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## From the Department Chair

I write this on a muggy late-August afternoon in my office in James Blair Hall, looking out on a very quiet Sunken Garden. In just a week or so, campus will be raucous and alive again, as students return and fall classes begin. Late summer is always an exciting time, full of anticipation and promise.

2022-23 seemed to usher in a “new normal,” post-(acute)-pandemic, with many faculty returning to conference travel, and the department welcoming its first in-person conference attendees and colloquium speakers since March 2020.

Over Labor Day weekend, the department hosted an excellent conference on Ethics and Theism, organized by Chris Tucker (and part of series of workshops at the intersection of ethics and philosophy of religion that Chris has been co-organizing with Mark Murphy (Georgetown) and Christian Miller (Wake Forest)).

We also enjoyed three top-notch colloquium talks from Quayshawn Spencer (Pennsylvania), on philosophy of race, Danielle Wenner (Carnegie Mellon), on political philosophy, and Sarah Stroud

(UNC-Chapel Hill), on meta-ethics. (Rishi Joshi’s (now at Arizona) talk scheduled for last spring was postponed until this fall due to illness.)

I was happy to serve a member of an Arts & Sciences Working Group on AI Writing Tools that met last spring to develop initial guidance for W&M faculty on the use (or lack thereof) of generative artificial intelligence (AI), particularly, large language models like ChatGPT, in the classroom. As someone who works on issues in philosophy of mind, I find the theoretical issues concerning intelligence and related topics raised by these new tools fascinating, even if I share some of the concerns that have been raised about using them in the classroom.

Thanks for your continued support, and please let us know what you’re up to, using the links on p.4. We also hope to see many of you at our Department Open House on Oct. 21, during Homecoming Weekend.

Wishing you a successful and enjoyable year,

-Matt Haug

## Diverse Philosophies Club

The Diverse Philosophies Club is open to all students at W&M and is dedicated to discussing valuable ideas in philosophy, with a special emphasis on underrepresented work, new perspectives, and diverse authorship. The Club allows students to pursue their philosophical interests wherever they may take them, including areas beyond the scope of classes typically offered at W&M.

The Club met regularly throughout the academic year and hosted its annual Undergraduate Philosophy Conference on April 2<sup>nd</sup>, 2023. Four students presented their work, and Prof. Philip Yaure (Virginia Tech) gave a keynote lecture on “Seizing Citizenship: Frederick Douglass’s Abolitionist Republicanism.”

The Club’s student facilitators for 2022-23 were Gaelan DiPaola and Evelyn Wang; student facilitators for 2023-24 will be elected later in the fall. The faculty advisors are Aaron Griffith (Fall) and Laura Guerrero (Spring).

## Student News

### Bosanko Scholarship Winners

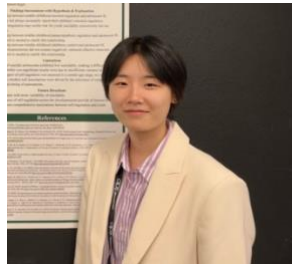
The **Jennifer Bosanko Memorial Scholarship Fund** was established by family and friends in memory of Jennifer, who was a philosophy major at William & Mary and a member of the Class of 2009. The Bosanko Scholarships support students who, like Jen, demonstrate intellectual curiosity, industriousness,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

In Fall 2022, the Bosanko Scholarships were awarded to **Lela Creamer** and **Yifan Yuan**. **Lela** is a double-major in Philosophy and Physics with a wide variety of interests. Her many activities including playing violin, drawing, writing and reciting poetry, and participating in several clubs, including Botany Club and a historical sword fighting club. This past summer she was an intern at NASA, working on a machine learning algorithm to help interpret spectrographic data from the Sun.

**Yifan** graduated *summa cum laude* and Phi Beta Kappa in May 2023 with a double-major in Philosophy and Psychology. After graduation, she presented work from her honors thesis in Psychology at the Association for Psychological Science annual convention, where she was one of two winners of the APS Student Research Award. She is currently pursuing a master’s degree at San Diego State University, conduct research on irritability in children and adolescents.



Lela Creamer



Yifan Yuan

### Miller Award Winners

The **Jerry Miller Essay Award** is awarded to a graduating senior philosophy major or majors who, in the judgment of the department faculty, presents the best essay in an annual competition. In Spring 2023, two students, **Preston Budd** and **Michelle Yue**, were co-winners of the Miller Award.

**Preston**’s winning essay was “On Conditional Reasons,” which was a chapter of his honors thesis, supervised by Prof. Chris Tucker. He graduated *summa cum laude* and is currently pursuing a PhD in philosophy at New York University, where he plans to work on topics related to ethics.

**Michelle**’s winning essay was “Assigning Desert Praise and Blame Values Under Swenson’s Egalitarian Solution to the Problem of Moral Luck,” which she wrote for Prof. Swenson’s PHIL403 seminar, Responsibility and Moral Luck. (Philip played no role in the selection of this year’s Miller Awards.) She graduated *summa cum laude* and Phi Beta Kappa with a double-major in Philosophy and Biology. She applied to medical schools over the summer and is currently working in Dr. George Church’s laboratory at Harvard’s Wyss Institute for Biologically Inspired Engineering, studying bipolar disorder.



Preston Budd



Michelle Yue

### Professor Alan Fuchs Memorial Scholarship Winner

This scholarship was established in memory of Prof. Alan Fuchs, who taught generations of students at William & Mary from 1969 until his retirement from full-time teaching in 2007. **Juntong Gu** was selected in Spring 2023 as the first recipient of this scholarship. Juntong is double majoring in Philosophy and Psychology. This past summer she attended the Philosophy Summer Seminar at the University of Colorado, Boulder, a three-week program designed for undergraduate students who are considering pursuing graduate studies in philosophy. This fall she is studying abroad at Oxford University, where she is enrolled in tutorials on philosophy of art and philosophy of time, and she will begin work on an honor thesis co-advised by Prof. Griffith and Prof. Haug.

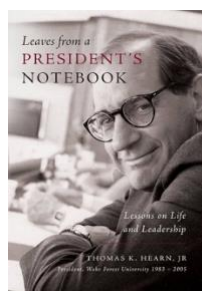


Juntong Gu

# Current and Former Faculty News

## New Visiting Teaching Professor

The Department welcomes a new Visiting Assistant Teaching Professor this year, **Tim Sommers**. Prof. Sommers received his PhD in 2022 from the University of Iowa. His research is primarily in political philosophy and ethics and is currently focused on how various kinds of equality (formal, moral, and substantive) are related to justice. He will be teaching courses in ethics, applied ethics, and philosophy of law this year. He is a regular contributor to the website [3 Quarks Daily](#) and also writes a monthly applied ethics and current events column for the [Prindle Post](#).



## Posthumous Book of Essays Published

**Thomas K. Hearn, Jr.** was a professor of Philosophy at W&M from 1967-74 and President of Wake Forest from 1983-2005. A new book of Dr. Hearn's essays, [Leaves from a President's Notebook: Lessons on Life and Leadership](#), was recently published by the Center for Creative Leadership. All proceeds will be donated to the Center. (Thanks to Dr. Hearn's son, Tom Hearn, for the info.)

## Recent Faculty Books

**Laura Ekstrom's** book, [Evil and Theodicy](#) (Cambridge University Press, 2023) is part of the Cambridge Elements series in the Problems of God.

In it, Prof. Ekstrom motivates the project of theodicy by examining arguments rooted in evil against God's existence and by critically examining the response of skeptical theism. Ekstrom explores eight different lines of theodicy. She argues that, even if the prospects for theodicy are dim with respect to defending the rationality of theistic belief in light of suffering, nonetheless, work in theodicies is practically useful.

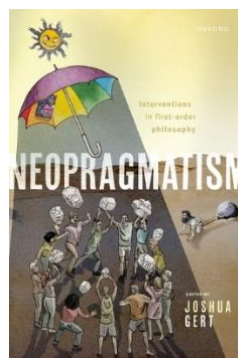


[Neopragmatism: Interventions in First-order Philosophy](#) (Oxford University Press, 2023) is a collection of essays edited by **Joshua Gert**. Many of the chapters in the volume descend from talks given at the 2018 biennial conference which Gert organized on this topic.

Neopragmatism is a very general language-first approach

to questions about the existence or nature of various traditionally philosophically troubling entities or properties. It rejects metaphysical questions about these things by instead focusing our attention on our practices using the relevant words, like 'true,' 'four', 'immoral', 'necessary', 'art', and so on.

Contributing authors include Huw Price, Amie Thomasson, Mazviita Chirimuuta, and Philip Pettit.



## Recent Faculty Papers

- **M. Victoria Costa** "Neo-Republicanism's Methodological Commitments and Individual Rights" *Theoria*
- **Timothy Costelloe** "Art, Ethics, and Value in the Modern Aesthetic Tradition" in *The Oxford Handbook of Ethics and Art*, ed. James Harold, Oxford UP.
- **Laura Ekstrom** "Forgiveness and the Emotions" in *A Companion to Free Will*, ed. Joseph K. Campbell, Wiley Blackwell.
- **Joshua Gert** "Neopragmatist Semantics" *Philosophy and Phenomenological Research*
- **Jonah Goldwater** "Paraphrase, Categories, and Ontology" *Analytic Philosophy*
- **Aaron Griffith** "Basic Racial Realism, Social Constructionism, and the Ordinary Concept of Race" *Journal of Social Philosophy*
- **Laura Guerrero** "Ontological Pluralism in Abhidharma Debates about the Existence of Past and Future Dharmas" *Philosophy East and West*
- **Matthew Haug** "Resolving Two Tensions in (Neo-)Aristotelian Approaches to Self-Control" *Ethical Theory and Moral Practice*
- **Noah Lemos** "Conditionalism, Intrinsicism, and Pleasure in the Bad" *Philosophy and Phenomenological Research*
- **Philip Swenson** "Equal Moral Opportunity: A Solution to the Problem of Moral Luck" *Australasian Journal of Philosophy*
- **Chris Tucker** "The Dual Scale Model of Weighing Reasons" *Nous*





## Send us your updates!

We're always interested in the latest news from our alumni (from the Olde Guard to the Young). Submit your updates online via [this form](#), or send them to [philosophy@wm.edu](mailto:philosophy@wm.edu), and we'll post them on our website or include them in a future newsletter.

## Support Philosophy

Contributions from alumni greatly enhance the intellectual life of the department. Click [here](#) to donate to the Philosophy Department's General Expendable Fund, which supports faculty research, student activities (like the Undergraduate Conference), and events like those listed at the right.

# Alumni News

- **William D. Harpine ('73)** retired in 2017 as Distinguished Professor of Communication Emeritus at Univ. of South Carolina, Aiken. He blogs about public speaking at [harpine.blogspot.com](http://harpine.blogspot.com).
- **Michael Hodges ('63)** will retire from teaching in the Philosophy Dept. at Vanderbilt University after more than 50 years of service.
- **Douglas MacDonald ('64)** died Nov. 8, 2022, at the age of 81. He was Professor of Philosophy Emeritus at Furman University, where he taught for 29 years and served as Department Chair. His commitment to undergraduate education in philosophy was evidenced by his establishing two endowments at Furman and

one at Vanderbilt, where he received his PhD. He also made a major gift, through his trust, to the W&M Philosophy Department, establishing the MacDonald-Lachs Philosophy Quasi-Endowment in honor of John Lachs, his mentor at W&M and later Vanderbilt. This gift will provide general support to the Department, including research and teaching. Dr. MacDonald is survived by his wife, Dr. Ruby Norris Morgan and many friends, colleagues, and former students. We are saddened by this loss but grateful for Dr. MacDonald's many contributions to philosophy.



## Department Events

- **Student/faculty BBQ and volleyball game: Sept. 8, 4:00 p.m.**, Outside James Blair Hall
- **Colloquium: Tristram McPherson** (Ohio State), "Moral Concepts, Inefficacy, and Collective Action," **Sept. 15, 3:30-5:00 p.m.**, 223 James Blair Hall
- **Reading Hume Today: A Conference in Honor of Elizabeth Radcliffe** (W&M), **Sept. 22, 9:30 a.m.-5:00 p.m.**, 301 Washington Hall, Click [here](#) for more information.
- **Colloquium: Ben Bradley** (Syracuse), "The Sacrificer's Dilemma," **Oct. 20, 3:30-5:00 p.m.**, 223 James Blair Hall
- **Homecoming (Alumni Open House), Oct. 21, 10:00 a.m.-12:00 p.m.**, Dept. Common Room (127 James Blair Hall)
- **Colloquium: Rishi Joshi** (Arizona), Title TBA, **Nov. 10, 3:30-5:00 p.m.**, James Blair Hall, room TBA
- **Colloquium: Nomy Arpaly** (Brown), Title TBA, **Mar. 1, 3:30-5:00 p.m.**, James Blair Hall, room TBA

As always, we are grateful for all your generous donations, especially those of Teresa Thompson ('67) and Michael Foradas ('78), which fund our conferences, workshops, and speakers.

Alumni Newsletter September 2023



# W&M

## Philosophy

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