



# PHILO NEWS

Newsletter of the Department of Philosophy  
University of Guelph

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### Chair's Report

I hope you are all staying well in the midst of this pandemic. It's been a very difficult year for all of us and I sincerely hope that you are all taking the time you need to relax, move away from the computer, and turn off the email.

We had to pivot very quickly to virtual instruction near the end of our Winter 2020 semester and I am proud to say that our faculty, our sessional instructors, and our graduate students more than met this challenge. Our Fall 2020 semester has been virtual as well and, despite the challenges this has posed, our courses have been a success. Thanks to everyone for your hard work and dedication in making our courses as effective and engaging as possible!

I would also like to congratulate our graduate students who completed milestone projects over the past 7 months. We know it hasn't been easy to focus on research in the midst of the upheaval of the pandemic. You have all done so well under the circumstances! Pat yourselves on the back, you deserve it!

I would like to welcome all of our new graduate students. We're so happy you have chosen to come to Guelph to carry out your research! This is certainly a different sort of year to be starting grad school, without the usual on-campus events, classes, talks, and social interactions. I hope you are all managing to connect with each other through virtual events, especially those put on by our PGSA and the weekly virtual chats Janet Thackray is running every Friday afternoon, and through virtual meetings with your classes. I hope we'll all be able to see each other in person soon!

I would also like to welcome our new postdoctoral fellow, Dalitso Ruwe, whose work is funded by the Extending New



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### Chair's Report continued

Narratives SSHRC Partnership Grant. Dr. Ruwe is developing an intellectual history of Africana anti-slavery arguments starting in the late 17th/early 18th centuries and extending through the 19th century. This is exciting and important work and we're so pleased to welcome him to the department.

I wish you all a very good last few weeks of the semester! My (virtual) door is always open, so please don't hesitate to get in touch if there's anything I can help you with.

*-Trish Sheridan*

### Report from the Grad Coordinator

For 2020-21 the Philosophy Department has admitted 12 new graduate students (with one of those coming into the program in January). Nour Abu Hasam and Molly Graham (both from Guelph's MA) Ashley Raspopovic (Waterloo), Rod McNeill (McMaster) and Mirella Tranquille (University of Montreal) make up the PhD cohort. The new MA students are Lukas Nicholson and Vanita Fernandez (both from Guelph), Camille Irvine and Justin Vriend (both from Queens), Dru Graham (Redeemer), Clair Baleshta (Waterloo) and Jacob Fehr (Trent). We welcome them all to our program, virtual as it may be!

Nour and Rod have backgrounds in ancient philosophy and are looking to branch out into phenomenology and medieval, respectively. Molly is interested in social robots and AI. Ashley, Camille, Vanita and Clair will work in biomedical ethics, Dru in race and social and political philosophy. Lukas is interested in the philosophy of technology, Jacob and Justin in virtue ethics.

*-Don Dedrick*



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## Graduate Student Achievements

Several of our grad students have recent or forthcoming publications.

**Brady Fullerton** recently published an article, "[Does art bring us together? An empirical approach to the evolutionary aesthetics of Ellen Dissanayaki](#)" in the philosophy of science journal, *Biological Theory* (2020).

**Josh Grant-Young** recently published a chapter titled, "[Dissecting the Corrupted Body Politic: Fear, 'Body Horror' and the Failure of Relations](#)" in the edited volume *Philosophy, Film and the Dark Side of Interdependence* (2020).

**Gennady McCracken** had an article accepted in *The Journal of Medicine and Philosophy* titled, "Can a MacIntyrean care about severely disabled strangers?"

**Amber Spence** published an article entitled "[The precarity of happiness in Aristotle's \*Nicomachean Ethics\*](#)" in the graduate journal GNOSIS (2020).

**Cameron Fioret** coauthored an article, "The Water-Migration Nexus: An Analysis of Causalities and Response Mechanisms with a Focus on the Global South," in the edited volume [Regional Integration and Migration Governance in the Global South](#) (2020).

**Marie-Pier Lemay** published an article, "[Erreur de diagnostic: préférences adaptatives et impérialisme](#)," ('Faulty Diagnoses: Adaptive Preferences and Imperialism') in the French Canadian journal, *Philosophiques* (2020).

Good work gang!



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## Recent Graduates

Over the past year the following students have completed our graduate programs:

1 Year MA (Major Research Projects):

**Molly Graham**, "Developing Social Robots for the Future."

**Leah Gray**, "Size matters: Microinequities in Heterosexual Promiscuity."

2 Year MA (Thesis Projects):

**Nour Abu Husan** "Myth and Mysticism in Plato's Phaedo."

**Mary King**, "Public Space and the Limits of Liberalism."

**Quinn McGlade-Ferentzy**, "Heterosexist Suspicion of a Queer Outsider."

**Lillian Wood**, "'Twin Studies and the Equal Environments Assumption – An Evaluation of the Genetic Heritability Account of Behaviour."

PhD:

**Daniel Griffin**, "Hegel and the Problem of Language."

Congratulations on your achievements!





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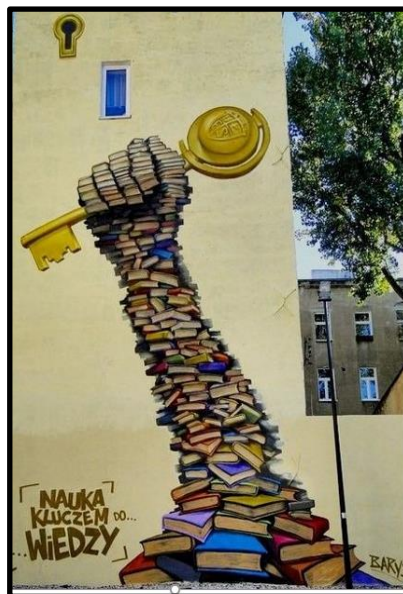
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## Former Grad Student News

We try to stay in touch with students after graduating from our MA and PhD programs. Occasionally we get some news about their achievements.

**Martin King**, a philosopher of science who received his PhD in 2016, has renewed his post-doc at the University of Bonn for a second three-year term. He recently published a paper in the *European Journal for the Philosophy of Science* titled, "[Explanations and Candidate Explanations in Physics.](#)" Keep up the good work Martin.

**Kyle Bromhall** is a William James scholar and epistemologist who received his PhD in 2015 and worked for several years as a sessional instructor at U of G. This was an extremely productive period for Kyle. Among other achievements, he published six articles and presented fourteen conference papers between 2015-2019. I am elated to announce that Kyle has accepted a permanent job as [Professor of Philosophy at Sheridan College.](#) Way to go Kyle!





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## Philosophy Faculty News

Our faculty have been publishing articles, winning awards, and giving virtual presentations.

**Samantha Brennan** published four book chapters, a book review, and a popular article. Her chapter "Analytic Approaches to Feminist Ethics," appears in the *Oxford Handbook of Feminist Philosophy* (2019). Another chapter titled "Parenting, Philosophy, Public Policy, and a Puzzle" appears in the Roman and Littlefield volume, *Philosophy and Public Policy* (2018). Her chapter, "The Sources of Thresholds for Options," appears in *Oxford Studies in Normative Ethics*. A fourth Chapter in [The Routledge Handbook of the Philosophy of Childhood and Children](#) is on "Childhood and sexuality" (you can watch a [video abstract](#)). Samantha's popular article in *The Conversation Canada* argues that it is "[ludicrous](#)" to [ban leggings on campus](#).

**Monique Deveaux** presented a paper at the Philosophy Department colloquium at Western University in March 2020: "The Capability Approach and Transformative Poverty Reduction".

**Peter Eardley** published a chapter on "Rhetoric and the Epistemic Status of Theology in the Late-Thirteenth Century" in the volume [The Origin and Nature of Language and Logic: Perspectives in Medieval Islamic, Jewish, and Christian Thought](#) (2020). He also has a forthcoming entry in the *Stanford Encyclopedia of Philosophy* on "Medieval Theories of Conscience. Peter presented a papers at two international conferences: The international conference *Contingency and Necessity in Medieval and Post-medieval Scholasticism*, in Prague, and the International conference *Motivation and Normativity of Practical Reasons: Moral Philosophy in the 14<sup>th</sup> Century*, in Hamburg, Germany.



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**Karyn Freedman** published a paper in *Feminist Philosophy Quarterly*, called "[The Epistemic Significance of #MeToo](#)". In the paper she argues that #MeToo testimony increases epistemic value for the survivor, for the teller, and for society at large. She further argues that #MeToo testimony compels us to consider the tremendous and often unappreciated costs to individual tellers, and the increased credibility they are owed in virtue thereof.

**Maya Goldenberg** published one journal article and one book chapter on trust in science and vaccine hesitancy. Her paper "[Countering Medical Nihilism by Connecting Facts and Values](#)" will appear in *Studies in History and Philosophy of Science Part A* (2021). Her chapter "Rethinking Debates About Pediatric Vaccine Safety: A Feminist View" appears in the [Routledge Handbook of Feminist Philosophy of Science](#). The big news, however, is Maya's forthcoming book: *Vaccine Hesitancy: Public Trust, Expertise, and the War on Science* (2021, University of Pittsburgh Press), which couldn't be better timed. Maya has been busy giving talks in anticipation of her book, appearing on the CBC Radio's political show *The House*, and presenting papers at such prestigious institutions as Social Science and Research Council (UK), WHO Global Health Ethics and Governance Unit, and other venues.

**John Hacker-Wight** published two journal articles and two opinion pieces on topics relating to virtue ethics and social life. His paper "[Passions, virtue, and rational life](#)," appears in *Philosophy and Social Criticism* (2020). "[Virtues as perfections of human powers](#)" appears in *Royal Institute of Philosophy Supplement* (2020). His popular articles on [Trump's illness](#) and [Individualism in the Time of COVID](#) appear in *Prindle Post*.



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**Stefan Linquist** published five journal articles on the philosophy of ecology and philosophy of genomics. His article "[Two \(and a half\) arguments for conserving biodiversity on aesthetic grounds](#)" in *Biology & Philosophy* (2020) defends aesthetic value as grounds for conservation. A paper on the nature of [ecological laws](#) appears in *History and Philosophy of the Life Sciences* (2020). A third paper, "Why ecology and evolution occupy distinct epistemic 'niches'" appears in a volume of [Philosophical Topics](#) (2019) that Stefan coedited. The other two articles were coauthored with scientists and appear in scientific journals. "[Getting clear about the F-word in genomics](#)," in *PLOS Biology* (2020), defends a conception of function for this discipline. A modeling paper in *BMC Biology* (2020) explores the possibility that harmful "jumping genes" persist in our cells by [creating their own habitat](#).

**Mark McCullagh** published a chapter, "Distributed utterances" in an edited volume called [The Architecture of Context and Context-sensitivity: Perspectives from Philosophy, Linguistics, and Logic](#).

**John Russon** has two recent books. [Adult Life: Aging, Responsibility and the Pursuit of Happiness](#) was recently published by SUNY Press (2020). *Politics, Money and Persuasion: Democracy and Opinion in Plato's Republic*, will soon be published by Indiana University Press (2021).

**Gus Skorburg** was recently named Co-Academic Director of CARE-AI which you can [read about here](#). Gus coauthored three journal articles on moral psychology and bioethics: "[The moral self and moral duties](#)" appeared in *Philosophical Psychology* (2020); "[AI methods in bioethics](#)" was published in





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the *American Journal of Bioethics* (2020); and "[Why we never eat alone: The overlooked role of microbes and partners in obesity debates in bioethics](#)" appeared in *Journal of Bioethical Inquiry* (2020). Gus also coauthored two chapters in edited volumes. "Partisanship, humility, and epistemic polarization" appears in the Routledge volume, [Polarisation, Arrogance, and Dogmatism: Philosophical Perspectives](#). A second chapter, "Some ethics of deep brain stimulation" was published in the [Elsevier volume, Global Mental Health and Neuroethics](#). Gus was recently awarded a research grant from the *University of Guelph Research Development and Catalyst Fund* entitled, "The epidemic within the pandemic: Ethical and legal issues in digital mental health responses to COVID-19" (\$11,700 ). Gus is also collaborating on a second project funded by the *Centre for Addiction and Mental Health Resiliency and Coping Fund* on the use of AI modeling to predict mental health challenges and needs in the wake of COVID 19.





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## Coming Events

The speaker series has gone virtual (like almost everything else). Thanks to Maya Goldenberg for organizing these talks.

### Sridhar Venkatapuram



Kings College, London

**October 9th**

“Pandemics and (Global) Health Justice.”

### Dalisto Ruwe



University of Guelph

**November 13<sup>th</sup>**

“Nineteenth Century Black Racial Sciences: Dr. James McCune Smith's Critique of Thomas Jefferson's Use of Zoology in Notes on The State of Virginia.”

### C. Thi Nguyen



University of Utah

**January 29<sup>th</sup>, 2021**

“Transparency is Surveillance.”

<https://objectionable.net/>

### Serene Khader



CUNY Brooklyn

**February 26<sup>th</sup>, 2021**

Title: TBA



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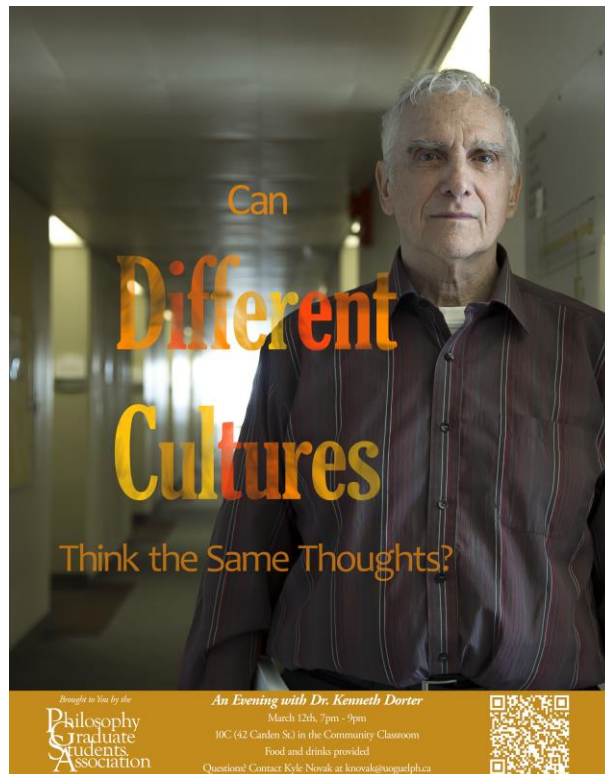
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### Feature: Ken Dorter

Ken Dorter was recognized recently with the University's **Medal of Merit**, which "is awarded to a professor who has retired from the University of Guelph, and who has made outstanding contributions to teaching, the functioning of the University, or other areas which have resulted in substantial improvement to the academic life and character of the University." The awards ceremony should have transpired last winter but was unfortunately interrupted by the COVID 19 lockdown. So, let me take this opportunity to extend our congratulations to Ken, whose teaching and scholarship serves as an inspiration.





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Speaking personally, I have long envied Ken's popularity with students. I recall once overhearing a student speaking effusively to her friends about the "wonderful philosophy professor" whose lectures are a sheer joy. This sentiment is shared no doubt by the many students who fill Ken's classes. Ken's popularity with grad students is evidenced by the groups of budding scholars regularly huddled in his office.

Many of us also continue to benefit from Ken's deep knowledge of various philosophical traditions. My own conversations with Ken about Plato often start in the hallway and drift into his office, until I realize that I am running late for class. I am very grateful to Ken for introducing me to the work of Marcus Aurelius, which has been a solace over the past few months during COVID. I also appreciate his patient efforts at explaining the merits of Heidegger's philosophical work and its relationship to that author's political life. I know that I am not alone in my gratitude for having such generous colleague.

Ken has recently published an important book, *Can Different Cultures Think the Same Thoughts: A Comparative Study in Metaphysics and Ethics* (2018, University of Notre Dame Press). This is a bold and important exploration of metaphysics as a basis for ethics across Western, Chinese and Indian traditions. In an era where academic work is becoming increasingly specialized and insular, it is refreshing to encounter a big-picture summary of ethical thinking writ large.

Thank you, Ken, for your many contributions to this department and to the discipline more broadly. You are a most deserving recipient of this award.

*-Stefan Linquist*



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## Meet Dalitso Ruwe, Postdoctoral Fellow in Philosophy



### **Please tell us about the graduate seminar you will be teaching in W21, and how you became interested in the topic?**

The class I will be teaching is titled Eighteenth-Nineteenth Century Black Racial Destiny. The class will look at the way 18<sup>th</sup>-19<sup>th</sup> century Black thinkers developed a philosophy of history that advanced the argument that Africa and its descendants had unique racial gifts that would add to human civilization. My interest in researching anti-colonialism began as a sophomore in high school. At that time my dad Dr. Field Ruwe was completing his second novel *Alluvial Reflection*- a story of an African CIA agent planning to stop a coup and the exploitation of diamonds in his country. My dad would discuss politics and history with me that got me interested in anti-colonial movements in Africa and the diaspora. I was also fortunate to have two amazing English APA teachers in Ms. Hoke and Ms. Davis who made me read Richard Wright's *Native Son* and Marcus Garvey's *The Philosophy and Opinions of Marcus Garvey* as part of my reading package for the class which furthered my interests in Africana philosophy in high school.



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### Can you please tell us about your academic background?

In undergrad I read a lot of Malcolm X, Huey P Newton, Angela Davis and Cornel West. My freshman year at California State University Fresno, I met a Visiting Professor of Philosophy by the name of Dr. Julius Bailey. At the time, I was auditing Dr. Bailey's class on Hip Hop Philosophy and developed a relationship with him. As our relationship grew, Dr Bailey told me he was mentored by Cornel West as a master's student at Harvard. He told me a story of how Cornel West gave him a reading challenge to read 100 books in a year and asked if I was up to do the same challenge. Working with Dr. Bailey helped build my research skills in Africana Philosophy. As I completed my studies, I served as principle research assistant for his books, *Jay-Z: Essays on Hip Hop Philosopher's King* and *The Cultural Impact of Kanye West*. In 2013 while presenting on the Kanye West book project at a Black Existentialism Conference, I was recruited by Dr. Tommy Curry to study under him at Texas A&M University. Dr. Curry is best known for his work in establishing the field of Black Male Studies and his American Book Award, *The Man-Not: Race, Class, Genre, and the Dilemmas of Black Manhood*. I completed my studies under Dr. Curry in 2019.

### What are you working on currently?

Before joining the department, I was Visiting Professor of Philosophy at Wittenberg University in Ohio. I am currently in the process of turning my dissertation "Black Narricide & Ontological Sovereignty: The Mischaracterization of American Slavery in Philosophy," into a publishable book manuscript. The book project postulates that while slave narratives have been studied in Africana philosophy, Africana philosophers, in their bid to advance entrenched concepts of ethics, morality, idealism, skepticism, and phenomenology, as revered paradigms in the western canon, draw from mainstream philosophical traditions that mischaracterize and justify African slavery. I further argue, by following this trajectory, Africana philosophers have failed to distinctly develop genealogies within Africana philosophy of how early Black thinkers historicized the enslavement of Africans differently from Western thinkers, specifically, how enslaved Africans confronted domestication of slaves, and how they fought for the abolishment of slavery.