



College of Letters & Science  
UNIVERSITY OF WISCONSIN-MADISON

# PHILOSOPHY

Winter 2017 | For Alumni and Friends  
of the Department of Philosophy

WISCONSIN STYLE



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# PHILOSOPHY

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## Letter from the Chair



**Hello once again!** I am happy to be greeting you for the holidays for the third time, as always with hopes that you have had a fulfilling and interesting year.

We have had some comings and goings. Russ Shafer-Landau, you may have heard, has rejoined us, deciding there is no place like home. A side benefit is the return of his famed Metaethics Workshop, hosted here in September to great acclaim; a wonderful venue for our faculty, students, and philosophers working in metaethics generally. On the sadder side (for us), Malcolm Forster left to take up a post as Distinguished Professor in the newly formed School of Logic and Philosophy of Science at Fudan University. While we lose an excellent philosopher, it is an exciting opportunity for Malcolm to help lead the way towards top-notch analytic philosophy in China and Asia more generally.

We have new faces in the office as well. You may recall that last year, Cheryl Schutte joined us as our new financial specialist and event planner (see page 4). This May, our beloved Lori Grant—recently graduate coordinator after long service as the undergraduate coordinator—retired (after 41 years at UW!). She says she is so busy she doesn't know how she had time to work before! While we do and will continue to miss Lori, we are very happy to welcome Miriam Fagan to our staff as the new graduate coordinator. Between Cheryl, Miriam, and Nina Akli, we have had an almost entire office facelift over the past three years; it is a great new group and we hope to be a happy family for some time!

Our students continue to do us proud. Two of our majors received honors from the College of Letters and Science: Alex Chen ('17) was awarded the Jane Goddard Scholarship, and Channi Ernstoff ('17) won the Thomas W. Parker Scholarship. Channi was also selected by her peers

to speak at our Annual Celebration of Graduates and Awards Event, along with fellow graduate Julia Boles ('17). More on Channi on page 4. Channi's mantle as President of the Socratic Society has been taken up by Dorothy Wu ('18), and the group continues to meet regularly for vigorous discussion and philosophical engagement—with refreshments funded in part from our generous donors.

Our graduate students have also shown remarkable initiative. Clinton Castro and Aaron Yarmel have founded Effective Altruism UW, which helps students understand the importance of charitable giving, and how to do it well (page 2). Aaron has also teamed up with fellow graduate student Katie Petrik to start Madison Public Philosophy, an outreach group that brings philosophical ideas to real issues in the community. (For more, see <http://news.wisc.edu/student-group-promotes-usefulness-of-philosophy-in-the-community/>)

In October 2016, the journal *Metaphilosophy* published a symposium dedicated to Claudia Card. It is a double volume and a fitting tribute, including a number of offerings from former students here in Madison, who have gone on to their own solid careers. This October, we hosted one more conference of our own: Jesse Steinberg and I brought in six speakers for the Midwest Annual Workshop in Metaphysics.

So, we are keeping busy and trying to continue to bring the good philosophical word. We are very grateful for the support we receive from our generous alumni and friends, which allows us to help both students and faculty in a variety of ways. Thank you for contributing to the thriving, vibrant world of our department. As always, my best wishes for a great 2018.

On, Wisconsin!

Alan Sidelle, Chair and Professor  
[asidelle@wisc.edu](mailto:asidelle@wisc.edu)



## EAUW: Helping Students Do Good Better

**Many of us will have our students entertain some version of the following thought experiment this semester:**

Walking to class, you pass a toddler splashing about in a pond. If you don't wade in and pull her out, she will likely drown. Wading in is easy and safe, but will ruin your clothes. What should you do?

The vast majority of students will say they should save the child. And most will agree that this is due to some version of the following principle:

*If you can prevent something very bad from happening, without sacrificing anything nearly as important, it is wrong not to do so.*

It's likely that you agree with the spirit—if not the letter—of this principle. Now consider the following two statements:

- Suffering and death from lack of food, shelter, and medical care are very bad.
- By donating to aid agencies, you can prevent suffering and death from these causes without sacrificing anything nearly as important.

These two claims are hard to deny. With the above principle, they put pressure on you to donate to aid agencies.

Many students leave our courses feeling this pressure, but few know what to do next. Which aid agencies most effectively fight the world's biggest problems? How should we evaluate charities? Which careers best tackle issues like world hunger?

Effective Altruism UW was founded in the fall of 2015 by two UW–Madison philosophy PhD candidates, Aaron Yarmel and Clinton Castro, to help students navigate these questions. The group holds meetings to discuss altruism and organizes fundraisers that promote charitable giving. Since the founding, the group—with support from the Department of Philosophy—organized the following events:

- A public lecture by Professor Harry Brighouse titled, “Should Professors Teach More?,” which raised \$150 for effective charities.
- A public lecture by Professor Rob Streiffer titled, “Being Human, Being Animal, and Everything In-Between,” which raised \$247.42 for the Against Malaria Foundation,

\$247.42 for Cool Earth, \$203.24 for GiveWell, and \$185.56 for the Humane League.

- A day-long conference, “Careers for Real Good for the Real World,” which featured speakers from all over the world—made possible by support from Effective Altruism Global, The Life You Can Save, and 80,000 Hours. This event raised \$58 for the Fistula Foundation, \$150 for Cool Earth, \$173 for the Future of Humanity Institute, and \$219 for The Humane League.

An event is being organized—in collaboration with Madison Public Philosophy ([publicphilosophysite.wordpress.com](http://publicphilosophysite.wordpress.com)), a group founded by graduate students Aaron Yarmel and Katie Petrik—that further explores the thought experiment from this article. For updates on the event and the group, or to get involved, join the Facebook group Effective Altruism UW ([facebook.com/groups/EALTRUISM.UW](https://facebook.com/groups/EALTRUISM.UW)).



## From L&S Dean Karl Scholz

Here at UW–Madison, the leaves are turning and the view from Bascom Hill is as beautiful as ever. But under the tranquility is a current of unrest. Issues of race, inclusivity, and free speech have caused (and will likely continue to cause) divisiveness on our campus, just as they have on many other campuses around the country. There is a tension in the air, the likes of which has not been felt here since the Vietnam War era.

In this climate, what we do in L&S is more important than ever. We are fiercely committed to an institution where every student has the opportunity to reach their full potential, and where the campus environment

and the knowledge discovered here become guiding lights for Wisconsin, the nation, and the world.

As the Chancellor has emphasized, only in an environment safe and free from harassment can our primary mission of teaching, learning, research, and service take place.

For many students who arrive on campus, UW–Madison is the most diverse place they've seen. Others have never seen a less diverse place. But the education we provide in Letters & Science teaches people to confront problems from many perspectives, to

imagine alternatives, to put themselves in others' shoes. Together, we create a welcoming place to learn.

We are grateful for the unwavering support and advocacy our alumni and friends offer on behalf of our faculty, our research endeavors, and our great students.

As Letters & Science alumni we hope you draw daily, not only on the knowledge you gained, but on the values you absorbed here. We are counting on you in an uncertain world. Thank you for all you do to support the College of Letters & Science at UW–Madison.

On, Wisconsin!

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## 2014 Goodrich Scholarship Recipient Channi Ernstoff



Channah (Channi) Ernstoff graduated from UW–Madison in May 2017 with a double major in philosophy and psychology.

In 2014, she received the Col. Jerome Ellis Goodrich, (Ret. USMC) Scholarship, an annual award that supports an undergraduate philosophy student with academic merit and financial need who is also a US citizen. She received the award as a first-year student, soon after declaring philosophy as her major, and has been an active member of the undergraduate philosophy community ever since.

Channi came to UW–Madison after living in Israel since she was five years old. When asked whether she feels American or Israeli, she explains, “When I was in Israel, I felt American, and here I feel Israeli.” She decided to come to UW–Madi-

son partly out of a general desire to return to the US, and also because she wanted to explore a wide range of academic disciplines. (In Israel, students enroll in a specific degree program and have very little opportunity to take classes outside of their discipline.)

Channi first encountered philosophy in high school, reading Maimonides and learning about Plato’s Allegory of the Cave. After high school, she spent two years completing her mandatory military service in the Israeli army, but her interest in philosophy was rekindled when she enrolled in a First-Year Interest Group (FIG) on vision during her first semester at UW–Madison. She took Introduction to Philosophy with Professor Sarah Paul, which covered topics in philosophy of perception.

Channi immediately connected with the sorts of questions that were asked in philosophy, and she noticed that not all of the students had the same reaction. The next semester she took a smaller seminar with Sarah Paul on philosophy of law, which

was full of students who shared her excitement about philosophy. She had found an intellectual home, and she promptly declared philosophy as her major.

In her time at UW–Madison, Channi has contributed greatly to the life of the undergraduate philosophy program. She was the president of the Socratic Society (after two years as co-president), our undergraduate philosophy club. She has guided it from a handful of active participants to kick-off events with more than 50 students in the past couple of years. While members strive for a high level of philosophical rigor in their discussions, more than half of the members are not philosophy majors.

Channi currently serves as a tutor and mentor through City Year, a 10-month Americorps program designed to address the graduation crisis facing urban schools across the US. Upon completion of the program, Channi plans to either go to graduate school or continue working in the non-profit sector.

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## New Administrative Team Member Cheryl Schutte



Cheryl Schutte joined the department as a part-time financial specialist in fall 2016. She has a bachelor’s

and master’s in Business Administration from Edgewood College, and previously served the state in various administrative capacities, mostly in medical settings, for about 21 years. When asked what attracted her to this position, she mentioned a couple things. First, she liked the mixture of something familiar with something new. She was familiar with financial work and event planning, but wel-

comed the new opportunity to work closely with faculty and graduate students. She was also looking for a place that offered work and personal life balance; this position seemed to offer the best of both worlds.

And then there was the familiarity with “event planning.” The department hosts many events, and Cheryl is no stranger to planning them. In fact, since she married into a family of 17 siblings from Monroe, Wisconsin, she has been planning lots of events. This small-town family is now spread all over the US. To keep in touch, they hold a 3-day family reunion every other summer. Past events, which can include up to 300 people when counting family and local friends, have involved a photo booth, fireworks, waterslide, camping, bouncy house,

corn boil, and even a polka band.

She is part of this big family all due to the fact that she was shopping for a new car and got more than she was looking for in the deal. She met her husband Jody, one of the 17 and a local car salesman, about 30 years ago when she was “new car shopping.” She did end up buying a car from him, but after the deal was over, he called her weekly to see if she liked the car. Eventually he got up the nerve to ask her if she’d like to get a cup of coffee and the rest is history. They have two adult sons and two grandchildren who live out of state.

Cheryl loves to cook and bake for her family, and it’s common for Cheryl to arrive at work with a warm, tasty treat for faculty and students to share.

## Beloved Emeritus Professor Goes International

In the summer of 2002, Professor Mike Byrd, who taught philosophy at UW–Madison for 32 years, received tragic news: his son, David, had gone missing in a remote part of southern Ecuador, where he had traveled alone. He was last seen on July 22 when he checked into a hostel in the small town of Zamora in the rain forest on the eastern slopes of the Andes. It is unknown what happened to him.

Here’s how Mike describes the aftermath of his son’s disappearance, which led to the creation of David’s Educational Opportunity Fund: “As this unfolded and it became increasingly likely that David would not return, I decided to resign from UW. I thought that I needed to engage in something intensely meaningful in order to live with what had happened. In the summer of 2003, Maggie, my wife; Rachel, my daughter; and I traveled to Ecuador to see the area where David had disappeared. Along the way, we stayed at a Jesuit mission to the poor in Quito and the idea came to me that working there was one way of responding to this terrible event. In the succeeding 10 years, one or both of us worked there as volunteer teachers. I taught middle-school mathematics and Maggie taught health. Doing this did not remove the pain of losing David but it did change us. We started David’s Fund informally in 2008 with two young women



that I had taught math to in 2004. In 2012, when we were supporting six students, we decided to become a 501(c)(3) public charity so that people who gave us money, including ourselves, could save on our taxes. Now we are supporting 16 students in a variety of careers.”

David’s Educational Opportunity Fund provides financial, educational, and emotional support to a small group of poor but gifted high school and university students in Ecuador (where the average income is \$3,600 yearly). For example, David’s Fund enabled a student with serious vision problems to receive treatment from an ophthalmologist; it enabled another student, who had previously needed to travel four hours by bus each morning to attend her universi-

ty, to get an apartment near campus. There are many other success stories. As Mike writes: “Given the differences in economies, the cost of helping this many students is not high, about \$4,000 per student. Maggie and I still go to Quito once a year for a month. And we are in regular communication with all of our students. Really what we have done is to extend our family; we have 16 college-aged sons and daughters and another six or seven who have graduated. We are part of many families in Quito and think of ourselves as having another 10 grandchildren there. This honors the kind of person David was.”

For more information about David’s Educational Opportunity Fund, and to contribute, please visit: [davidsef.org/](http://davidsef.org/)

### YOU MAKE THE DIFFERENCE

To mail a donation to the Department of Philosophy, please include the fund number (#1267904) and designation (Philosophy) on your check, made payable to the University of Wisconsin Foundation. Mail checks to:

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P.O. Box 78807  
Milwaukee, WI 53278-0807

To make a gift online, please visit: [supportuw.org/give](http://supportuw.org/give)

**THANK YOU!**

## An Interview with Leonard Waks (PhD '68, Philosophy)



Leonard J. Waks earned both his BA (1964) and PhD (1968, Philosophy) from UW–Madison. After stints at Purdue and Stanford, he went on to teach philosophy of education and educational leadership at Temple University, from where he retired as Professor Emeritus in 2005. He recently received the John Dewey Society's Outstanding Career Achievement Award.

### 1 | When and how did you get interested in the philosophy of education and educational leadership?

In the sixties, many students were interested in education and reading books like A.S. Neill's *Summerhill* and Paul Goodman's *Compulsory Miseducation* and *The Community of Scholars*. It took some time before I looked into philosophy of education. I took a seminar on Dewey's *Democracy and Education* in 1963, but I couldn't wrap my mind around it. After Dewey, there wasn't much in philosophy of education the 1960s, when Israel Scheffler published *The Language of Education* and R. S. Peters launched a similar program of analytic philosophy of education at the University of London. To tell the truth, even though I saw myself as an analytic philosopher, that work—although excellent in its way—never attracted me.

A book I admired was Boyd Bode's

*Modern Educational Theories*. Bode had been a professor of philosophy at the University of Wisconsin, but in mid career he joined the education faculty at Ohio State. He was not so much a philosopher of education as a philosopher in education, approaching educational literature from administration and curriculum to teaching and research as a critical philosopher. I also saw myself as a philosopher in education; I didn't emulate Bode, but that book confirmed for me the path I had already chosen and have remained on to this day.

### 2 | Much of your research concerns the interplay between technology and education. What are some of your findings?

When I was in grad school I declared an education minor. In the education school I encountered the pervasive effort to reduce education to a technical formula—teaching either to achieve specific measurable objectives or to secure high grades on exams with items selected from specified objectives. This idea struck me as not only stupid but also dangerous.

Soon enough I saw the same idea—I labeled it 'technicism' and am told I was the first person to use the term in this sense—in many applied human sciences. Many government social programs are established to achieve broad goals, and evaluations are required. Applied social scientists thus compel program administrators to establish measurable objectives. This typically creates problems for the programs because they were in fact guided not by those reductive objectives but by tacit aims which are built into the conventions of the practices e.g., in social work or psychotherapy.

So the first 'conclusion' to draw from my work is that such reductive or 'technicist' programs are profoundly destructive of sound practice.

In the 1970s anti-technology attitudes were widespread. These struck me as confused. Ivan Illich, in

*Tools for Conviviality*, distinguished between manipulative technologies that coerce people into behaviors alien to their own ends, and 'convivial' technologies enabling people in achieving their ends. Compulsory test prep as a substitute for education is a good example of the first. The telephone system is a good example of the second because it enables people to speak to whomever they wish. In my recent book on MOOCs, I found this distinction useful because MOOCs may be used both manipulatively—as a kind of technological entrapment—and 'convivially'—allowing people to learn whatever they wish without the costs or inconveniences of degree programs.

### 3 | Are there certain approaches or methods of teaching that you strongly endorse or strongly discourage?

Well, I've already spoken about my loathing for manipulative teaching aimed at preset measurable objectives.

I have become increasingly interested in 'active learning' approaches, many of which have been inspired by Dewey. These offer specific ways of augmenting conventional lecture-discussion methods. One example is the 'one-minute paper.' The teacher asks a question, and before taking answers, all students write out their own answers for a minute or two and discuss them with peers. Then a few are called on to answer in front of the whole class. These techniques encourage original thinking and build speaking and listening skills. All students have to get into the act, not just the few talkative ones.

### 4 | Who were some of your own favorite teachers during your time at UW–Madison?

My favorite teachers at Wisconsin were Eugene Kaelin, Fred Dretske, Gerald MacCallum, and William Hay. I feel deeply blessed to have had these men as my teachers.

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## Faculty Highlights

**John Bengson** won a Vilas Associates award. He was also awarded tenure and promoted to Associate Professor.

**Harry Brighouse's** book, *Aims of Higher Education: Problems of Morality and Justice* (co-edited with Michael McPherson), was awarded the 2017 Frederick W. Ness Book Award for the "book that best contributes to the understanding and improvement of liberal education" by the American Association of Colleges and Universities.

**Paula Gottlieb** presented her talk "A Hitchhiker's Guide to Aristotle's Ethics" at Grainger Hall on November 16 as part of the department's ongoing series, UW Philosophers at Work. More than 150 members of the campus and Madison area community attended the event. *If you want to hear about department talks and events, send a message to [philosophyevents@philosophy.wisc.edu](mailto:philosophyevents@philosophy.wisc.edu) to be added to the mailing list.*

**Anat Schechtman's** "Substance and Independence in Descartes" was named one of the top 10 papers of 2016 by the *Philosophers' Annual*.

**Elliott Sober's** *Ockham's Razors: A User's Manual* received honorable mention for the APA's 2017 Sanders Book Prize.

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## 2017 Award and Scholarship Winners

### Graduate Student Awards and Scholarships

Richard McHugh Memorial Scholarship: Ben Schwan

Marcus G. and Blanche L. Singer Graduate Fellowship: Frank Cabrera

The W. Oliver Prize for Best Graduate Student Essay: David O'Brien, for "Inequality of Opportunity: Some Lessons from the Case of Highly-Selective Universities"

Larry Temkin Graduate Essay Prize in Value Theory: Megan Fritts, for "Measuring Well-Being and Valuing Virtue"

William H. Hay II Award for Summer Research: Michael Schon

Berent Enc Teaching Award: Emi Okayasu

### Undergraduate Departmental Awards and Scholarships

Charles Manthey Winter Scholarship: Poker Liu

Col. Jerome Ellis Goodrich (Ret. USMC) Scholarship: Hannah DeBrine

Temkin Undergraduate Essay Prize: John Mathie

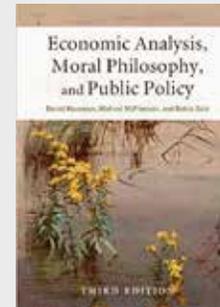
### L&S Awards

Jane Goddard Scholarship: Alex Chen

Thomas W. Parker Scholarship: Channi Ernstoff

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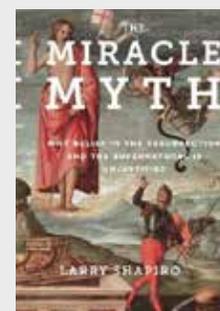
## The Book Nook



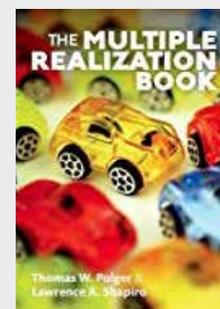
**Dan Hausman:** *Economic Analysis, Moral Philosophy, and Public Policy, 3rd edition* (Cambridge University Press, 2017). (with Michael McPherson and Debra Satz)



**Steve Nadler** (with Ben Nadler): *HERETICS! The Wondrous (and Dangerous) Beginnings of Modern Philosophy* (Princeton University Press, to be published in June)



**Larry Shapiro:** *The Miracle Myth: Why Belief in the Resurrection and the Supernatural Is Unjustified* (Columbia University Press, 2016)



**Larry Shapiro:** *The Multiple Realization Book* (with Thomas Polger) (Oxford University Press, 2016).

# Spring 2018 Colloquiums

The Department of Philosophy plans to host the following speakers in Spring 2018. For more information or to be added to the mailing list for public department-sponsored events, please send your email address to:

philosophyevents@philosophy.wisc.edu

**February 2:** Nancy Cartwright, University of California at San Diego and the University of Durham

**February 16:** Tommie Shelby, Caldwell Titcomb Professor of African and African American Studies and of Philosophy at Harvard University

**March 9:** Elisabeth Camp, Associate Professor of Philosophy at Rutgers University

**March 16:** Louis De Rosset, Professor and Department Chair at The University of Vermont

**April 27:** Elizabeth Harman, Professor of Philosophy and the University Center for Human Values at Princeton University

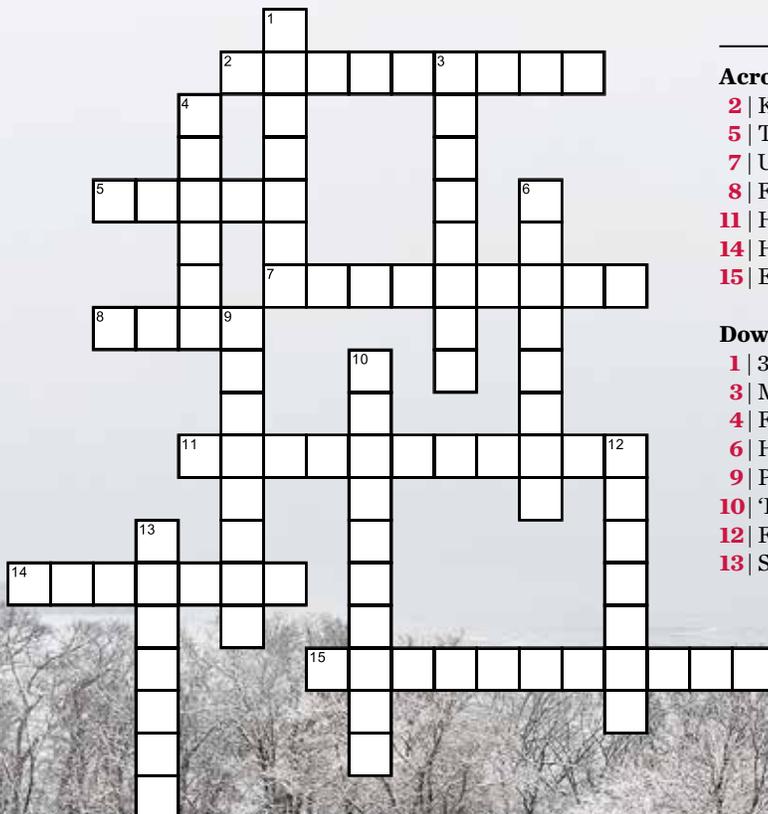
*(Schedule subject to change)*



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## Across

- 2 | Kant's big books
- 5 | Thales said everything is made of this
- 7 | Utilitarian's aim
- 8 | For Plato, what all things of a kind share
- 11 | Home of the food carts
- 14 | He tried to reconcile Aristotle with Christianity
- 15 | End of peninsula jutting into Lake Mendota

## Down

- 1 | 3 odd words in "Varsity"
- 3 | Moore's Open \_\_\_ argument
- 4 | For Aristotle, 8 down's partner
- 6 | Home of the Packers
- 9 | Period of 14 across
- 10 | 'For some' or 'for all'
- 12 | Fraternity street
- 13 | Statue at top of Bascom Hill