

AGORA

Newsletter of the Department of Philosophy



U.S. Supreme Court building / Photo courtesy of John Brighenti via Flickr

Jurisprudence, the theoretical study of law, might be concerned with one or more of the following questions: What is the nature of law? What characterizes legal reasoning? Are we obligated to follow a law just because it is a law? What are legal systems and institutions, and how do they generate normativity and obligations? What is the relation between law and morality? Is an unjust law really law? Or must a law have a particular moral status to count as a true law?

While many of those who practice law may not be confronted with precisely these questions in their daily work, these and related questions naturally arise when we think about our legal system and its institutions, and when lawyers, judges and legal theorists reflect on what they are doing. Since these questions are largely philosophical, those with philosophical training will likely be better suited to address them. Our Jurisprudence Specialization is designed to give students an introduction to these Jurisprudence questions and the issues they raise, perhaps to better prepare them for the legal profession, or perhaps just because these are issues that any well informed, philosophically inclined citizen

might engage. As part of the specialization, a student might take a class in Philosophical Issues in Criminal Law, Civil Law or Constitutional Law. Or a student might take a class on Law and Morality, Legal reasoning or Philosophical Issues in International law.

In recent years, approximately one-third of philosophy majors have been enrolled in our Jurisprudence Specialization. And many of our minors are also working on the specialized Jurisprudence minor. Because some of our best majors are doing this specialization, it is no surprise that many of the department awards go to Jurisprudence students. In the last three years, for instance, Philosophy Department awards have been given to Jurisprudence students Rebecca Kerley, Jacqueline Andreano, Maria Gerasikova and Alida Babcock. Our Jurisprudence graduates have then gone on to some of the most prestigious Law Schools, including Yale, Harvard, Columbia, NYU, Virginia, Emory, Penn, Berkeley, Washington University (St. Louis), Alabama, William and Mary, and more. Many are now practicing law, serving as law clerks, or teaching law.

KEEP READING JURISPRUDENCE ON PAGE 4

FACULTY NEWS



**Dr. Torin
Alter**



**Dr. Adam
Arico**



**Dr. Seth
Bordner**



**Dr. Tim
Butzer**



**Dr. Scott
Hestevold**



**Dr. Andrew
Ingram**

Torin Alter *Professor*

Dr. Alter gave a talk at Princeton's Institute for Advance Studies and a commentary at the Southern Society for Philosophy and Psychology. Oxford University Press accepted his proposal for a book tentatively entitled *The Matter of Consciousness*, which he is slowly writing. He is also co-writing (with Derk Pereboom of Cornell University) an entry on Russellian monism, for the *Stanford Encyclopedia of Philosophy*. And he presented Dr. Hestevold with compelling arguments against retiring (they didn't take).

Seth Bordner *Associate Professor*

Dr. Bordner continues to pursue several projects, including work on Berkeley's so-called Master Argument (which he will present at a workshop in Milwaukee in October), the harm of death, and a new argument for the virtue of ontological simplicity in scientific theories. Again this fall, he is a Faculty Fellow in the Blount Scholars Program and continues to serve as a Faculty Fellow in the Alabama Program in Sports Communication. Dr. Bordner will be on sabbatical in Spring 2019.

Scott Hestevold *Professor Emeritus*

After serving 40 years on UA's philosophy faculty, Dr. Hestevold retired on June 1 and has been appointed Professor Emeritus. He spends most days in his office in Gallalee Hall, working on the final chapters of his book on space. During 2018-19, Dr. Hestevold will continue serving as faculty advisor for Phi Sigma Tau, the undergraduate philosophy honorary; and he will serve as a student's Honors Thesis advisor. He and Nita hiked in Alaska in May, visited their son in Denver in July, and traveled to NYC in September to attend their daughter's dance performance.

Holly Kantin *Assistant Professor*

Last year Dr. Kantin had her paper, "Why Compositional Nihilism Dissolves Puzzles" accepted for publication in *Synthese* and she completed a new paper on the extent to which minors should have a say concerning whether they are enrolled in medical research. Dr. Kantin also continued her work on several ongoing projects, including one on the ethics of assisted dying for individuals with non-terminal illnesses. In addition

to doing philosophy, Dr. Kantin has been hiking and trying to find time to play the piano.

Benjamin Kozuch *Assistant Professor*

Because Dr. Kozuch was released from teaching duties this spring and summer, he spent much of this time in Paris, working on a project that uses brain lesion data to explore the cognitive requirements for consciousness. His trip was funded by grants from the University, including one from the Research Grants Council, and another from the College Academy of Research, Scholarship, and Creative Activity. While in France, his project was carried out in association with the Centre National de la Recherche Scientifique (National Center for Scientific Research). Also last year, Dr. Kozuch had two articles accepted for publication in prestigious philosophy journals. The first appears in *Erkenntnis*, and concerns the evolutionary functions of pain and pleasure; the second is to appear in *Mind and Language*, and argues that consciousness is possible in absence of attention. Finally, Dr. Kozuch participated in his first and only trail running race last year. It

FACULTY NEWS



**Dr. Trig
Johnson**



**Dr. Holly
Kantin**



**Dr. Benjamin
Kozuch**



**Dr. Rekha
Nath**



**Dr. Mark
Pickering**



**Dr. Ted
Poston**

was a distance of 12 miles, and he took third.

Rekha Nath

Associate Professor

Dr. Nath is on sabbatical for the 2017–2018 academic year. During her sabbatical leave, she will be working on a book manuscript on the injustice of weight stigma. She has a forthcoming publication in *Bioethics* in which she critically engages with narratives surrounding the vilification of fatness. She also has been hiking, kayaking, and generally enjoying the great natural beauty of the North Carolina wilderness.

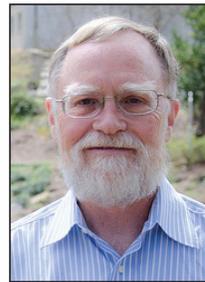
Stuart Rachels

Associate Professor

In 2018-2019 Stuart wrote and got published the 9th edition of his widely-used textbook, *The Elements of Moral Philosophy*. The 8th edition of that book, Stuart was told, will soon be published in Mongolian. This past year, Stuart has been on the editorial board of the journal, *Utilitas*, and (much more time-consuming!) has worked on two other book manuscripts in addition to *Elements*, which he is currently negotiating with presses about. Meanwhile, it was a busy year



**Dr. Stuart
Rachels**



**Dr. Norvin
Richards**



**Dr. Richard
Richards**



**Dr. Chase
Wrenn**

in the department, where Stuart served on two hiring committees, a faculty retention committee and was the department's library liaison while also being the faculty sponsor of both UA's chess club and UA's bridge club. On a lighter note, Stuart also applied his knowledge of moral philosophy in answering some ethical questions about chess that were posed to him by Grandmaster Andy Soltis (the author of more than 90 chess books) and was liberally quoted in Soltis's widely-read column in the April 2018 issue of *Chess Life*, titled "Ethics 101."

Norvin Richards

Professor Emeritus

Norvin Richards' article "Raising Children with Respect" was published in *The Nature and Value of Childhood*, a special issue of the *Journal of Applied Philosophy*. He continues to

work on the topic of parental love. He and Janet also continue to travel, this year going both to India and to Tanzania.

Richard Richards

Professor

Dr. Richards is in his fourth year as department Chair. Last fall his article, "Engineered Niches and Naturalized Aesthetics," was published in the *Journal of Aesthetics and Art Criticism*. His book, *The Biology of Art*, is to be published later this year by Cambridge University Press. He is currently working on an article on "Artworlds and Art Niches," and a chapter for the *Cambridge History of Atheism*, on "Atheism and the Visual Arts." In July 2018, he and his wife, Rita Snyder, Associate Professor of Dance, attended an international ballroom training

OUR NEW COLLEAGUES

Andrew Ingram is from Waco, Texas. He went to Brown University before returning home to the South for graduate school. He finished his Ph.D. this May at the University of Texas, where he was part of the Law & Philosophy Program and earned his J.D. in 2013. In between years of graduate study, Andrew worked as a law clerk for the Fifth Circuit Court of Appeals and volunteered at Texas Rio Grande Legal Aid to help with workers' rights cases. He is excited about teaching courses for the department's jurisprudence concentration and is working on a new article about vicarious liability in criminal conspiracies. He wrote his dissertation about guilt and is curious about how it can help us understand what separates duties from other reasons.



Mark Pickering is joining the Philosophy Department this year as an Instructor. He taught previously at Lynn University, the University of Rochester, and Brigham Young University. He received his Ph.D. in Philosophy from Boston University and also received a J.D. from the University of Chicago. He is interested in Kant, Berkeley, and the philosophy of law.

Ted Poston is incoming as the inaugural director of the McCollough Institute for Pre-Medical Education. For the past ten years, he taught medical reasoning to a select group of pre-medical students at the University of South Alabama. He has been working with an epidemiologist at Tufts University on criteria for inferring causal relationships in epidemiology. One result of this collaboration is a forthcoming paper in a volume on the epistemology of science. Dr. Poston recently completed a book with Adam Carter (Glasgow) titled *Knowledge-How: A Critical Introduction* (Bloomsbury). He also edited a book with Kevin McCain *Inference to the Best Explanation* (Oxford). His current research project focuses on the relationship between Bayesian inference and explanatory reasoning.



FACULTY NEWS

FACULTY CONTINUED FROM PAGE 3

camp in Caorle, Italy. He is scheduled for a one-person show of his artwork beginning in December 2018 in the University Gallery at the Dinah Washington Cultural Arts Center.

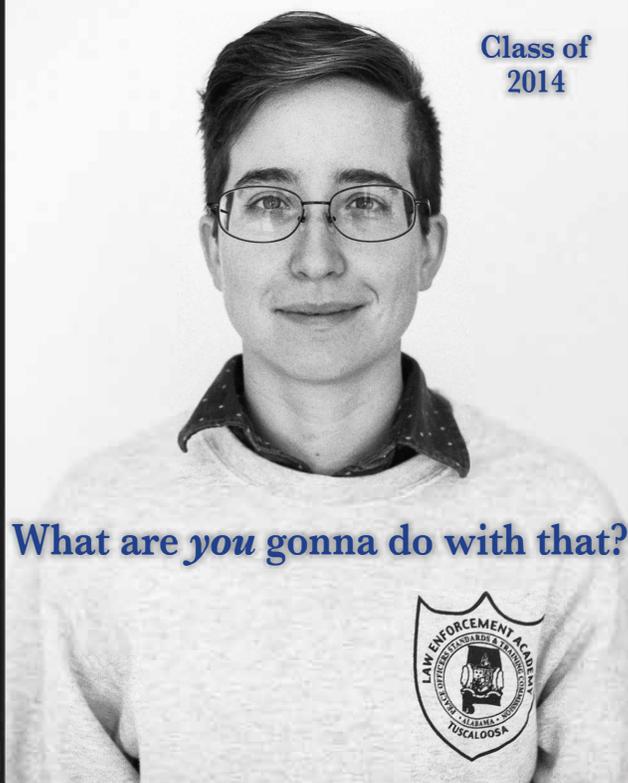
Chase Wrenn

Professor

Dr. Wrenn returned to Scotland in May 2018, continuing work on his book, *The True and the Good*, which is coming along nicely but not yet finished. While there, he gave talks on his work in progress at the University of Edinburgh and at St. Andrews University. He was also honored with an invitation to present his work at the 2018 Mid-Atlantic Philosophy of Language workshop, which brought together some of the world's top philosophers working on truth. Papers of his on the metaphysics and logic of truth are included in a pair of forthcoming edited collections.

Officer Holly: Philosophy Major

Class of
2014



What are you gonna do with that?

ALUMNI NOTES

Anthony Rivera-Rodriguez (2013) is living in Washington D.C. and working as an assistant to the chief of staff for California Senator Dianne Feinstein.

Ellen Coogan (2014) completed her final year of law school at Washington University in St. Louis as a student at the University of Utrecht. Next year she will begin studies toward a Masters in Law at the University of Amsterdam.

Alexandra Harris (2015) graduated from Columbia University in 2017 with a Master of Public Health degree. She has since been working for the Center for Outcomes Research and Evaluation at Yale University, a leading outcome measure developer for Medicare and Medicaid.

Ben Lucy (2015) is a third-year JD/MBA candidate at the University of Virginia. He is a member of the Virginia Law Review Editorial Board and serves as president of Mindfulness in Law at the University of Virginia. In his spare time, Ben leads the UVA law school band and the UVA MBA school's student-faculty band. This spring, Ben's team placed first in the Venture Capital Boot Camp Case Competition in Reston, VA, hosted by Cooley LLP. He also participated in the 2018 Game Day Sports Case Competi-

tion, hosted by UCLA, where his team placed second. Ben worked as a summer associate at two law firms this summer and worked as a law clerk for the Oakland Athletics. Next summer, Ben will work as a summer associate at Latham & Watkins LLP in its Menlo Park, CA office. Ben plans to practice corporate law in the Bay Area after finishing professional school.

Evan Richtmyer (2015) taught English in Memphis through Teach for America for two years after graduating, after which he took a gap year in which he lived in South American and studied for the LSAT. He'll be attending law school at the University of Wisconsin where he plans to study international law.

Rebecca Kerley (2016) is on leave from law school at the University of Virginia and is completing a one-year research scholar program in economics at Harvard University.

Let us know how you are doing! Reach out by phone, email, or on Facebook — search for and join the UA Philosophy Majors & Minors (Past & Present) group.

JURISPRUDENCE CONTINUED FROM PAGE 1

The Department's Jurisprudence Specialization was developed in 1999 after consultation with professors from UA law and one local judge. Craig Alexander, a Birmingham attorney and former philosophy major at UA, later made invaluable contributions to the course on Civil Law by teaching meetings on issues of the day. Since the Fall of 2012 the courses in our Jurisprudence specialization have also been taught by Dr. Ken Ehrenberg, and exclusively by him since the retirement of Norvin Richards in 2013. In 2016, Dr. Ehrenberg published his book *The Functions of Law*, with Oxford University Press, but then left the University of Alabama in 2017 for a position as Director of Research at the University of Surrey Centre for Law and Philosophy. And while we miss Dr. Ehrenberg, we understand the attraction of such a prestigious position.

Last year we initiated a search for a philosopher of law to cover Dr. Ehrenberg's classes, but were unable to find a satisfactory replacement. We plan to run a search again this year

for a tenure track philosopher of law. In the meantime, we have two temporary instructors to cover our Jurisprudence courses. Mark Pickering received his J.D. from the prestigious University of Chicago School of Law where he completed course work with such notable legal theorists as Martha Nussbaum, Cass Sunstein and Richard Epstein. His Ph.D. is from Boston University, where he wrote on Kant's *Critique of Pure Reason*. He has published work on Hume and Kant, and can also help out the department in our Early Modern Philosophy course, while Dr. Bordner (who currently teaches that class) is on sabbatical. Andrew Ingram comes to us from the University of Texas, where received his J.D. and has just completed his Ph.D. Along with the Philosophy of Law, he specializes in Ethics and Political Philosophy. The department is fortunate to have these two faculty members, both highly qualified, to help us cover our Jurisprudence courses. And with a search for a new tenure track philosopher of law, our Jurisprudence specialization will be in good hands.

By Richard Richards

Scott Hestevold Retires After 40 Years



At left:
Scott Hestevold with
(L to R) son Erik, wife
Nita, and daughter
Kara.

Below, left: (L to R)
Nita Hestevold with
alumni Alana Crowe
Frederick and Scott
Frederick.

Below, right: (L to R)
Chase Wrenn, George
McClure, Tim Butzer,
and Max Hocutt

Effective June 1, 2018, Professor Scott Hestevold retired after 40 years of service to the Philosophy Department and the University of Alabama. When he was hired in 1978 to replace Iredell Jenkins, there were five faculty in the Philosophy Department and about the same number of majors. Now there are over 80 majors and over 110 minors served by 13 faculty. Between his arrival

and retirement, Dr. Hestevold served several times as acting chair and from 2007–2015 as chair of the department. Much of our progress in the last 40 years is due to Dr. Hestevold's careful teaching and scholarship, dedication and integrity. I hope that the Philosophy department can continue along the path he established.

By Richard Richards





At left: (L to R)
 Scott Hestevold,
 Norvin Richards, and John
 Schmitt (former professor of
 communicative disorders),
 circa 1980.

Photo courtesy of
 Norvin Richards

Scott is clearly one of the
 best professors this
 department has ever had.
 (I've been here almost
 the whole time there has
 been a Department of
 Philosophy, so I'm in a
 good position to judge.)

NORVIN RICHARDS
*from remarks at Scott's
 retirement celebration*



Above: (L to R) Kathy
 Cotton, Pat Taylor, Dwight
 Taylor, and Lewis Cotton.

Left: (L to R)
 Emory Kimbrough and
 Kara Hestevold.

Right: (L to R) Scott
 Hestevold and Associate
 Registrar Wendy McMillian



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Can Sight Be Blind? Untangling the Tale of Blindsight and Unconscious Vision

Ian Philips
Princeton University

Oct. 18, 2018



Where Are the Women in (the History of) Philosophy?

Margaret Atherton
UW-Milwaukee

Nov. 29, 2018

2018–2019
Philosophy
TODAY

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

Learning from Psychopaths

David Shoemaker
Tulane University

March 28, 2019



Modeling Reality: How Science Advances Understanding of the World

Catherine Elgin
Harvard University

April 18, 2019

