

THE STETSON GADFLY



DEPARTMENT OF PHILOSOPHY NEWSLETTER

Ronald Hall (ronhall@stetson.edu) Susan Peppers-Bates (speppers@stetson.edu) Joshua Rust (jrust@stetson.edu) Melinda Hall (mchall@stetson.edu)
Departmental Secretary, Divina Bungard (dbungard@stetson.edu)

CROWNING ACHIEVEMENTS

Dear 2017 graduates: You have made history! You were a part of the largest class ever to receive a degree in philosophy from Stetson University. Congratulations. The philosophy faculty is extremely proud to have reached this historical milestone. But our pride goes way beyond this quantitative measure. The heart of our pride is in the quality of this class. We hope to have established lasting friendships with you and to have instilled a love of philosophy that will never fade. It was especially gratifying to work closely with each of you on your senior projects. In addition to the high quality of these crowning achievements, the faculty was duly impressed with the wide array of topics you pursued and this kept your faculty advisors on their toes. We learned much from you.

We look forward to hearing from each of you as you make your way in the world beyond college. And as we have already heard from you, your life-plans are varied and range from taking a year off, to continuing your education in graduate and professional schools. What we are sure of is that your work in philosophy here at Stetson will serve you well in whatever path you take in life.



Graham Ball: "Conceptualizing Disability: An Endorsement of the Ecological Perspective"

Advisor: Melinda Hall

Joseph Beery: "The Ethical Implications of Wittgenstein's Investigations, as Influenced by Leo Tolstoy" Advisor: Ronald Hall

Lissette Conty: "Love is a Choice"

Advisor: Ronald Hall

Eric Cordoba: "Ideology, Capitalism, and the Autonomous Society"

Advisor: Joshua Rust

Sid Corbin- Name on Record: (Sid Coutu) "Millennials and Their Memes"

Advisor: Melinda Hall

Jason Cruz: "Narrating the Self in the Face of Trauma"

Advisor: Joshua Rust

Chance Everett: "The Relevance of Fully Authentic Agency in Brownlee's Human Right Against Social Deprivation"

Advisor: Susan Peppers-Bates

Brittney Ferko: "The Moral Dilemmas of Euthanasia"

Advisor: Melinda Hall

Olivia Haskin: "Morality: An Emotivist Interpretation"

Advisor: Ronald Hall

Amanda Hernandez: "YouTube Celebrity as Icon"

Advisor: Joshua Rust

Bek Luke – Name on Record: (Rebecca Luke) "The Current Understanding of Sex is Not Biological: Debunking the Myths of the Sex Dichotomy"

Advisor: Joshua Rust

Galen McTaggart: "Propaganda and Moralism in Art: An Ordinary Language Perspective"

Advisor: Ronald Hall

Joshua Resnick: "The Logic of Forgiveness"

Advisor: Ronald Hall

Cole Simpson: "The Culture Industry: An Illusion of Authenticity"

Advisor: Melinda Hall

Elsa Marie Solomon: "What's in an Education"

Advisor: Susan Peppers-Bates

Tyler Swanson: "Manufacturing Masculinity: Privilege, Paradoxes, and Power"

Advisor: Susan Peppers-Bates

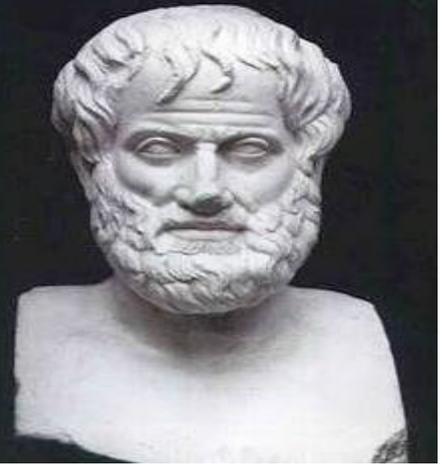
Maja Salibasic: "Moral Disappointment"

Advisor: Ronald Hall

"I am that gadfly which God has attached to the state, and all day long and in all places am always fastening upon you, arousing and persuading and reproaching you." -Socrates

Philosophy Behind Change

In the quest for academic diversity and inclusion, *ground zero* has assumed a lead role and is taking it personally.



We are extremely proud that the Philosophy Department was featured in Stetson Magazine's latest issue on Diversity and Inclusion. The article written by Michael Candelaria nicely highlights the department's on-going efforts and struggles in this area. Even in the abstract world of philosophy, a universe rooted in the uncertainty of observation, speculations, beliefs and concepts, there is no wiggle room for debate on the topic of diversity and inclusion. When it comes to philosophy, women and people of color largely are underrepresented.

While each department at Stetson regularly assesses its curricula for a variety of factors, the Department of Philosophy has put the bullseye on diversity and inclusion. Work began last spring, with a disclaimer: "We aren't doing this because anybody has called us to. We're doing this of our own volition because of its value within our department," says Melinda Hall.

There remains so much more to do. It is so hard to get this right. But we need to try. If we want the best arguments, we need to hear all the voices."

A link to the whole issue can be found here: <https://issuu.com/stetsonu/docs/stetson-magazine-33-1>

HALL AWARD

The Ronald L. and Margaret Smith Hall Award is given to the most outstanding graduating senior majoring in Philosophy. It carries a \$1,000 cash component. In addition the name of the award winner is engraved on a plaque that hangs on the wall outside the Department Office in Elizabeth Hall. This year the faculty was unanimous in deciding to give this award to Joe Beery. In addition knowing about Joe's stellar performance as a student, we also got to know him as an integral part of the life of the philosophy Department. In his senior year, he was our Departmental Student Assistant. His daily presence was far more than we could have expected. Not only did he do his duties as an office assistant to Divina Bungard our administrative assistant, he was always prompt, dependable and thorough in doing the biddings of the faculty. But much more than this, he was engaged in the intellectual conversations that are constantly going on in the Department. He did much more than listen; he routinely made insightful contributions. In addition to all of this, he was the President of our Philosophy Club and did a marvelous job in arranging our meeting and finding guests speakers. We will miss you Joe, but we know that you are destined for great things. Congratulations!





Philosophy Club and Visitors

The past year has been a thoroughly productive one for the storied Stetson Philosophy Club, by way of our dedicated faculty, the generous funding provided by SAFAC and our department, teamed with the stellar academics who made their way to Stetson to share their academic acumen with the undergraduate population.

In the month of February, the internationally known Dr. Neil Sinhababu commenced philosophy club's formal meetings with a talk entitled "Credence in Psychological Explanation." Dr. Sinhababu's talk was titillating to undergraduates and faculty alike, weaving together mathematical probability and belief formation; the subsequent conversation proved vigorous and enlightening. This particular meeting set the stage excellently for the semester to come and was a serious demonstration of the core principles of Philosophy Club.

In March, the Philosophy Club welcomed Dr. Mason Cash from the neighboring University of Central Florida to speak on appropriate ascriptions of responsibility. Dr. Cash's high energy presentation and engaging style drew numerous students who normally remain silent into Socratic dialogue. Students remained in the lecture hall discussing the material that had been presented well after the presentation was over, and into the evening.

In April, the Club received a special treat as Dr. John Biro from the University of Florida spoke generally on Ludwig Wittgenstein. While a visit from Dr. Biro is noteworthy in its own right, this occasion was particularly special as his talk related to the

material being covered in the Philosophy Department's faculty seminar. Dr. Biro engaged deftly with the students who had spent a semester with the works of Wittgenstein, opening new ways of understanding language and the way it is ordinarily employed.

A fantastic year was cap-stoned in May with a poster session, featuring the work done by the Research in Philosophy class, where students briefly presented on the mini-theses they had written during the semester to prepare for senior research. The work done by these individuals was undoubtedly praiseworthy, and the Philosophy Department looks eagerly towards the completion of future Senior Projects and the excellent contribution they will provide this field in years to come.

Finally, like the United States, Philosophy Club has inaugurated a new President. We welcome with warm arms Ruel Mannett as he takes the reigns and works to lead the Club well in the coming year. Ruel is a Philosophy major with a penchant for equestrian sports, languages, and consistently sterling insight; he is ideally equipped for his station.

Our deepest gratitude goes out to the individuals and organizations that make Philosophy Club possible, to Stetson University for continuing to foster the environment in which we work, and the young philosophers who contribute their time and talents to our discipline. Theologian Charles Spurgeon wrote that, "A lie can travel half way around the world while the truth is putting on its shoes." My parting charge for the Club's future is that we might bolster truth and impede lies, working to be pragmatic, useful *philosophias*: lovers of wisdom.

Written by Joseph Beery, Philosophy Club Co-President 2016 - 2017

Senior Honors

At this year's annual Senior Honors Banquet, it was with pleasure that the Philosophy Faculty honored two of our very best graduating seniors, Joe Beery and Jason Cruz.

At the presentation of the honor to Joe, Dr. Ronald Hall noted that it was a great experience to work with Joe on his Senior Project on Wittgenstein and Tolstoy. This was certainly a fitting topic given that Joe was a double major in Philosophy and Russian Studies. Hall said that Joe would often bound into his office spouting some Russian sentences that left him impressed with his progress in mastering the language. As Dr. Hall mentioned at the ceremony, working with Joe was not so much a teacher-student affair but rather a conversation between colleagues. It was clear that Hall thought that he was leaning along with Joe. And this is the way it should be. When presenting the award to Jason, Hall recounted for the audience the general thesis of Jason's splendid essay on narrating the self in the face of trauma. Inspired by the poignancy of the story of Odysseus' weeping upon hearing the bard narrate his own life. Jason undertook an analysis of Kurt Vonnegut's book *Slaughter House Five* and claimed for it that it illustrated how the unspeakable trauma of the bombing of Dresden could be faced only if placed within a narrative structure. Hall told Jason that he had recently been on a plane and found himself sitting next to a young lady who obviously was distraught. She wanted to talk. Hall listened. She had over the past year lost her husband, her father and two children. How could she go on? She told him that she was headed to a retreat that was designed to help victims of such unspeakable trauma. Hall told her about Jason's thesis. They talked for the rest of the trip. When they landed, she stood up and said, "An angel must have led me to this seat. Thank you." Hall was happy to tell Jason that his work was having an impact far beyond what he could have imagined.

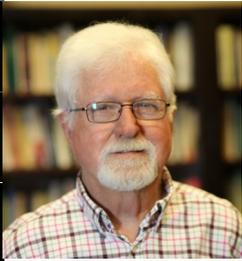


Ronald Hall, Joe Beery,
Melinda Hall, Jason Cruz

The Philosophy department just started a new fund to help our senior philosophy majors present their research at conferences. If you are an alum who is interested in contributing to this fund, please make your donation thru this link: www.stetson.edu/portal/development/ and designate the Philosophy Department in the "other" tab. 100% of all contributions will be go back to the students. If you have any questions , please contact Dr. Joshua Rust. jrust@stetson.edu Thank you!

CONTACT US AT ...

Stetson University
Department of Philosophy
421 N. Woodland Blvd., Unit
8250
DeLand, FL 32723
(Phone) 386-822-7580
(Fax) 386-822-7582
stetson.edu/philosophy

Faculty News

Dr. Ronald Hall continues to serve as Editor-in-Chief of the *International Journal for Philosophy of Religion*. A new book that he and a colleague Dale Cannon have edited has just been published Lexington Press. The book is entitled: *Recovering the Personal: The Philosophical Anthropology of William H. Poteat*.



Dr. Susan Peppers-Bates: I continue to chip away at the revisions of both of my articles that have been haunting me for a few years now—one is for the Oxford Companion on Malebranche, and these collections ask for multiple revisions. The second, my article on Black Women and America's Genocidal Prison Nation, is now on its THIRD acceptance: the online book on African American Philosophy fell through, the anthology on global slavery was rejected by Cambridge Press and is awful. So now the American Philosophical Association Newsletter on Feminism has accepted it, pending minor revisions. Please cross your fingers. I participated twice in the Community Education Project at Tomoka prison last year, lecturing on philosophical aspects of Harry Potter, and had a ball. Finally, Anne-Marie (12) and Sophia (7) are now fervent horse riders and move to Casa Montessori in the fall for their education.



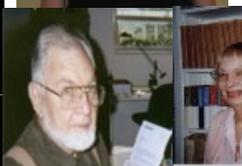
Dr. Joshua Rust: As chair, I'm especially proud of the accomplishments of the philosophy department this year. We graduated the most number of philosophy majors in my memory. Many of the senior projects were excellent. We were recognized in Stetson Today as a campus leader in our efforts to teach more diverse philosophy content to a greater diversity of students. And the department just started a new fund to help our senior philosophy majors present their research at conferences. If you are an alum who is interested in contributing to this fund, please let me know. 100% of all contributions will be go back to the students. Thank you!



Dr. Melinda Hall: My book, *The Bioethics of Enhancement*, came out in December 2016 with Rowman & Littlefield/Lexington Books. I was thrilled to be invited to several Author-Meets-Critics Panels on the book at philosophy conferences in the US and Canada and am very glad that the book has been positively received. In June, my chapter "Patient Interpretation: Kristeva's Model for the Caregiver" was published in the volume *New Forms of Revolt: Kristeva's Intimate Politics* (SUNY Press, 2017). This work focuses on the usefulness of the work of psychoanalyst Julia Kristeva in bioethics. Finally, I have a paper forthcoming in the *Journal of Social Philosophy*, "Obscured Social Construction as Epistemic Harm," which outlines a new, epistemic reason to engage in projects focused on uncovering the social construction of the world around us; that is, to believe something is natural when it is actually socially constructed harms us as knowers by restricting what we can ask "why" questions about. It's been a wonderful year full of growth and opportunity. My husband, Steven Smallpage, joined the faculty in the Political Science department this year. And, as always, I very much enjoyed collaborating with students and colleagues



Amanda McMullen: One of our finest philosophy majors. She entered the PhD program in philosophy the University of Miami and is now ABD. She is returning to the area and in the fall she will work on her dissertation and teach as an Adjunct in our Department. She will each an upper level course in the philosophy of mind. It was wonderful to have you here as student, now it will be even more so having you here as a colleague.



Associated Scholars Bob and Sylvia Perkins are enjoying their retirement and continue to be involved with Department Activities