

W&M PHILOSOPHY DEPARTMENT

2025-2026

www.wm.edu/as/philosophy/

STUDENT ORGANIZATIONS



PHILOSOPHY CLUB

The Philosophy Club is back again this year bringing philosophy to every part of campus, asking simple questions and finding complex answers! They can be found in Blair or walking the campus, presenting new ideas, debating old ones, or finding the middle ground! They are looking forward to another successful Spring Undergraduate Philosophy Conference, where they will consider essay applications from across the country and host an exciting guest lecturer.



ETHICS BOWL COMPETITION TEAM

The Ethics Club focuses on competing in all sorts of ethics bowls. These bowls are discussion-based competitions where they discuss contemporary moral issues. Those issues include AI, the environment, government aid abroad, and more. Last year they competed in the National Bioethics Bowl in the spring and the APPE Mid-Atlantic Regional Competition in the fall. In total, they had 4 wins, 2 ties, and 1 loss. Additionally, in the last year alone they have more than doubled their membership!

FROM THE DEPARTMENT CHAIR

Time flies! Another year is already underway at W&M. For the first time ever, the philosophy department is offering major concentrations. We are still offering the standard major with no concentration, which has stood the test of time. But now students can get a concentration in Ethics & Law or a concentration in Ethics for Data & Computing. These concentrations develop the same critical and writing skills as the standard major while making it easier to translate the value of philosophy to some employers.

I also want to say thanks to all of you for your continued interest and support. This past year, the philosophy department had more resources than ever. We increased funding for student and faculty travel. The Ethics Bowl students in particular were able to take advantage of this increase in funding, and you will read more about their exploits in this newsletter. We just wrapped up a conference and had an outside researcher visit one of our senior seminars. Last year we trialed a mentoring program for students in the department and are continuing it this year. Among other things, this program helps our students translate their philosophy degree into real world success.

The rest of this newsletter provides just a taste of what our students and faculty are up to. I hope you enjoy it, and thank you again for being a part of our community.

~ CHRIS TUCKER
Department Chair



RECENTLY TENURED!



PROFESSOR LAURA GUERRERO

Laura Guerrero was promoted to Associate Professor beginning Fall of 2025. She joined William & Mary in 2020 as the first tenure-track professor hired that specializes in a philosophical tradition outside the Western canon. Her main area of research is Buddhist philosophy. Her research aims to explain, compare, and critically assess the views of Buddhist philosophers in a way that engages with relevant contemporary work in analytic metaphysics, epistemology, and philosophy of mind. Her research is both exegetical and constructive, as well as cross-cultural, drawing on resources from both classical Indian and contemporary Western analytic traditions. She created a new course specifically on cross-cultural philosophical methodology entitled "Philosophy Across Cultures." She looks forward to continuing to promote the study of philosophy from a wide variety of cultural and disciplinary perspectives.

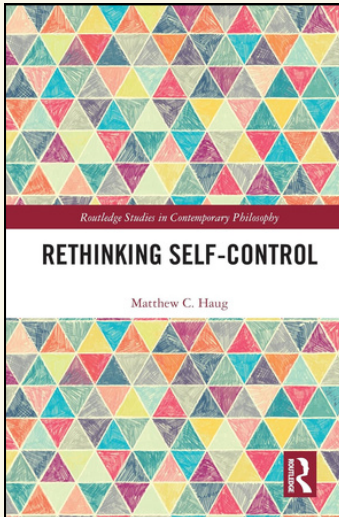
RECENTLY HIRED!



PROFESSOR WILLIAM D'ALESSANDRO

Bill D'Alessandro joined W&M in 2024, after doing a philosophy PhD and mathematics MS at the University of Illinois-Chicago and holding fellowships at the University of Oxford, LMU Munich and the Center for AI Safety. He's a first-generation college graduate from Niagara County, New York. His research interests include philosophy of science and mathematics (where he's written many papers about topics like explanation, understanding and proof), aesthetics, ethics and philosophy of AI. He regularly teaches Ethics and Data Science at W&M and serves as faculty advisor to the Philosophy Club.

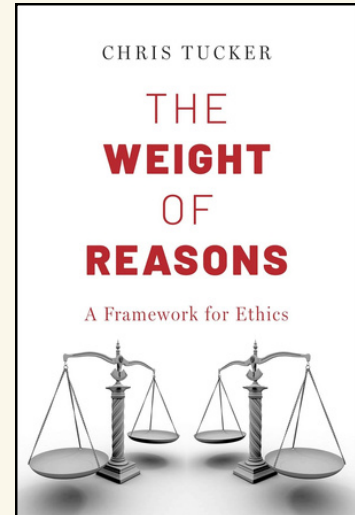
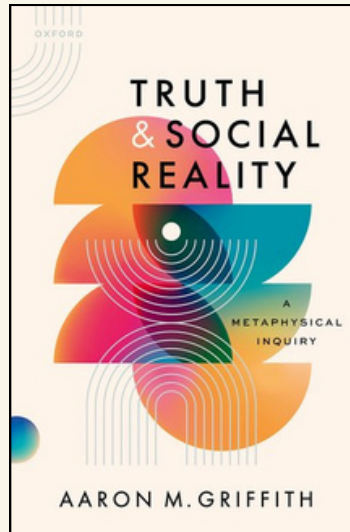
RECENT FACULTY PUBLICATIONS



Matthew C. Haug

Rethinking Self-Control is an essential resource for philosophers and psychologists interested in virtue ethics, moral psychology, philosophy of mind, philosophy of action, and ancient philosophy.

Aaron M. Griffith
Truth and Social Reality rebuts the cynicism of the "post-truth" age by defending the possibility and value of social truth.



Chris Tucker

The Weight of Reasons tells you everything you ever wanted to know about weighing reasons and a lot of stuff you didn't want to know too.

MEET OUR FACULTY



As pictured left to right, top to bottom: Laura W. Ekstrom (zoom), Paul Sheldon Davies (zoom), Noah Lemos, Jonah P.B. Goldwater, William D'Alessandro, Tim Sommers, Philip Swenson, Chad Vance, Laura P. Guerrero, Matthew Haug, Timothy Costelloe (zoom), Aaron Griffith, Victoria M. Costa, Joshua Gert, and Christopher Tucker.

SUPPORT PHILOSOPHY!

Contributions from alumni greatly enhance the intellectual life of the department. Go to give.wm.edu to donate to the Philosophy Department's General Expendable Fund (code 2983). This fund supports faculty research, student activities (like the Undergraduate Research Conference, and events for the entire department. We thank you for your continued interest and support!



We're always interested in the latest news from our alumni! Email philosophy@wm.edu to submit your updates. We will post them on our website or include them in a future newsletter!

JERRY MILLER AWARD

The Jerry Miller Award recognizes the Outstanding Undergraduate Essay by a graduating philosophy major. In memory of beloved W&M alumnus Jerry Miller, it is endowed by Mr. and Mrs. William M. Richardson, the United Virginia Bank, and members of the family of Gerald G. Miller. No award is given when no entries are of sufficient quality. Up to two awards may be given when there is more than one deserving essay. This year, the winner was Sam Roach.

Sam Roach

Sam graduated in the Spring. He will be attending Washington & Lee Law School in the Fall, thanks to winning The Dean's Scholarship that covers full tuition. This summer, he is interning under the Honorable Sean Workowski in the Augusta (VA) County Circuit Court. He hopes to practice law and gain enough experience to become a professor of criminology. Previously, he has won the department's highest honor, the Fuchs Scholarship (\$5k value).

He wrote his award-winning, "Expressivism about Race: Deflating the Race Debate", under Professor Aaron Griffith as part of his honors thesis. Recently, metaphysicians have tried to untangle the metaphysical nature of the social world by giving accounts of things like class, race, and gender. Sam argues that this project is misguided. On his view, all distinctly metaphysical questions about race dissolve when we get an accurate picture of our race-related linguistic practices and why they developed in the first place.

PROFESSOR ALAN FUCHS MEMORIAL SCHOLARSHIP WINNER

The Professor Alan Fuchs Memorial Scholarship is a merit-based award of \$5,000 and was established in memory of Alan Fuchs, Professor Emeritus of Philosophy (1941-2020). He taught generations of students at William & Mary from 1969 until his retirement from full-time teaching in 2007. Invitations are made based on overall GPA and nominations by faculty members. This year, the award was split equally between Bernardo Jimenez and Elizabeth Marcus.

Bernardo Jimenez

Bernardo is a rising senior, a double major in Economics and Philosophy, with a 3.82 GPA. He was President and Team captain of the student run Ethics Bowl team, where they competed across the country. While they did not quite make the national championship this past year, he was part of a team that made it the year before. His favorite field within Philosophy is that of normativity, especially metaethics. He is pursuing an honors thesis on the strength of reasons to follow moral norms under Professor Gert's advisory in the Fall. Last summer he completed the initial research on this topic for the Charles Center under Professor Griffith with some help from Professor Gert.

Elizabeth Marcus

Elizabeth is an International Relations & Philosophy double major with a 3.95 GPA, and a perfect 4.0 in philosophy. This summer, as a Freeman Fellow, she is completing an 8-week internship at CODE-NGO in the Philippines. This past Spring, she studied philosophy and international relations abroad at Oxford University, and the prior summer she studied in Lithuania, thanks to the Dobro Slovo Scholarship. She is currently exploring her career plans, but in general she hopes to become involved in political campaigning or activism ahead of the 2026 midterm elections, improve her language skills in Mandarin and Russian, and prepare her international relations graduate school application.

BOSANKO MEMORIAL SCHOLARSHIP

The Jennifer Bosanko Memorial Scholarship Fund was established by family and friends in memory of Jennifer, who was a philosophy major at William & Mary and a member of the class of 2009. The Bosanko Scholarships support students who, like Jen, demonstrate intellectual curiosity, industriousness, and a well-rounded approach to taking on the world. This year, the scholarship was awarded to Emmanuel Sampson and Jessica Lain.

Emmanuel Sampson

As he approaches his senior year, Emmanuel Sampson is a busy guy. In addition to his philosophy and physics double major, he participates in a wide variety of extracurricular activities that hopefully will prepare him to be an engineer. In the past, he was president of the Robotics Club. This upcoming year, he is the President of the William & Mary Photography Club and the Data Science Society. As if that weren't enough, he's currently developing software for a watch company that aims to alleviate mental health issues and is the marketing manager for an ophthalmic engineering company that specializes in making devices to help children with ocular diseases.

Jessica Lain

As she approaches her senior year, Jessica Lain has a 3.8 GPA, with a major in philosophy and a minor in history. This summer, she has an internship in New York City with a literary public relations agency. When she returns to campus, she has extra-curricular activities all over campus: she is a co-facilitator of the Philosophy Club, a staff editor of William & Mary's student literary magazine, The Gallery, and a Confidential Peer Advocate at The Haven. Aside from these positions, she's a member of a Kappa Alpha Theta and Bird Club. In her free time, she writes poetry and volunteers at her local animal shelter. After college, she plans to attend law school and pursue either intellectual property, environmental, or criminal law.