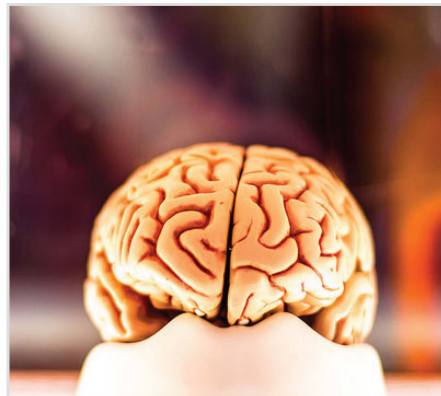


AGORA

Newsletter of the Department of Philosophy

A Special(ized) Department



By Richard Richards

IN last year's *Agora*, Scott Hestevold, then chair of the philosophy department, titled his essay "Musical Chairs." He did so because he was stepping down as department chair to devote time to his philosophical research and teaching. On August 16 of last year, I replaced Professor Hestevold as chair. The philosophy department could not have had a better chair for the eight years Professor Hestevold served in that capacity. Over that time, we gained three new tenure-track faculty, and dramatically increased the number of students taught in our courses, as well as the number of philosophy majors and minors. Since Professor Hestevold stepped down as chair, he has been very generous in helping me learn this job. I very much appreciate his patience and support.

Just as I was taking over as chair, Amber Walker was taking over from Julie Wilson as Administrative Secretary. Ms. Walker first sat down at her desk in the philosophy department office at 8 am on the first day of classes, fall semester 2015. Since then, Ms. Walker and I have both been learning on the job. And things went pretty well last fall considering we were both new to our jobs. Since then Ms. Walker has been managing the department office with great skill and good humor. I am grateful for her expertise and hard work. I am also grateful to my colleagues in the philosophy department

for their patience as I sometimes seem to be working by trial and error, with emphasis on the error.

As you may know, the philosophy department has three specializations: **Mind and Brain**, **Jurisprudence**, and **Philosophy and Medicine**. For each we offer a specialized major and minor. The Philosophy and Medicine specialization, our newest, is only a few years old. Last year we were given permission to search for a new faculty member to teach in this specialization, and in the fall we began looking through applications. This search was long and thorough, but it was also successful, and I am happy to say that Dr. Holly Kantin joined the department in August 2016. Before joining us, she received a Ph.D. in philosophy from the University of Wisconsin, Madison. For the last two years though, she has been at the National Institutes of Health on a post-doctoral appointment. There she went on rounds with doctors and offered her expertise on medical ethics panels. This spring she will be teaching a course in the Philosophy of Mental Health that will become a regular offering of the department. She is in the process of developing some advanced seminars in medical ethics that will also become part of the Philosophy and Medicine Specialization.

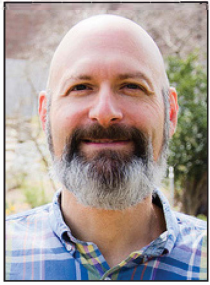
The department specializations are an important part of the service the department offers to students. Philosophy graduates do not typically go on to advanced degrees in phi-

KEEP READING SPECIAL(IZED) ON PAGE 4

FACULTY NEWS

Torin Alter Professor

This past year Dr. Alter finished revising “The structure and dynamics argument” (forthcoming in *Nous*) and wrote three new papers on consciousness (one with Sam Coleman of U. Hertfordshire, UK). He gave talks at UA, the Society for the Metaphysics of Science conference at Rutgers, and the Science of Consciousness conference in Tucson. And, he reports, “for the first time in a decade, I changed the strings on my classical guitar.”

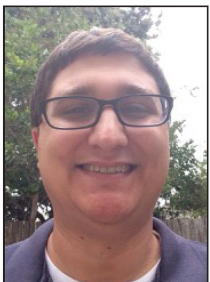


Seth Bordner Assistant Professor

Dr. Bordner spent most of the year thinking and writing about determinism, the harm of death, and applying for tenure. He gave papers at the Midsouth Philosophy Conference in Memphis and at Trinity College Dublin in Ireland. He is currently working on several papers, the first and foremost of which deals with Berkeley’s Master Argument, and will be presenting a version of that paper in January at the Eastern APA.



Tim Butzer Instructor



Dr. Butzer had his paper “Bootstrapping and Dogmatism” accepted in *Philosophical Studies*, appearing online in September with a print version to

follow. He also acquired Oscar, an English bulldog, adding to the Department’s growing family of human and non-human people.

Ken Ehrenberg Assistant Professor

Dr. Ehrenberg’s first book, *The Functions of Law*, was published in May by Oxford University Press (US addressees get 30% off from the publisher’s site with the code AL-AUTH16). He also had an article published in *Jurisprudence* this summer and a chapter in a volume titled *Metaphilosophy of Law* is due out shortly. He and wife Hanako welcomed their second child, Shira on Sept. 19. They and older sister Sara couldn’t be more pleased.



Scott Hestevold Professor

After leaving the chairmanship in August, 2015, Dr. Hestevold taught during Fall 2015 and then took sabbatical leave this past spring and summer. He finished a working draft of his paper on the nature of space and presented abbreviated versions of this work at two conferences. He also finished drafts of two more papers, extending his Leibnizian view of space to the problem of boundaries and to his answer to the Special Composition Question.



Justin Klocksien Instructor

Last year Dr. Klocksien taught several courses in introductory philosophy,



ethics, and medical ethics. He also had a couple of articles appear in print: one dealing with the nature of justice, and another dealing with metaphysical issues

surrounding ethical properties like goodness and being better than. Last but not least, he writes, “my family continues to be happy and healthy. My wife teaches composition and literature in the English department, and our two boys are constantly growing and learning.”

Benjamin Kozuch Assistant Professor

Dr. Kozuch’s first year at the University of Alabama proved eventful and productive. Four articles of his were published in various journals and anthologies, including one in



Mind and Language (“Dislocation, not Dissociation: The neuroanatomical argument against visual experience driving motor action”), and another in an anthology on psychiatry and philosophy (“Free will, Moral Responsibility, and Mental Illness: The relation between mild forms of mental illness and competent moral agency,” coauthored with Michael Mckenna). He also gave talks at the spring meetings of the Mississippi Philosophical Association in Starkville, Mississippi and the Science of Consciousness conference in Tucson, Arizona. In addition, Dr. Kozuch’s transition from Arizona to Alabama has apparently not weakened his love of competitive cycling, as he achieved several top-three finishes in endurance mountain biking events around the Southeast.

FACULTY NEWS

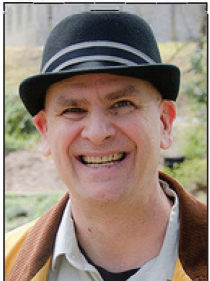
Rekha Nath **Associate Professor**

Dr. Nath started off the last academic year giving a keynote address at a workshop, "Law, Institutions and Political Philosophy" at the University of Delhi. She is beginning work on a new project on social equality and health. In the spring semester, she will be giving talks at the American Philosophical Society, the University of Alabama at Birmingham, and the University of Mississippi. Dr. Nath is also delighted to have been granted tenure and promotion to Associate Professor.



Stuart Rachels **Associate Professor**

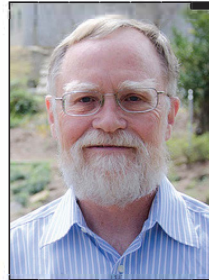
Over the winter break, some of Stuart's original chess problems were selected to be the (annual) New Years' Puzzles on chessbase.com (an honor, as these things go). As part of the ritual, two of his problems were presented over Skype to Garry Kasparov, the former World Chess Champion (1985-2000)



and probably the greatest chess player in history. Kasparov solved one of the puzzles in about five minutes. When Dr. Rachels heard no report on the second puzzle, he asked the founder of Chessbase, Frederic Friedel, what had happened. Friedel replied, "I never heard back." When Stuart asked, "Why not?" Friedel said: "I assume that Garry could not solve your problem in a reasonable amount of time and is now hiding under a pile of coats."

Norvin Richards **Professor Emeritus**

Norvin Richards had one article published in an Oxford Handbook and another accepted by the Journal of Applied Philosophy. He and Janet continue to travel, this year spending a month mostly in Borneo and partly in Bali and Flores.



Richard Richards **Professor**

Dr. Richards has just completed his first year as department Chair. In September his book, *Biological Classification: A Philosophical Analysis*, was published by Cambridge University Press. As of September, his article,



"Evolutionary Naturalism and Valuation," for the *Cambridge Handbook on Evolutionary Ethics* is in press. He gave a talk to the College of Community Health

Sciences on "Shall We Dance?" offering some scientific and philosophical reflections on dance. Also in September, he gave a keynote address "Naturalizing Dance: Prospects and Limitations" at an international symposium on dance, Engagement: Philosophy and Dance, at Texas State University.

Chase Wrenn **Professor**

As of August 15, 2016, Dr. Wrenn has been promoted to the rank of full Professor. Recently, he completed work on an article about naturalistic epistemology to appear in *The Routledge Companion to Social Epistemology*, and has just wrapped up work on a couple of articles on truth. He will be on sabbatical in Spring 2017, he writes, "working on my next big project, a book on why truth is a goal worth pursuing."



Nath, Wrenn Promoted; Alter Appointed to Faculty Leadership Board

Rekha Nath and Chase Wrenn both received promotions this year. Dr. Nath joins the tenured members of the department as Associate Professor. Dr. Wrenn has been promoted to full Professor.

This past year, Torin Alter was appointed as a Faculty Fellow to the College of Arts and Sciences Lead-

ership Board, beginning a three-year term. He joins current Department Chair Richard Richards, professor emeritus Norvin Richards, and former professor Jim Otteson as philosophy faculty members to have received the honor.

The College of Arts and Sciences Leadership Board Faculty Fellowships

recognize the College's most promising or most accomplished teacher/scholars, individuals early in their careers who demonstrate exceptional promise or faculty members who have brought distinction to the College and University throughout their careers. Three fellows are selected each year for a three-year term.

OUR NEW COLLEAGUE

Dr. Kantin specializes in biomedical ethics, metaphysics and epistemology. She received her PhD in philosophy from the University of Wisconsin-Madison in 2014 where she wrote her dissertation in defense of ontological nihilism about material objects.



Dr. Holly Kantin
Assistant Professor

This is the view that while there is matter, there is no material individuation and so, are no objects. (She is aware that this sounds crazy on its face, but insists that it actually isn't!)

After completing her dissertation, Dr. Kantin turned her focus to more normative questions. She spent two years as a postdoctoral fellow in the Department of Bioethics at the National Institutes of Health where she received intensive training in bioethics and worked as an ethics consultant at the Clinical Center (the NIH's main research hospital). There she became intimately acquainted with the sorts of ethical issues that present themselves in the context of clinical practice and medical research. Dr. Kantin will be applying this experience to the department's Philosophy and Medicine Specialization.

While Dr. Kantin still has interests in abstract metaphysical questions, most of her current research centers around issues that fall in the intersection of ethics and metaphysics/epistemology. Some of her recent work is on the metaphysical and ethical issues related to personal identity and death, including the ethics of physician-assisted dying for non-terminal, and especially psychiatric, illnesses. She has recently presented at numerous conferences in bioethics and philosophy and published papers in *Philosophy and Phenomenological Research* and *The Cambridge Quarterly of Healthcare Ethics*.

Prior to attending graduate school for philosophy Dr. Kantin worked as a personal trainer in Boston. She still loves fitness (although she has ethical concerns about whether someone with an undergraduate degree in philosophy should have been able to become a certified trainer so easily!) and enjoys both watching and playing tennis.

Join Us on Facebook!



SPECIAL(IZED) CONTINUED FROM PAGE 1

losophy, but usually follow other interests. Many of our students go to law school or graduate school in other fields. The Jurisprudence and Mind and Brain specializations serve some of these other interests. And they have served them well. Our graduates have enrolled in law schools at the University of Alabama, University of Virginia, Columbia, Yale, Harvard, and more. Rebecca Kerley and Ben Lucy, for instance, just enrolled this last year at the University of Virginia Law School. And Mind and Brain graduates have gone on to graduate study in related fields. Joshua Quick is in a graduate program in Cognitive Science at Indiana University, and Tyler Brockett is in a graduate program at Northern Illinois, thinking about cultural models of intelligence.

Over the years we have discovered that our students have had success in the medical profession as well. One of our graduates, Matthew Satcher, completed medical school and is now practicing family medicine in Tuscaloosa. Another graduate, Alexandra Harris, is currently enrolled in the school of public health at Columbia University. Philosophy majors typically do quite well on the Medical College Admission Test and in applications to medical school. We are designing the Philosophy and Medicine Specialization to provide a service to these students. Those who graduate with either a major or a minor Medicine specialization will have had opportunities to think philosophically about topics in medical ethics, the different ways to conceptualize health and disease, and medical epistemology and evidence based medicine. We are also hoping to develop an ongoing relationship with the University of Alabama School of Community Health to form a closer relationship between the Philosophy and Medicine specialization and the practice of medicine.

All this shouldn't be taken to imply that there aren't rewards for just learning how to do philosophy, and doing it well. Anyone who has confronted a difficult philosophical problem, and has succeeded in clarifying it, or even better solving it, will understand the satisfaction that philosophical study can bring.

ALUMNI NOTES

Christopher Crotwell (2008) is a children's librarian in south Chicago for the Chicago Public Library.

Matt Hudgens-Haney (2008) writes, "I got my MA in Neurophilosophy at Georgia State (amazing interdisciplinary program there) then decided I wanted to get more into the science. Now I'm finishing up a PhD in neuroscience at UGA and will soon be working at UTSW in Dallas studying brain imaging in psychosis."

Anthony Rivera-Rodriguez (2013) succeeded in acquiring Spanish citizenship this year and then spent a few months studying for the LSAT. He currently works in the marketing department for a big craft beer brewery and is applying to law school for entry next year.

Sam Arnold (2012) went to Montana for a while, then San Francisco, Florida, New York City, and is now in Birmingham. He works in business-to-business tech sales. "I can't imagine doing anything else!" he writes.

Jacob Black (2012) writes, "I am in my third of four semesters for my MPH at UAB and am living in Birmingham. I'll graduate in December this year. Hoping to find work in Health Policy once I finish."

Jarrold Vines (2012) writes, "I was accepted into the Marine Corps officer program. I graduated from OCS and commissioned in the fall of 2014. Since then I've completed some subsequent training in Quantico, VA and FL. I'm currently in Naval flight school in Pensacola, FL. Hope to get my wings within a year or so."

Hannah White (2012) is teaching art at a public school in Atlanta, GA. She writes, "I decided to go back to school for art education after being repeatedly discouraged from going to grad school for philosophy. My philosophy background has definitely been helpful in both art and teaching ... logic,

ethics, aesthetics, and phil. of language have all been particularly relevant to what I do."

Kaiya Arroyo (2013) writes, "I just graduated from the University of Pennsylvania law school! (You can find some of my published comments through the University of Pennsylvania J. of Con Law and the J. of Law & Pub. Affairs this fall!) taking the summer for bar prep and starting with the firm Davis Polk & Wardwell in the fall."

Ross Boone (2013) writes, "I just finished my last year of law school at The George Washington University and am studying for the DC bar exam in July. I haven't firmly nailed down my job for the fall but will probably be doing federal government contracting work."

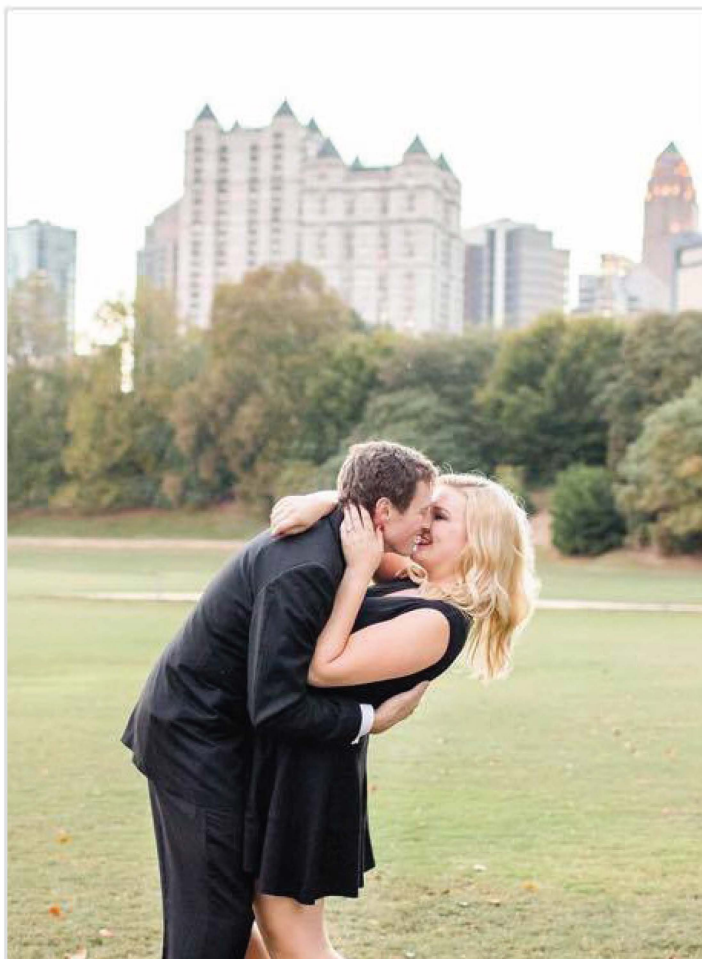
Amanda Buxton (2013) writes, "I'm currently in Atlanta, GA, having just graduated from Emory Law School. Right now I'm studying for the GA bar exam (ugh), but I'll be working with the Cobb County DA's office in the fall."

Jonathan Eagerton (2013) writes, "I have just completed my second year at Bama Law. I am spending my summer working for the

Jefferson County Community Law Office (JeffCo's public defender's office). Along with the J.D., I am pursuing a certificate in Public Interest Law and hoping to work as a public defender in Jefferson, Shelby, or Tuscaloosa County upon graduation."

Trevor Gant (2013) writes, "I work at a coffee shop and am working towards going to graduate school for mathematics! I also got a cat!"

Madaline Hargrove (2013) writes, "After graduating May 2013, I went to Vanderbilt for nursing. I'm now a Women's Health Nurse Practitioner at the OBGYN clinic with St. Vincent's in Birmingham. Not many of my peers



Amanda Buxton (2013) and fiancé **Corey Sherman** are to be married in October 2017.

ALUMNI NOTES

have a philosophy background, but they should. Ethics, morals, intrinsic value, metaphysics, and all the fun stuff comes up every day!”

Hannah Hicks (2013) writes, “I just graduated from UA Law. For the next two years I’ll be working as a staff attorney for the U.S. Court of Appeals for the 8th Circuit in St. Louis, MO.”

Austin Lafferty (2013) writes, “I’m currently living in Hong Kong working as a creative copywriter with PwC’s Experience Centre here, focusing mostly on brand consulting and advertising. But this September I’ll start my M.A. in international relations with Johns Hopkins SAIS, spending my first year in Bologna, Italy and my second in DC. Super pumped – and would love to meet up if anyone is in DC or Europe!”

Michael Reagan (2013) is manager/bartender at Superior Grill in Birmingham.

Douglas Weathers (2013) taught linear algebra at Shelton State this summer before joining the mathematics department at Coastal Carolina University in the fall.

Ellen Coogan (2014) writes, “I just finished my first year at WashU Law. This summer I will be working at Community Legal Services in East Palo Alto as an Immigration Intern on the Humanitarian Relief Project.”

Chase Hudson (2014) graduated from the Thomas R. Kline School of Law at Drexel University in Philadelphia. He writes, “I start working at the National Labor Relations Board in the Fall and I’m hoping to translate that into a job at their headquarters down in DC after graduation.”

Zachary McCann (2014) writes, “I’m working on my Masters of Public Admin at UA, working for Alabama Insurance Mutual as a legal assistant (or glorified file clerk),

and interning with Tuscaloosa ESD, where I’m working to rewrite some city codes. I’m currently looking at schools where I can pursue a Ph.D. in Public Health Administration, or Public Policy Analysis.”

Hollin Wakefield (2014) writes, “I got my M.A. in French Applied Linguistics, and now I’m teaching high school French and coaching tennis at a boarding school in Pebble Beach, CA.”

Joshua Blair (2014) writes, “I moved to Charlotte with my girlfriend shortly after graduation and have been bouncing around less-than-stellar temp jobs since. I just enrolled in a local community college’s software development program, and am hoping that my B.A. combined with this field-specific A.S. will finally be enough to keep my resume from being immediately incinerated upon delivery. Despite the difficulty, I’ve never regretted my choice in major; I just sometimes think I selected ‘hard mode’ in the career search game!”

Brian Hoff (2014) writes, “I just finished up my Teach For America commitment in Dallas, TX where I’ve been teaching seventh grade math for the past two years. I’m continuing teaching in Dallas next year while I

finish up my M.Ed at SMU, facilitate a racial justice reading group (happy to share resources if anyone is interested), and organize a chess program between local colleges and elementary schools. If anyone finds themselves in Dallas, I’d love to have you drop by my classroom. Lots of discussions around ethics and morality in my classroom with young minds eager to debate!”

Holly Kennedy (2014) writes, “I have been an administrative assistant at UA for the last four years, but I just got my offer as a trainee officer for the University of Alabama Police Department! The Chief is very interested in training officers in de-escalation and emphasized the need for a



Marcale Sisk (2015) at the Alabama Gulf Coast Zoo with Cassanova, a Eurasian lynx.

ALUMNI NOTES

transition from authoritarian policing to community-based policing. No one on the force thought that philosophy was a strange way to come to the job. I'm cautiously optimistic and very excited."

Greg Sikes-Mitchell (2014) writes, "as of May I graduated from Basic Training located at Fort Sill, OK. Currently, I am located at Goodfellow AFB receiving my job training to be a Signals Intelligence Analyst for the US Army."

Hannah Darby (2015) writes, "I just finished my first year at Alabama law. I am working at Balch & Bingham in Birmingham for the first half of the summer and Phelps, Jenkins, Gibson & Fowler in Tuscaloosa for the second half."

Alexandra Harris (2015) is in the last year of a Masters in Public Health program at Columbia, concentrating on health policy as it relates to pharmaceuticals. She spent the summer working on business development and market strategy for a small niche market at Aetna.

J. T. Lewis (2015) writes, "I'm a second year law student at the University of Alabama School of Law, where I'm trying to attend every last football game I can. I recently accepted a position as a summer associate with Frost Brown Todd, an international full-service law firm based out of the Midwest. I'll be in their Nashville office. "

Matthew O'Brien (2015) is completing his first year at FedEx working in sales analytics.

Lauren Riley (2015) finished her first year at William and Mary Law School and worked for the Hampton City Attorney's Office this summer.

Ann Elizabeth Sovereign (2015) writes, "I'm finishing up a gap year working for an international girls' charity

doing research-y stuff and will be moving to London in the fall to study law at King's College. I'm hoping to get a job and stay in the UK after I graduate, but that's a long way off, so we'll see!"

Ben Lucy (2015) is finishing a year of playing music and will start at UVA Law in the fall.

Ashleigh Ruggles (2015) finished her first year at

Harvard law school and interned in New York this summer.

Jenna Reynolds (2015) is a Master's candidate and Graduate Teaching Assistant in Spanish Literature at the University of Alabama as well as a virtual intern at the Department of State's Foreign Language Institute. She just finished a Fulbright English Teaching Assistantship in Madrid, Spain, teaching English, art, and physical education at a bilingual high school.

Marcale Sisk (2015) is in Gulf Shores, AL at the Alabama Gulf Coast Zoo as assistant to the zoo Director.



Bren McMaken (2016) and wife Allyson Argo McMaken

Chisolm Allenlundy (2016) writes, "I just graduated but I'll be working in Birmingham with a nonprofit called Impact America for a year while studying for the LSAT and (hopefully) getting shipped off to law school somewhere."

Kourtney Chester (2016) just graduated and is attending Mercer Law school this fall.

Rebecca Kerley (2016) is studying law at the University of Virginia and considering a dual degree program in either economics or philosophy.

Bren McMaken (2016) writes, "I graduated and I just got married! My wife and I will be in Tuscaloosa for at least three more years since I start law school at Bama in the Fall."

The University of Alabama
College of Arts & Sciences
Department of Philosophy
Box 870218
Tuscaloosa, AL 35487-0218

Nonprofit Organization
US Postage Paid
The University of Alabama



**My Whole Life Long: The Ethical
Significance of a Unified Self**

Marya Schechtman
University of Illinois, Chicago

Sept. 27, 2016



Outlaws

Elizabeth Anderson
University of Michigan

Nov. 3, 2016

2016–2017
Philosophy
TODAY

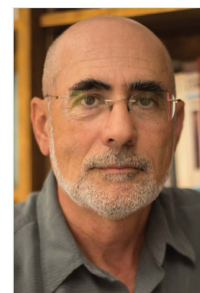
Watch for all these talks and more
on UA's iTunesU channel!



**Two Rights of
Free Speech**

Andrei Marmor
Cornell University

Feb. 2, 2017



**Mysteries of
Consciousness:
Connecting Mind
and Brain**

Wayne Wu
Carnegie Mellon University

Feb. 23, 2017

