



# AAPT NEWS

*The Newsletter of the American Association of Philosophy Teachers*

VOLUME 30 NUMBER 1

SUMMER 2007

## **CALL FOR PROPOSALS 17TH INTERNATIONAL WORKSHOP-CONFERENCE ON TEACHING PHILOSOPHY**

University of Guelph, Guelph, Ontario, Canada

August 6-10, 2008

Proposals for interactive workshops and panels related to teaching and learning philosophy at any educational level are welcome. We especially encourage workshops and panels that deal with innovative and successful teaching strategies; the application of philosophy to any area or issue; the connection of philosophy with other disciplines; the use of new technologies; new uses of "old" technologies; and the challenge of teaching in new, as well as in traditional, settings. Applicants are welcome to submit more than one proposal.

### PROPOSAL GUIDELINES

- Proposals must be received by January 16, 2008.
- Proposals should describe, in 1-3 pages, what the presentation will cover, what participants/ audience members will do or experience during the session, and what the session seeks to achieve. Proposals should also list any materials or handouts to be provided, as well as any special equipment to be used. To facilitate the anonymous review process, do not include your name or any identifying information in the body of your proposal.
- In addition to your proposal, please supply a separate information sheet (as a separate file if sending submission via email) that includes each presenter's name, institutional affiliation (if any), and contact information (phone number, email address, and postal address), as well as the title of the proposed presentation, the length of the presentation (60 or 90 minutes), the format of the presentation (workshop, panel, discussion, or demonstration), a list of equipment needed, and a brief abstract (100-200 words) for use in the printed conference program.
- Proposals may be submitted via email, postal mail, or fax. Send email submissions to [kevin.hermberg@dc.edu](mailto:kevin.hermberg@dc.edu) with "AAPT Proposal" in the subject line of your message. Attachments must be in MS Word or PDF and should be labeled with your name (for example: [Jane\\_Doe\\_Info\\_Sheet.doc](#) or [.docx](#) or [.pdf](#)). Send postal submissions to Kevin Hermberg, Department of Philosophy, Dominican College, 470 Western Highway, Orangeburg, NY 10962. Proposals may also be faxed to the attention of Kevin Hermberg at (845) 359-5771.
- Visit <http://www.philosophyteachers.org> for additional information about AAPT or the workshop-conference.

*AAPT News* is the Bulletin of  
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## SUBMISSIONS TO AAPT NEWS

*AAPT News* is currently published twice each year.  
Deadlines for submissions are Dec 10 and Aug 10.  
Submissions may be sent as e-mail attachments to  
**[bdecyk@csulb.edu](mailto:bdecyk@csulb.edu)**.

Microsoft Word is preferred.

Hard copies may be FAXed to  
(562) 985-9100 (attn: Decyk) or mailed to:  
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### Election results

2007-2009 Elected Officers:

John Wager – Vice-president  
David Concepción – Board Member-at-Large  
Tziporah Kasachkoff – Board Member-at-Large  
Nils Rauhut – Board Member-at-Large

The membership also approved a set of By-Laws and Rules of Order which the Board of Officers had recommended following the 2006 workshop/conference. These will be appended to the Constitution. The document specifies that business and board meetings shall be conducted in accordance with Robert's Rules of Order Newly Revised, provides the quorum rules for meetings of the organization and meetings of the Board of Officers, specifies the timeframe for communication of actions taken at a board meeting to the whole board and provides a mechanism for the board to reconsider actions taken.

Thank you to the election committee for a job well done!:

Stephen Bickham  
David Concepción  
William Johnson  
Stephen Schulman

### A change in the membership cycle

At the 2006 workshop/conference, the board decided to align the membership year with the timing of the conferences – which are held in the summer. This means that membership fees will now be due in the summer and one's membership will expire on June 30th of a given year rather than on the last day of December. The amount of the membership dues has not changed.

*Betsy*

## 17<sup>th</sup> BIENNIAL WORKSHOP CONFERENCE ON TEACHING PHILOSOPHY August 6 – 8, 2008

Our host for the 17th Biennial Workshop Conference on Teaching Philosophy will be the *Department of Philosophy at the University of Guelph, Guelph, Ontario, Canada*

The University of Guelph is located 43 miles from Pearson International Airport in Toronto and 40 miles from the Hamilton International Airport.

The University of Guelph provides an idyllic setting for this conference. Arrangements are being made to house conference participants in the East Residence Complex at the University. This complex consists of high rise apartment style suites and a town-house complex. The residence area is within walking distance of the Arboretum where we hope to hold our conference banquet. For information about local attractions visit the City of Guelph's tourism site at: <http://guelph.ca/visiting.cfm>

### PLAN TO ATTEND! START NOW!

Regulations governing travel between the U.S. and Canada have been changing. They have already changed for air travel and are likely to change for land and sea travel on or after January 31, 2008. In order to re-enter the U.S., individuals will have to present a valid passport (this includes all U.S. citizens), or have a current NEXUS Card, or have an alien registration card.

Complete information on new travel regulations can be found at:

<http://www.dhs.gov/xtrvlsec/crossingborders/whtibasics.shtm#4>

The International Workshop-Conference on Teaching Philosophy (IWCTP) is a family-friendly four-and-a-half-day conference for people who teach philosophy at any level of education. We emphasize workshops that are practical and interactive, and taken all together they cover a wide range of subjects related to teaching. Concurrent with the IWCTP is a selective and highly popular teaching seminar for graduate students, which **AAPT** co-sponsors with the **American Philosophical Association**. Special events during the conference include our famous wine and cheese reception, a film series, conference banquet, and may other informal activities. Typically, we "take over" a local pub in the evenings so we can continue conversations and friendship-building. If you join us at the upcoming conference you'll discover why the **American Association of Philosophy Teachers** is known as one of the friendliest and most inclusive professional organizations in philosophy.



## LOOKING BACK, LOOKING FORWARD

**Donna Engelmann**  
*Past President*

At our AAPT Board meeting at the American Philosophical Association Eastern Division meeting in Washington, D.C. on December 29, 2006, the presidency of the AAPT passed to Nancy Hancock. I am delighted that the organization is in such experienced and capable hands! John Wager has been elected Vice President and as such will serve as the Chair of the Lensen Prize Committee. Having been re-elected, Tziporah Kasachkoff will continue her dedicated service as a Board Member at Large. David Concepción rejoins the Board in a new position as an elected Board Member at Large. Betsy Decyk is our wise and able Executive Director, Bob Timko is our very effective Treasurer, and I continue to serve on the Board as Past President and Chair of the Graduate Seminar Advisory Committee.

We also welcome several AAPT members who are new to the Board. Nils Rauhut has been elected as a Board Member at Large. The Board has appointed Stephen Schulman as Chair of the Speakers and Awards Committee and Kevin Hermberg and Adrienne McEvoy as the Program Co-Chairs for the 2008 Workshop Conference. We are grateful for their participation and look forward to their new ideas and contributions!

I want to extend my thanks to our outgoing Board members Daryl Close, Martin Benjamin, Stephen Bickham, Andy Carpenter, Laura Newhart and Linda Sartorelli for their commitment to the AAPT. I cannot emphasize enough how fortunate I have been in my tenure as president to serve with such an outstanding leadership team. Our Board members have

offered literally decades of service to the AAPT and to the improvement of the teaching of philosophy.

Thanks also to Betsy Decyk and Bill Johnson for their excellent editing and lay-out of the newsletters, and to Sue DaBaco and her staff in the Alverno College duplicating department for their fine work in the production and distribution of the newsletters.

I am proud of our accomplishments in the last two years, and I want to note some of them for readers of this newsletter:

... We continued to build international ties around the teaching of philosophy by supporting travel to conferences by AAPT representatives. Betsy Decyk and John Wager were AAPT representatives at the conference on teaching of philosophy held at the University of Leeds in July, 2005. That conference was sponsored by The Subject Centre for Philosophical and Religious Studies, the Director of which, George Macdonald Ross, is a staunch AAPT member. We sent Nancy Hancock, Alphonse Capone, and Sara Lublink Daley as AAPT representatives

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below*

to the November 2006 UNESCO conference on Philosophy in Everyday Life. This conference was in Paris, and our folks were hosted by our French colleague, Oscar Brenifier.

... Our August 2006 conference at Washington and Jefferson College in Washington, Pennsylvania, drew over 100 participants to share stimulating workshops. We enjoyed great camaraderie on a lovely and welcoming campus. The conference included inspiring keynotes by

Robert Ennis and Martin Benjamin. These long-time members of AAPT were also honored with special awards.

...We awarded the Lenssen prize for excellence in a published article on the teaching of philosophy to David Concepción. His essay, "Reading Philosophy with Background Knowledge and Metacognition," appeared in *Teaching Philosophy*, 27:4, pp. 351-368.

...We continued our partnership with the American Philosophical Association in sponsoring a philosophy teaching seminar for graduate students in conjunction with the 2006 AAPT conference. Participants from graduate programs across the nation were led in morning sessions by Martin Benjamin and Betsy Decyk, and in the afternoons and evenings they participated in our conference activities. We expect that these young philosophers will be the next generation of our members, and future leaders of the AAPT, as has been the case with seminar participants in the past.

...We maintained a listserv for both members and non-members which provided a forum for sharing expertise on teaching philosophy. We are currently reconstructing the AAPT website. Thanks go to John Wager, Nancy Hancock and others who have contributed their energy to developing and maintaining our electronic presence.

...We sponsored sessions on teaching at each of the APA divisional meetings during the last two years. We were pleased to collaborate in offering

these sessions with the Association for Informal Logic and Critical Thinking, the APA Committee on Teaching in Two Year Institutions, and the Committee on Teaching of the APA.

...We sponsored a session on teaching C. S. Pierce at the Society for the Advancement of American Philosophy conference in March 2007, organized and presented by our AAPT members James Campbell and Richard Hart. James Campbell is President-elect of SAAP.

...As ex-officio member of the APA Committee on Teaching, I served on a subcommittee that substantially revised the 1995 APA statement on outcomes assessment. The statement was approved by the APA board in November 2006. Our new President, Nancy Hancock, joins the committee as ex-officio member, and Betsy Decyk, our Executive Director, serves as associate chair.

My colleagues in the AAPT are an on-going source of energy, ideas and inspiration for me. I have heard many of our members attest to the hospitality, collegiality and dedication to the mission of improving philosophy teaching that they find in the AAPT. The AAPT is unique among professional organizations. May it continue to be a wonderful resource for teachers of philosophy everywhere!

*Donna*

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below

**TESTING FOR SKILLS and  
PREPARING STUDENTS  
TO SUCCEED on SKILLS-  
BASED TESTS<sup>1</sup>**

**Stephen Schulman**  
*Elon University*

*In this essay, I advocate designing exams that assess both knowledge of course content and analytical skills. By using assignments during the course that are structured to provide practice in analytical skills as well as the mastery of content, students can learn both, and become prepared for this new, more rigorous type of exam. I offer examples of a practice final exam and a final exam I now use.*

For many years, I structured and formatted examinations in my introductory level classes in imitation of the exams that I had taken as a student. I structured assessment traditionally, giving a mid-term and a final exam; sometimes I provided study guides, sometimes I did not. The exams were formatted as a series of (largely unrelated) essay questions which asked about the content (the texts and ideas) that I had covered in class, and I found that a majority of what students wrote were lists of facts or claims, not coherent and structured arguments.

*...students can live well without knowing Kant's Categorical Imperative ...but ...*

As I became a more critical and intentional instructor, I realized that these exams matched only one of the course goals, and, indeed, not

<sup>1</sup>I would like to thank David Concepción and the editors of this newsletter for their extremely helpful comments and suggestions.

the most important one. I am convinced that students can live well without knowing Kant's categorical imperative, but they cannot live well without being able to critically analyze their world, their lives and the cultural texts they encounter. Thus, the real goal in my

*... they cannot live well without being able to critically analyze ...*

introductory courses is to improve students' ability to critically analyze the world, themselves, and texts and this means that I hold as a goal that they improve their ability to read, to interpret new texts, and to relate new texts to previously read material and to their own ideas and lives. My old exams were "content heavy" relative to this goal: they relied too much on information and on what was covered in the texts, not enough on analysis of new material and on reading. I needed to alter my final exam so that it would assess not just how well students understood the content covered in the class, but also the analytical skills they were developing in class. I began to focus on how I could change the final exam to foster a genuine and skillful engagement with ideas and to counteract their habit of writing as a mere repeating of facts.

I now include on a final exam a new passage by a philosopher that the students likely do not know and I keep the name hidden so that any assumptions suggested by the name do not play into their thinking. I then ask a series of questions that challenge them to bring the content, skills and experiences of the course to bear in analyzing and understanding this new text. The format is intended to make clear to students that their grade for the exam is directly tied to how well they read and in-

*Continued page 8*



## The Final Exam

I recommend that you take a significant portion of your time (something like 45 minutes to one hour) reading this passage, reading the questions, and contemplating. Then write your answers. You may use scrap paper. As always, I will read the exams anonymously—put your name only on the first sheet and staple your exam together at the end.

Because the goal is not to test your vocabulary, I have placed definitions of terms with which you might not be familiar at the end of the exam. Good luck.

**The Text** [While I hide this information from the students until after the exam, this passage is excerpted from Karl Marx and Fredrich Engels, *The Communist Manifesto*, translated by Martin Malia (New York: Signet Classic, 1998).]

The philosopher you will be reading about, let's call him X, is concerned with a system set up to unfairly advantage the upper class at the expense of everyone else. He describes how all of history, in his words, is "the history of class struggles." The thing that drives all of our actions, our ideas, and our view of ourselves, as well as all of history is the struggle between the 'haves' and the 'have-nots', that is, between the upper class and everyone else. As X describes it, there used to be many classes (e.g., in the Middle Ages, there were the feudal lords, the vassals, guild-masters, journeymen, apprentices, and serfs). Even though feudal society is now long gone, class conflicts have not gone away. Rather, "our [age]... has simplified the class antagonisms. Society as a whole is more and more splitting up into two great hostile camps, into two great classes directly facing each other." Furthermore, the gap between these two classes is ever-widening and the upper class is gaining more and more power. So much so, that really, the two groups could best be described as the "oppressor and oppressed."

The antagonisms—that is the hatred between these groups—is driven by capitalism and when capitalists are in charge (they are the upper class), it affects every part of everyone's life. For example, it "has left no other [thing that connects people together other]... than naked self-interest, [in the form of] callous 'cash payment.' It has drowned the most heavenly ecstasies of religious fervor, of chivalrous enthusiasm... in the icy water of egotistical calculation. It has [turned] personal worth into exchange value [i.e., into some number based on how much monetary worth you have]." And, in the place of what used to be, "it has substituted naked, shameless, direct, brutal exploitation."

For example, he explains, this system (and those who run it) have "stripped of its halo every occupation [previously] honored and looked up to with reverent awe. It has converted the physician, the lawyer, the priest, the poet, the man of science, into its paid wage laborers." It has also "reduced the family relation to a mere money relation."

How does it do its work of destroying the occupations and the family? It is "the cheap prices of its commodities" that "are the heavy artillery with which it" destroys all. Specifically, in this age, there is "an epidemic that, in all earlier epochs would have seemed an absurdity—the epidemic of overproduction." That is, "there is... too much means of subsistence, too much industry, too much commerce." X asks: How did this crisis of overproduction come about? His answer: "Modern industry has converted the little workshop of the patriarchal master into the great factory of the industrial capitalist. Masses of laborers, crowded into the factory, are organized like soldiers." Because owning a factory takes tremendous financial resources, only a few people can do so. These people can therefore dictate the amount of money that workers receive for their labor, and the owners make sure that the laborers get just enough to survive. All other profits go to the factory owners, who can dictate the labor agreement because they own the means of production, that is, the factory in which labor occurs. It would be impossible for a worker to build, say, a car by herself. If she wants to make cars, she must do so for the capitalist, and she makes only her wages, not what she earns for her boss. And in an age of such interdependence, there is nothing a person can make alone, so these workers are "enslaved" by the upper classes who own the companies in which they toil. They are also "daily and hourly enslaved by the machine." If the crisis is overproduction, and the overproduction is achieved by modern capitalist

*Continued page 9*

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interpret new material and how well they are able to integrate the new arguments and views with the ideas of others and with their own ideas and experiences.

Because we teach in a context where the “banking model” Friere<sup>2</sup> identifies is still prevalent, I thought this change would offer significant challenges for students. I realized that before I implemented this change I needed to better understand what students’ habits and study skills were, and which ones would be impediments to doing well on more demanding, more skills-based final exams. First, I noticed that students tend to study by: (1) writing notes throughout the semester in the form of facts or claims, without distinguishing between evidence and conclusions drawn from the evidence; and then by (2) memorizing—often, by cramming—their notes. In this memorizing, facts are often either decontextualized (e.g., facts on flashcards that are randomly ordered) or ordered precisely as learned (first fact first, seventh fact seventh, and so on). Even as I tried to convince students that while facts may be useful, the goal of learning was to be able to argue and interpret, I noticed (1) that, in review sessions, students continued to ask questions to spark their memory (rather than their understanding) and (2) that they continued to arrive for the final exam a few minutes early to memorize (or check that they had accurately memorized) their notes. So, I had to make it absolutely transparent how much analytical skills mattered, and how insufficient mere memorization was for doing well on the exam; I now do this by asking the types of questions that clearly cannot be answered with facts.

I also observed that by having only a midterm as assessment prior to the final exam students were getting only one, albeit large, instance of feed-

back from me. I found that students rarely took the midterm feedback into account as they prepared for the final. With only a midterm before the final exam, students were not given enough opportunities either to practice important analytic skills or to incorporate my feedback on their efforts into their subsequent writing. Based on these insights, I decided to change the structure of the course assessment to allow for more frequent practice.

With the goal of helping students do better on the final exam, I eliminated the mid-term exam. I now ask the same number of questions as on a midterm in a series of short (22 minute) quizzes, spread throughout the course. I give students three questions the class period before the quiz and then select one for them to answer. I also ask questions that require analysis as well as content knowledge: questions, for example, that focus on providing and analyzing arguments rather than merely on providing conclusions. This allows them frequent practice in analysis and gives them significant opportunities to receive feedback and to use it more immediately. Sometimes I will

*... frequent practice ...  
with feedback ...*

re-list an earlier question as a possible question for a later quiz to encourage them to reexamine difficult concepts or to refresh material that was covered early in the course. I also make sure that the final quiz or two asks questions about material we have covered early in the semester.

Because the students thus begin to review significantly before the final exam, they need to focus less time memorizing for the final exam and are thereby freed to focus on what matters most: critical analysis. This shift in attention is clearly evident in the types of questions students now ask

<sup>2</sup>On the “banking model,” see Paulo Freire, *The Pedagogy of the Oppressed*, translated by Myra Bergman Ramos (New York: Continuum International Publishing Group, 2000), 71-76.

*Continued page 10*



practices and machinery, X asks: "How does [the upper class] get over these crises?" X's answer: by the "conquest of new markets, and by the more thorough exploitation of the old ones."

With everything so bad, what is the solution X offers? It is revolution. Of what does the revolution consist? X writes: "Abolition of private property." This will no doubt make many people mad, but X's reasoning is this: it is not like the lower classes have much private property anyway. Though the lower class may have bought into the system and may be convinced that the system protects them by protecting their jobs, for example, in truth, the longer the system is in place, the more what the lower class has approaches zero. So the lower class has, in earnest, nothing to lose but a system that keeps them in chains.

## Questions

Note: even though each question is numbered, I expect you to answer each question within the larger question. Furthermore, if you must repeat yourself to answer a question, do so. Don't assume that just because you wrote some of the same things above that the same explanation will work again.

You must answer question 1 and 3, and you must answer *either* question 2a. or 2b.

1. Using specific examples from Schlosser's work and from your own Fast Food project<sup>1</sup> throughput study, and Dorm-room study (if you did one), **both explain and give evidence** for X's view that capitalism has (a) "[turned] personal worth into exchange value," (b) ruined the professions, (c) acted to destroy family relations, and (d) has enslaved the worker both to the capitalist and to the machine. [Hint: Don't tell me your view.... Explain X's view and then show how Schlosser and your observations give evidence that X is right, even if you disagree.]

2a. While X and Postman agree that there are winners and losers in the systems they describe, they disagree about how this is determined. (a) What makes a person a winner or a loser in the capitalist system, according to X? (b) What makes a person a winner or a loser in the technopoly, according to Postman? (c) What would Postman say to X about who wins and who loses, today? What evidence would he use?

2b. If X is right, why did Eichmann do what he did? [Hint: if X is right, why does everyone do what he/she does?] How would Arendt respond to X's answer, and what evidence would she provide? Is her evidence sufficient to criticize X?

3. X, Postman and Arendt all take up the question of how to deal with a system gone wrong. X claims that the only possible way of dealing with the system is through revolution. Postman claims that the way to deal with a system gone wrong is through acting like a 'loving resistance fighter' and through education. Arendt claims that if people engaged in thinking, they would counteract a system gone wrong. Explain the view of each. Finally, argue who is right. [Hint #1: Make sure to discuss how many people each form of resistance deals with. In other words, is the suggestion something one person can do, or something that takes a large number?] [Hint #2: Make sure you explain, as best you can, why X might argue that a revolution is the only way to overcome the capitalist system.] [Hint #3: Make sure you discuss both the 'loving resistance fighter' and his/her values and how he/she acts, and why Postman argues that a certain type of education will counteract technopoly.] [Hint #4: When you discuss Arendt, make sure you distinguish thinking and knowing. And make sure you show why only one of these counteracts an evil system.]

<sup>1</sup> The through-put study, as I call it, is a project that asks students to examine the last product or service that they purchased. Specifically, it asks them to examine ethical implications of either the production and manufacturing process or of the waste management of the product or service that they purchased. Their research culminates in a letter that they write to someone who is in charge of making the product or service or in the disposal of any waste associated with the product or service and must argue either that they (the company or person) should continue one of their practices or should change or halt one of their practices.

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during the review sessions for the final exam.

Furthermore, I changed the way students study for the final exam several weeks before the actual exam so they know what kinds of questions will be on the exam and have time to practice the particular skills needed to do well on this type of exam. Students who send me answers to the practice final exam in time receive from me exemplary answers with comments about what makes these answers better than others. This gives students a significant incentive to take the practice final exam and allows me to give feedback to many students without having to assess each student's practice exam individually — a task I have found to be prohibitively time-consuming at that late point in the semester. I can put this answer guide together in a single evening, and students have told me, repeatedly, how useful taking the practice exam and seeing exemplary answers have been in their studying.

By preparing students better to take a content/skills hybrid test and by formatting the exam with material that is unfamiliar to them, I have found that they now spend a considerable amount of time in the final exam reading and taking notes before they write any answers at all, and this matches the values and habits of thoughtful reading and of critical analysis that I am trying to instill in students.

Even so, I found one more stumbling block: even with the better analytical skills acquired by practice, students often lack the ability to guide their own thinking, and thus I found that if I simply gave them a new passage and asked them to relate it to the course content and their experiences and to critically analyze it, they were unable to do so. I found, however, that with the guidance of prompts, students can answer questions that are much more complex than they can answer if unaided. By using prompts, I found that I could guide students to see for themselves the links between

the different ideas, and to see them in a way that they would not have been able to see without this guidance.

Post Script: I would be glad to hear your thoughts or comments on this paper and the ideas therein.

Please feel free to email me at:

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### CALL FOR SUBMISSIONS TO *QUESTIONS: Philosophy for Young People*

*Questions* publishes philosophical work by and for young people, including stories, essays, poems, photographs and drawings, etc. In addition, articles related to doing philosophy with young people, reviews of books and materials useful for doing the same, lesson plans (including description or transcripts of student responses), classical thought experiments redefined/modified for modern audience interests and demographics, transcripts of philosophy discussions, photographs of classroom discussions, and more are sought.

Images, whether photographs, drawings, paintings or other media, should be sent as uncompressed TIFF files (with at least 300dpi resolution). Written submissions should be sent in Word, WordPerfect, or Rich Text file format (as .doc, .wpd, or .rtf). Scholarly articles should conform to the Chicago Manual of Style for textual and citation matters; please use endnotes rather than footnotes.

Be sure to include contact information with your submissions. A copyright release is needed for publication. All submissions should to to QuestionsJournal@gmail.com.

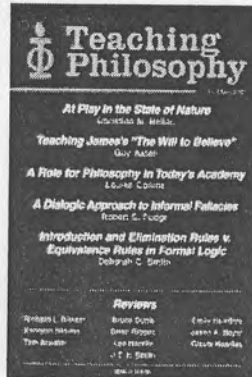
Submissions for the Summer 2008 issue should be received by March 31, 2008. They will be reviewed first by the editors (Rory Kraft, Jr., and Alison Reiheld), and then blindly reviewed by the larger editorial board.





# Teaching Philosophy

Volume 1, 1975 – Volume 31, 2008



## Recent special issues:

*Teaching To / By / About People with Disabilities*  
Volume 30, Number 4—December 2007  
guest editors, Anita Silvers and Anita Ho

*Teaching Philosophy in the New Climate of Conservatism*  
Volume 30, Number 2—June 2007  
guest editor, Anita Superson

*Teaching Philosophy* provides a peer-reviewed forum for the exchange of ideas about the challenges faced by philosophers in the classroom. It is the only journal devoted to the discussion of teaching and learning philosophy, and over the years it has published the largest body of original work on philosophy teaching in the English language. Each issue contains a unique mix of articles, reports, case studies, and reviews that are of continuing value to the profession. More information about the journal, including tables of contents of the most recent ten volumes and sample articles, is available at

[www.pdcnet.org/teachph.html](http://www.pdcnet.org/teachph.html)

Electronic access to all issues of *Teaching Philosophy* is provided through POIESIS: Philosophy Online Serials, and all tables of contents, searchable by author and title, are freely available through this project. The full text of the first twenty-five volumes is also available on a fully searchable CD-ROM available to individual subscribers at a 30% discount. *Teaching Philosophy* is committed to providing affordable access to all published issues, and electronic access for subscribers will soon be available.

ISSN 0145-5788; Quarterly; 2008 Subscriptions: Individuals \$30, Institutions \$78  
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## REFLECTIONS on the 16th IWCTP

Ross Romero, S.J.

*Boston College*

Certainly the most helpful aspect of attending the AAPT conference was to receive a strong infusion of enthusiasm for good teaching. In our day-to-day world of research, paper writing, and conference presenting, good teaching seldom gets much attention. The enthusiasm shown for teaching philosophy at the AAPT was welcome.

Teaching fellows in philosophy at Boston College participate in a two-year teaching seminar. Students take turns presenting and commenting on prepared syllabi. We also discuss other issues related to teaching such as lecturing, assessment, discussion leading, course design and the student-teacher relationship. At the first meeting of this seminar in September, I made a brief presentation to the other Teaching Fellows about my experience at the AAPT, sharing the various resources for good teaching made available to me at the conference. In particular, I drew attention to *Teaching Philosophy*, a journal to which our library subscribes. I also reported on the session that I attended on Plagiarism in Philosophy by George MacDonald Ross and discussed various approaches to using grading rubrics. In particular, I shared the rubrics created by Adrienne McEvoy. We also discussed approaches to improving student writing. Helpful for this was Martin Benjamin's distinction between collegial and filial writing and his epigram, "Write as the teacher, not for the teacher."

Many Boston College Teaching Fellows expressed tremendous interest in the AAPT and a desire to attend future conferences.

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## REFLECTIONS on the Graduate Seminar

Sarah Robins

I met Martin Benjamin in the Pittsburgh International Airport. We were waiting for the bus that would take us to the APA/AAPT graduate teaching workshop. I told him I was looking forward to the seminars. He smiled in a way that I would learn was characteristic of Martin (a smile that will need no further description to those who know him) and said, "I can't tell you what will happen, but I know that it will be great. It's amazing what happens when you put a group of smart people who care about teaching together in one room. We'll listen to each other, and it will just happen."

It did, in fact, happen. The seminar spanned four days, during which we addressed a variety of teaching-related topics (e.g., grading, structuring an intro course, plagiarism). And somewhere, during these meetings, we came to view ourselves as developing, but competent, teachers. The precise transformation is difficult to describe. After all, we were quite an assorted group. The 15 graduate students in attendance differed in the types of philosophy we studied, the types of universities at which we studied it, and the particular skills and limitations that we brought to the teaching of philosophy. A fellow attendee remarked that it was truly refreshing to be with such a diverse group of philosophers and yet find so much common ground. The desire to become a good teacher was a unifying goal that cut across our traditional understanding of philosophical divisions.

On the surface, our sessions were relatively informal; each day we read a set of articles and discussed them. But despite the casual atmosphere, Martin clearly had active goals for each of us. He listened attentively, extracting

*Continued page 13*

comments and ideas from everyone, highlighting the ways in which we might learn from one another. He shared his own experiences as well, both those that had gone well and those that hadn't, approaching each with characteristic humor and insight. Most of all, he believed that we were all capable of being good philosophy teachers. By the end, we thought so too.

After a few days of this interchange, I began to notice that I was evolving my own particular views on how philosophy should be taught, and how I best function as a teacher of philosophy. That is, I shifted from viewing

the teaching of philosophy as a general skill, to an understanding that the successful teaching of philosophy is a personal pursuit that, at its best, combines one's interest in the discipline with an excitement for conveying that interest to others. I am grateful to have had such an experience.

I highly recommend attending the APA/AAPT graduate teaching seminar to anyone with a serious interest in improving his or her teaching. Betsy Decyk, who assisted with this year's seminar and will be leading the seminars in the future, will no doubt continue to make the seminars an invaluable experience.

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## UNESCO Conference Highlights Global Nature of Philosophical Practice

**Sarah Lublink Daley**

*The University of Western Ontario*

On November 15<sup>th</sup> and 16<sup>th</sup>, 2006, more than two hundred philosophers from around the world gathered at the UNESCO in Paris to contribute their experiences, ideas, and research regarding new approaches to philosophy, new contexts in which philosophy has been introduced, and new ways in which traditional approaches should be understood. The conference, sponsored by UNESCO and organized by France's committee on New Philosophical Practices, was entitled "Philosophy as Educational and Cultural Practice: A New Citizenship." It aimed to consider the subject of philosophy as practice, in educational, cultural, social and political contexts.

Philosophical practice, no longer limited to the university or college, is expanding to include philosophy with children, philosophical cafes, philosophical counselling, and philosophical workshops in libraries and bookstores. This expansion calls for renewed reflection on the nature of our profession as philosophers. It

should also challenge those of us practicing philosophy in North America to broaden our knowledge and understanding of philosophical practices in other parts of the world.

Three memorable presentations were those by Mohammad Sadegh Zahedi, assistant professor at the Iman Khomeini International University in Ghazvin, Iran, by Merete Baekkevold and Beate Borresen, who work in the Directorate for Primary and Secondary Education at Oslo University College, Norway, and by Taro Mochizuki, associate professor at the Osaka University Institute for Higher Education Research and Practice, Japan.

Zahedi outlined some of the difficulties involved with teaching philosophy in Iran. The philosophers studied in Iranian universities are primarily Muslim, and critical analysis is limited to interpretive issues. There is no clear distinction between philosophy, theology, and mysticism. The goal of a philosophy course in Iran is to learn philosophers' ideas, not to generate questions and address problems. Yet, Zahedi is optimistic that the philosophy classroom is the best context in which rationality can be taught, and he and other philosophy teachers are working toward change.

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Baekkevold and Borresen described the curricular innovations being tested this year in Norway, which added philosophical education to the religious education which is mandatory in all public schools. This project has encountered a lot of resistance due to the anti-intellectualism which is predominant, especially in the educational context. One of the motivations for introducing philosophy in primary schools is to lessen the social and political gap between those who attend university and those who do not. Baekkevold and Borresen suggested that one fruitful way to teach philosophical thinking to children is to involve them in long-term projects – ones which would span a student's ten-year public school experience.

Mochizuki set out a proposal for teaching critical thinking in Japanese universities, which are marked by two characteristics: they are filled with students who have never been trained to think critically, and their primary educational paradigm is peace education. Japanese students, according to Mochizuki, have become indifferent to topics such as politics due to their lack of critical engagement. Mochizuki proposed a non-adversarial framework for critical thinking which focuses on finding areas of agreement rather than disagreement.

What these and all other presentations had in common was that all those involved were committed to teaching philosophy and philosophical thinking in whatever contexts might be available to them. Philosophical practitioners from Turkey, Iran, Botswana, Norway, Canada, the United States, Japan, Greece, Australia, and many other countries, spoke of struggling against forces which marginalize philosophical thinking and teaching.

This must not be done without critical reflection upon our philosophical practices, however. Baekkevold and Borresen stressed the need to inculcate in students the desire to find the true, the good, and the beautiful, rather than simply to provide students with critical thinking skills. Zahedi questioned whether we can be sure that teaching students to think philosophically will

lead them to become better citizens of liberal democracies, given that philosophical thinking can lead to non-liberal positions such as radical Marxism. Gale Prawda and Jonathan Levy, who teach philosophy in new contexts in Paris, warned that critical thinking training in the context of civic education can mask a political ideology and thus be homogenizing rather than a tool which enables pluralism and democracy.

All of these claims raise questions about our roles as philosophers and as philosophy teachers, and about the role of philosophy and philosophy teaching in social, cultural, and political life. We can hope that the kind of dialogue engendered by this conference will continue to build bridges between practitioners in various contexts, and will contribute to engendering a more reflective attitude toward philosophy teaching in our own context.

Further details about the conference, including abstracts, can be found at the conference website: <http://www.colloque-pratiques-philos.fr>

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## UPCOMING EVENTS

### At the 2007 APA Eastern Division Meeting

Marriott Waterfront, Baltimore, MD

Saturday, December 29, 2007

Group Session X 8-11:00 p.m.

Dover A (Third floor)

Topic: *How (not) to Teach Transgressive Topics*

Abstract: Generally, to transgress is to flout a norm. Since there are many norms and many ways to flout them, transgression is a matter of degree, both quantitatively and qualitatively. The disquiet students experience when studying transgressive topics (e.g., radical lesbian feminism) is often extremely personal, intense, and difficult to manage. Insofar as transgressive topics present students with challenges that are distinct from those associated with merely novel or counter-intuitive views, it is

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worth reflecting upon how to best support student learning of topics that tend to undermine or oppose culturally dominant views which students often (implicitly) endorse.

Chair:

Donna Engelmann (Alverno College)

Speakers:

Claudia Card (University of Wisconsin-Madison)

“Teaching Radicalesbian Feminism”

Harry Brod (University of Northern Iowa)

“Educational Affirmative Action: The Need to Teach Against Dominant Frameworks”

Naomi Zack (University of Oregon)

“Teaching ‘Philosophy of Disaster and Emergency Response’”

David Concepción (Ball State University)

“Working with Anger and Guilt”

**At the 2008 APA Central Division Meeting**

Palmer House Hilton, Chicago, IL

April 16-20 (session time and place not yet available)

Topic: *Teaching Kant to Undergraduate Students*

Abstract: The main idea behind the session is to give experienced teachers, who have taught Kant’s philosophy to undergraduate students over several years, the chance to talk about their challenges, strategies and teaching approaches. The session will involve a discussion of teaching Kant’s ethics as well as the teaching of his epistemology and metaphysics.

Chair: Adrienne McEvoy (Mansfield University)

Speakers:

Jeanine Grenberg (St. Olaf College)

“Kant’s Ethics for Majors and Non-majors”

Robert Hanna (University of Colorado)

“Back to Kant: Teaching the First Critique as Contemporary Philosophy”

Nils Rauhut (Coastal Carolina University)

“Are there necessary conditions for the possibility of teaching Kant to undergraduate students?”

George McDonald Ross (University of Leeds)

“Translating the *Critique of Pure Reason* for Undergraduate Students”

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**Also at the APA Central Division Meeting:**  
 the APA Committee for Two Year Colleges and the AAPT will co-sponsor the following session. (Session time and place is not yet available).

Topic: *Evaluation of Teaching Demonstrations*  
 Abstract: A key component of the interview for community colleges and four year teaching institutions is the teaching demonstration. In hopes of improving interview performance, the co-sponsors are soliciting job candidates to present 15-20 minute demonstrations on a topic of their choosing or on a topic assigned by the committee. This three hour session will conduct presentations and feedback for the first two hours and then we will spend an hour in general discussion. Space is limited. Prospective presenters should contact Bill Hartmann (APA): bhartman@stlcc.edu or Betsy Decyk (AAPT): bdecyk@csulb.edu

Chair: Bill Hartmann (St. Louis Community College – Forest Park)

Panelists:

Coleen Burns (Harper College)

Holly Graff (Oakton Community College)

David Zacker (Elgin Community College)

Donna Werner (St. Louis Community College – Meremac College)

Betsy Decyk (California State University, Long Beach)

Donna Engelmann (Alverno College)

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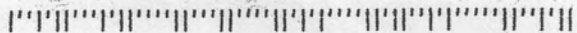
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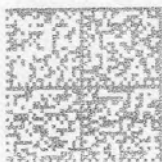
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