First Call for Proposals
AAPT's 11th International Workshop/Conference on Teaching Philosophy

I am busy putting class materials away from the Spring semester 1995 and by the time you get this newsletter you already may be busy gearing up for the Fall semester. Either time is excellent for thinking about what really works in teaching philosophy. Therefore, I enthusiastically invite you:

TO SHARE YOUR IDEAS AND TEACHING STRATEGIES!
***
TO LEAD A WORKSHOP, PANEL DISCUSSION, OR DEMONSTRATION!
***
TO JOIN DEDICATED TEACHERS IN IMPROVING THE TEACHING OF PHILOSOPHY!

AAPT is dedicated to improving the teaching of philosophy at all levels, kindergarten-graduate school, and presentations on any aspect of teaching philosophy are welcomed. All sessions should be interactive.

Especially encouraged are sessions that will improve the teaching of philosophy for first-time and/or one-time-only philosophy students in the typical beginning college courses such as introductory philosophy, introductory ethics, logic and/or critical thinking, and the history of philosophy. Workshops on more specialized topics such as teaching political theory, aesthetics, philosophy in literature, feminism, non-western philosophies, applied ethics, existentialism, phenomenology, philosophy of science and philosophy of religion are also invited.

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From the President...  
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Of special interest are innovative and successful strategies for introducing cultural and gender issues in philosophy courses, teaching philosophy in nontraditional venues, linking philosophy with other disciplines, or using new technologies. Also of interest are workshops which will open discussion of teaching practices, both traditional ones such as paper assignments, examinations, grading, lecturing, and less traditional ones such as open syllabi, co-operative learning, class publishing, etc.

Expanding on the Graduate Student Seminars of 1990 and 1994, AAPT seeks some sessions that will particularly benefit graduate students and first time teachers of philosophy. Perhaps people who were participants in the earlier graduate seminars would like to share their further experiences in teaching. We also hope to discuss issues related to the graduate training of philosophy teachers.

FIRST DEADLINE FOR PROPOSALS:  
JANUARY 1, 1996

SECOND DEADLINE FOR PROPOSALS:  
JANUARY 15, 1996

Proposals submitted by the 1st deadline date will be given preference in the schedule. Proposals submitted by the 2nd deadline date will be accepted as space permits.

Proposals should be prepared as follows:

4 copies of a 1-2 page cover sheet, separate from the proposal (two for review tracking, two for scheduling purposes, if accepted):

(1) your name, affiliation (if any), address, work and home phone numbers, email address, if you have one, and a summer phone number, if different from your other phone numbers
(2) title of proposed presentation
(3) preferred length of presentation (60, 90, or 120 minutes)
(4) style of presentation (workshop, panel, discussion, poster, etc.)
(5) list of any special equipment you will need (overhead projector, VCR and monitor, computer, etc.) or any special room set-up.
(6) a one-paragraph abstract (100-300 words) to be used to describe your presentation, if accepted, in the conference program.

3 copies of a 3-5 page proposal (2 for blind reviewing, one for the master file)

(1) the title of your presentation, but without your name
(2) a summary of your presentation: its content, its method(s), and its goal(s)
(3) a list of handouts and materials you plan to provide

Complete proposals should be sent to:

Nancy Slonneger, Executive Director
AAPT
Transylvania University
300 North Broadway
Lexington, KY 40508

Please share this call for proposals with colleagues!

[Conference site and dates (early August, 1996) are not yet final at this printing, and will be announced in the Fall issue of AAPT News—eds.]
Mr. Charles Barkley, the notoriously outspoken star of the National Basketball Association, has claimed that what American children need most is a good education. "All we do is tell 'em on TV, 'Y'all must have a big house and a nice car and fancy clothes,' and then we're surprised when they go out and try to get 'em. The first thing we've got to do in this country is find a different message to send to our kids" (Montgomery Advertiser, 10 January 1995, p. 3D).

Mr. Barkley is certainly not the first to address the problem that is often referred to as "anti-intellectualism." It is a problem that I have regarded as a form of social disease that is especially prevalent in the U.S. In accord with Mr. Barkley and others, I have believed that one of the disturbing effects of this disease is the repression of education, an effect that is visited upon philosophical education with particular virulence. Thus I decided that a workshop on anti-intellectualism (presented at AAPT's 10th International Workshop/Conference on Teaching Philosophy, August 1994) was in order. This writing begins with an explanation of strategies I use in the classroom, which I believe are somewhat effective in dealing with the problem of anti-intellectualism, and then moves to an interpretive report of the workshop itself.

An anti-intellectual society is, as Mr. Barkley affirms, one that values big house, nice cars and fancy clothes above education. However, it is also a society that values university athletics, university administrators, and even the university itself above education (to say nothing of other things such as securing "grants"). Of course there is no difficulty in citing examples of anti-intellectualism in society. For me, the real problem has to do with conveying a "different message" to students, one that will further enable them to value the particular form of intellectuality that is philosophy.

In the philosophy classroom, I have employed two distinct strategies that I believe help students become aware of their own attitudes toward intellectuality. First, I ask the students to view philosophy as art, as a form of artistic expression. Second, I profess to students the meaning of education.

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A Workshop on Teaching Philosophy...
continued from page 3

The first strategy involves taking on the same approach toward philosophy that is usually taken toward music, sculpturing or any of the commonly recognized “fine arts.” If you ask what I mean by “philosophy-as-art,” I would say my meaning is that any great philosophical work, like any great painting, music composition or sculpture, can be valued simply as a beautiful or aesthetically pleasing work. Even in less artful realms of human endeavor we often say that a person did a good job of whatever it is she did. In this sense, a well dug ditch or well made hamburger is not that different from well composed music or well sculptured statuary. So, why can’t we say that philosophers, who have put together a philosophical system or who have written a philosophical work, have, because of their artfulness, done a good job of philosophizing? Of course, the answer is that we can say this. However, what gets in the way is the fact that we can also evaluate philosophy in terms of its truth value or rightness. Obviously, this is a kind of evaluation that is inapplicable to works of fine art. We do not value a painting as right or wrong. But why must we, or our students, evaluate philosophy only in terms of “right” and “wrong,” “truth” and “untruth?” To miss the art of philosophy is to miss its intellectuality. The point is that students will learn to appreciate intellectual substance when they understand philosophy from the point of view of what is an artful philosophical work.

In using the second strategy of professing the meaning of education, I assume that there is, even among the community of educators, a general misunderstanding of what education is. I also assume that students who do not understand what education is cannot reasonably be expected to appreciate intellectual substance. As professors of philosophy, we are a faculty that should identify the deficiencies of our institutions of formal education, especially the deficiency of inadvertently furthering the misunderstanding of education. And the students, because they have not learned what education is, might sense this same ignorance in their educators.

Thus, I profess to my students that education is a mix of three basic ingredients: understanding, communication, and stories. In formal education these three are philosophy, which is understanding, language, which is communication, and history, which is stories. The story is what must be understood and the story—or one’s understanding of the story—must be communicated. On these terms, an educated person can be defined as one who can understand and communicate stories, an articulate philosopher who has something sensible to say. And those who are unable to understand and communicate stories, regardless of how much mathematics, or business, or engineering they know (which of course could not be much) would not be, nor appear to be, well-educated.

At the outset of the workshop I had asked the participants to state why they decided to attend this particular session, or what they were hoping to achieve by attending this workshop on anti-intellectualism. What follows refers to their comments.

The first person to comment spoke of “a gap between my students and the subject matter of philosophy.” He went on to say that the gap was between the intellectual ability of his students and the intellectual ability required to be an effective student of philosophy. He suspected that this gap was in large part caused by anti-intellectualism within the students and within the environment they grew up in. There was further discussion of this point in terms of reference to a developing “cultural debt” in students and throughout society, and in terms of the tendency to “water-down” the intellectual content of courses and teach to the “minimum competency” level of the student.

Another comment expressed concern about a growing tendency within society, and especially in education, to “over-emphasize and over-value ‘facticity’,” which is at least symptomatic of anti-intellectualism. This participant believed our society is becoming one that only accepts the knowledge of “facts” as important knowledge and, consequently, the learning of abstract concepts and conceptual relationships is being pushed aside as useless and unimportant knowledge.

One of the graduate students indicated that she was interested in identifying possibilities for the occurrence of “change” in philosophy. Her concern seemed to be that philosophy had become, or might become, locked into overly limited methodologies or points of view.

Finally, there were those participants indicating their interest “in learning or developing strategies for dealing with anti-intellectualism in the classroom.” In the discussion of this particular
A Workshop on Teaching Philosophy... continued from page 4

concern, two definitive strategies were suggested. The first suggestion was that the use of films in the philosophy classroom had the disingenuous effect of seducing students into intellectuality. In other words, film has an effect that written text cannot achieve, the effect of over-riding the student’s ability to choose to be interested. The second strategy suggested, perhaps stimulated by the first, also referred to the notion of “seducing” the student into learning philosophy. In this case the seduction employed was to inform students of how the knowledge of philosophy can be helpful to one’s career. This participant held that such a seduction was justified in that it achieved the desired consequences: philosophy has been learned and anti-intellectualism has been diminished.

Throughout this commentary there were two participants who continuously challenged both the assumption that there was such a thing as anti-intellectualism and the assumption that the term “anti-intellectualism” had meaning. They insisted that the first order of business must be one of defining exactly what anti-intellectualism is.

Now, in retrospect, it seems to me that there is a common thread running through all of these comments, which is useful as a basis for defining anti-intellectualism. I am referring to a common understanding of anti-intellectualism as based on a wrongful prioritizing that fails to give intellectuality the highest priority. I think such wrongful prioritizing occurs when intellectuality is understood to have a merely relational value. Thus the problem is not a matter of intellectuality never being valued, nor of its simply being valued less that it ought to be. The problem becomes one of intellectuality being regarded as having no value of its own. And having no value of its own, it can never be valued except as being inferior to all that is regarded as having its own value. In other words, just as it is hard to believe that one who values money simply because it is a means to power could value money more than power, so also it is hard to believe that a person who values intellectuality simply as a means to a successful career (or what you will), would value intellectuality more than the success.

So, if I am correct in my interpretation of the workshop commentary, anti-intellectualism may be defined as a belief, or ideology, which holds that intellectuality has no intrinsic or inherent value but that intellectuality does obtain instrumental value to the extent that it is a means for achieving that which does have intrinsic or inherent value.

According to the above definition of anti-intellectualism, an anti-intellectual would be one who may well value specific instances of intellectuality, such as valuing whatever intellectuality that is part of Edison’s light bulb, Eiffel’s Tower, or Einstein’s theory of relativity, but such an anti-intellectual would nevertheless hold that intellectuality cannot be valued in itself.

There is much more to be done than the workshop could possibly accomplish, and I am sure the participants wanted to cover more (if not the same) ground. Some of the participants indicated an interest in continuing the discussion either by paper or electronic mail. I hope that such interest will be intensified by what I have written here. I am particularly interested in a discussion of what “intellectuality” is, or is perceived to be, as well as of additional strategies relating to the teaching of philosophy in anti-intellectual surroundings.

Marc R. Graney
Department of Philosophy
College of Arts and Science
Tuskegee University
Tuskegee, Alabama 36088

*Based on a workshop presented at AAPT’s 10th International Workshop/Conference on Teaching Philosophy, Marianopolis College, August 1994.
Dear AAPT Members:

Although there were some difficulties with this year's election mailing, we finally have results to report! First, I think a few words concerning the difficulties we had are in order. Our first mailing, as many of you probably noticed, did not include a return envelope for ballots and hence many did not know where to send them. After a small return, we decided it would be best to re-run the election, this time including a return envelope. We accepted any ballots which were returned to us by the end of June. However, most ballots (including ones from Canada and all coasts of the United States) were returned by June 12, 1995.

One final note. Some members observed that biographical information was not included for one of the candidates for At-Large Member of the Board. We rely on candidates to send biographical information to us, and any omissions are a result of not receiving that information from the candidate.

That said, here are the election results:

Vice President: James Campbell
The University of Toledo

At-Large Board Members:
Phyllis Woloshin
Oakton Community College
Tasha Moehle Rushing
Salem College

Constitutional Amendments:
1) That the number of members-at-large on the Board be increased by one, so that there would be three members-at-large on the Board.
   PASSED

2) That the past Executive Director of the AAPT be a member of the Board.
   PASSED

Nancy Slonneger, Ph.D.
Executive Director
Transylvania University

CALL FOR BOOK REVIEWS!

Although many journals have sections dedicated to reviewing new books in philosophy, rarely (if ever!) is there an opportunity to discuss how well those books actually work in the classroom, or how a certain software program (or movie, video, game, novel, etc.) can be used in the classroom to deepen understanding and enhance discussion of philosophical issues. So, here's the chance! Whether you have been using a text (film, etc.) for years or have only experimented with it for one semester, we are interested in whether you would recommend it and why.

General guidelines we have for submissions to the new review section are the following:

- materials reviewed must have actually been used by you in the classroom; and reviews should include:
  - a description of the use you made of the materials
  - a discussion of student responses to the materials
  - a summary of the results
  - reviews should be 500 to 1000 words long.

That's it! Please send submissions to:

Nancy Slonneger, Book Review Editor
AAPT
Transylvania University
300 N. Broadway
Lexington, KY 40508

Internet: aapt@music.transy.edu

*If you are interested in commenting on what you have found to be useful in the classroom, but do not wish to write a full-length (i.e., 500-1000 word) review, you might consider writing a summary for "The Bulletin Board" in this newsletter.
Bibliography

TEACHING THE CANONS OF WESTERN PHILOSOPHY IN HISTORICALLY BLACK COLLEGES AND UNIVERSITIES: THE SPELMAN COLLEGE EXPERIENCE

The following bibliography, by no means exhaustive, lists works which, in one form or another, are concerned either with questions about the origin and sources of Western philosophy or with questions about the supposed objectivity of knowledge in the Western canon. Among the types of questions to which some of these readings are responses are the following: (i) What makes reason, and hence rationality, the determinant of knowledge as is generally supposed in the Western philosophical tradition? Besides, whose reason is used as the measure of knowledge—male and female? white and people of color collectively? (ii) Suppose one adopts the Kantian dictum of the logical interrelation of concepts and experience for the acquisition of knowledge; and assuming for the sake of argument that concepts are innate; whose experiences are the point of reference for knowledge anyway, given that experiences are bound by certain contingent features such as the kind of society, and hence the culture, into which one is born; one’s race; one’s class; and one’s gender? The critical investigation of these issues is, among other things, what underlies the various works here listed.


continued on page 8
Bibliography of Western Philosophy... continued from page 7


***designates works with additional bibliographies
**designates works that are highly recommended

Clarence Shole Johnson
Spelman College
Atlanta, GA
One of the perks of being a philosopher who has the good fortune to teach INTRODUCTION TO PHILOSOPHY is the opportunity to read papers that might contain insights into the nature of things or advice on moral matters, to name only two. For those of you to whom this perk is unavailable because you are only allowed to teach senior philosophy majors and graduate students, we are pleased to give you the following example (which no doubt will cause you to become insanely jealous of the rest of us philosophy teachers):

“If you were suffering from an eternal illness or pain, I think it would be acceptable to ease the pain and suffering by termination.” [from Mark Lenssen, Ohio Northern University]

What is so intriguing about this piece of advice is that it forces us to come to grips with a profound problem: if an illness or pain is eternal, one must figure out HOW to go about terminating it. (Hey, Mark—have YOU figured it out yet?) In any event, just remember,

“you can’t change your mind after death.”

As Director of the QQs Center, it is our duty and obligation as well as our responsibility to remind you of the importance of identifying students who are socially conscious and critically reflective and who have the potential for becoming members of our Research Staff here at the QQs Center. This adds even more significance to the importance of reading student papers carefully. Besides, you never know when you might come across a future political genius who only needs a little encouragement from you to pursue a career in politics. To assist you, we will give you an example with which we were especially impressed:

“Affirmative action is supposed to give equal opportunity to all human beings that possess the same qualifications and skills, not the same level of consciousness.”

We bet YOU thought affirmative action had to do with equal levels of consciousness—HA! So put THAT in your pipe and smoke it.

Students can also be excellent commentators on metaphysical matters. As proof, we offer you this QQ:

“Only ideas exist, patterns of temptation suspended in time.”

Naturally all those patterns of temptation make it difficult to walk the straight and narrow, especially when the temptation has to do with SEX. This temptation is on the rise because, unbeknownst to us (and to you too, no doubt).

“Sex is becoming more known as a pleasure act.”

So just WHAT is a person to DO about all these “patterns of temptations”, especially when they are “suspended in time”? It hardly seems fair; after all, if they are suspended in time, how do you know when one is yours and when it’s not yours?

Well, you might be lucky enough to find a good suggestion lurking in a student’s paper about what to do if YOU FEEL THE URGE TO HAVE SEX just in case you aren’t married. We found this one:

“If I was not dating someone, or was not married, and felt the urge to have sex, I would deem it immoral and would do something else; like play volleyball.”

If, however, you are sexually frustrated yet have no desire to play volleyball, you might think there is no way you can be helped—but that’s all wrong. We were informed of other alternatives:

“I think that if people are sexually frustrated, they should look to another outlet for relief, e.g., taking up a sport or finding a hobby.”

(Receive, all these revelations are a result of our reading papers written by INTRO students. Don’t you feel ASHAMED that YOU didn’t publish these first?)

Sometimes our students’ profundity is enough to make us think we are really STUPID and that they are the ones who should be teaching Introduction to Philosophy. Imagine a philosophy teacher’s astonishment upon learning that

“War has always been an unpleasant experience, history has shown us that.”

Or imagine one’s perplexity upon being asked to consider a question such as

“War is immoral during times of peace, but is it fair to say war, or more specifically killing, is immoral during times of war?”

We hate to admit it but this question sure had us stumped, even though we were given a hint—that war is immoral during times of peace. Here we are continued on page 10
being asked whether it is fair to say that war is immoral during times of war. Since we couldn't figure out the answer, we decided to resort to skepticism. But, we wondered, is skepticism plausible?

Fortunately we were able to answer this question, thanks to something we had read in another magnum opus:

"Skepticism is plausible. For every belief there is a contradicting one out there somewhere."

This made us feel much better about not being able to answer the first question: no matter WHAT answer we gave, it wouldn't matter because out there where, we do not know) would be a belief that contradicted ours. Besides, there are enough beliefs to go around so EVERYBODY can have one:

"There is a belief for everyone. It is necessary for each person to find that belief."

However, be careful about having just any ol' belief you find. Here is a piece of advice we found in our archives:

"It is always good to doubt things; I think that if you believe everything you heard you'll go crazy."

So we asked ourselves another question (at this point we were beginning to wonder if we were actually enjoying inflicting mental torture on ourselves): should we stick with skepticism (so we don't go crazy, which is the LAST thing we need to do), or is there a problem with skepticism? We didn't have to waste time trying to figure out the answer because it appeared as a deus ex machina:

"The problem with skepticism is it can keep one holding back and analyzing and thereby not letting you actively engage in life. The reason for this is because all you do is think about how you doubt what is knowledge. How can you get into life if all you do is sit there and doubting thing, what fun is that?"

Now that is a question we could answer; and the answer IS—that is absolutely NO FUN AT ALL.

Speaking of fun (our MOST favorite topic of all times), and since this column is appearing in a SUMMER issue of AAPT News (we LOVE summers at the QQs Center), naturally our thoughts turned to doing fun things like water-skiing and boating and swimming in lakes. But at the same time we realized that doing such fun things would raise environmental questions, and they are these:

"The questions raised concern sensual beings and landscapes."

Being as how we didn't want to get into those "patterns of temptation" mentioned earlier, what with questions coming up about sensual beings and landscapes (we never know what might give us THE URGE TO HAVE SEX), we thought it best to ignore them. So we started pondering (for what reason we have NO idea) a hypothetical case: what if we didn't have a place to go boating or swimming or water-skiing and then someone proposed building a dam that would not only create hydroelectricity but would also create a lake so we could do all those fun things yet would cause the extinction of some ol' stupid species of fish that you can't eat and nobody even knows why it exists and so would it matter if it became extinct? It then occurred to us that we were getting awfully tired of raising questions and feeling like we had to answer them so we decided this was the LAST one we'd ask for awhile (after all, it IS summertime at the QQs Center). We still needed an answer, however, so we consulted one of the members of our Research Staff and we got an answer to the dilemma (which we had made up just so we'd have another question to answer, which is beyond US why we wanted to have to do that). For one thing,

"By producing electricity through water, more people would be able to have a better type of electricity."

(Upon finding that out, we immediately began making arrangements for the QQs Center to be equipped with that type of electricity; why settle for regular electricity when there is a better type?)

In addition,

"Hydroelectric power benefits far more than the species of fish becoming extinct that seems to have no purpose by being in the river. By producing electricity through water, more people would be able to have better electricity. ...In this day and time, people are becoming to love the outdoors and all the things they can do outside. By building this dam, people would be able to enjoy the outdoors without having to worry so much about different things such as fish, trash, etc. People would be able to enjoy the outdoors without all the hassle of having to deal with garbage. They would be able to go boating, swim, or water-ski in an environment that is somewhat controlled of what it contains since there is electric currents running through the water."

An EXCELLENT answer, we thought; the mere thought of trying to do those fun summer things in a lake inhabited by trash and garbage and fish is enough to give us the heebie-jeebies. We sure do hope we'll get the chance to do our fun things in a lake that has electric currents in it and which keep out all the junk and nasty fish so we'll be able to have some hassle-free fun. If anybody out there knows of such a lake, please send brochures to the QQs Center. Please specify the voltage running through the lake. And we thank you.

Mary Ann Carroll, Director of the QQs Center. (contingently and sometimes necessarily associated with the Center for the Promotion of Fun) at Appalachian State "Fun" University, located in the Fun Town of Boone, which is situated in the Fun Area of the Fun Blue Ridge Mountains of North Carolina, where too many Fun Questions can drive a Fun Person crazy.
American Association of Philosophy Teachers
Membership Dues Form

Memberships are for the calendar year. Upon receipt of dues, your name will be placed on the mailing list and you will receive any remaining issues of the Newsletter for that calendar year. If we receive your dues after the fall Newsletter has been mailed, your membership will begin the following calendar year.

If you have any questions about the status of your membership, please feel free to contact the Executive Director by e-mail at "aapt@music.transy.edu" or write to: Dr. Nancy Slonneger, AAPT, Transylvania University, Lexington KY 40508.

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Please check membership type: □ Regular □ Student □ Emeritus □ Life
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AAPT News - Summer 1995

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Calendar of Events

August 10-12, 1995 - Tenth Annual Conference on Computing and Philosophy, Carnegie Mellon Univ. Contact Marvin Croy, Program Chair, Philosophy, Univ. of North Carolina at Charlotte, Charlotte, NC 28223, Internet: mjcor@unccvm.uncc.edu Conference coordinator is Robert Cavalier at CAAE, Smith Hall, Carnegie Mellon Univ., Pittsburgh, PA 15213, Internet: rc2z@andrew.cmu.edu.

October 26-28, 1995 - Conference on "Closing Minds on Open Questions in Education," Tallahassee, FL. Sponsored by Florida State Univ. Contact Rodney Allen at 904-644-2999, E-mail: rallen@mail.h.fsu.edu


April 3-6, 1996 - American Philosophical Assoc. (APA), Pacific Div., Westin Hotel, Seattle.


These listings are drawn in part from Nancy Simco (ed.), The Philosophical Calendar, published by The Conference of Philosophical Societies.