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Editor, Kristen Mauro, Philosophy

Phone: 607-777-2735

Fax: 607-777-2734

E-mail: kmauro@binghamton.edu



From the Chair

This is the first issue of the Department of Philosophy and the Philosophy, Politics, and Law (PPL) Program Newsletter. I have been with the Department and with PPL since 1991 and am the Department's chair only since the beginning of the 2003-2004 Academic year. Even during the time I have been with the Department it has changed. It has changed quite a lot since the early 1960's when it emerged as an independent unit out of the Harpur College Humanities Division. Today's Department grants a B.A., M.A., and a Ph.D. in Philosophy. Its B.A. is general. Its M.A. and Ph.D. are specialized in Social, Political, Ethical, and Legal Philosophy (SPEL). In addition, the Department supports and administers the interdisciplinary undergraduate program in Philosophy, Politics, and Law (PPL) and a 3/2 program that connects the PPL B.A. with the SPEL M.A. The Department has, in addition to myself, another fourteen faculty members. The members who have been with us longest are Tony Preus who joined in 1964 and who is also a member of PPL, Vito Sinisi who joined in 1966, Stephen Ross who joined in 1967, Mike Dillon who joined in 1968, and Don Weiss who joined in 1969 and is also a member of PPL. Jeffner Allen joined in 1987, John Arthur, who is the Director of PPL, and Eric Dietrich, in 1988, and Max Pensky, who is a member of PPL, in 1990. Our newest members are Melissa Zinkin who joined in 1998 and is also a member of PPL, Steve Scalet, who is the Associate Director of PPL, and Lisa Tessman, who is a member of PPL, both of whom joined in 1999, Christopher Knapp who joined in 2001 and is also a member of PPL, and Charles Goodman who joined in 2003. The Newsletter will feature two or more of the faculty in each issue, as well as give news about faculty accomplishments. These are usually quite impressive. The Department faculty, which is usually known to most of its alums as teachers, is a very productive faculty, which contributes substantially to research in Philosophy. For more information about the Department please look at our website at <http://philosophy.binghamton.edu>. The newsletter has a dedicated space for news from Philosophy and PPL alums. This space is not used in this first issue but we are all looking forward to hearing from you.

Bat-Ami Bar On



Staff Member Awarded the 2004 Binghamton Council/Foundation Award



Melanie Yaworski, secretary in the Philosophy Department, received the 2004 Binghamton Council/Foundation Award. This award recognizes the exemplary services by both classified and unclassified professional staff. Melanie has been employed at the university since 1984 and has worked in the philosophy department since 1989. Her dedication and hard work are valuable assets to the department, and her friendly manner makes every student and faculty member feel welcome. Aside from the university, Melanie has numerous outside interests. She loves to dance and is on a four-couple ballroom performance team performing at the United States Amateur Ballroom Dancing Association (USABDA) dances. She is also secretary of the local USABDA chapter. She is active in a home-based wellness business and is a distributor of Lady Finelle Cosmetics.



Faculty Accomplishments

Tony Preus, Professor of Philosophy and Faculty Master of College-in-the-Woods, recently received a Distinguished Service Award from his alma mater, Luther College, in Decorah, Iowa. Tony graduated from Luther in 1958 and went on to study at Oxford and Johns Hopkins before joining the Harpur College faculty in 1964. In addition to his service to Binghamton University and the Society for Ancient Greek Philosophy, the citation mentioned his various publications, as well as his work with Boy Scouts and the Finger Lakes Trail Conference. Luther College awards about 10 DSAs each year, at homecoming, usually to members of reunion classes.

Publications

Professor Bat-Ami Bar On: “Manly After-Effects of 11 September 2001: Reading William J. Bennett’s *Why We Fight: Moral Clarity and the War on Terrorism*,” *International Feminist Journal of Politics*, November 2003, 456-458

Professor Steven David Ross: “The Ego does not Resemble the Cadaver: Self and Image in Freud,” SUNY Press 2004; “Moving Images of Eternity: Powers in Difference,” *Schelling Now: Contemporary Readings*, Indiana University Press 2004



Featured Faculty

Martin C. Dillon



Dillon, who purports to be the world's leading authority on the thought of an obscure twentieth century philosopher (himself), is the author of Merleau-Ponty's *Ontology* (now out in a second edition), *Semiological Reductionism: a Critique of the Deconstructionist Movement in Postmodern Thought*, *Beyond Romance*, and the piece you are now reading. He is the editor of *Merleau-Ponty Vivant and Écart & Difference: Merleau-Ponty and Derrida on Seeing and Writing*. He has fifty articles in various scholarly journals. Dillon is now writing two books whose working titles are *Art, Truth, and Illusion: Nietzsche's Ontology* and *The Ethics of Particularity*. He hopes to finish both of them during a forthcoming sabbatical leave in the spring of 2005.

In addition to his customary undergraduate lecture courses, *Existentialism and Phenomenology*, *Philosophy and Literature*, and *Love and Sexuality*, Dillon has started to teach an experimental *Introduction to Philosophy* course which attempts to put into practice some of the politically incorrect pedagogical techniques he has developed during his thirty-five year tenure at Binghamton. Dillon continues to vilify the non-existent deities and celebrate his sexist belief in the joyful differences between the sexes.

Dillon teaches upper level and graduate seminars on such thinkers in the Continental tradition as Nietzsche, Freud, Husserl, Heidegger, Sartre, Merleau-Ponty, and Derrida. After completing his undergraduate studies at the University of Virginia in 1960, Dillon went to sea as an Ensign in the United States Navy. He retired at the rank of Captain after a total of 23 years of service.

Dillon has spent the better part of his life studying philosophy because he couldn't think of a better thing to do with his life. At the beginning of his career, he was drawn toward Zen Buddhism, studied it with fervor, and even attempted to learn Japanese. Then Nietzsche turned him away from all nihilistic yearnings for nirvana. And Merleau-Ponty taught him that his body was the source of his understanding, not an impediment to it. Now, nearing the end of his career, Dillon is once again attracted toward Eastern thought, specifically Tantric Buddhism, which seems to have a healthier attitude toward this world, the body, and (of course) sex.

Melissa Zinkin



Melissa Zinkin, a Kant scholar with MA and PhD degrees from Northwestern University, has established a reputation for making that philosopher's most challenging concepts accessible to undergraduate and graduate students alike. In keeping with Kant's own philosophy on the goal of education, she seeks to teach students to love thinking and to encourage them to develop clearer understandings of both their studies and the questions that concern them. Rather than merely teaching a subject, she teaches the art of thinking for its own sake. She has also received numerous fellowships and grants from organizations such as the Center for the Humanities and several Dean's Workshop grants. She is author of articles forthcoming in publications such as *Imagination, Philosophy, and the Arts* as well as a chapter in the forthcoming book *Reflections on Sensibility: Aesthetics and Cognition in Kant's Critical Philosophy*. This spring she will be the keynote speaker at the Eastern Pennsylvania Philosophy Conference. She has been called "one of the most accessible and personable colleagues our department has ever had." She conveys similar qualities in her teaching, offering seminars designed to meet the needs of her graduate students and spending time in helping her students with questions and challenges. With frequently abstract subject matter, and instruction that is challenging but engaging, she encourages a healthy work ethic and commands students' attention with her passion for the material, detailed outlines of the arguments she discusses, and quizzes, readings and writing exercises that test their comprehension. Although Zinkin demands much of her students, they deliver because, they say, "she truly cares about the work we produce."





A Message from the PPL Director

Dear PPL (and former Law and Society) Majors,
Greetings from Binghamton. This is the first of what will become a regular newsletter, jointly produced by the Philosophy Department and the Program in Philosophy, Politics and Law. Unless you are a recent graduate, much has happened to the Program since you were here. All of it, I am happy to report, is good news.

First we have added many new and wonderful faculty to the program. They are Charles Goodman (Buddhism and Ethics), Christopher Knapp (Ethical Theory and Environmental Ethics), Steve Scalet (Philosophy of Economics and Business Ethics), Lisa Tessman (Feminist Ethics, Virtue Theory) and Melissa Zinkin (Kant, Feminism). For those of you who were here many years ago, Abisi Sharakiya moved to Arizona, but otherwise the faculty who were here when you attended are still at the university.

If you would like to keep up with the Program, you can visit the University web site at: <http://ppl.binghamton.edu> We are working on building a data base of graduates, so keep an eye out for that too.

We wish you all the best.
John Arthur

Institute for Philosophy, Politics & Law

Founded in 2003 with generous seed funds from alumnus Owen C. Pell '80, the purpose of the Institute for Philosophy, Politics and Law is to enhance the intellectual life of students and faculty at Binghamton University and to contribute to larger public discussions of important ethical, legal and political issues of the day. PPL is one of the University's largest majors, graduating 150 students per year. The Program also includes a thriving MA program for PPL majors who wish to complete combined B.A./M.A. degrees in five years, and is closely associated with the doctoral program in Social, Political, Ethical and Legal Studies.

The activities of the Institute are an important addition to the life of the PPL Program. They include a Visiting Scholar Program and ongoing Workshops. Contributions are welcome and are directly used to enhance the experiences of PPL undergraduates.

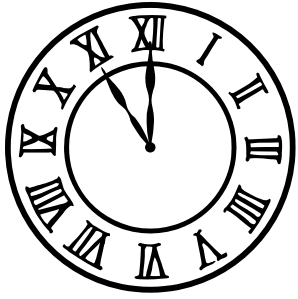
Visiting Scholar Program

The Visiting Scholar Program brings Visiting Scholars to campus for a few days to an entire semester. Visiting Scholars are national and international scholars and professionals who can contribute to the life of the PPL Program. Visiting scholars participate in classes, give lectures and hold seminars and lunches with members of the campus and wider community.

Workshops

The Institute's PPL Workshop will include visiting speakers, workshops for students interested in law as a career, debates and discussions by faculty of timely campus issues, and lunches with students.





Alumni

Looking for Information from you

*"We are what we
repeatedly do.
Excellence, then, is
not an act but a
habit."*

~Aristotle



Department of Philosophy

Phone:
(607) 777-2735
(607) 777-3616

Fax:
(607) 777-2734

E-mail:
kmauro@binghamton.edu

We're on the Web!

See us at:

<http://philosophy.binghamton.edu>

MONEY MATTERS

The Department of Philosophy is beginning an effort to build a fund of its own in order to supplement is budgetary allocations in all areas. All contributions small and big are very welcome. There are many projects that will be supported by these contributions and if you would like, you can designate a specific project that you wish your contribution to support. Among the less ambitious projects is of course the Newsletter, which needs support for its publication in snail-mail version. Another not too ambitious project is the formation of a Department Prize that will be given to they year's graduating seniors who achieve Honors in Philosophy. A prize of this sort will add to the recognition of the honor students and as an alumnae prize will be very special for them. A bit more ambitious project is a Philosophy Speaker's Series that will bring to campus at least one speaker a year to present their ideas to the Department. Speakers' presentations and interactions with speakers enrich the intellectual life of the Department faculty and students. Much more ambitious is the formation of a travel fund to help support some of the undergraduate and graduate students research and especially presentations at conferences. Truly ambitious is a fund to supplement graduate students stipends or even create Departmental Fellowships. Most ambitious of all is the creation of an Endowed Chair in Philosophy. I am aware that this is a wish list. Please help us make it come true. You can send your contribution to the Department of Philosophy, Binghamton University (SUNY), Binghamton, NY 13902-6000. Feel free to get in touch with me to discuss contributions by calling (607) 777-6198 or sending an e-mail to me at ami@binghamton.edu.

Philosophy Department
Binghamton University
PO Box 6000
Binghamton, NY 13902-6000

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US Postage Paid
Binghamton, NY 13902

