

AGORA

Newsletter of the Department of Philosophy

WE'RE GROWING

Meet our new faculty and the newest additions to the extended Departmental family
Pages 3-4

IN MEMORIAM

J.B. McMinn, 91, passed away in Odessa, Texas, on April 24, 2014. He was born November 12, 1922, in Port Neches, Texas. With an interest in theology and Greek philosophy, Dr. McMinn taught philosophy for many years at The University of Alabama. He was preceded in death by his son, Jan Branden McMinn; he is survived by his son Robert E. McMinn (Tracee) of Odessa and two grandchildren. A memorial service was held April 27 at the Lincoln Tower Retirement Center.



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Should One *Not* Major in Philosophy?

By H. Scott Hestevold

One should not major in philosophy if one seeks a paycheck in one's major field of study. There are more than sixty philosophy majors at UA, and the faculty actively discourages them from pursuing graduate work in our field. Having placed majors in top graduate programs, why do we not encourage graduate work in philosophy? I addressed this question in one section of an essay that I wrote this past year for an anthology on "Why study philosophy?" (The volume will target high school and college students who are contemplating

undergraduate or graduate degrees in the discipline.) Anticipating that fellow contributors will serve as pitchmen for philosophy, I addressed instead several conditions under which a student should not study philosophy; below is what I wrote about majoring in philosophy for the sake of having a career in the field.

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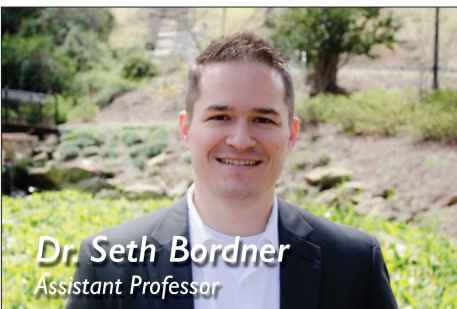
Undergraduates who major in electrical engineering, communicative disorders, or nursing, can likely find secure, satisfying, and relatively well-paying jobs as engineers,

KEEP READING PHILOSOPHY ON PAGE 5

FACULTY NEWS



Dr. Alter continues to enjoy collaborating. Yujin Nagasawa (of Birmingham University, U.K.) and he finished the manuscript of their co-edited collection, *Consciousness in the Physical World* (forthcoming on Oxford University Press). The book will include a new paper that Dr. Alter co-wrote with Robert J. Howell (SMU). Also, Dr. Alter presented the first, very rough version of another new paper to his colleagues at UA. In light of their comments, he presented a revised version at the CUNY Graduate Center and at Conscious Thought and Thought about Consciousness, a conference at Ole Miss. Dr. Alter also reports that, this past spring, he had the rewarding experience of teaching a blind student Introduction to Deductive Logic. That, too, was collaborative: Julie Wilson fabricated a three-dimensional truth table and various other tools, and the logic TAs (especially Rebecca Kerley, who was the student's official TA) also pitched in. Dr. Alter completed his first years as the Department's Director of Undergraduate Studies. A loner he is not.



Dr. Bordner published two papers this year 'Call 'Em As They Are: What's Wrong With Blown Calls and What To Do About Them' (*Journal for the Philosophy of Sport*), and 'A Modest Defense of Manifestationalism,' co-authored with Jamin Asay (*Synthese*). In May, he was invited to give a talk at the Philosophy Department at Cal Poly San Luis Obispo and, in November, will be a speaker in the Philosophy Friday

series at the University of Southern Mississippi. In June, the Bordners welcomed a new addition, Avery James Grant Bordner. Dad, Mom, and big sister are super proud.



In February, Dr. Ehrenberg's wife gave birth to Sara, who traveled over both oceans before she was five months old. In May, the three Ehrenbergs traveled to England where Dr. Ehrenberg attended the Analytic Legal Philosophy Conference and addressed the Oxford Philosophy of Action Group. In July they traveled to Hawaii to meet his mother-in-law, who came from Japan to meet her first grandchild. These family obligations did not interfere with Dr. Ehrenberg's scholarly work: he published a book review in the July edition of *Ethics*, and the *McGill Law Journal* accepted for publication his paper on hearsay evidence and epistemic contextualism. He will deliver a complete first draft of his manuscript "The Functions of Law" to the publisher before the start of the Fall semester.



This past spring, Dr. Hestevold and physicist Patrick LeClair taught for the second time "Physics, Metaphysics, and Other Nonsense." Half physics majors and half philosophy majors, the class studied topics at the interface of the two disciplines: space, time, substance, and identity. Discussing the nature of space with the students and LeClair allowed Dr. Hestevold to make a bit of progress on his paper on the nature of space; it takes

up more room than it did a year ago. He also contributed an invited paper on "Should You Not Study Philosophy?" for an anthology-in-progress, *Philosophy for the Curious*. Dr. Hestevold has begun his eighth year as chair.



This past year, Dr. Klocksien taught several courses in introductory philosophy, ethics, bio-medical ethics, and an upper-division course in value-theory. He has also been pursuing an active research program on certain structural and metaphysical issues surrounding ethical properties such as goodness and better-ness, and a defense of the desire-satisfaction theory of well-being. Dr. Klocksien's family is thriving—the number of children in his family doubled this year as he and Caroline welcomed in April their son Virgil. Older son, Emmett, is a devoted big brother and will celebrate his third birthday in the fall.



Dr. Nath is beginning her fifth year at UA. The *Journal of Ethics and Social Philosophy* has accepted for publication her paper, "Against Institutional Luck Egalitarianism;" and her paper "On the scope and grounds of social equality" will appear in an edited collection, *Social Equality: On What it Means to be Equals* (Oxford University Press). Dr. Nath also gave a talk at the University of Southern Mississippi: "Do I have a duty to give to charity and go vegan? Reflections on individual responsibilities for social injustices." Dr. Nath has had a busy summer trying to keep up with her

FACULTY NEWS

wonderful new pug, Scout, who is a recent graduate of puppy kindergarten.



During the past year, Dr. Rachels wrote and submitted new editions of his textbooks, *The Elements of Moral Philosophy* and *The Right Thing to Do*. *The Elements of Moral Philosophy* is the best-selling philosophy book of the last 30 years and has been translated into 6 languages. During his 15 years at The University of Alabama, Stuart has submitted 14 book manuscripts. He has also been working on a book called *The Best I Saw in Chess*. That manuscript is around 500 single-spaced pages and appears to be growing. Finally, he published an essay called “The Immorality

of Having Children” (*Ethical Theory and Moral Practice*), and he has no children. Dr. Rachels is the faculty sponsor of The University of Alabama Bridge Club.



Dr. Richards gave a talk on “Darwin’s Experimentalism” in Montpellier, France in July 2013 for the annual meeting of the International Society for the History, Philosophy and Social Studies of Biology. He wrote an article on this same topic that will be published in a special issue of *Endeavour*; this British journal is devoting the issue to “Darwin and the Scientific Revolution.” This past year, Dr. Richards updated two of his articles for the online Encyclopedia of Life Sciences (“The Species Problem” and

“Biological Classification”). He is currently on sabbatical working on his book *Biological Classification: A Philosophical Introduction*, for Cambridge University Press. He and his wife Rita Snyder also competed in ballroom dance at the USA Dance Nationals in Baltimore, MD, in March 2014.



This has been a big year for Dr. Wrenn. In addition to presenting papers at the Southeastern Epistemology Conference and the annual meeting of the Southern Society for Philosophy and Psychology, his book *Truth* is now completed and due to be released in November 2014. On top of all that, Dr. Wrenn made this year memorable by getting married in July.

OUR NEW INSTRUCTORS

Fredrik Haraldsen

Fredrik joins the department from the University of Miami, having been a visiting lecturer there after earning his doctorate in 2013. His research is primarily in the philosophy of language, philosophical logic and epistemology. He has published several papers in the philosophy of language, including a paper in the *Australasian Journal of Philosophy*. *Erkenntnis* recently accepted for publication his paper “On What Actually Is” – on the semantic and logical properties of the actually-operator in modal logic and natural language semantics. During his first year at UA, he will be teaching introductory philosophy, introductory ethics, and critical thinking.



Vincent Picciuto

Specializing in philosophy of mind and cognitive science, Dr. Picciuto joins UA with a doctorate from the University of Maryland. His masters in philosophy is from the University of Virginia, and he has an MFA in poetry from the New School for Social Research in NYC. He has published in *Journal of Consciousness Studies* and *Cognitive Neuroscience*; and his co-authored paper on “Inner-sense” is forthcoming in *Perception and its Modalities*, an anthology to be published by Oxford. At UA, he will likely teach introductory philosophy, philosophy of science, and philosophy

of mind. He and his wife, Elizabeth (who is also a philosopher!), are the parents of three children.

Robyn Repko Waller

This past year, Dr. Waller published three articles: “Revising Reasons-Reactivity: Weakly and Strongly Sufficient Reasons for Acting” (*Ethical Theory and Moral Practice*), “The Threat of Effective Intentions to Moral Responsibility in the Zygote Argument” (*Philosophia*), and a co-authored paper on “Causation, Norms, and Omissions:



Dr. Waller (R) with husband Russ, son Nathan, and dog Rudy

A Study of Causal Judgments” (*Philosophical Psychology*). Dr. Waller presented papers at the annual meetings of the Florida Philosophical Association and the Society for Philosophy and Psychology, and she was an invited commentator at the Central Division meeting of the American Philosophical Association. She also found time to organize a conference on agency, free will, and moral responsibility. During her first year at UA, she will teach introductory philosophy and introductory ethics and will continue her research in philosophy of mind and metaphysics, especially on issues surrounding agency and free will.

FACULTY EMERITI

Norvin Richards

Professor Emeritus

Dr. Richards contributed “How we acquire parental rights” to the *Oxford Handbook on Reproduction* (forthcoming), was a critic at the Pacific ASP in an author meets the critics session on Jane Mohr Lone’s *The Philosophical Child*, and read an invited paper titled “Providing the goods of childhood” at a conference at the University of Sheffield on the nature and value of childhood. He and his wife (Janet) also made a long-awaited trip to Tibet and Nepal, combined the Sheffield talk with a few days in England’s Peak District and a few more in London, and gathered with family on several occasions. So far, Dr. Richards misses parts of the old life but is finding the new one to be very good in ways of its own.



Max Hocutt

Professor Emeritus

The Independent Review published Dr. Hocutt’s “The Fruits and Fallacies of Fred Skinner on Freedom,” and *The Behavior Analyst* published his “A Behavioral Analysis of Morality and Value.” The latter was a talk he gave to the Association of Behavior Analysts International as part of an invited symposium in 2012 in Santa Fe, New Mexico. This past spring, Dr. Hocutt enjoyed offering a well-received course of eight weekly lectures on Greek Philosophy to retiree members of OLLI, many of whom had professional and graduate degrees. For four of these lectures, he commuted from Navarre Beach, where he was vacationing.



WE’RE GROWING!

The extended Departmental family
grew by four this year.
Meet our new additions!

Sara Sakanushi Ehrenberg

(top right), born Feb. 21, 2014

Scout (bottom right, with Dr. Nath),
born March 15, 2014

Virgil Wren Klockslem

(bottom left), born April 16, 2014

Avery James Grant Bordner

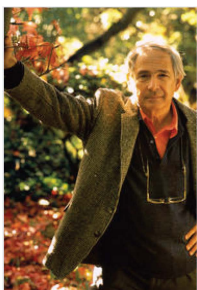
(top left, with sister Rowan)
born June 25, 2014





Is Time Travel Possible?

Ned Markosian
Western Washington
University



Consciousness, the Brain, and the Soul

John Searle
University of
California, Berkeley

Philosophy TODAY

Watch all these talks and more on
UA's iTunesU channel!

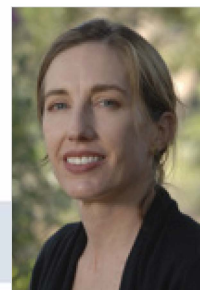


Do We See Less Than We Think We See?

Ned Block
New York University

The Problem of Free Will and Moral Responsibility

Pamela Hieronymi
UCLA



Should One Not Major in Philosophy?

CONTINUED FROM PAGE 1

speech therapists, or registered nurses.

The philosophy student may hope for similar success: having enjoyed a philosophy class or two, she may hope that she will be able to land a job as a professional philosopher. For all practical purposes, the only work for a professional philosopher is to teach philosophy, and this requires a doctorate — another four to six years of study — which has become much more difficult to earn.

One must first secure admission to a graduate program. In 1974, I was in a typical class of ten first-year graduate students. Over the next several decades, after financial slumps reduced funding for graduate programs and after the 1993 repeal of the mandatory retirement age for professors in the US, graduate programs began admitting fewer students. For example, my graduate department now aims for a first-year class of five students—half the size of my 1974 class. With fewer seats for first-year philosophy students, competition for graduate-school admission is fierce. Unless an undergraduate is among the most qualified, she may never be admitted to a doctoral program in philosophy.

If fortunate enough to be admitted, one should not accept the graduate school's invitation unless it provides adequate funding for tuition and living expenses. After all, if the student eventually serves as a full time instructor or assistant professor, repaying student loans will be a challenge: even without loan payments, paying for moving expenses, housing, transportation, and health insurance can be difficult on a new philosopher's salary. And there is more disappointing news: the probability of landing a secure teaching post with its relatively low salary is not very high.

According to Andrew Carson's analysis of placement records for philosophy graduate programs, only "54% of philosophy graduates [since 2000] are currently in permanent positions in academic philosophy." [See "Graduate School Philosophy Placement Records in the US and CA: Will I Get a Job?" *Philosophy News*, October 20, 2013; available online.] If one does manage to enter and complete a doctoral program in philosophy, one has but half a chance of finding permanent employment in the profession. The bottom line: if one is committed to majoring in a discipline that will likely result in a secure paycheck in that chosen field, then one should not major solely in

philosophy. It is not a safe bet.

...

In spite of our words of warning, at least one UA major will apply to graduate school this fall, at least one alumnus is currently a doctoral student in philosophy, and at least two alumni have recently earned doctorates and are seeking teaching posts. For the sake of these majors and for those students committed to philosophy regardless of career aspirations, I closed my essay with the following words of encouragement.

...

If you are beginning to think philosophically, then you are beginning to think about yourself and the world open mindedly and critically, shunning dogmatism while striving for clarity and seeking the guidance of reason. If you have already started down this philosophical path, it is doubtful that you can again be content with trusting blindly the deliverances of authority or that you can ever find comfort in the conventional.

Regardless of the career that you pursue, you are likely the sort of person who will continue contemplating what Bertrand Russell called "ultimate questions": Are we purely physical beings, or do we have souls? Do we have free will? What obligations, if any, does the individual have to others? Is government justified; and if so, to what extent? If you know now that you will contemplate such questions for years to come, then do consider philosophy as a major or as a minor field of study. You may never again have the opportunity to contemplate "ultimate questions" with the structure and guidance that your philosophy professors can offer. And, indulging your philosophical interests is not without extrinsic benefit.

Committing to a rigorous undergraduate philosophy program can hone your critical thinking and writing. You will learn to formulate clearly the views of others and to evaluate their views; and you will thereby learn to better articulate and defend your own views. Such skills are invaluable regardless of whether the views in question are philosophical views or views about the best course of treatment for a patient, the strongest legal defense for a client, or the most promising option a business could pursue to increase revenue. Complimenting one's undergraduate work with a concentration in philosophy can make you a better thinker, a better writer, a better speaker, and a better advocate.

ALUMNI NOTES

Kevin Derryberry (2002) has accepted the position of Assistant Dean for Development in the College of Education at Florida State University.

Brittany Burgess (2009) completed law school at Cumberland in 2013; she is now an attorney with the Jefferson County Public Defender's Office.

Josh Frank (2009) earned his law degree from Vanderbilt in May. Beginning in September, he will be an attorney with Barrett Johnston, a Nashville law firm with a long history of civil rights work and class action litigation on behalf of the interests of investors and consumers.

David Chaplin II (2009) is a Law Clerk with the Corporation Counsel in the Mayor's Office of the City of Syracuse.

Alana Crowe Frederick (2010) and her husband, Scott, moved to Birmingham as Scott finished his clerkship in Montgomery. Alana is now an attorney with Bradley Arant Boult Cummings.

Jamie Ballew (2011) and **Dain Stewart** (2010) were married April 19 in Cullman, AL. Jamie was working two days/week as a law clerk at a civil firm in Birmingham while finishing law school at Alabama. She graduated in May and will take the bar in July. Dain was a criminal studies major and philosophy minor before attending law school at Cumberland, and has what Jamie describes as "his dream job" as a District Attorney for Jefferson County.

Emily Brait (2011) will begin law school at American University in Washington DC this fall.

Erik Hestevold (2011) returned to school this past summer and has completed courses in statistics and organic chemistry. He has an eye on becoming a Registered Nurse.

Josh Quick (2011) has been admitted to Indiana University's learning sciences graduate program, beginning fall 2014.

Jon Thompson (2011) is currently living in Cambridge. He is a masters candidate at Heythrop College and is hoping to begin a PhD program in philosophy of religion in 2015. This past summer, he returned to the US long enough to marry Meredith Wildes in Birmingham.

Adam Mills (2012) was admitted to law schools at NYU, Stanford, and Yale; but he and his new wife, Melanie, have moved to Massachusetts: this fall, Adam will be a first-year law student at Harvard.

Amanda Buxton (2013) finished her first year of law school at Emory, serving on the moot court team. This past summer, she had an internship with the US Department of Justice.

Ross Boone (2013) served this past summer as an intern for a small criminal defense firm in Washington, DC; the firm specializes in federal white collar crimes. He also worked as a teaching assistant for one of his law professors. Ross has just transferred to George Washington University's law school where he will be a second year student this fall.

Jonathan Eagerton (2013) received acceptance letters from both UA's and Cornell's law schools; this fall, he is a first year law student at UA with an interest in public-interest law.

Madeline Hargrove (2013) has completed the first of two years in Vanderbilt's accelerated Certified Nurse Practitioner

Program. This coming year, her studies will include coursework toward a masters in women's health.

Jarrold Vines (2013) has been admitted to the Marine Corps Officer Candidate School in Quantico, VA. After a year of training, he will begin flight school in Pensacola, FL.

This Year's Graduates

Brian Hoff (2014) is joining Teach for America and will be teaching high-school mathematics in in the Dallas/Ft. Worth metroplex for the next two years. He will be working concurrently on his M.Ed. at Southern Methodist University.

Also in the class of 2014: Kayci Dennis, Alexander Hollinghead, Michael Reagan, Trevor Gant, Ellen Coogan, Seth Cox, Timothy Green, Chase Hudson, Zachary McCann, Trent Moore, David Nearing, Brandon Pratt, Gregory Sikes-Mitchell, Michael West, Joshua Blair, Keikhosrow Moshiri

Let us know how you're doing!
Send your updates to scott.hestevold@ua.edu

DONATIONS

The Department of Philosophy is grateful to friends and alumni who support our mission. Anonymously, two philosophers have made donations to the Department's student-award funds. Alumnus Kevin Derryberry (Tallahassee, FL) has pledged \$1,000 to the Department's support fund for teaching and research. Beverly and Steve Davis (of Mobile, AL) added \$1,500 to the corpus of their support fund, which is used primarily for faculty travel for presentations at international conferences. And, UA alumnus, Louis Perry (of LaJolla, CA) contributed \$2,000 toward the Department's Philosophy Today Speaker Series. Lou supported this series since its inception in 2007.

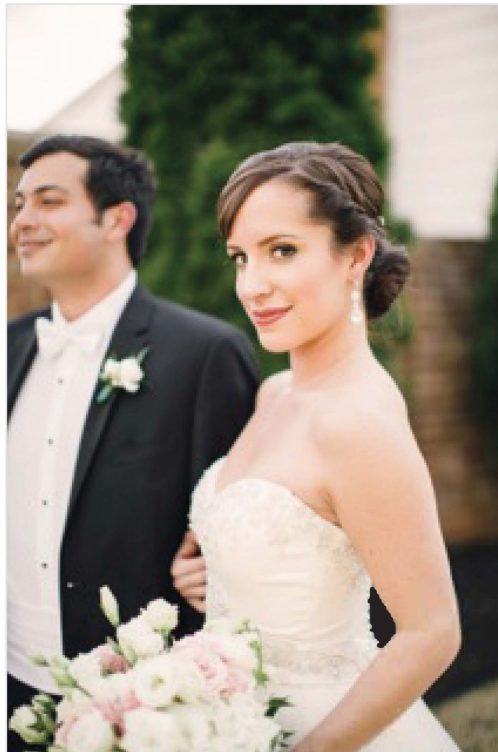
If you would like to join these supporters of philosophy, please visit our new website (philosophy.ua.edu). On the website's homepage, under "For Alumni," click "Giving." There are suggested levels of giving from The Anselm Level ("An amount greater than which the Department hath not conceived") to The Existentialist Level ("Struggling with angst, I nonetheless support that Department's efforts"). For additional information, contact Scott Hestevold at scott.hestevold@ua.edu.

Alumna in the Spotlight: Cheryl Hurley Malik

Though Carla Bruni hints in song that she has had 30 lovers, Cheryl Malik admits openly that she has 40 aprons – *at least 40 aprons!* Since leaving UA in 2005, Cheryl has been a University-of-Texas law student, photographer, web designer, creative cook, and successful food blogger. The journey from Tuscaloosa to Memphis by way of Austin has been, for Cheryl, as circuitous as it has been satisfying.

The University of Texas Law School awarded Cheryl a scholarship; but during her first year, she found the law culture “odd” and “unnerving,” and the prospects of a “Big Law” job became increasingly off-putting. With the courage to follow her heart and leave her scholarship behind, she abandoned law school, determined to find her way with her philosophy degree.

Moving to Memphis, Cheryl continued to enjoy her passion for cooking... and eating! She maintained two food blogs that reflected her 20-year on-again-off-again commitment to vegetarian and vegan cuisine. While she began



developing recipes for her blogs, she also founded a web design and digital marketing company that continues to flourish. “I do think that philosophy prepared me incredibly well for web development, both the study of logic and the acquired ability to think through theory—no matter whose—thoroughly.”

Earlier this year, Cheryl married Omar Malik, who, ironically, is an attorney. “I spend most of my time with Omar’s delightful attorney friends, and it’s a gentle daily reminder that I made the right choice to leave that lifestyle behind.”

Cheryl has recently forged partnerships with several companies, including Tofutti – the company that produces dairy-free “ice cream.” The Tofutti project involves creating “a veganized cronut.” Still based in

Memphis, Cheryl has merged her two blogs to create a new one: 40aprons.com. For those who can’t wait to visit her website, Cheryl has kindly included a couple of favorite recipes for our newsletter. Clearly, attorney Omar dines well indeed!

Vegan Moroccan Meatballs

Sauce

- 1 Tbs olive oil
- 1/2 small onion, diced
- 2 cloves garlic, chopped
- 1 lemon, zested
- 1/2 C pitted and chopped briny olives
- 1/2 C white wine
- 1/4 C veggie stock or broth
- 1 (14-oz.) can crushed or diced tomatoes, preferably crushed
- 1 tsp light brown sugar, or sweetener such as agave or maple for unprocessed eating
- 1/2 tsp. dried red pepper flakes
- Pinch ground cinnamon
- Salt and freshly ground black pepper

For the Meatballs

- 1 Tbs ground flaxseed meal
- 3 Tbs water
- 2 Tbs tomato paste
- 3 Tbs finely chopped fresh cilantro leaves
- 1 Tbs minced fresh ginger
- 1 tsp ground cumin
- Pinch ground cinnamon
- 2 scant C ground seitan

- 1/3 C finely ground rolled oats or fine bread crumbs
- Salt and freshly ground black pepper
- chopped freshly parsley, for garnish

Couscous

- 1 C water
- 1 C veggie stock or broth
- 1 Tbs olive oil
- 1/4 C finely chopped dried dates
- 1 C quick-cooking couscous, preferably whole wheat
- Salt and freshly ground black pepper

Instructions

1. Preheat oven to 350°F.
2. Stir together 1 Tbs flaxseed meal and 3 Tbs water and let sit about 10 minutes, or until gelly and gooey. This is your “egg” -- if you’re shorter on time, use slightly warm water, as this speeds up the process.
3. Next, in a medium bowl, combine your flaxseed-water “egg” and tomato paste and stir until smooth. Add the cilantro, ginger, cumin, and cinnamon and mix until well blended. Stir in the ground seitan and ground oats, season with salt and pepper, to taste, and combine gently after each addition. Do not overmix. Rolling with your hands, make about 32

meatballs, about 1-inch in diameter. Place on a foil-lined baking sheet.

4. Bake the meatballs about 15-20 minutes, or until almost browning. Meanwhile, make your sauce.

5. In a large saucepan, heat the olive oil over medium heat and sauté the onion and garlic until soft but not brown, about 3 minutes. Add the lemon zest and olives and cook for 1 more minute. Add the white wine, deglaze the pan, and let it reduce for a 1 to 2 minutes. Stir in the stock, canned tomatoes, sugar, red pepper flakes, and cinnamon, and simmer to blend flavors, about 7 minutes. Season with salt and pepper, to taste.

6. Once the meatballs are finished cooking, transfer them gently to the saucepan with the sauce and let simmer for 10 minutes. Meanwhile, make your couscous!

7. Bring the water, stock, and oil to a boil in a small saucepan over medium heat. Add the dates followed by the couscous. Cover the pan tightly with a lid, remove from the heat, and allow to sit for 5 minutes. Fluff with a fork and season with salt and pepper, to taste.

8. Divide up your couscous into individual bowls, spoon meatballs and sauce over couscous, and garnish with fresh parsley.

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CALENDAR

November 18, 2014

Philosophy Today
Barbara Montero (CUNY)

December 4, 2014

Philosophy Today
Jesse Prinz (CUNY)

April 9, 2015

Philosophy Today
Brie Gertler (UVA)

April 23, 2015

Philosophy Today
Dorit Bar-On (UCONN)

More than a year in the making and featuring a dozen philosophers,
the Department has a new website:

philosophy.ua.edu

In the summer of 2013, Dean Robert Olin tapped the Department of Philosophy to be one of the first four departments to produce recruitment videos for the College. You will find our new video on our website's homepage. Also, if you have been out of touch with your fellow philosophy alumni, please send us information for next year's newsletter. On the homepage under "For Alumni," click on "Update Form."

Sending us your news has never been easier!