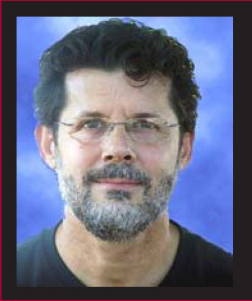


AGORA

NEWSLETTER OF THE DEPARTMENT OF PHILOSOPHY

The University of Alabama College of Arts & Sciences Fall 2011 Issue 9



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Chair

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THE UNIVERSITY OF ALABAMA
COLLEGE OF ARTS AND SCIENCES

TRANSFORMATION

In the only sentence that remains of his work, Anaximenes (6th century BCE) tells us, "Just as our soul, being air, controls us, so also wind and air encompass the whole cosmos." On April 27, it appeared to many in Tuscaloosa that Anaximenes' view was close to the truth.

At 4:50 PM on April 27, with only two days left in the semester, I arrived at World Gym for a treadmill workout before going home. I was then unaware that a tornado warning had been issued thirteen minutes earlier just after I left campus, and I was also unaware that straightline winds had disabled the tornado siren near the gym. Sitting in my car obliviously, I decided to phone my wife to remind her that I would not get home until 6 PM. With worry in her voice, she told me that a supercell storm was approaching the city. "Surely there is time for thirty minutes on the treadmill..." I negotiated. She begged me to skip the workout, so I backed out of my parking space and drove home. I was fortunate to have phoned my wife: less than thirty minutes later, an F4 tornado damaged or destroyed 5000 homes and 400 businesses, reducing World Gym to a giant tumbleweed of twisted beams and sheet metal. More than forty Tuscaloosans were killed, and hundreds were left homeless or jobless.

No one with the Department of Philosophy suffered injury or property damage, but our just-retired secretary, Dorothy Bazemore, was not as lucky. Tearing

through Tuscaloosa just two days after her retirement dinner, the tornado uprooted a massive tree that crushed Ms. B's car before falling through the dining room of her Alberta City home. Ms. B and her dogs escaped injury, but nearby businesses and homes were obliterated. Strong and optimistic, Ms. B remains in her home while it undergoes repair.

Amidst tons of rubble awaiting removal, much construction is now underway as is longrange city planning. There is the anticipated talk of rebuilding old neighborhoods and businesses and of constructing new ones, but there is also talk of creating walking paths and bike trails to interlink residential areas, shopping areas, and the University. Tuscaloosa's transformation could be remarkable.

As I reflect on the transformation that the city may undergo in the coming years, I find myself reflecting as well on the transformation that the Department has already undergone over the past thirty years. When I arrived at UA in 1978, UA's enrollment was 15,000. There were five tenure-track philosophers and as many majors; and the Department was lucky to produce *one* graduate per year. Today, UA's enrollment tops 30,000, and the Department begins the fall semester with eight tenure-track faculty (plus three fulltime philosophy instructors!) and more than eighty majors. Last year, the Department produced twenty graduates!

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News Of The Department

A Retirement Celebration



Dorothy Bazemore retired this spring after 15 years with the University and 12 with the Department. She was a wonderful person to have with us, as nice as it is possible to be and utterly devoted to her job: we used to try to *make* her go home and put off completing a project until the next day. We did a lot of good work together. We will all miss her dearly. Photos above are from two opportunities we took to tell her good-bye and wish her well, one in the department's seminar room and one at the Cypress Inn.

News Of The Department

Our New Colleague



We are delighted to have **Seth Bordner** as a new colleague. Seth's field is the history of philosophy, with a specialty in the early modern period and additional interests in ancient philosophy, ethics, and philosophy of science. His PhD is from the University of North Carolina, and he also holds MAs from UC Irvine and Virginia Tech. From 2008-20010, Seth

coached the UNC team in the Ethics Bowl competition conducted by the Association for Practical and Professional Ethics, and there are plans for him to inaugurate a team in that here at Alabama.

Seth's dissertation was on George Berkeley, whom you might remember as having held that perceived things like rocks and feet were not really physical objects but just collections of ideas that existed only in a mind (including God's, which takes care of whether there's a sound when a tree falls and no one is there to hear it—Someone always is.) "Thus I refute him," Samuel Johnson is supposed to have said while kicking a stone. That's the standard understanding of Berkeley, but Seth argues that it has him quite wrong. Seth has developed his view in an impressive number of presentations at top philosophy conferences, and also has an article about Berkeley forthcoming in the *Journal of the History of Philosophy*. He's going to be great to have around, both for the faculty and the students.

Transformation

(continued)

The result of this transformation is not only a department with more philosophers and more majors but a department that offers an outstanding philosophy program for undergraduates. But don't take *my* word for it! This past year, the Department underwent its mandatory eight-year review, which involves a review of the Department's research, teaching, and service activity by both a committee of UA faculty from outside the Department and an external consultant. The external reviewer was a prominent analytic metaphysician from a strong undergraduate department in the northwest; his conclusion:

The bottom line is that the University of Alabama Philosophy Department is arguably the best in the region (even if it is not yet receiving the recognition it deserves...), especially when compared to departments that do not have graduate programs, and especially when compared "pound for pound" to the many larger departments (including those with graduate programs) in the Southeast.

This strong endorsement underscores that the Department's transformation has indeed been remarkable. And the transformation may continue...

Just after my final meeting with the review committee, the Dean, and the Provost, the Dean invited the Department to petition for a ninth tenure-track position. Weeks later, the Associate Dean urged the Department to petition for a tenth position! With such encouragement from the Dean's Office and with the growing support of alumni, the transformation of the Department will continue. Indeed, the next several years hold great promise for the Department and for the city that is home to its philosophers.

Faculty Activities

Torin Alter gave a symposium talk at the 2010 Pacific



APA and co-authored *The God Dialogues: A Philosophical Journey* (Oxford) with Robert J. Howell. He also completed the main work on an edited collection on consciousness and the mind-body problem,

which is due out next year also from Oxford. One shorter piece was also accepted, another was given a second revise-and-resubmit, and several other projects on consciousness are under way. He and Chase Wrenn implemented the self-paced introduction to philosophy course they designed and it appears to have been a success. “My twins turned 4 and continue to amaze and delight me daily. The table tennis club I advise continues to grow, and I somehow managed to win the annual UA tournament for the first time, despite some stiff competition. I fared less well in the statewide tournaments. But I did win first place in the “under 1700” category in at Atlanta tournament, somehow defeating a far superior player who was probably around 12 years old.”

Scott Hestevold spent more than half his time tending



to the business of the Department, which included a search for a tenure-track philosopher and an external review. Following the November death of his friend and co-author, William R. Carter, Scott began writing the section of a paper on time and persistence that he and Carter

were to have written together. He hopes to return to work on space later in the year.

Max Hocutt (Emeritus) completed the writing of many



entries for the *Lincoln Library Encyclopedia*, had “Morality: What on earth is it?” accepted by *Behavior and Philosophy*, and gave an invited talk, “Libertarianism without Natural Rights” to a conference at Mississippi State.

Rekha Nath published two book chapters: ‘Global



Institutionalism and Justice’ in *Questioning Cosmopolitanism* and ‘What is so special about the state?’ in *Sovereign Justice: Global Justice in a World of Nations*. She also had ‘Two Wrongs Don’t Make a Right: A Critique of Virginia Held’s Deontological Justification of

Terrorism’ accepted by *Social Theory and Practice* and ‘Equal Standing in the Global Community’ accepted by *The Monist*. She will spend the summer as a visiting fellow at the Australian National University. While there, she plans to work on a project with Holly Lawford-Smith concerning the obligations individuals have in situations of failed collective action.

Stuart Rachels wrote a 5,000 word essay on “Euthanasia”



for the International Encyclopedia of Ethics, wrote new editions of *Problems from Philosophy* and *The Truth about the World*, and is awaiting publication of “Vegetarianism,” in *The Oxford Handbook of Ethics and Animals*, edited by Raymond Frey and Tom Beauchamp.

Faculty Activities

Philosophy T-Shirt

Norvin Richards published “Lives no one should have to live” in *Social Theory and Practice* and had *The Ethics of Parenthood* published by Oxford, participated in an author-meets-the-critics session on that book at the annual meeting of the Association for Practical and Professional Ethics, and accepted an invitation to present a paper at a conference arranged by the Centre for Ethics at the University of Zurich.



Richard Richards’ book, *The Species Problem: A Philosophical Analysis*, was published by Cambridge and his article, “Sexual Selection and Recent Human Evolution,” appeared in the *Encyclopedia of Life Sciences*. He wrote a chapter on “Sexual Selection” that will appear in *The Cambridge Encyclopedia of Darwin and Evolutionary Thought*. He also gave a talk titled “Against Method: Phylogenetic Inference and the Material Theory of Induction” at the annual meeting of the Philosophy of Science Association in Montreal. This spring he was promoted from Associate to Full Professor.

Chase Wrenn gave a symposium talk at the Pacific APA, “Truth: The Worst of All Goods” and published “A Puzzle About Desire” in *Erkenntnis*, “The Unreality of Realization” in *The Australasian Journal of Philosophy* and “Truth is Not Instrumentally Valuable” in *New Waves in Truth*, (ed. Cory Wright and Nikolaj Pederson.) He was also elected Secretary of the Southern Society for Philosophy and Psychology.



Explain yourself !

Out of excuses and ways to be humble when praised? Tired of trying to explain how you turned out the way you did? You have only to wear this handsome green t-shirt. The front says:

Department of Philosophy
University of Alabama

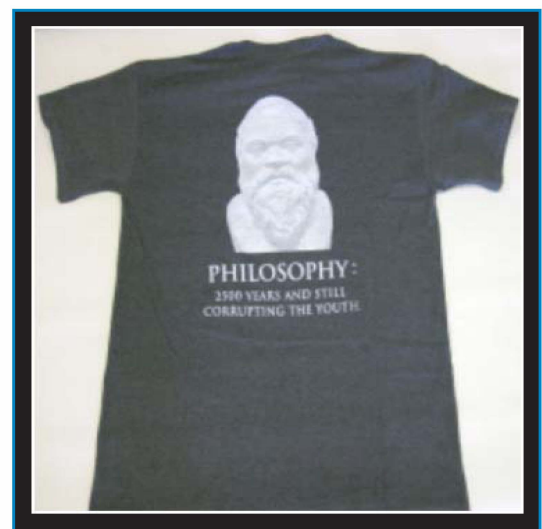
The reverse sports a bust of Socrates, over the words:

Philosophy:

2500 Years and Still
Corrupting the Youth

What more would you need to say?

Yours through the mail for a mere \$15. Indicate size (S, M, L, XL) and send a check made out to The University of Alabama to Ms. Julie Wilson, Department of Philosophy, Box 870218, Tuscaloosa, AL, 35487.



News Of Philosophy Alums

Craig Alexander (1977) will begin



teaching courses for the law school at Alabama this Fall, in addition to continuing his work as an attorney for Rumberger, Kirk & Caldwell in

Birmingham. He regularly does two sessions in our civil law class, so we know first-hand how very good he'll be at teaching.

Nita DeBoer Hestevold (1981) is



now the College Coordinator for Emergency Logistics, a position created in response to the terrible

tornado damage of April 27. She describes her work this way: "We are a clearing house for disaster-relief information for the UA Arts and Sciences Community. We help find resources for those who have suffered losses. We find volunteer opportunities for those who wish to serve. We find opportunities for giving, both monetary and material, for those who wish to help." She says most of what she does is routine, but offers this example as well: "I have one client who had extensive home damage that will be paid for by FEMA and insurance. But he lost forty or fifty trees and insurance and FEMA do not cover this. I found an arborist to come out for free to advise him, we are in the process of finding free replacement trees, and I have a list of volunteers ready to help with planting

when the trees come in."

Nita and Scott's son Erik graduates this August with a B.A. in philosophy and art. Their daughter Kara will enter her senior year at ASFA (Alabama School of Fine Arts), after doing summer intensives in New York with the Joffrey Ballet and in Tuscaloosa with the American Ballet Theatre.

Greg Madden (1986) lives in Lancaster, PA and works as Associate Director of IT for Penn State Harrisburg. His wife Kirsten (also a 1986 graduate of UA) is an economics professor at Millersville University; their two daughters are both enrolled at the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill. "I'd say my time at Alabama has had the largest possible impact on my life: one of my majors (computer science) turned into my career, the other (philosophy) has completely dominated my approach to life, and I am still married to the woman I met when we were juniors together in Tuscaloosa." Greg plays music to entertain himself, and in July appeared on Staten Island at a fundraiser to benefit victims of the April 2011 Tuscaloosa tornado.

Pedro Gonzalez (1987) is a professor of philosophy at Barry University, Miami Shores, Fla. He has published five



books in philosophy, including two on Ortega y Gasset. He and his wife Ann are pictured below with their son (Marcus Julian, 11) and daughter (Isabella Sophia, 9).

Ann Coyle (1988) reports that her son Dylan will begin studies this fall at the University of North Alabama in the Department of Entertainment Industry, where he will major in Entertainment Technology: "He argues that music is moving away from instruments and to computers and other technology (that usually leads to some fights in our house...one of us can be a bit of a purist, clearly)."

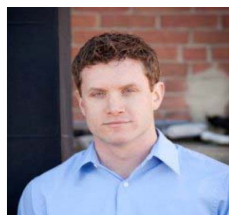
Takeshi Enomoto (2001) earned a Master's degree in Intercultural Communication from Rikkyo University in Tokyo, and continued on to the Ph.D. program there. He is now teaching in the Foreign Language Institute of Kanazawa University while working on his dissertation. "My research is on linguistic anthropological issues of Japanese English language education, including pragmatic, (socio)linguistic, and ideological dimensions."

He reports that he and his relatives all came through the combined earthquake and damage to the nuclear plant okay, but that "I think everyone in Japan is affected in some ways, physically and/or mentally. Many people in tsunami-hit areas are still forced to live in a devastated situation. Besides, people are tired of hearing about organizational corruption in the power company and the Japanese political situation that seem to be making the recovery process slow and even ineffective."

Shane Weldon (2001) has had a solo legal practice for the past five years, the last of them in Daphne. He and his wife now hope to return to "the North," i.e. Tuscaloosa or Birmingham.

News Of Philosophy Alums

Gabriel Walvatne (2003) has resigned his position as an attorney with Miles & Stockbridge to be an actor—look for him as Gabriel Voss. “I am petrified, but it’s the right move. On my last day of work, everyone asked me how I felt. I had to be honest and admit that I was overwhelmingly scared....but I could not stop smiling.” To see his work, go to his Facebook page and click on one of the clips—he’s really good!



Matthew Satcher (2006) has finished his Internship in family medicine and is now a Resident in that specialty.



Matthew Price (2007) is pursuing a Master’s in Public Administration at UAB.

David Clyburn (2009) writes “I’ve taken a different track in life than I had anticipated, and I am currently in the middle of my final semester to receive my master’s degree in Secondary Education: Language Arts while on my way to becoming a high school English teacher and track coach. Lots of things went into my decision to avoid law school, but it basically boiled down to the fact that I’d rather do something that I loved than something that would make me lots of money. I believe the Beatles said ‘Can’t buy me love,’ and that seems to have hit the nail on the head, but I also believe they wrote the lyric ‘The best things in life are free, but you can keep it for the birds and bees. Just give me money.’ Either way...

Jana Wright (2009) will start law school this fall at Alabama, Ole Miss, or Loyola of New Orleans. She wants to go where there is a criminal defense clinic or where she can start one.

Deborah Anderson (2009) is taking various courses at Harvard and serving as a Research Assistant in one Harvard study on Cognitive Illusions, while applying for accounting jobs in Boston and planning her strategy for applying for graduate study.



John Cockrell (2009) and Jordan Ciza weremarried June 25, at the American Village in Montevallo. John began law school at Alabama this past January. Jordan will begin studies this fall toward a Master’s in Public Health at UAB.



Kyle Driggers (2009) completed his Masters in philosophy at Texas A & M. This fall, he will begin studies toward his Ph.D. at the University of Miami, which is one of the finest programs in our discipline.



Alonso Heudebert (2009)



completed his Masters in Public Health at UAB. He starts medical school this fall at South Alabama.

Alana Crowe (2010) has been working in Birmingham for the past year. Beginning this fall, she will be in law school here at Alabama.

Laura Dover (2010) has completed her first year of medical school at UAB. She spent ten days this summer south of Cairo, collecting data for a grant to create medical education/training for rural areas in Egypt. From there she moved to a seven-week fellowship in oncology at Johns Hopkins, before returning for her second year of medical school at UAB.

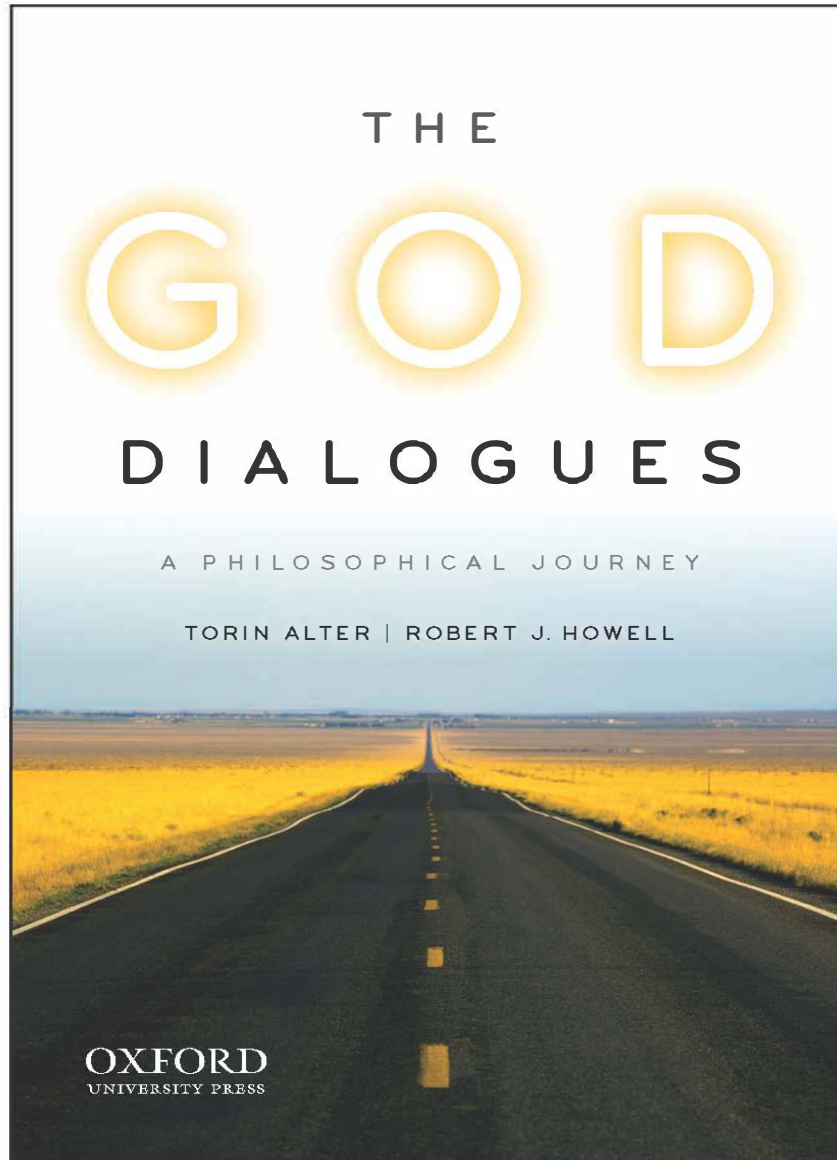
Ben Hohman (2010) spent the previous year teaching English in Lanxi, in Southeastern China. He will spend the next year improving his background by taking the course load of an undergraduate major in theology at Marian University. He will be applying for graduate study in theology at a number of schools, including two in Italy and one in Belgium.



Please send your news to:
nrichard@tenhoor.as.ua.edu or to
 Norvin Richards, Box 870218
 Tuscaloosa, AL 35487

Faculty Activities

NEED A GOOD READ?



Engaging and accessible, *The God Dialogues* covers all the main arguments for and against God's existence. Three main characters represent the principal views: theism, atheism, and agnosticism. During a cross-country road trip, these characters discuss the meaning of life and its connection to God's existence. This in turn leads to vigorous debates about morality and theism, evidence for and against God's existence, probability and the rationality of belief, and the relationship between faith and reason.



This Year's Graduates



Jamie Ballew chose Alabama for law school, over Virginia and Washington & Lee. She'd do well anywhere!

Jordan Berry will work for a year, then go to law school.

Emily Brait will teach English, probably to 3-5 year-old children, in Changchun, China, a city near the North Korean border, for the next two years. She hopes to move from there to an internship with an American law firm in China and then to a program leading to both an MBA and a law degree.

Jonathan Cobb will "work a regular job and practice Adidam, the esoteric spiritual practice founded by Adi Da Samraj. Graduate studies may very well be in my future, but the 'if, when, and what for' of it are not now known."

Claire Guest will begin work this fall on a Master's degree in American Studies at Penn State at Harrisburg.

Alen Haric is off to law school at Faulkner University this fall.

Erik Hestevold will live in Tuscaloosa, get a job to keep body and soul together, and paint. If you've seen his stuff, you know the boy has talent!

Tyler Krug has begun studies at Southeastern Baptist Theological Seminary. In January, he will transfer to Beeson Divinity School at Samford.

Jonathan Lenning is "working with a nonprofit Christian ministry based out of Birmingham that starts and runs orphanages and cares for suffering children around the world. We currently have a home in Uganda where 17 children are being cared for with an emphasis on Jesus. There are future plans for expansion there as well as for fostering connections of the same kind in Papua New Guinea, Costa Rica, Haiti, Kenya, and Birmingham. I am now working here in Birmingham for this ministry, planning a fundraiser for the end of August and doing communications (which was my other

major) for them. I am hoping to get engaged soon, and am looking for part-time/odd jobs that I can do on the side to put back money right now. Soon, however, I will send out fundraising letters to raise support for myself to live and function as a missionary who will eventually be traveling. Right now, my parents are graciously allowing me to live and eat at home, which helps sooo much."

Sean Randall says "My plans, as soon as I have an offer of a steady job and assurance of decent, cheap living with roommates I can trust, are to move to New York City and pursue a career in theatre as both an actor and a writer."

Trace Sexton will begin law school at Case Western Reserve in the fall.

Peter Sloan not only distinguished himself in his philosophy classes but also received the "Outstanding Senior" award this year from the School of Music. Next year, he will teach in New York City for Teach for America.

Jon Thompson has accepted a year-long internship in Cambridge, England, with Christian Heritage. "My official title will be Apologetics and Evangelism Intern, and I will have several duties. I will be working at the Round Church part of the week, giving tours in a museum there on the history of Christianity and of Cambridge. I will also be doing personal apologetics with students at the University of Cambridge. The rest of my time will be spent doing research in the areas of theology and apologetics."

Marilyn Tucker will begin a three-year Masters of Divinity program at Columbia Theological Seminary in Decatur, GA. She will be supported by the Columbia Scholarship, one of only four awarded each year, and the largest available at the school!

Sara Webb plans to work for a year, and then attend law school.

Honors, Prizes and Awards

Departmental Awards

The Marten & Marie ten Hoor Prize for Excellence in Philosophy

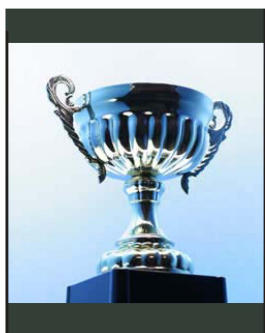
Winner - Joshua Quick
Second Place - Peter Sloan
Third Place - Spencer Carter

The Iredell Jenkins Endowed Memorial Scholarship

Winner - Joshua Quick
Second Place - Peter Sloan
Third Place - Jon Thompson





The Norvin Richards Award In Philosophy and the Law

Winners - Jamie Ballew & Jordan Berry



News of the Department

PHILOSOPHY TODAY

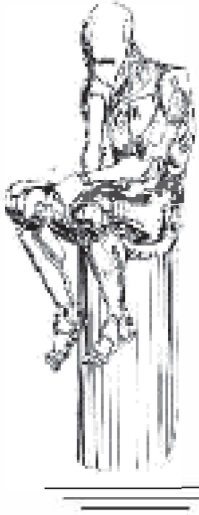
	IS THERE A RIGHT TO IMMIGRATE? MICHAEL HUEMER THE UNIVERSITY OF COLORADO AT BOULDER	9/16/2010 7:30 PM 206 SMITH HALL
	MEANING IN LIFE AND THE ILLUSION OF FREE WILL DERK PEREBOOM CORNELL UNIVERSITY	11/09/2010 7:30 PM 206 SMITH HALL
	THE PHILOSOPHICAL CHALLENGES OF GLOBAL GENDER JUSTICE ALISON M. JAGGAR THE UNIVERSITY OF COLORADO AT BOULDER	1/27/2011 7:30 PM 206 SMITH HALL
	IN DEFENSE OF GENETICALLY MODIFIED FOOD PAUL THOMPSON THE UNIVERSITY OF TORONTO	2/24/2011 7:30 PM 206 SMITH HALL

Sponsored by the University of Alabama's College of Arts and Sciences and Department of Philosophy. The grant from Louie G. Perry will also be used by other alumni and friends of the Department, for further educational purposes. Dr. H. O. Perry, President, 1942-1972.

We offered our fourth Philosophy Today lecture series this year, made possible by funding contributed by Lou Perry and the Dean of the College. These are wonderful events in the intellectual life of the university, and while the speakers are on campus we take full advantage of them: we have them give a second talk for the philosophy faculty, students, and interested others, and often we've been able to time their visits so that they can also do a class in one of our seminars.

To date, the scheduled speakers for the 2011-2012 series are Jeff McMahan, Hud Hudson, Rebecca Copenhaver, and Alvin Goldman. We will post the dates and topics on our website (www.as.ua.edu/philosophy). We look forward to seeing you there.

Thanks!



We are grateful to **Lou Perry** for his continuing financial support of the *Philosophy Today* series, to **Beverly and Steve Davis** for having endowed a small fund that helps pay for academic travel by our faculty, and to an anonymous donor (and former winner of the prize) who added to the fund awarded as the ten Hoor prize. We greatly appreciate the support, and the chance to do good things with the money. Thanks!

We welcome your support too, of course. You can lend it by mailing us a check made out to the University of Alabama. Feel free to designate something in particular that you want to fund or help fund, or to leave the choice to our fertile brains. Or we'd be glad to discuss ideas with you. We are Prof. Scott Hestevold, at 205-348-5942, shestevold@bama.ua.edu and Prof. Norvin Richards, at 205-348-1906, nrichard@tenhoor.as.ua.edu.



ten Hoor Hall

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