

Spring 2011

Philosophy & World Religions Department Newsletter, v2, Spring 2011

University of Northern Iowa. Department of Philosophy and World Religions.

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UNI DEPARTMENT OF PHILOSOPHY & WORLD RELIGIONS

DEPARTMENT NEWSLETTER
SPRING 2011

I am delighted to introduce the second issue of our department newsletter. As the Buddhists (and John Dewey) say, "Even the great mountains change." Several changes in our department have occurred this semester. Professor Susan Hill has been accepted as an Administrative Fellow and so will be working for the Provost's office half-time for the next two years. Professor Ken Atkinson has shifted his career goals and so will move to the Department of History in the fall. And Professor Bill Clohesy will begin a five-year period of phased retirement beginning next January. As a result, we are currently searching for two Visiting Assistant Professors, one in the Study of Religion (Biblical Literature) and one in Philosophy (the Philosophy of Science). There are a number of eager young scholars looking for work in these fields, and so we expect to hire outstanding instructors for these positions sometime during the early part of the summer.

Our department is experimenting with ways to alert students to our majors. As you may remember, most high schools do not teach either philosophy or the academic study of religion, and so when students first come to UNI, most are unfamiliar with what we do. In recent years, we have created a webpage which gives brief introductions to our disciplines. We also have a short video, which you can view on our website. And just this semester, we commissioned a large banner which can be displayed as high school students visit UNI. The banner is about seven feet tall and three feet wide. One half shows a picture of Rodin's "Thinker," and the other half a picture of Muslim Dervishes performing a whirling dance at UNI several years ago. This dance, called Sufi Whirling, is part of a religious ceremony called Sema in which the participants seek a state of mystical ecstasy. And, as many of you know, Rodin sculpted "The Thinker" to sit in quiet philosophical contemplation over the doors in his huge masterpiece, "The Gates of Hell," while the mass of suffering sinners are falling into the nether world. Our hope is that these images will provoke enough interest by prospective students that they inquire about what we do in our department. Any other suggestions

you might have for communicating the unique and significant opportunities that are available in our department will be welcomed.

We received a wonderful response to the first issue from a number of alums, and I would like to thank you for that response. It was so good to hear how you are doing and what you are up to. I know your student colleagues from your UNI days will want to share in



Jerry Soneson
Head of the Department

your news, and so we have included your responses in our Alumni Update page. Also, please know that because faculty, current and emeritus, have spent a number of years with you studying texts, discussing important questions, and discovering new insights about ourselves and our world, all of you have come to mean a great deal to us, and so we are all grateful for your responses. One of the nice things about these new instruments called "computers" is that it now is relatively easy to exchange information and pictures through email and newsletters. And so I encourage more of you, as alums, to let us know what is happening in your lives. We always welcome and encourage you to send along a current picture of yourself, which we will be happy to share in the next newsletter. Finally, when you are in town, we also invite you to visit us in the department in Baker Hall.

Sincerely,

Jerry Soneson
Head of the Department

Francis Degrin

service work

Since arriving at UNI nearly eight years ago, part of Professor Degrin's mission has been to serve the local health care community. In addition to numerous speaking engagements and service on two state committees, Dr. Degrin has focused on serving local hospitals, providing ongoing training for nurses, physicians, social workers, chaplains, and other providers both through individual classes and by organizing the Northeast Iowa Medical Ethics Conference. Dr. Degrin also teaches for the Family Practice Residency Program, which trains family practice physicians, some of whom end up practicing locally. But, he is most deeply involved with the three local hospitals of the Wheaton Franciscan System, for whom he serves as their Ethics Consultant, a member of the Ethics Committee and as a night relief chaplain. In this role, Dr. Degrin assists in reviewing and setting ethical policies for the hospital, ongoing training and mentoring about the ethics and communication around issues like Do Not Resuscitate Orders and Triage Criteria and consults with families and care givers.

Professor Degrin's service work not only benefits the community in terms of better care and treatment for patients, his work often directly translates to the UNI classroom. Many of the topics and powerpoints he uses for UNI began as educational materials for health care providers. UNI students who have gone on to Medical School, for example, have commented that his Bio-Medical Ethics class is often more applicable to their training than any similar class offered once they got to medical school. Additionally, ethics questions are now a fairly standard part of most medical school interviews. The cases and situations discussed in class are nearly all either those real world cases which shaped the law and ethical discourse of our country, or they are cases which he has worked himself. (Some facts are changed to protect confidentiality.) As a result, his service work and class work complement and provide resources for each other.

The other major class taught by Dr. Degrin, Perspectives on Death and Dying, is similarly informed

by his service work. Part of the course work overlaps with issue of medical ethics—for example, the very large topic of death and bereavement. Yet this class focuses more on meaning of life sorts of questions, such as what facing one's death teaches one about life. Dr. Degrin's work, with both patients and care givers, similarly informs this class. Students with majors like gerontology and social work find this course particularly helpful, and it is currently tied for the widest cross section of majors for any capstone class.

Professor Degrin's focus on service began very early in life; he even went to seminary at Notre Dame with the thought of seeking the priesthood. He left seminary, in large part, because he didn't want to be tied to a particular theology, and while he finished a degree in ministry, he felt that the freedom of a doctorate in philosophy suited his interests more than one in theology. Clinical ethics was a natural fit: the philosophical side of the discipline suited his academic passions, while the clinical side, with its direct service to caring for people, suited the service side of his passion and kept his philosophical endeavors grounded in the concrete care of others. In preparation for the clinical side of his work, Dr. Degrin completed two fellowships (first as a Junior and then as a Senior Fellow, both full time for a year) in Clinical Ethics at St. Thomas Hospital in Nashville, Tenn.

In recognition of his service to the community, Dr. Degrin was recently selected as a recipient of the Veridian Community Engagement Award for 2011. Each year since 2006, up to five Community Engagement Awards are given among UNI's five undergraduate colleges to "recognize the outstanding contributions of UNI faculty to the greater community and to inspire additional meaningful partnership among faculty, students and community organizations." Each award recipient receives, along with the award, a \$1,000 check payable to the approved nonprofit organization of the faculty member's choice. Degrin was recognized at the UNI Community Engagement Luncheon this spring.

Betty DeBerg

american academy of religion task force

Professor DeBerg has always been devoted to trying to increase knowledge of the world's religions, which led her to a two-term position with the American Academy of Religion Task Force on Religion in the Schools. During her six years on the task force, DeBerg helped to write the guidelines for teachers on how to teach religion in classes in a constitutional and academic way and help them feel more comfortable doing so. This document was to parallel social studies and language arts guidelines that had been published for teachers in those fields. DeBerg and the American Academy of Religion Task Force on K-12 Education felt that writing the report was important in combating widespread illiteracy in religion and preparing educated citizens.

DeBerg said that even though some people feel that teaching religion in public schools is favoring religion, there is a way to teach the subject in a neutral objective way that does not favor any particular religion. Instead, knowledge is taught, and students are not encouraged toward any particular viewpoints.

When asked about the importance of religion to

culture, DeBerg agrees with some scholars who say that religion cannot be absent from culture. She also said that "religion is at the center of culture, and culture is not understood without seeing the religion and the religions that are shaped by it." DeBerg does not know a culture without a religion, even though there are individuals without religion. Additionally, she says, "Religion is glue. It is the conscious and unconscious world view that holds culture together, giving identity and purpose."

In regards to starting a teaching program in religion, Professor DeBerg stands by the recommendation of the task force to train more people to teach about religion in social studies and to give more attention to biblical literature in language arts. Furthermore, DeBerg feels that by adding more religion courses to teacher education programs, teachers would gain more knowledge of and comfort in teaching content in religion in their classes.

For more information about the American Academy of Religion Task Force on K-12 education or to read the report, visit www.aarweb.org.

Professors Named to Advisory Board of TURKISH AMERICAN SOCIETY OF IOWA



Betty DeBerg and Kenneth Atkinson have recently been named to the Advisory Board of the Turkish American Society of Iowa,

founded to "eliminate or reduce false stereotypes, prejudices and unjustified fears through direct human

communication. Toward these goals, the society organizes academic and grass roots activities, such as conferences, picnics, intercultural family dinners and cultural exchange trips." See www.tasiowa.org for more information. In addition, DeBerg has been taking Turkish cooking classes at the Turkish American Society, and believes she's making real progress.



BILL

Professor Clohesy came to UNI 23 years ago with the intent to develop a specialization in ethics within the Department of Philosophy & World Religions. With the creation of this ethics minor, the department hoped that they would become more of a presence on UNI’s campus. Clohesy’s first ethics class was Ethics in Business, which was taught in 1989 and has been taught every year since, now taught by Donna Wood. The addition of other ethics classes followed, including his Ethics in Public Policy, taught every year since its start in 1990. Professor Clohesy also teaches Theoretical Ethics, Political Theory, and History of Philosophy.

Professor Clohesy’s interest in philosophy and ethics goes back to when he was an

undergraduate at Loyola University. At that time he was the editor-in-chief of the school newspaper, which is where he says he learned to write. As an undergraduate, Clohesy became interested in two contemporary schools of thought: American Pragmatism and Phenomenology. He knew when he searched for grad schools he wanted to work in both of those areas, so he attended Southern Illinois University at Carbondale for Pragmatism and the New School for Social Research in NYC for courses in continental thought taught by major figures in the field. At SIU Carbondale, he wrote his master’s thesis, “From Reason to Inquiry,” on Dewey and Hegel, and at the New School he wrote his dissertation on Kant, “Kant and the Cultivation of Freedom,” which he is still building upon 30 years later.

Prior to arriving at UNI, Professor Clohesy worked at Montclair State University in Upper Montclair, NJ; Loyola University of Chicago; Rochester Institute of Technology in Rochester, N.Y.; and as a Fulbright Fellow in Argentina. Coming to UNI from Argentina took an adjustment for Professor Clohesy and required new ways of living and doing things. He felt that the most interesting thing about living in Iowa was the fact that the people were “honest, open, friendly in a quiet way and a bit diffident. Most Iowans have a genuine respect for learning, their own and their children’s. That is one of the state’s treasures.”

CLOHESY

PROFESSOR OF PHILOSOPHY

Professor Clohesy is currently working on several projects. One of his short-term projects is a companion essay to an essay he wrote years ago on the categorical imperative. This essay discusses the topic of “how many voices are raised in the categorical imperative and what are they urging us to do?” In addition, he is working on an essay on religion and secularism, which is a companion to an essay he published in 2009 on the separation of church and state, which “studies the proper role of the government in supporting civic projects undertaken by religious organizations.” Professor Clohesy also has a long term project, “a study of power among citizens acting on their own in ‘civil society,’ independent of government, that develops from a critical

review of the liberal tradition rooted in the thought of Hannah Arendt and Michel Foucault.”

Looking back over the years, Professor Clohesy has noticed some changes as a professor. One change he has found is that he does not feel as concerned about covering all the material he has set out in the syllabus. Also, he feels that he may have become a tougher grader and somewhat more demanding. Overall, he says he is the same teacher and tries to listen and adapt in his classes as needed. Clohesy hopes that alumni, along with current students, can continue to give advice for courses that are and were beneficial, in an effort to maintain the department’s strength.





Martie Reineke began teaching religion at UNI in 1984 but has had a growing interest in religion since childhood. For Professor Reineke, religion is the most compelling subject there is to study and a central feature of human experience. In addition, she recognizes that it gives life meaning, and by understanding religion, we can understand each other and avoid conflict.

Professor Reineke completed her graduate work at Vanderbilt University, which she feels was an excellent school for her. Looking back, she realizes that it was very rigorous in preparing for the ups and

MARTIE

downs of publishing. At Vanderbilt, she no longer received positive comments on her writing like she had as an undergraduate. Instead, she was getting only suggestions for improvement, which required her to develop a “thick skin” for criticism of her work. This experience gave her self-motivation in her research and writing.

As Professor Reineke was writing her dissertation in Kansas City, she had the opportunity to teach at three different community colleges in that area, each giving her a unique experience with students of diverse backgrounds who had a similar excitement for learning. From there, Reineke started teaching at UNI, where she now teaches Existentialism, Religion and Society and Why We Believe, a psychology of religion course. Throughout her experience at UNI, Professor Reineke finds that her favorite part of teaching is that she has the opportunity to learn right along with her students. She is continually changing books that students are reading each semester, which she says “puts her one day ahead of her students” and gives her the opportunity to experience the “excitement of learning around the same time as them.” To continue this experience, Professor Reineke is always looking for new ways to bring ideas into the classroom.

Throughout her time teaching, Professor Reineke has found that students have changed in that they are now more visual learners and are better at comprehending visual media than they are at comprehending written texts. She feels that an influence in this change has been the impact of

REINEKE

PROFESSOR OF RELIGION

computers and television. To aid in this new learning style, Professor Reineke has read a great deal about how students learn and how professors can teach accordingly. Through her research in this topic, she has learned not only to play to students' strengths by increasing visual media in class, but also to strengthen their weaker skills, specifically reading, as reading comprehension is still a vital skill. Overall, Professor Reineke enjoys helping students who have a strong work ethic and who care about their writing. She feels satisfaction in helping them develop solid writing skills and appreciates being able to contribute to the enhancement of those skills.

Not only does Professor Reineke stay busy with teaching, she continues "studying and researching Julia Kristeva, René Girard and Girard's mimetic theory,

which emphasizes the role of imitation in our lives, as an effect and a behavior and a motivation." This research incorporates Professor Reineke's interest in how religion relates to the worst in humans and why humans become violent. She is compiling her research in this area of study into her second book which is in the final stages of revision. It is titled "Intimate Domain: Desire, Trauma, & Mimetic Theory."

Looking ahead to the end of the semester, Professor Reineke is looking forward to making a trip back to Vanderbilt University where she has the opportunity to present a paper on Kristeva and Girard and the topics of phenomenology and existentialism. She has not been back for 15 years and is excited to also meet up with a former student, Alison Suen, who is now a graduate student at Vanderbilt.



DARWIN & INTELLIGENT DESIGN

A LECTURE BY ELLIOT SOBER

By John Anderson

Elliott Sober examined whether belief in God and evolution are irreconcilable during a lecture given to a standing-room-only crowd in the Center for Multicultural Education on Friday, October 29.

The event was hosted by the Philosophy Students Club in partnership with the Tri-Beta Biology Club and was funded by the Northern Iowa Student Government.

Sober hosted a brief discussion on philosophy of science with a handful of students before the lecture, and joined the Philosophy Club officers and a few other students for a post-lecture dinner at the Brown Bottle.

During his lecture, Sober, the Hans Reichenbach Professor and William F. Vilas Research Professor at the University of Wisconsin - Madison, argued that there are at least three main logically coherent positions to take on the relationship between God and evolution—atheistic evolution, which asserts that evolutionary theory is true and there is no God; creationism, which asserts that evolutionary theory is false and God exists; and theistic evolution, which is the position that evolutionary theory is true and God exists.

Theistic evolution itself, Sober explained, comes in two types: deism, which is the belief that God brings about the features of organisms through the evolutionary process; and belief in an interventionist God who is like the deist God but also sometimes intervenes in what happens.

Anticipating the objection that God and evolution are incompatible because the mutations that drive natural selection are unguided, Sober specified that when evolutionary biologists state that mutations are “unguided,” they mean that they do not occur because they would be useful to the organism, not that they are uncaused. This argument mirrors his distinction between methodological naturalism and metaphysical naturalism. According to Sober, evolutionary theory obeys the former and does not endorse the latter; evolution makes no metaphysical claims, he said, because such claims lie beyond the bounds of science.

During his presentation Sober outlined several different questions to examine when considering whether God exists: Are any of the arguments for God’s existence



compelling? Is the quantity of evil that exists evidence against the existence of God? Should belief/disbelief in God be based on evidence or on faith? Evolutionary theory, he argues, does not address any of these questions.



According to Sober, Darwin’s own unwillingness to believe in the Christian God stemmed from the problem of evil described above, not from his theory. He argued that this does not mean that Darwin’s theory conflicts with theism, or with Christianity, for that matter.

While evolutionary theory may seem to some to suggest that there is no God, Sober sided with Jacques Monod, leaving his audience with a quote from Monod’s *Chance and Necessity*: “... any confusion between the ideas suggested by science and science itself must be carefully avoided.”

Holiday Party



Department faculty hosted an end-of-semester holiday celebration for philosophy and study of religion majors, minors, faculty and friends of the department on December 10, 2010. Lunch and refreshments were served at the event as faculty, students and friends gathered to celebrate graduates and to discuss semester achievements, events, and future plans. Plans are being made for a spring, end-of-the-year gathering in April.

DISCUSSION & LECTURES BY

STEPHEN NATHANSON

The Philosophy Students Club organized and hosted a discussion and two lectures by Stephen Nathanson, professor of philosophy at Northeastern University in Boston, Mass., on March 28. His afternoon lecture was titled "Is President Obama a Socialist," where he addressed current debates on market capitalism and the role of government. Nathanson's evening lecture was "Can Terrorism Ever be Morally Justified?"



Look for UNI Department of Philosophy & World Religions on [facebook](#) to STAY UPDATED with department news and upcoming events.

JOEL ANDERSON



Year:
Senior, graduating in 2012

Majors:
Philosophy, Accounting
Minor: Ethics

Favorite Classes:
• Philosophy: The Art of Thinking
• Society, Politics and the Person
• The Human Person

Most Important Thing Learned:
The philosophy major is the ideal supplementary major if students have time. It betters students in every way possible, no matter the career.

Favorite Philosopher:
Hannah Arendt, since he enjoys reading her books and feels there is a good balance in communication to people with both a greater and lesser interest in philosophy. He also finds her prediction of what is happening currently in the Middle East to be interesting.

Joel Anderson is in his fourth year at UNI as a philosophy and accounting double major. His interest in the philosophy major grew from his experience in the class, Philosophy: Basic Questions (now Philosophy: The Art of Thinking) as well as his future interest in attending law school. On the other hand, his decision to become an accounting major was based on his desire to learn the skills of business.

One of Joel's favorite things about the philosophy program at UNI has been his interaction with professors. He finds that in comparison to friends at other schools, he has had the opportunity to grow closer to professors and stay in touch with them after a class is completed. He has appreciated the sense of community and family these interactions have given to the program as well as to UNI.

Not only does Joel stay busy with completing his double major, but he also has become involved with a number of organizations. Joel joined the Northern Iowa Student Government (NISG) after noticing the involvement of other members of his fraternity. Through his involvement on campus and in NISG, he was elected student body president last spring. Joel has found that his study of philosophy has benefited him in this role, specifically in various debates and arguments he has had. Philosophy has helped him to both articulate and break apart arguments easier than he feels others are able to. In addition, he often has to deal with various ethical issues where his study of philosophy and ethics have allowed him to use some forms of logic to answer questions that are at hand.

Besides his involvement in NISG as student body president, Joel is involved with the Philosophy Students Club, which he had a role in founding, Connecting Alumni to Students (CATS) and the Sigma Phi Epsilon fraternity.

JOHN ANDERSON

John Anderson came to UNI in 2008 with an interest in English that carried over from high school. With this growing interest, John quickly became involved in organizations that would help him develop skills in this area. During his freshman year, he began writing for the Northern Iowan newspaper after a friend introduced him to the opportunity. He continued writing for the newspaper each year and is now editor. John also developed a new interest in philosophy during his time at UNI after taking the classes Philosophy: The Art of Thinking with Professor Holland and Humanities with Professor Boedeker. As his interest in philosophy grew and as he was deciding to pursue a major in philosophy, John became involved with the Philosophy Students Club where he enjoyed the discussions and the opportunity to delve deeper into topics relating to philosophy. He continued his involvement in the Philosophy Students Club in the following years and is now president of the club. John has found that philosophy “provides critical thinking skills that are necessary for any leadership position and for dealing with changes quickly.” In addition, philosophy helps him recognize what is important and how to accomplish tasks accordingly.

During his time as a philosophy major, John has enjoyed learning to think in general. He also appreciates the opportunities when he can sit with friends and other philosophers and simply talk about philosophy and other related topics. He has realized that philosophy affects every view of thinking, and the critical thinking skills he has developed help him to look at the world and take his thinking farther. John has valued opportunities to get to know various professors and appreciates their care for student learning as well as their vast knowledge about each of their subjects.

Following one final year at UNI, John plans to attend seminary. Although he does not know which seminary, he likes the idea of being able to serve God while continuing to pursue his interest in philosophy.



Year:
Junior

Major:
Philosophy, English

Favorite Classes:
• **Philosophy: The Art of Thinking**
• **History of Ancient Philosophy**
• **Existentialism**

Most Important Thing Learned:
Be humble and recognize that you don't always have the right answer and that you may never actually know what it is. By talking to others and really listening to them you may realize that they understand things better.

Favorite Philosopher:
Immanuel Kant for his fascinating way of thinking and interesting approach to scepticism that has had a strong influence on philosophy ever since.

SELENA LOSEE



Year:
Senior

Major:
Biology, Study of Religion

Favorite Classes:
Existentialism
Religion & Ethics
Ecology & Evolution

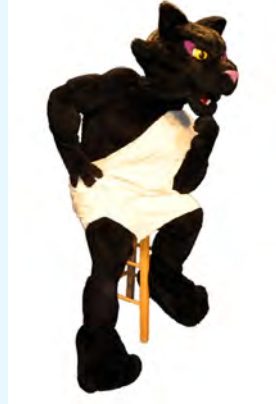
Most Important Things Learned:
By studying religion we can understand each other. Problems can be solved by studying other people's religions. The knowledge and understanding of other religions gives you tolerance.

Selena Losee came to UNI in the fall of 2007 as a biology major hoping to someday go into healthcare. She realized after taking Religions of the World that she wanted to also pursue a major in the study of religion. At first, Selena did not realize that there was commonality between these majors, but she found that both areas of study helped people explain the world around them and bring order to chaos. In addition, just as biology helps to provide healthy ways to live life, one's religion also teaches better ways to live life.

Selena hopes to continue on to medical school eventually, but after graduating in May, she plans to take a year off. During this time she plans to travel and study abroad, specifically in Taiwan where she will do biology research. She also plans to prepare for the MCAT and apply for medical school. As she continues with medical school and eventually into the healthcare profession, Selena recognizes that she will be able to use what she learned in religion classes to help her to understand not only other people and co-workers whom she comes in contact with daily, but also patients who are making medical decisions based on their religious views. This understanding is also beneficial in the medical field, since medicine is becoming more global, and since physicians will have increasing opportunity to work with a diverse population.

Selena says her favorite thing about the study of religion at UNI was that it helped her learn new ways of thinking about things. She was able to step back from her ideas and beliefs and develop new ideas and realize why she believes what she does. She learned that it is important to realize that everything is connected, and what was taught in one class could be related to another class. Another thing Selena learned during her time at UNI was that it is important to get involved. "You never know when you meet someone you will need down the road."

Selena would encourage students to take classes in the study of religion, as it causes you to think differently than before and helps you to understand why you believe what you do. She also says it is important to remember that these classes are not telling students what to believe, but instead giving them frameworks for understanding how people work and believe, which can be applied to every aspect of life.



THE PHILOSOPHY STUDENTS CLUB,

which began in 2008, has seen continual growth in membership each semester and continues to directly impact the philosophy major. According to club Vice President, Emily O’Loughlin, the club “encourages our majors to engage in philosophy by hosting insightful discussions and speakers and providing a community for philosophy majors in the process.” She also feels that the club “gives non-philosophy majors a place to learn more about philosophy and, in some cases, may have convinced them to declare a philosophy major.” The club’s faculty advisor, Margaret Holland, has also recognized that the Philosophy Students Club has “fostered a deeper involvement in our program among majors and interested students.”


Every week, the Philosophy Students Club meets for discussions on topics brought up in classes or topics of interests relating to philosophy. They also watch and discuss movies and TV shows, including “Inception” and episodes of “Battlestar Galactica.” In future meetings, they plan to view and discuss “Blade Runner” and “The Lives of Others.”

Besides their weekly meetings and discussions, the Philosophy Students Club tries to bring in a

speaker each semester. This past fall, the club invited Eliot Sober to lecture on Darwin and Intelligent Design. This spring, Professor Stephen Nathanson of Northeastern University in Boston was invited to participate in an informal discussion as well as give two lectures. In addition, the Philosophy Students Club helps with advising for the Department of Philosophy and World Religions through events on campus, collaborating with other groups, attending recruitment events such as UNI Up-Close and the summer orientation fairs, and generally making other students aware that the philosophy program exists and is a very open major.

Club President John Anderson and Emily O’Loughlin agree that Margaret Holland has been extremely helpful in encouraging and planning events that the Philosophy Students Club sponsors. John says that Margaret Holland has been able to provide suggestions to put the leaders in the right direction as well as help them focus. According to the club’s constitution, the advisor can only serve for three years, so Margaret Holland is coming to the end of her term and club officers will soon be looking for a new advisor for upcoming years.

For more information or to join the Philosophy Students Club, you can:

- check out their webpage (www.uni.edu/philrel/PhilosophyStudentsClub.shtml)
- find their  group
- contact President John Anderson (anderjao@uni.edu)
- contact Vice President Emily O’Loughlin (emolou@uni.edu)
- contact their faculty advisor Prof. Margaret Holland (margaret.holland@uni.edu)

ALUMNI UPDATES

RICK GRISEL | After graduating from UNI in 1996, Rick went on to study theology and philosophy of religion at Yale Divinity School. He spent the next 12 years in various roles as an admissions officer and high school counselor, meeting his wife Colleen along the way. They currently live in Portland, Ore., where Rick is studying environmental law at Lewis and Clark Law School.

DAVID JOHNSON | Since graduating in 1981 with a degree in philosophy and a degree in physics-teaching in 1984, David has been teaching science at Hardwood Union High School in S. Duxbury, Vermont for 26 years. David spends his free time playing tournament chess and hiking the mountains in New England. He still enjoys reading and studying philosophy, mainly Kirkegaard. He currently lives in Hartwick, Vt. and plans on getting married in the summer of 2011.

BROOK MALLOY | Since graduating in December 2009, Brook has been working as a research assistant at the Carver Labs, Institute for Vision Research at the University of Iowa. Brook is currently looking to pursue a Masters of Divinity at Denver Theological Seminary.

PEG O'ROURKE | Peg graduated with a degree in religion in December 1988. Peg currently owns and operates a private practice as a licensed marriage and family therapist. She also has taught as an adjunct in psychology at Kirkwood Community College for 19 years. Her husband is a retired pastor, and she is looking forward to retirement in about two years.

GREGORY ZARS | Greg graduated in 2005 with degrees in philosophy and sociology and has completed his master's in public policy. He currently lives in Cedar Falls and works as an energy services specialist at Waverly Light and Power, helping customers use less energy through conservation and energy efficiency. Greg and his wife Beth have a two-year old daughter and are expecting twins this summer.

EMERITI UPDATE

TOM THOMPSON,
EMERITUS PROFESSOR OF PHILOSOPHY

I've now been retired for 17 years, and I'm still trying to get the hang of it. Since I retired at age 70, it's evident that I've not only experienced retirement, but also the realities of age. For that there's no rehearsal; it's play it by ear day by day. It's not all that easy to continue a full life once deprived of the identity conferred by occupational status.

My major activities are two-fold: I'm playing baritone saxophone and serving as business manager of the California Street Sax Quartet. That effort involves scheduling practice, scouting for quartet arrangements and searching for playing opportunities. It's enjoyable and it recaps some of the experience I had as an active musician prior to a life in academia. The other activity is writing a monthly column for the Waterloo Sunday Courier.

It's not all that easy for a former school-teacher to say something sensible, or even interesting, in 650 words. But I've persevered. And, I think researching and writing the column has helped keep me mentally sound.

I should mention also that I attend a regular Thursday lunch with a number of other retired colleagues. It's a fun time and, together, we discuss (though rarely solve) some of the thorniest political and academic problems.

For the rest of retirement, I only mention that I'm grateful to the Teachers Insurance and Annuity Association and Social Security for making retirement completely free of financial worries. Professors do not make huge salaries, but we do profit from the institutional arrangements for our eventual departure from working life.

EMERTI UPDATE

EDWARD W. AMEND,
EMERITUS PROFESSOR OF RELIGION

I retired in 1997 and, since then, have worked as a consultant at UNI, traveled overseas and, in 2007, moved from our acreage in Bremer County to two blocks from the university in Cedar Falls. I have served as evaluator for nine grant-supported teaching institutes at UNI. Last year I moderated a day-long planning session for the university faculty senate. In June, I shall be evaluator for another project having to do with environmental education.

Our daughter lives in Chicago and our sons live on the East and West Coasts. Lately, Christmases have been spent in California where our older two granddaughters also live. Since our son and his wife in Arlington, Va., are U. S. Foreign Service officers, my wife, Dalila, and I have visited them and their three daughters at various posts in India, Pakistan, Turkey, and Russia. We also participated in church-related trips to Nicaragua and the Andean countries of South America. In April, we shall be in Puerto Rico, where I served as an intern-pastor and met my wife, Dalila.

After twenty-five years remotely connected by gravel roads to grocery stores and social activities, Dalila was ready for less winter isolation and more community involvement. So our recently deceased dog, Duke, and I followed her in to University Meadows off Hudson Road conveniently located between the Gallagher-Bluedorn Performing Arts Center and our church. In 2009, Dalila had a couple of what she calls "episodes" that rushed us to the hospital. So our move has been



Ed Amend and part of his family in Russia

an especially fortunate one, and I join her at the Cedar Falls Rec Center most weekday mornings after my early bird tennis games at the Black Hawk Club.

We have come to cherish the many associations that especially Dalila has developed in Waterloo-Cedar Falls: with our Latino friends and at a "Spanish Table" she mentors for a group wishing to practice their language skills. I am a member of the Arcturus Club and give an annual talk there. When we first came to Cedar Falls in 1967, we lived for fifteen years east of Main Street. Returning now we have come to appreciate the many attractions of Cedar Falls that have developed during the intervening years: the Rec Center, parks, bike trails, restaurants and especially the recitals and concerts at the Gallagher-Bluedorn Performing Arts Center. We regard Cedar Falls as truly a "Class Act"!

THANKS to all who sent in updates. If you wish to contribute to the next issue, please refer to the back cover of the newsletter. We look forward to hearing from you.

IMPACT OF SCHOLARSHIPS



If you would like to start your own scholarship or lecture series, contact Debra Umbdenstock at debra.umbdenstock@uni.edu or (319) 273-7727.

The scholarships I have received from the Department of Philosophy and World Religions have been integral to my education at the University of Northern Iowa. With my parents busy paying off my older brother's student loans and helping my sister cover the costs of a University of Iowa education, the burden of paying for my education falls completely on my shoulders. Fortunately, I have received scholarships from the University Honors Program, the College of Humanities and Fine Arts, the English department and the Department of Philosophy & World Religions to ease that burden.

Without these graciously given scholarships, I wouldn't be able to attend college. If I didn't receive any awards from this department, I would need to work even more to cover the costs of my education, which would leave me with very little time to further my studies and wrestle with difficult philosophical issues.

-John Anderson, philosophy major

Scholarships I have received through the Department of Philosophy and World Religions have greatly benefited my time here at UNI. Although I do work a part-time job, without the gifts I have received through scholarships I would have to spend much more time at work and would find it difficult to devote enough time to my studies. Instead of working 30+ hours per week, I am able to balance two majors and two minors with many extracurricular activities, which I have found provide me with some of the best experiences at UNI. Furthermore, since I plan to attend medical school, I will have even more financial burdens to bear in the future. The scholarships I've received through this department as an undergrad enabled me to use my time at UNI in the most beneficial ways, while also allowing me to keep further education an option in my future.

-Selena Losee, study of religion major

The scholarships I receive on campus benefit me in relieving some concerns about finances during the school year. The gift of a scholarship I received through the Department of Philosophy and World Religions has allowed me to focus on my classwork more than I could if I were required to work for the equivalent amount of money. Scholarships are what have allowed me to attend UNI, and allow me to continue doing so.

-Emily O'Loughlin, philosophy major

SUPPORT FOR STUDENTS OR DEPARTMENT

Would you like to support a philosophy or study of religion student and/or the Department of Philosophy and World Religions? If so, please fill out the form below and return it to

UNI FOUNDATION FINANCIAL SERVICES
1223 W. 22nd Street
Cedar Falls, IA 50614-0239

Name _____

Address _____

City _____ State _____ Zip _____

E-mail: _____ Phone _____ Is this a cell phone _____

Please check if different than addressed.

I/we would like to support the following fund(s)

\$ _____ Philosophy & World Religions Scholarship Fund (21-222318)

\$ _____ Robert M. Schwyhart Memorial Endowed Scholarship (30-211825)

\$ _____ Mabel Haywood Memorial Quasi-Endowed Scholarship (20-210165)

\$ _____ Other _____ (100418)

ONLINE-----Go to the online pledge form at www.uni-foundation.org and click on "Make an online gift." You will need to enter the specific name(s) of the Philosophy and World Religions projects in the "Other" box near the bottom of the web form.

CHECK----- Check enclosed, payable to the UNI Foundation

CREDIT CARD--- Credit Card: Please charge my card \$ _____ beginning (mo/yr) ____/____

Matching Gifts: My (or my spouse's) company, _____ (name) will match my gift. Please contact your HR office for details and the matching gift form to be submitted with your payment.

Signature (required) _____

Credit card information will NOT be kept on file.

Charge my: VISA MasterCard Discover American Express (circle one)

Card # _____ Exp. Date _____

IMPACT

MATTHEW GROE

Matthew Groe is a UNI alumnus from the Department of Philosophy and World Religions. While at UNI, Matthew received a B.A. in philosophy, a minor in English and a second minor in political science. He also participated heavily in the Varsity Men's Glee Club and traveled with them to Austria. Matthew says that what he knows about how to work as a team comes from his experience in glee club. After graduating from UNI in 1995, he went back and received a B.A. in German in 1998. Matthew decided to go to graduate school since he wanted to study European philosophy but found few schools that specialize in continental European philosophy. He decided on Villanova for a combined masters and Ph.D. in philosophy, but he also took classes at Pennsylvania. Matthew completed his masters degree in 2000 and Ph.D. in 2006. He explains that his favorite aspect of graduate school was the level of difficulty and the study of interesting things. "I liked the challenge. I liked that it forced me to step up my game and to grow as a person. I also got to study in-depth the things that I was truly interested in, making it terrifying and exhilarating at the same time."

After graduating in May of 2006, Matthew took a job teaching in Shippensburg University for one year. He then got a position in Jacksonville, Fla. as an assistant professor of philosophy. Although the department at Jacksonville is very small in comparison to UNI, he enjoys being able to have a big influence within the department, especially concerning the development of classes. He admits that he really enjoys teaching and likes that he gets to have fun while having students learn.

"Take risks as a student and try new things. If you keep trying you might learn something. Grades are important, but sometimes in order to learn you just have to take a chance. Even if a grade suffers a little, unless you experiment you won't find what you are looking for."



Hometown:
Quad Cities

Favorite Philosopher:
Rather than a specific philosopher or theologian, he enjoyed the schools of thought in Pragmatism and Existentialism.

Favorite Professors or Classes While at UNI:

- **(William) Bill Clohesy's classes**
- **General Humanities (World Civilizations) as it "really opened my eyes to philosophy and introduced me to exceptional professors."**

Advice for Majors:

Don't study topics; don't take classes; take professors. If they wow you, you will learn something from them. Especially if they are passionate about what they do, you will remember them and learn a lot.

HEATHER GODLEY



Hometown:
Ames, Iowa

Favorite Professors or Classes while at UNI:

- Jerry Soneson's classes
- Ethics classes

Advice for Majors:

Take as many courses as you can. Look at minors that are available and keep your eyes open for options with minors. Classes that you take for fun could be practical in life as well as getting a job.

Heather (Martin) Godley came to UNI with the intent to study history, but in her second year, she began taking classes in the study of religion and continued taking them until she had added a B.A. in the study of religion to her history degree that she received upon graduating in 1995.

Following graduation, Heather attended Oxford University for a year to earn a Master of Studies in Modern Political Theology. There, she worked with Andrew Linzey and focused her study and eventually her thesis on Christianity and animal rights. Heather continued on to graduate school at the University of Iowa to study history, where she focused on medieval Europe, but also studied religion in the Middle Ages and early modern Europe. Heather wrote her masters' thesis at the University of Iowa on a medieval abbey in England. Throughout graduate school, Heather felt that her study of religion at UNI helped her to think about and evaluate what she learned and gave her exposure to different perspectives, which she said are valuable regardless of the program you study.

Heather entered graduate school at the University of Iowa hoping to become a professor, but she realized how much she loved teaching after having the opportunity to teach undergraduates and work in the History Writing Center. Even though she felt that it was somewhat challenging to change career paths and take different classes, Heather began working to get a certification to teach social studies. After passing her comprehensive examinations, she started teaching history, working as a college counselor, and eventually taking over as the Academic Coordinator at Scattergood Friends School in West Branch. By 2001, Heather moved to Racine, Wis., to teach at Case High School, where she teaches World History, Introduction to International Baccalaureate World History and Theory of Knowledge. Heather feels that her study of world religions continues to be helpful in her teaching of history, since she feels it is critical to teach world religions with history.



DEPARTMENT OF
PHILOSOPHY & WORLD RELIGIONS
CEDAR FALLS, IOWA 50614-0501

ALUMNI RESPONSE FORM

In order to keep us and your UNI colleagues informed of your activities, please complete the form below and return to "Department of Philosophy & World Religions," UNI, Cedar Falls, IA 50614-0501, or send an e-mail to helen.harrington@uni.edu. We are particularly interested in the current career paths of our alumni.

Last name First name Middle/Maiden name

UNI degree(s)-years

Address

City State Zip-code

Is this a new address? Yes No

E-mail address

Spouse's name Is spouse a UNI alum? Yes No

Your position and employer

New items of interest: _____

This update can be printed in the next newsletter!

Please do not print this update.

DEPARTMENT OF PHILOSOPHY &
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Leah DeVries, executive editor
Jerry Soneson, director

The Department of Philosophy &
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College of Humanities and Fine Arts,
Joel Haack, Dean

The University of Northern Iowa is
an equal opportunity educator and
employer with a comprehensive plan
for affirmative action.