

Philosophy Phile

Georgia State University

Department of Philosophy
Spring 2009

Georgia State Welcomes George Graham



The Georgia State Department of Philosophy is thrilled to announce that the distinguished philosopher of the mind, Professor George Graham, joined the faculty in August of 2008. As one of the world's preeminent philosophers of psychology and psychiatry, his addition to the faculty is an exciting development for our department.

In the professional academic arena, Professor Graham has had a remarkably illustrious career. He earned his undergraduate degree at Fordham University and his Ph.D. from Brandeis. He comes to Georgia State from Wake Forrest University, where he held the A.C. Reid Professorship of Philosophy. Prior to his time at Wake Forrest, he was the chair of the philosophy department at the University of Alabama–Birmingham. In 2005, Graham was President of the *Society for Philosophy and Psychology*. Professor Graham has been a visiting scholar at Princeton and at St. Andrews (Scotland) and has guest lectured at such universities as Duke, Emory, Texas, UCSD, Virginia Tech, Washington University St. Louis, and the University of the West Indies.

His academic interest focuses on the philosophy of the mind, especially on theories of consciousness and intentionality, folk psychology, and mental illness. Over the course of his research career he has authored or co-authored dozens of articles, in such journals as *Nous*, *Philosophical Quarterly*, and *Synthese*. He has produced, as either author, co-author or co-editor, ten books with such presses as Blackwell, MIT Press, and Oxford University Press.

Other New Faces

Edward Cox joins us as a Lecturer from his previous position at Murray State University. He earned his undergraduate degree at the University of Chicago and his M.A. and Ph.D. from the University of Oklahoma. He specializes in philosophy of mind and metaphysics.

Jay Julian is a Visiting Instructor from Florida Southern College. He received his B.A. from the University of West Florida, his M.A. from University of Miami (Ohio), and his Ph.D. from the University of Memphis. His areas of interest are history of ethics and continental philosophy.

Ness Creighton is a Visiting Instructor who completed both her Masters and Undergraduate degrees at GSU. Her areas of interests range from Kant's practical philosophy to Japanese Political Philosophy.

Brandie Martinez-Bedard is a Visiting Instructor who also completed both her Masters and Undergraduate degrees at GSU. In 2008, she won the Graduate Student Teaching Award for all of Georgia State.

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Points of Interest:

- Get to Know the Department of Philosophy's New Faculty
- Updates on Faculty Research, Awards, and Publications
- Find Out About Upcoming Events and Programs Sponsored by the Department
- Updates on Alumni

Faculty Members

Andrew Altman
 Jessica Berry
 Andrew I. Cohen
 Andrew J. Cohen
 Edward Cox
 Ness Creighton
 Sandra Dwyer
 George Graham
 Christie Hartley
 Steve Jacobson
 Jay Julian
 Peter Lindsay
 Brandie Martinez-Bedard
 Lissa Merritt
 Eddy Nahmias
 Tim O'Keefe
 George Rainbolt
 Sebastian Rand
 Andrea Scarantino

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Felicia Thomas
 Contributing Editor,
 Department Staff

Letter from the Chair



We're back! After a two-year break caused by turnover in the office staff, we bring you the new and improved *Philosophy Phile*. A lot has happened in the last two years, too much for me to cover in one letter. I'll just provide a quick overview and urge you to check out the articles inside for the details.

If you graduated from the Department before 2001, you will barely recognize us. Everyone in the Department except yours truly was hired in 2001 or thereafter. If you go to www.gsu.edu/philosophy you will find a listing of all of us at our newly redesigned web site. Instead of just pulling up faculty CVs you can now read a short bio written by each of us and check out our pictures. We hope and believe that our philosophical skills surpass our modeling skills.

I also have the pleasure of introducing the modifications to our new philosophy major. The University is implementing a new initiative called "Critical Thinking through Writing" (CTW) and Philosophy is thrilled to support it. CTW provides funds for every department to have two classes in the major that are limited to 25 students. At a public university, it is rare for undergraduates to have this kind of experience. We redesigned our major to include the two CTW courses and we took the opportunity to make some other changes that make the major more cohesive.

Thanks again to all of you who have supported the Department over the last two years. Your monetary support is invaluable and we hope that you can continue to support us in this way. Your help is especially meaningful in this rough financial climate. The State of Georgia's tightening of the fiscal belt has substantially cut Georgia State's budget and this necessarily impacts our learning environment in a number of ways. For example, we may have to increase in the size of our classes. This hurts the quality of the education we offer to students so we hope that the legislature will restore these funds. Your contributions allow us to offer some morale boosters (such as books for students who win departmental awards) that are all the more important when money is tight.

Even more important than monetary support is moral support. And the best thing about providing moral support to the department is that it is fun. We would love to see you at our events. We have an incredible line up of speakers coming this year. You are also invited to join us for Philosophy on Friday, our monthly gathering for pizza and philosophical conversation. If you would like to receive email notifications about upcoming departmental events, see the last page of this newsletter for information on how to join our listserv. We hope that you can find the time to come down and see us.

George Rainbolt
 Chair, Department of Philosophy

Attention Alumni!

If you are a graduate of the Georgia State Department of Philosophy we would love to hear from you! Please drop us a line and we will publish updates about alumni in future issues.

Contact Felicia Thomas at fthomas@gsu.edu or mail us a letter at the Department of Philosophy P.O. Box 4089 Atlanta, GA 30302-4089



Spotlight on the Graduate Program

The Georgia State Department of Philosophy's graduate program remains in the top ten in the Leiter ranking of M.A. programs. Comments on Leiter's blog since the last official change in the rankings indicate that we may have moved from the top eight to the top five.

Our entering class reflected this shift. Last fall our mean GRE was the highest ever, and we brought in record numbers of graduate students. We have reached capacity and plan to slightly decrease the size of the incoming class next year in order to maintain the intimate quality of our classroom environment.

We continue to welcome graduate students and visiting scholars from around the world. We will host two students from the Sorbonne this year and are welcoming visiting scholars from Germany, Spain, and Brazil. Through our efforts, we are constructing a vibrant community of higher level academia.

Our graduate students continue to excel after they leave us. In the past two years, our graduates have entered top-ranked Ph.D. programs such as University of California, Riverside, University of Texas-Austin, John Hopkins, University of North Carolina, Chapel Hill, and the University of Arizona. Still others have gone on to succeed in a wide variety of jobs including counselor, high school teacher, librarian, and employee for IBM in China.

Film & Ethics Series

The Blumenfeld Center for Ethics recently concluded another successful installment of its annual Film-in-Ethics movie series for the fall semester of the 2008-09 school year. Co-sponsored by Georgia State Housing and the Center for Ethics' Student Forum, the series aims to provide a forum for philosophical dialogue outside the classroom setting.

The theme of the recent series, "Votes, Government, and the Media," focused on the recent election and its implications for democracy and voter competence. Students were able to view a variety of political movies and discuss their context within an academic setting.

Apart from a dazzling array of professors pulled from multiple Departments, the Film-in-Ethics series was supplemented with a symposium on "The Perils of Attention Deficit Democracy" with speaker James Bovard, the renowned political pundit.



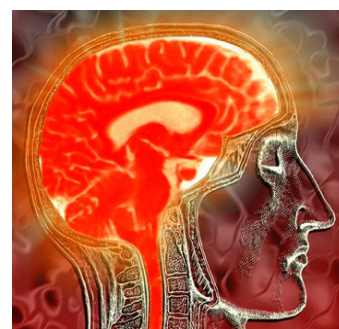
The Film-in-Ethics series offers a cultural context for the discussion of ethics

Neurophilosophy Forum

The Neurophilosophy Forum comprises a series of informal discussions among neuroscientists and philosophers at Georgia State and Emory University about issues related to Brains & Behavior.

The objective of the Forum is to cross-fertilize between Philosophy and Neuroscience. This past semester featured speakers from MIT, Emory, and the University of Maryland on topics ranging from morality and the brain to reasoning mechanisms.

The Forum is organized by George Graham, Eddy Nahmias, and Andrea Scarantino. Everyone is encouraged to attend. It holds three meetings per semester, usually on Fridays and there are no requirements for membership or participation



The Neurophilosophy Forum: providing an interface between philosophy and the mind.

Pioneers of the Mind

Georgia State continues to define academic excellence in the field of research. Our professors have received numerous awards and published various research to further the field of philosophy. Due to limited space, we cannot list all of our professor's accomplishments here, but we will give a quick overview of the most prominent awards.

Andrew Altman was chosen by the National Endowment for the Humanities (NEH) to lead an NEH Summer Seminar for College Teachers, "Philosophical Perspectives on Law, Democracy, and Human Rights" in 2007. This is the second time that Dr. Altman has earned this prestigious grant.

Jessica Berry is one of eight philosophers in the nation to be awarded a National Endowment for the Humanities Fellowship for University Teachers. The Fellowship's \$25,200 stipend funded her research leave for the Summer and Fall semesters of 2008. Her time away allowed her to finish her book "Nietzsche and the Ancient Skeptical Tradition" which is under contract with Oxford University Press for publication in 2009.

Andrew I. Cohen recently published an essay entitled "Pharmaceutical Advertising and Patient Autonomy" in an anthology on pharmaceutical innovation. Professor Cohen was also awarded his second consecutive Page Legacy grant to study the ethics of corporate crisis communication in 2008–2009. He is currently working on essays for forthcoming publication in *Social Philosophy and Policy* and *Ethics and Environment*.

Melissa Merritt is currently working on an essay entitled "Reflection, Enlightenment, and the Significance of Spontaneity in Kant" for forthcoming publication in the *British Journal for the History of Philosophy*.

Eddy Nahmias was awarded a \$100,000 dollar grant from the University of Chicago's Defining Wisdom Initiative. Only three philosophers in the entire country were awarded one of these grants. He will use the grant to complete his book *Rediscovering Free Will* (Oxford University Press) and to teach a course on the philosophy and psychology of wisdom in 2009–2010.

Join the Friends of Philosophy listserv and get announcements about talks, conferences and social events in the Department. To join, send an email to: listserv@listserv.gsu.edu. In the body of the message include only two words: **subscribe philfriends**. You should receive a welcome message confirming your subscription.

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