As a high school senior in Minnesota, Macy Salzburger was hungry for philosophical discussion. But none of her friends were interested in engaging with her on, say, the experiential properties of sensation or the nature of consciousness.

Salzburger (now a senior) was excited when she arrived at UW-Madison in 2010 and discovered a student club called the Socratic Society. At the first few meetings, Salzburger found the lively debate she’d been seeking. What she didn’t find: other undergraduate women. Salzburger suspected that the aggressive tone of the debate was keeping them away.

“People were very vehement in their arguments,” she says. “Banging on the table and yelling. Sometimes I would be the only girl, and it would be hard to be heard.”

The “dialectic” — an emphatic method of argument that philosophers use to resolve a disagreement — doesn’t put women off by itself, according to recent research exploring the underrepresentation of women in philosophy. But it can contribute to a hostile environment — a recognized and much-discussed problem for women in the field.

Salzberger wanted to change that, so she asked for advice from two professors whom she thought of as mentors: Claudia Card and Harry Brighouse.

“Basically, they advised me to invite more women — and be intentional about it,” she says.

So that’s what Salzberger did. With targeted invitations and encouragement to speak loudly and often, more women began showing up for the weekly meetings. Slight moderations in debate tone meant everyone had a chance to be heard.

“Macy has been an outstanding leader,” says philosophy department chair Russ Shafer-Landau. “It’s absolutely vital that we enfranchise all who want to participate in philosophical discussion, and Macy’s efforts have been exemplary in this regard.”

Salzberger, majoring in philosophy, is now serving her second term as president of the Socratic Society, an undergraduate student organization founded in 2010 to offer students a chance to discuss a “broad range of philosophical, political, and polemical issues.” The group meets every Friday at 7 p.m. in Memorial Union.

Through Salzberger’s leadership, the Socratic Society has sharpened its focus and hosted several guest speakers, as well as organized a panel on the status of women in philosophy that drew about 60 attendees.

And Salzberger has found those like-minded friends.

“You don’t often get a chance to discuss your field outside the classroom,” she says. “It’s just so cool to make philosophy friends.”

From qualia to bio-ethics to arguments for school choice, the topics have generated surprising impacts. When students get excited about a discussion, they often take it one step further.

“Sometimes the topic will lead people to enroll in certain classes,” says Salzberger. “Or they’ll form study groups or try out arguments for papers they plan to write. After our talk about sex in philosophy, a few undergrads began asking Claudia Card to teach a class in feminist philosophy. We can’t take total credit for it, but she is now teaching that class!”

— Mary Ellen Gabriel
L&S Communications Staff Writer
Greetings from the philosophy department! I’m delighted to report that things here on the fifth floor of Helen C. White Hall are going wonderfully well.

We continue to enroll record numbers of students and majors in the department, and we are proud of our reputation for teaching excellence. The strength of the department has long been recognized by the L&S administration, which, in an era of tight fiscal constraints, has authorized us to hire two additional faculty this year. Once we have concluded our searches, we will have nine junior faculty in our ranks. The sense of fresh energy in the halls is palpable. And, if I may say so, we have done an outstanding job of recruitment — these younger colleagues have already established international reputations for themselves, receiving invitations from across the world to contribute their ideas at workshops, seminars, and conferences.

I’m especially excited to share news about an important innovation: last year we received funding from the Madison Initiative for Undergraduates to hire a career advisor for our students. Karen Knipschild (profiled on page 6) joined us at the beginning of the year and has already done great work establishing professional connections for our undergraduates. I hope you will consider being in touch with her to share ideas and opportunities on this front.

Speaking of career options — those of us who have been the beneficiaries of a philosophical education know that the skills acquired in our classrooms can be parlayed into creative and satisfying careers. We’ve now compiled the evidence: check out the new feature Why Study Philosophy? at philosophy.wisc.edu/undergraduate/whystudyphilosophy. While you’re on our website, please take a minute to update us on what you’ve been doing since graduation — our Alumni Updates page now contains more than 250 entries, and it takes only a minute or two to add your own at philosophy.wisc.edu/alumni/updates.

We are very grateful for our strong network of friends and alumni whose generous support has made so many of our initiatives possible. Stay in touch, be well, and happy reading!

Russ Shafer-Landau, Chair
shaferlandau@wisc.edu

10th Annual Wisconsin Metaethics Workshop

One hundred and thirty-five philosophy students and faculty from around the world converged on the UW-Madison campus to participate in the tenth annual event, which has become internationally recognized as the pre-eminent forum for work in this field.

UW grad students show off the workshop’s commemorative T-shirt. From left to right: (front row) Greg Nirshberg and Justin Horn; (back row) David O’Brien, Augusta Moore, and Eric Sampson.
Nadler for President

Congratulations to Steve Nadler, who was elected to serve as president of the Central Division of the American Philosophical Association. Over the past century, 11 UW-Madison philosophy faculty have earned this extraordinary distinction.

From the Dean’s Desk

As the new dean of UW-Madison’s College of Letters & Science, I am delighted to introduce myself and share with you some of the many reasons I am honored and excited to serve the college.

As an economist, I have devoted my scholarly career to studying the ways in which human beings respond to the world’s complexity. We are increasingly interconnected through technology and economic growth. I believe our students must graduate as engaged global citizens in order to successfully navigate through work and life.

The Department of Philosophy is critical in this effort. Recognized as one of the best places in the world to study the philosophy of science, ethics, formal epistemology, and the history of philosophy, the department is also committed to helping undergraduates think ahead to life beyond the classroom. With the appointment of a career advisor and the development of new web resources for job searching and more, the department is helping to prepare not only great thinkers, but strong job candidates.

Near-record enrollments point to the teaching strengths of faculty, and the department continues to have one of the best placement records in the country for its graduate students.

As alumni, you have many reasons to be proud and to continue your support of the Department of Philosophy. Perhaps the most valuable skill a liberal arts graduate can bring to our knowledge-based economy is the passion to keep learning. The Department of Philosophy fosters curiosity and creativity in unique and innovative ways, strengthening campus and the community at large and preparing students to become active and involved members of society.

Please stay in touch with your alma mater. I welcome your feedback and appreciate all that you do for the university.

Thank you and On, Wisconsin!

John Karl Scholz
Dean, College of Letters & Science

UW Philosophers Tackle Contemporary Issues

Our popular public-lecture series continues to draw more than 100 members of the community to hear our faculty discuss current events of real importance. For those unable to attend, videos of the talks are available on our website at https://sites.google.com/site/philosophertackle/.

Looking Back:
Professor Elliott Sober

After 39 years in the philosophy department at UW-Madison, Professor Elliott Sober reflects on early influences, opportunities for scholarship and collaboration, and more.

Q: Professor Sober, where did you grow up?
A: I grew up in Baltimore, Maryland, and went to public schools there. I played violin and was on my high school junior varsity lacrosse team.

Q: Who influenced your career choice?
A: My father was a dentist who regretted not becoming a historian. When I was in college, he was delighted that I got interested in philosophy and that I wanted to be a professor. My mother was a public school teacher, so for her as well, my aiming at being a professor sounded like a good idea.

Q: Why philosophy?
A: I read Bertrand Russell’s popular books when I was in junior high school — Religion and Science, Why I Am Not a Christian, and others. I took my first philosophy courses at the University of Pennsylvania during the tumultuous 1960s. I was also interested in history and literature and found that the questions that interested me most had to do with how you justify a proposed explanation of a historical event or a proposed interpretation of a work of literature. This drove me to philosophy, and then to philosophy of science, where concepts of evidence and explanation are central subjects.

Continued on next page
Q: You are known as a philosopher of biology. What does that mean today?

A: Philosophy of biology is a thriving sub-discipline within philosophy of science. It is on the map now more than it was in the 1960s and before. This is in part because the philosophy of specific sciences, rather than of science in general, has grown. The popular writings of Stephen Jay Gould, Richard Dawkins, and Daniel Dennett have helped. And creationism also deserves some thanks, since the evolution-versus-creationism debate is rich in philosophical content.

Richard Lewontin’s population genetics lab changed my life. I came to realize how important it was to study probability theory as a tool that is used in evolutionary biology and is also very important in philosophy.

Q: You’re known to dispute the theory of intelligent design. What conclusions have you reached?

A: I think it is important for people to realize that it is possible to both believe in God and accept the theory of evolution. This won’t be true if you are a young-earth creationist — someone who holds that God started life on earth some 6,000 to 50,000 years ago. But other theistic pictures, which are less fundamentalistic, are not in conflict with the science. Too much air time has been given to those who think that there is a total conflict here.

Q: Why, and how, has UW-Madison been a particularly rewarding intellectual home for you?

A: I’ve had very productive interactions with evolutionary biologists on the faculty here at UW. James Crow, Carter Denniston, John Kirsch, Alan Attie, and David Baum have been very generous with their time. Talking regularly with colleagues Fred Dretske, Berent Enç, and Dennis Stampe was a fantastic education in my early years here. Later, I was given a Vilas Professorship, which gave me more time to pursue my research interests. I’ve enjoyed co-authoring papers with my colleagues Ellery Eells, Gabriel Segal, Martin Barrett, Malcolm Forster, and Larry Shapiro, and with many of my graduate students. UW-Madison is and has been a great place for me to teach and do research.

Elliott Sober and Russ Shafer-Landau

Another Gittler Award Winner in 2013

We’re on a streak: Professor Larry Shapiro won this year’s Joseph B. Gittler award, given annually by the American Philosophical Association to the single most outstanding work in the philosophy of the social sciences. Larry won for his book *Embodied Cognition* (Routledge). Professor Dan Hausman was last year’s winner, for *Preference, Value, Choice, and Welfare* (Cambridge). No other philosophy department in the country has ever had back-to-back winners of the Gittler award. Congratulations to Larry and Dan!

philosophy.wisc.edu
First-Ever Career Advisor for Philosophy

We asked Karen Knipschild, the department’s first career advisor, to share her thoughts about her new role, what she’s accomplished so far, and how alumni can help our current students.

Q: Karen, we are so delighted to have you. Tell us a little about yourself and what you do.
A: As the philosophy career advisor, I help students find their niche, whether through internships or long-term careers.

I have been working in student services for 11 years, matching many students with meaningful career opportunities. I’m a UW-Madison alumna with degrees in journalism/communication arts and continuing and vocational education.

Q: What sorts of services do you offer philosophy undergrads?
A: Career exploration is an important aspect of the undergraduate experience, and students are encouraged to set up individual appointments to discuss job-search strategies. I also provide career resources through my web page, weekly internship listings, and a monthly newsletter.

Q: Tell us about one or two programs you’ve designed that you’ve found especially rewarding.
A: Workshops and alumni panels proved highly successful this past year. Last spring, I organized a philosophy career panel that engaged students in a lively Q&A about professions in law, marketing, library services, and nonprofit management. Earlier in the year, another alumnus from the corporate world presented a workshop to assist students in identifying skills that employers value.

Q: How can alumni help our current students?
A: The philosophy undergraduates and I are very appreciative of any alumni who would like to share their career-path adventures. Please contact me at kknipsch@wisc.edu or 608-262-7836 if you would like to participate in a career panel or conversational Q&A.

Q: How marketable is a philosophy degree?
A: Philosophy is a great foundation for a wide variety of careers, including government, law, teaching, and public service, to name a few. If you have any doubts, a review of the Alumni Update page on the UW-Madison philosophy website proves my point.

Gifts That Keep on Giving

Over the past year, the incredible support of our alumni and friends made the following possible:

• More than $33,000 in awards, prizes, and scholarships to our undergraduates and grad students.
• Funding for our third annual Honors and Awards Banquet, attended by all of our undergraduate award winners and their families, our graduate-degree recipients, faculty, staff, and donors who have endowed named scholarships.
• A variety of career workshops for our undergraduates.
• Continued support for the Socratic Society, our undergraduate philosophy club.
• The publication of this newsletter.
• Travel funds for more than 30 graduate students who travel annually to present their work at professional conferences.
• Recruitment stipends for all first- and second-year graduate students.
• Continued support to our Women in Philosophy group.
• Ongoing support for the UW Philosophers Tackle Contemporary Issues public-lecture series.
• Funding for our outstanding colloquium series, which brings world-class speakers to campus.
• Technical services to maintain and update our website.

All of these undertakings and more are made possible only by the generous support of those who care that the philosophical community at UW-Madison continues to thrive. Please consider adding your support to enhancing the life of the department.
Fred Dretske died this summer, suddenly, of cancer. He was one of the most beloved and respected members of this department: straightforward, down to earth, and charismatic — probably the most important Wisconsin philosopher ever. For 20 years or so, from the early ’60s to the middle ’80s, Fred was the dominant philosophical figure at UW-Madison. His papers “Conclusive Reasons” (1970) and “Epistemic Operators” (1971) developed an important new option in the analysis of knowledge. So did his 1977 paper “Laws of Nature” in the philosophy of science. He went on to write the influential books Knowledge and the Flow of Information and Explaining Behavior (on how reasons can cause behavior), and later, while at Stanford, and (after retirement) at Duke, he staked out views on our consciousness of our own minds and the qualitative character of awareness. Fred was a superb teacher. He was also the natural leader of regular evening philosophical discussions, held at someone’s home with a fridge full of beer, in which one or another of his colleagues would try out new ideas. These philosophically rich and enjoyable evenings fostered an integration of interests and a productive philosophical culture in the department. It all worked because Fred was at the center of it. His effect on the life of the department, its members and his students, was very deep.

— Denny Stampe, Professor Emeritus

In Memoriam: Fred Dretske (1932–2013)

The Book Nook

Quitting Certainties: A Bayesian Framework Modeling Degrees of Belief
by Michael G. Titelbaum
Oxford University Press

“A tour de force…. [Titelbaum] writes with great clarity and verve on central philosophical topics…. This is formal epistemology at its best — that’s for sure.”
— Alan Hájek, Australia National University

The Philosopher, the Priest, and the Painter: A Portrait of Descartes
by Steven Nadler
Princeton University Press

“Riveting…. Nadler has written his most inviting book yet…. Nadler’s detective work makes for fascinating reading…. [T]he resulting survey of Golden Age Dutch culture, Cartesian philosophy, and art connoisseurship makes for very welcome intellectual entertainment.”
— Michael Dirda, The Washington Post

Your gift to the Share the Wonderful Campaign helps ensure that we continue to provide a top liberal arts education through the kinds of life-changing experiences that foster creativity, excellence and leadership.

Give today at philosophy.wisc.edu.
Your gift makes all the difference.

For more information, contact Ann Dingman at the UW Foundation (608-265-9954) or ann.dingman@supportuw.
Calling All Alumni

More than 250 alumni have already posted to our Alumni Updates website. We and your fellow classmates want to hear from you!

It only takes a minute at http://philosophy.wisc.edu/alumni/updates.php.

Thanks!

Clockwise from top left: Steve Nadler and graduate students playing hockey, winter 2013; graduate student Gina Schouten (left) and Professor Claudia Card at the 2012 Awards Banquet; Professor Harry Brighouse; Professor Dan Hausman; department chair Russ Shafer-Landau hits a home run at the fall 2013 picnic; Professor Paula Gottlieb at the 2013 Awards Banquet.