

# THE STETSON GADFLY

## DEPARTMENT OF PHILOSOPHY NEWSLETTER



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### 2011 HALL AWARD PRESENTED TO MATTHEW HOFFMAN

This year's award went to Matthew Hoffman. Matt, a double major in Philosophy and French, presented a senior thesis entitled: "Citizenship in the Just State" which focused on contemporary issues of national identity in France. In the fall, Matt will enter a graduate program in philosophy at Kings College in the UK. Congratulations Matt!



The Ronald L. and Margaret Smith Hall Philosophy Award was established in 2001 by Prof. Ron Hall and his wife Maggi to honor and recognize the most outstanding graduating senior in the Department of Philosophy. Given at the annual Honors Convocation each spring, a recipient is chosen on the basis of grade point average, quality of senior thesis, and the intention to continue philosophical studies at the graduate level. In addition to its monetary component, the recipient receives an award certificate and has his or her name engraved on a plaque listing previous winners. The plaque is honorably displayed on a wall outside the Philosophy Department offices.

#### Past Recipients:

Derek Stottlemeyer (2009)  
Bradford Hewitt (2008)  
Chantel Wonder (2007)  
Brendan J. Rogers (2006)  
Wesley Sun (2005)  
Robert D. Van Kaam (2004)  
Steven L. Green (2003)  
Jennifer L. Hodge (2002)  
Brian J. Mistler (2001)  
Socrates (399 BC)

*"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*

### IN MEMORIAM: TODD BATES

I am deeply saddened to report that we have lost a dear husband, friend and colleague. Todd Bates died on Tuesday morning at 12:15 am June 14th from complications of a brain aneurism he suffered on Friday May 13th. Todd was 40. He was such a bright star in our world, nothing short of brilliant. He was the husband of my colleague here at Stetson, Susan Peppers-Bates, and the father of two children, Anne Marie and Sophia Frances. He held a tenure-track faculty post in philosophy at Bethune Cookman University in Daytona Beach and regularly taught as an Adjunct Professor at Stetson. Todd was a graduate of the University of Massachusetts and held the Ph.D. from the University of Pennsylvania and recently authored a book on Duns Scotus.

Todd, we will miss you dearly.



## Notes from the Field—Philosophy in Oxford

*This year three of our philosophy majors spent a semester in Oxford. Welcome back to Stetson Brooke Berndtson, Tyce Herrman, and Anders Brent!*

*Brooke shares the following account of her experience:*

When I initially arrived at Stetson University, I attempted to drop my Introduction to Philosophy course. I was a three-time college dropout and had only two intentions a) procure a degree in whatever major I could complete in the shortest amount of time b) never work a triple shift for minimum wage again. I had purposely avoided philosophy after witnessing a fistfight over transcendentalism at my first college, fearing that I would end up as “one of those people”. However, I needed to fill a general education requirement and begrudgingly showed up to Dr. Peppers-Bates class. I changed my major the next semester. I started to love school, instead of looking at it as an unfortunate, but necessary, obstacle in my path to a life outside of poverty. Through the department’s endless encouragement, support, and faith in my academic abilities, I went from failing out of college to an A student with an opportunity to study abroad at the University of Oxford.

Oxford has a tutorial system. Students pick two subjects and study them independently, under the guidance of an expert in that particular area of interest. I chose to study the Nicomachean Ethics and jurisprudence. My first few days in Oxford, I felt like an imposter. I had only taken eight philosophy classes and I was sure that everyone there was a genius but me. It was unbelievably intimidating to meet with my professors in a building founded before Columbus stumbled upon America—complete with deer park, bar and private gardens. At my first formal dinner, while a choir serenaded me through a three-course meal, I wondered if I had been admitted by mistake. The experience was surreal. I thought Dr. Hall, Dr. Peppers-Bates, and Dr. Rust had to be crazy to think I could be a competitive student in a place where people sing to you when you eat.

Since a visiting student is allowed to attend any university lecture she wants, I used the opportunity to sit in on other philosophy courses as a

Brooke continued on page 4



*Tyce shares the following account of his experience:*

“Agitated, pulled willingly into a frenzy of raw exuberance and resoluteness and calm. Exuberance at my calm.”  
*excerpt from a manic, undated, approximately 4 am writing session*

I run the risk of sounding like (and perhaps actually being) an exaggerator of my experience (and thus myself) throughout this short account. I assure you that I am only trying to recount what I know was, for whatever else, the most pivotal time in my life. Now this does not speak to the objective significance of that experience. But for me, for what I am capable of experiencing, this was It is that experience when you are stirred up into a frenzy. Realizing that you are merely human, and how insignificant that is, but simultaneously, that it’s a pretty great fate to be given.

Providence found it appropriate to stack on one neat little shelf being in the physical place of Oxford, studying Heidegger, and meeting some amazing friends. The physical place one is in is very important, though I think in ways that we often don’t consider. As physical entities, we are tied to the place we are in and are constantly creating a unique space. The city of Oxford, the libraries, the path along the murky Thames river, meandering alleys, corner table in the pub, these were not simply places to occupy or merely enjoy, but were shaping me and consciously reshaped by me.

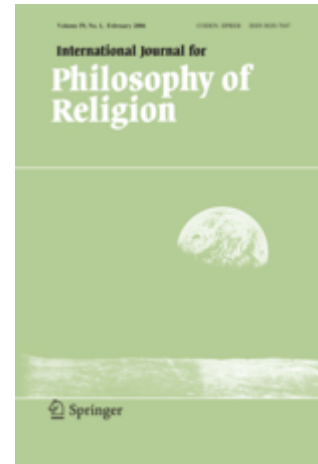
Heidegger’s writings resonated deeply with me, like divine truths were being granted to me as I read. But what really exacerbated these ecstasies were a handful of other students I came to know. We teetered on the edge of peaks of joy and brinks of despair falling and climbing sometimes in mere seconds – life was a hurtling time machine that didn’t give a damn about how fast it was going. I didn’t just stumble upon my revelations as if they were

Tyce Continued on page 4



## PROFESSOR HALL NAMED EDITOR-IN-CHIEF OF IJPR

Dr. Ronald L. Hall, Professor and Chair of the Department of Philosophy, has been appointed Editor-in-Chief of the *International Journal for the Philosophy of Religion*. This journal is published by Springer Publishing of the Netherlands. The Journal has a wide circulation and is one of the premier journals that Springer produces. Stetson will gain international recognition as the journal establishes its new home here. For twenty years, the journal's home was in the Philosophy Department at the University of South Carolina and its Editor-in-Chief was Gene Long. Now that Stetson's Philosophy Department is the new home of the journal, Stetson's name will be featured in each of the 6 issues published each year and this will do much to enhance our reputation on the international stage.



The International Journal for Philosophy of Religion (IJPR) provides a medium for the exposition, development, and criticism of important philosophical insights and theories relevant to religion in any of its varied forms. It also provides a forum for critical, constructive, and interpretative consideration of religion from an objective philosophical point of view.

IJPR presents articles, symposia, discussions, reviews, notes, and news, serving the interests of a wide range of thoughtful readers, especially teachers and students of philosophy, philosophical theology and religious thought.

### Jules Coleman

This Spring Jules Coleman was the Culverhouse Chair at Stetson Law's Gulfport campus. In February he visited Dr. Rust's Kant seminar to discuss Kant, Human Dignity, and constitutional law.

Jules Coleman is the Wesley Newcomb Hohfeld Professor of Jurisprudence and Professor of Philosophy at Yale Law School. Educated at Brooklyn College with a Ph.D. in philosophy from Rockefeller University and an M.S.L. from Yale Law School, Professor Coleman teaches in the areas of philosophy of law; torts; law, language and truth; political philosophy; and rational choice. His books include *Hart's Postscript*, *The Practice of Principle*, and *Oxford Handbook of Jurisprudence and the Philosophy of Law* (with S. Shapiro).

This picture is of Jules presenting at Stetson Law's distinguished Nichols Lecture. There Coleman encouraged Stetson Law students to think about the purpose and nature of liability in the law of torts and how liability is understood from the two leading theoretical perspectives on torts: law and economics and corrective justice. Source: <http://bit.ly/1KCMvv>

### THE LAWSON LECTURES AT STETSON UNIVERSITY: RICHARD PIPES

This year's Lawson Lecture featured Richard Pipes. He gave a lecture entitled "Russian Intellectuals".

Richard Edgar Pipes was born in Poland. The Pipes family fled occupied Poland in October 1939 and arrived in the United States in July 1940. He was educated at Muskingum College, Cornell and Harvard. He married Irene Eugenia Roth in 1946. They have two children. Professor Pipes taught at Harvard from 1950 until his retirement in 1996. He was the director of Harvard's Russian Research Center from 1968 to 1973 and is now Baird Professor Emeritus of History at Harvard. He served as a senior consultant at the Stanford Research Institute from 1973 to 1978. During the 1970s, he was an advisor to Senator Henry Jackson, and in 1981 and 1982, he served on the National Security Council. He is the author of *The Russian Intelligentsia* (1961). This book is available for purchase in the hall outside of the Stetson Room.





Past and present students of the Stetson Philosophy department please join our Facebook page: <http://on.fb.me/mfHaUH> We don't post very often. Nevertheless it would be an easy way to stay in touch with everyone.

## Alumni News

Congratulations to Dan Quattrone. This former graduate of the Stetson Philosophy department just received his PhD from Georgetown University. Here's his description of his dissertation. Good Luck Dan!!!

The dissertation is called "A Two-Dimensional Account of Epistemic Modals." It's on a problem in philosophy of language involving the truth-conditions for modal claims. Basically, the standard possible worlds semantics used by philosophers and linguists doesn't work well for epistemic modals, which has gone mostly unnoticed for the last 30-odd years. I've identified a problem and put forward a new semantic theory that (I think) has all the explanatory power of the standard account and allows us to represent the truth-conditions for epistemic modals accurately.

The Philosophy Club at Stetson is starting a new lecture series! We're inviting former graduates back to give a short (i.e., 30 minute) presentation on the academic work they've done since leaving Stetson (even if you did that work a long time ago). The work need not be explicitly philosophical (it might concern theology, literature, economics, etc.) but it would be nice if the presentation had at least a hint of philosophy in it! We'll follow the presentation with a Q and A session.

Not only will you get another line item on your CV but we'll take you out to dinner!

This is standing invitation. If you don't live in the area consider coming to Stetson the next time you visit Disneyworld.

If you are interested please contact me, Dr Rust, at [jrust@stetson.edu](mailto:jrust@stetson.edu).

We look forward to hearing from you!

### Brooke in Oxford Continued

strategy to combat my anxiety. I sat as close to Stephen Mulhall, Edward Kanterian, and P.M.S Hacker as possible (a technique I also use to assuage my fear of Dr. Hall), to prove to myself that no one was going to throw me out. I soon realized that my professors at Stetson had taught me just as much as the students at Oxford. The quality of my education in philosophy is equivalent to one of the greatest in the world. I did not struggle in my tutorials but thrived. I held my own with the undergraduates and graduates alike and, according to my tutor, asked "the very same questions" as Rosalind Hursthouse. Oxford gave me access to better libraries, more rigorous writing/reading each week, and professors who are friends with Joseph Raz (my ultimate legal philosophy hero—queue swooning), and Ronald Dworkin. The philosophy department at Stetson gave me purpose, everything else is contingent and I'm really happy to be home.

### Tyce in Oxford Continued

something out there waiting to be discovered, but each stumble was a creation.

I'm not a creative novelist or poet—a puppeteer of words. Even if I were, my witty or beautiful or insightful words couldn't even begin to do justice to the reality of each of those precious days. I confronted, as Heidegger might say, my ownmost self, in ways I did not know were possible and will probably never see again. I've now slipped back into stability, normality, but even that is much different now—a new norm. It's very peaceful though, and after the time machine-rollercoaster I just disembarked, I'm content. Maybe that's all life is, ascend to the peaks, plunge to the bottom, but mostly trudge the great expanses of the plains in between. At least I stumbled upon something that finally broke up the continuous horizon of the rolling prairie, if only for a fleeting moment.

# Senior Research Titles and Abstracts 2010-2011

**Matthew Hoffman**

## **“Citizenship in the Just State”**

In thinking about the state's relationship to its citizens, confusion exists over what a citizen is in relation to the state and who should count as a citizen, based on the purpose of the state. Here the discussion is about just states, so the beginning of the discussion must be about justice and how the state is just. I begin with Martha Nussbaum's capabilities approaches the best model for the minimal requirements of justice: first to see the reason the just state has for functioning, and second, to an understanding of citizenship based on the purpose of the state.

**Kameron St.Clare**

## **“The Contentious Case of Rawls vs. Sandel”**

This paper will analyze the political philosophy of John Rawls and Michael Sandel. Rawls writes in the liberal tradition of political philosophy while Sandel writes in the communitarian tradition. In 1984, Sandel wrote a critique of Rawls's 1973 book, *A Theory of Justice*. The goal will be in two parts: (1) to analyze Rawls's theory of what a just society would look like as well as to analyze Sandel's objections to Rawls's Kantian foundations of the self, and (2) to defend Rawls against Sandel's communitarian critique by analyzing the seemingly opposed conceptions of the self and reconciling them with respect to the objective(s) of Rawls's work.

**Donald Ingham (Humanities Major)**

## **“Does Dexter Have a Heart? :The Foundation for Vigilantism”**

American society has long been fascinated by stories of vigilante justice. From stories of the Wild West, to Batman, to The Boondock Saints, the populace has been both fascinated by and divided over the question of a vigilante's place in society. But what is a vigilante? The term is commonly used, and most people instinctively think that the definition is clear. If a vigilante is simply a person who takes the law into his or her own hands, then it seems that almost everyone is a vigilante in their own way. The RA who circumvents the judicial process, and merely forces a resident to clean up the mess they made seems to hit this mark as easily as Batman does. But something feels intrinsically wrong about this broad grouping.

Dexter is a perfect case study to evaluate the validity of this term. This television series presents a seemingly straightforward case of vigilantism, but when inspected closer, it throws a lot of curveballs. If Dexter can make the cut, then other potential applicants can use this outlier as a precedent to judge their own validity. Les Johnson, who was published in the *British Journal of Criminology* in 1996, has attempted to explore the ambiguity of this term before. The conditions that are put forward in the article “What is Vigilantism?” will serve as a good starting point when judging Dexter's application for acceptance into this elite club.

**Callhan Garret**

## **“Genocide on Trial: Lessons from Nuremberg”**

Overall in this paper, I will examine from the Nuremberg Trials to now and finding justice in the face of contemporary atrocities. I argue that the Nuremberg Trials were effective in addressing the Holocaust, but sadly, confronting atrocities today is not as successful.

**Cletandre Thelus**

## **“Philosophical Neutrality and Personal Appropriation”**

Philosophical neutrality is the best approach for a complete and profound understanding of contemplative ideologies, which is fundamental for personal appropriation.

## CONTACT US AT ...

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## Faculty News

### From Ronald Hall:

Professor Hall gave the presidential address before the Society for the Philosophy of Religion in Claremont California, entitled "It's A Wonderful Life: Reflections on Wittgenstein's Last Words." This essay has been published in *Philosophical Investigations*.

### From Susan Peppers-Bates:

Despite the tremendous loss Professor Peppers-Bates has had a particularly productive year. She written a book review for publication in the *Black Catholic Theological Association* journal. She's also working on articles entitled "Milky Phenomenology" and "A Girardian Rejection of Substitutionary Atonement". The former is a phenomenological analysis of being a nursing mother in the United States. In addition to co-authoring a paper with Dr Rust on *True Blood*, they are working on a paper concerning *Harry Potter* which compares the Hogwarts' house system to Plato's class system. If the comparison hold, isn't there something dystopic about Hogwarts?

### From Joshua Rust:

Joshua Rust is now a father! His wife Kim gave birth to Quinn on February 17th, 2011. Welcome to the world Quinn! The picture is from our first adventure—we went to see the final launch of Space Shuttle Discovery STS-133.

Professor Rust and Professor Peppers-Bates coauthored an article entitled "A Vampire's Heart has its Reasons that Scientific Naturalism can't Understand" which was published in *True Blood and Philosophy* (they are both huge *True Blood* fans!). If you are interested in reading our article you can download it here: <http://bit.ly/liuVG>. He also has a number of other articles in the pipe. See <http://bit.ly/gkKGPg> for an popular overview of his work on ethicist's ethical behavior.

### From Sylvia Perkins:

Sylvia Walsh Perkins, Scholar in Residence at Stetson University, has been working on a new translation of Kierkegaard's communion discourses which will be published by Indiana University Press this summer. She has also written an essay on "Moral Character and Temptation" for "The Wisdom of the Christian Faith: Philosophers on the Cross-Shaped Life," a collection of essays edited by Paul K. Moser of Loyola University and Michael T. McFall of Stanford University, forthcoming from Cambridge University Press. Dr. Perkins is also a co-chair of the Kierkegaard, Religion, and Culture Group in the American Academy of Religion.

### From Bob Perkins:

Robert L. Perkins, Stetson Alumnus, Class of '51 and Ph.D., Indiana University, 1965, Professor of Philosophy at Stetson, 1984-2000, has completed the twenty-fourth and last volume of International Kierkegaard Commentary. The series was published by Mercer University Press, the first volume appearing in 1984. The 7587 pages of text and indexes contain 282 essays written by 123 authors from 14 countries. Dr. Perkins has been honored for creating the IKC with a Festschrift, *Why Kierkegaard Matters*, by the Søren Kierkegaard Society (which he founded in 1982).

