosmetic surgery is empowering for these women insofar as it enables the exercise of autonomy in situations of limited choice, some radical feminists argue that women who undergo cosmetic surgery are compelled to do so by unrealistic standards of beauty and femininity (and so do not exercise any autonomy). Liberal approaches acknowledge that women who undergo cosmetic surgery frequently take an active role in the decision-making process (and claim to undergo cosmetic procedures for their own benefit) but typically overlook the external constraints

have held a very successful interdisciplinary conference for graduate students.

During this time we also moved to a stand-alone program from the tri-university program. We passed the OCGS evaluation with flying colors and managed a rather smooth transition. Since then the number of applications to our program has been increasing. So, I can say that today our graduate programs are strong. I am happy to report that my competent colleague, Karyn Freedman, will take over as the new Graduate Studies Coordinator.

*Professor Omid Payrow Shabani*

privilege of sitting down with Dr. Singer before his lecture. Although some have criticized Singer for espousing a philosophy that has a mass appeal but that lacks philosophical rigour, those people obviously haven’t had the opportunity to speak with Dr. Singer about his work. This became abundantly clear after sitting down with Dr. Singer for more than a few minutes.

Singer’s new book, *The Life You Can Save*, argues that “our current response to world poverty is not only insufficient but ethically indefensible.” We are in a unique position insofar as we have the ability to eradicate world poverty through some simple changes without significantly diminishing our own quality of life.

The event was sponsored by the Department of Philosophy, The Campbell Centre for Animal Welfare, and The Office of The Dean, College of Arts.

*Aaron Masseur*

and limitations that might shape this desire. And, while radical approaches do take these into account, they tend to posit women as vulnerable victims of patriarchy. Adopting Judith Butler’s account of the postmodern subject as neither wholly free nor entirely determined, my objective is to demonstrate that both liberal and radical responses to cosmetic surgery do not sufficiently explore the relation between the intrinsic and extrinsic motivations that underlie this practice, and, more specifically, the way in which subjects can simultaneously act and be acted on by their situations.

**Tim Fitzjohn** I’m finishing up a thesis on Hegel. The focus of the thesis is on Conscience in Hegel’s Phenomenology of Spirit. I am using the theme of self-certainty to show how Conscience resolves the logical tensions that are present in the structure of the individual.

**Jennifer Friis** Merleau-Ponty’s ‘philosophy of ambiguity’ contests the distinction between ‘self’ and ‘other’—a distinction that has been used in feminist discourse to describe women’s position in society as ‘other’. His work has been



criticized because it negates the differences between man and woman, which effectively prevents political action. My GRP will focus on this debate and argue that the notion of gender difference involves a dichotomy characterized by hierarchy and that a retention of this difference will always conceal the extent to which human existence is, as Merleau-Ponty has argued, inherently ambiguous, co-constitutive and intersubjective. In place of the notion of gender difference, I offer Merleau-Ponty's conception of intersubjectivity and intercorporeity as a way to overcome patriarchy.

**Douglas Halls** My current research works at understanding the relation between Levinasian ethics and justice, especially in terms of the different temporal modes invested in these concepts. Arguably, Levinas understands ethics as a transcendental condition of human experience, one radically dislocated from presence and satisfied by a 'pre-ontological' encounter between two people. Justice, by contrast, is an ontological implication or byproduct of ethics that is synchronous with the present and involves a relation between three or more parties. I am hopeful that researching the role of time in the passage between ethics and justice will allow me to diagnose Levinas' reluctance to accept animals as having a morally compelling status.

**Jeremy Hogg** Instrumentalism says: practical rationality is only about taking the appropriate means to your ends and that practical reasoning is only a matter of deliberating about the means to your ends. I say: a) instrumentalism cannot account for the rationality of choosing a greater good (for oneself) over a smaller but more local (or present) good, b) instrumentalist accounts of ends in terms of pleasure and desire-satisfaction (the default views) are problematic, and c) cost-benefit analysis suggests that for both the purpose of describing deliberative behavior and evaluating it, it is more practical to treat of ends as heterogeneous—whereas instrumentalists must commit to treating ends as homogeneous.

**Ryan Krahn** I have just completed an MA thesis on the Philosophical Hermeneutics of Hans-Georg Gadamer and its relevance for cross-cultural interpretation. I argue that Gadamer's hermeneutical approach represents an interstitial position between, on the one hand, the Romantic defense of a total commensurability of horizons that one finds present in the work of Friedrich Schleiermacher and Wilhelm Dilthey and, on the other hand, John D. Caputo's defense of a total incommensurability between the interpreting self and interpreted other. After likening the dreams of total commensurability and total incommensurability to certain political schemata, colonial usurpation and nativist secessionism, respectively, I argue that the hermeneutical in-between at the heart of Gadamer's 'fusion of horizons' is significantly similar to Homi K. Bhabha's idea of 'hybridity.' On the basis of this comparison, I contend that Gadamer offers us a new, specifically postcolonial model of intercultural interpretation.

**Nolan Little** I'm working on the ontological commitments of the possible worlds semantics of modal logic. Specifically,

I am comparing two realist views on possible worlds: the "world-novels" (for lack of a better term) of Robert Adams and the "world-natures" proposed by Robert Stalnaker and developed in somewhat more detail by Peter Forrest. I argue that the "world-nature" form of realism is the more plausible of the two and attempt to show that it is both grounded in (relatively) uncontroversial intuitions about possibility and necessity and carries (again, relatively) uncontroversial implications about the metaphysical structure of reality. Believing that there really are possible worlds need not be as crazy as it may sound.

**Katherine Livins** My thesis focuses on how research regarding the cognitive mechanisms of analogy may help to further our understanding of qualia. Ultimately I hope to demonstrate that qualia and Physicalism may be compatible.

**Brooke McIntosh** What exactly is encouragement? What is it about an encouraging gesture that affects us so deeply, and, more often than not, so effectively? What inspires us to encourage each other? Can I encourage myself? Is there a proper "way" to encourage: an indubitable method that yields maximal results? Does it have an end—a telos? Drawing on several seminal thinkers from the western philosophical tradition, my thesis explores the nature and value of the phenomenon of encouragement, particularly as it relates to the experience of learning. My first chapter describes the generative context within which our capacities to encourage and to be encouraged arises. There, I present a challenge to the view that our capacity to encourage and to be encouraged are abilities already in our possession independently of our engagement with other people, and suggest to the contrary that they are capacities in which other beings are already implicated as their necessary condition. Chapter two explores what might be called the "temporality" of encouragement, showing that encouragement is conditioned by a future that is by definition impossible to predict. And finally, chapter three picks up on the lessons of the previous two chapters, showing that because an encouraging gesture is essentially concerned with awakening in the other an effort to discover through their very own activity what they can do, encouragement is an inherently educative phenomenon.

**Elisabeth Paquette** My research is focused upon the theories of Althusser and Balibar. I hope to discuss the concept 'subject', primarily the political subject, for whom subjectivity is not the prime concern. It is a concept of subject that is not concerned simply with individuation but with participation. In light of the inclusion of a participation the relation of citizen and state must be changed, and furthermore the subject must also account for this relation through a concept of transindividuation, which is a phase in the formation of the subject that I hope to develop further.

## PhD students

**Michal Arciszewski** My research attempts to trace the potential for theoretical unification of scientific models within

the language and methods of molecular science. I look specifically at the research being done on the organism *Ceanhorabditis elegans* and the successes this model has had at producing a unified molecular explanation of psychological and biological phenomena.

**Joseph Arel** I am working on giving an account of intimacy. I want to know what it is and how it functions in the constitution of subjectivity. This discourse is situated in Hegel's philosophy, but I am drawing from other sources as well, from ancient Greek philosophy as well as contemporary continental philosophy.

**Nahum Brown** In the "Actuality" chapter of Hegel's *Science of Logic*, Hegel claims that absolute necessity is contingency, and that as contingency, absolute necessity lets actualities go free. My dissertation will explore the specific developments of this claim that help to generate insights about the nature of possibility. These insights include the notion that experience is a multiplicity of determinate infinities, that totalities remain open to movements beyond their limits, and that necessity does not still the agitations of contingencies, but rather excites freedom and lets possibility become vibrant, even explosive with deep distinction.

**Amy Butchart** My research is in feminist philosophy of science, especially medicine. I am interested at looking at the neural underpinnings of eating disorders and how cultural theorists and postmodern philosophers have ignored such important data.

**Cameron Clayton** I will be working on Nietzsche and examining how his Lamarckian conceptions of evolution and incorporation inform various themes in his work such as the seemingly contradictory notions of self-creation and 'amor fati'.

**Richard Duchalski** My current research concerns the place of emotion in morality. The traditional model of moral judgment has emphasized the centrality of reason, stressing that the 'intrusion' of affective states is distracting for the 'cool-headed' moral agent, and so emotional reactions should be minimized. Some recent work has challenged this by suggesting that emotions are crucially insightful, even necessary for full moral agency. Some of the issues I am examining include the epistemic value of emotion, feminist accounts of the moral value of affect, as well as the conditions under which an emotion can be properly said to be moral.

**Niels Feuerhahn** I am working on a dissertation on Emmanuel Levinas. My dissertation project focuses on the role that the concepts of time and temporality play in Levinas' major works *Le temps et l'autre*, *Totalité et infini*, and *Autrement qu'être*. I am particularly interested in Levinas' indebtedness to Henri Bergson and the residues of Bergsonian thinking in Levinas' conception of subjectivity and (ethical) responsibility.

**Luke Fraser** I am interested in exploring a cluster of problems surrounding the position of "structural realism," the position that the sciences can and do produce knowledge bearing on the *structure* of reality (or, as another version has it, bearing on reality, full stop—insofar as the *real is structural*). These problems are both ontological and epistemological in nature, and their exploration calls for the development of concepts that are adequate both to the way in which structures exist, and to the historical processes by which structures may be exposed or produced in knowledge. The two guiding questions of my research, in a nutshell, will be: *What are structures?* And: *How can they be known?* More specifically, I will be asking: *What difference, if any, distinguishes a mathematical from a physical structure? To what extent, and on what grounds, is the mathematization of nature possible (in light of this difference)? What is it for a structure to exist physically? Can mathematics, itself, yield a philosophically sufficient concept of structure? What relation is there between mathematical formalization and philosophical conceptualization?* Given the trajectory of these questions, a critical articulation of philosophy's position with respect to the sciences will be unavoidable if these investigations are to be pursued coherently, and this will, itself, form an integral part of the project.

**Matthew Furlong** Michel Foucault remarked in a 1984 interview that "Freedom is the ontological condition of ethics. But ethics is the considered form that freedom takes when informed by reflection." Very schematically, my current research consists in giving a sense to that statement by associating it with a concept of freedom appropriate to it. This conception of freedom lies in the thoroughgoing multiplicity presupposed by Foucault's historical investigations; it is therefore both non-subjective and non-reistic, and can be construed as a name that irreducible multiplicity receives from the point of view of a practical ethics. Ethics would then be a concerted concern for and negotiation with what is given to us multiply and heterogeneously (e.g. "the self"), yet which can take on a unitary and necessary character.

**Jill Gilbert** My thesis proposes a phenomenological analysis of the temporal nature of depression. I suggest that the experience of depression is an attempt to deny the mediation of time, and as well, the mediations of the body and of other people. I hope that such an analysis will shed light on the nature of depression and, on what it is to live time and to be a self: subjectivity emerges out of living time with others. I will draw from such thinkers as Bergson, Merleau-Ponty, Levinas and Binswanger.

**Daniel Harris** I'm just starting thesis research. I am interested in Nietzsche's conception of friendship, a topic which, though it weaves in and out of his work, Nietzsche never gives sustained treatment. I think that getting a better sense of his views on the subject might both move forward conversations about friendship and make clearer Nietzsche's positions on the self, self-creation, and the role of others in our lives.

**Kelly Jones** I recently gave a paper at PhiloSOPHIA, a feminist society, on Luce Irigaray's use of rhetorical questioning in her interpretation of Maurice Merleau-Ponty's ontology of the flesh. My nascent research centers around similar themes; I am interested in language and literature as sites for ethics, and specifically the role that questioning and silence play therein.

**Cherilyn Keall** In my dissertation I explore the relationship among education, human nature, culture, and freedom. I begin by arguing that, according to Dewey's view of human nature, human culture is a necessary but not sufficient condition for human freedom, where freedom is conceived positively rather than merely negatively. I then examine the relationship among Dewey's conceptions of habit, growth, and mind in order to show that there are very specific cultural practices—habits acquired through education—that are required if we are to realize our freedom. After highlighting and analyzing three specific categories of habits of growth that are crucial to human fulfillment, namely, habits of self-knowledge, self-control, and meaningful self-expression, I intend to show how the combination of an aesthetic and a phenomenological education is particularly well suited for the cultivation of such habits. I anticipate that my dissertation will serve to support the Deweyan view that education should properly result in democracy as a way of life.

**Lindsay Lerman** I'm working on a description of nonknowledge as a sort of third state or Event, something other than knowledge or ignorance, when (or where), for example, reason-giving is non-existent or interrupted. For now, I'm calling this the epistemic event of nonknowledge.

**John Lundy** In the Western tradition, at least since the Enlightenment, moral philosophers and political theorists have thought their task was to develop credible alternatives to the traditional justifications of norms and principles based on settled tradition or divine authority. The prevailing tendency of this tradition has been to insist that the best way to figure out how to live would involve, instead or in addition to other methods, a significant role for some kind of thinking process called practical reasoning. I seek to answer the question: how can we expect to find a legitimate basis for our social and political practices in the face of post-modern critiques of rationality and the fact of radical cultural pluralism? My thesis defends the possibility of grounding ethics in a postmetaphysical humanism, the center of which is a communicative reason and tries to show the reality of human finitude, our inexorable situatedness in historical/cultural contexts, and the nexus of power, human interest and knowledge, need not entail the abandonment of a notion of reason which would allow these facts to be partially transcended.

**Matthew Martinuk** My dissertation, "Being-toward-the-Good," is a comparison of the philosophical anthropology of Charles Taylor (author of *Sources of the Self* and not the Liberian dictator) and his teacher Iris Murdoch (author of *The Sovereignty of Good*). The work attempts to

show that both authors employ a transcendental argument for the conclusion that the self is fundamentally orientated toward the good; an argument motivated by their criticisms of anti-realist approaches to ethics such as those found in Ayer, Mackie, Blackburn and to some extent Williams.

**Aaron Masecar** I am currently working on developing a philosophical understanding of everyday habits through the work of the Pragmatist Charles S. Peirce. Nowhere in the tradition is there a more thorough explanation of exactly what a habit is than in Peirce's writings. My hope is that an understanding of the process of habit destruction and formation will have some interesting things to say about Virtue Ethics.

**Suzanne McCullagh** "Resourceful Interventions: Action with(in) constraints", aims to conceptualize resourcefulness by developing a theory of capacities wherein capacities are activated by the constraints and limits of situations and are not properties of individual things or beings. The main idea is that the ability to discern capacities is a key element of resourceful activity. The project mixes Ontology and Social and Political Philosophy.

**Daniel McDonald** I am interested in ways that Martin Heidegger's philosophy can contribute to political philosophy. In particular, I am interested in what the chapter on discourse in *Being and Time* can tell us about the connection between language and politics. I am also interested in how a better understanding of authentic speech and attentive listening to others can contribute to discussions about the role of free speech in democracies.

**Rebecca Olivier** I'm working with the conflicting concepts of empathy used in current neuroscience and psychology, and examining the sources of these concepts in eighteenth century philosophical thought.

**Megan Penney** I am interested in the connection between technology and power. Through examining different forms of power, and distinct technological areas, I will aim to show that there is no possibility of an equal power relationship between nations without each nation first having similar technology.

**Brad Richards** My research is focused on consciousness, perception, attention and introspection. I am interested in what the content of our experiences is, and whether experiences always have content. Many current views of experience are committed to the claim that all experiences are contentful; one way of understanding this claim is as saying that there is always some way that things are presented as being in experience. Although, the notion of content is a technical one, this is a substantive claim, which if true would offer direction and hope for a naturalized account of conscious experience. However, I think that even the more modest claim that all perceptual experiences have content is false. I argue this through a careful consideration of first person

and empirical data on attention and introspection, both in consciousness research and everyday experience.

**Karen Robertson** I am interested in the implications of Heidegger's work for the practice of critiquing our institutions and ways of living. Drawing on a description of Dasein from Heidegger's *Being and Time*, in particular his description of 'worldhood', I argue that because Being, or the ontological, is only ever revealed in the intersubjective context of the determinate communities through which we organize ourselves and give meaning to our lives, any way of life is only ever a partial revealing of Being and is therefore one-sided and in perpetual need of critique. I develop such a critique in terms of the historical situatedness of any community, the relationship between the ontic and ontological as embodied by both Dasein and truth, and the expression of such a relationship that is manifest in a work of art.

**Andrew Robinson** My most current research focuses on Luce Irigaray's theory of education and its relation to her broader ethical project. I've also recently been working on Irigarayan and other feminist critiques of the "feminine Other" in the work of Emmanuel Levinas. This Fall, I will be presenting a paper at SPEP arguing that Irigaray's ethical project is a movement of "becoming-woman," and therefore can be read as consistent with Gilles Deleuze's ethical project.

**Jason Robinson** My dissertation "A Hermeneutical Reconstruction of the Natural Sciences and Objectivity: Theory, Practice, and Progress" lays the groundwork for a dialogue with the natural sciences. It does so through a reconstruction of the self-understandings of the natural sciences and Gadamer's philosophical hermeneutics that embody how

each thinks the limits, possibilities, and goals of human understanding.

**Brian Rogers** I am investigating Heidegger's and Ricoeur's contributions to the phenomenology of religion. My principal focus is the problem of treating religion as a theme. It is not entirely clear what this term means, especially on the levels of ontology and philosophical anthropology. The thinkers under investigation construe religion as a basic structure pervading all aspects of life and which is bound up with ecstatic time. This interpretation of religion has important implications for the way in which we view philosophy.

**Reiner Schaefer** My research primarily involves modifying Robert Brandom's theory of language and reasoning so that it can accommodate defeasible reasoning. Reasoning is defeasible if it allows good inferences (such as the one from "Tweety is a bird" to "Tweety can fly") to be over-ruled or defeated by additional information (such as learning that Tweety is a penguin). Brandom's theory of language is particularly interesting because it is probably the most thoroughly worked out account of how the meaning of an expression is determined by its use and because it involves a sort of meaning holism that I think is particularly difficult to reconcile with defeasible reasoning.

**Saša Stanković** I'm writing a PhD thesis on Kant and Deleuze on the issue of morality and ethics. I argue that both philosophers conceptualize a kind of normative imperative that demands that 'one becomes who one really is,' that is, that one develops the transcendental (Kant) or the virtual (Deleuze) side of oneself. This side is the side of capacities.

*For the latest information on upcoming talks and other departmental events, please visit our website:*

[www.uoguelph.ca/philosophy](http://www.uoguelph.ca/philosophy)