The Newsletter of the American Association of Philosophy Teachers

VOLUME 19, NUMBER 2  Summer 1996

11th INTERNATIONAL WORKSHOP/CONFERENCE ON TEACHING PHILOSOPHY

PROGRAM SCHEDULE

Wednesday, July 31
8:00 a.m.  Rooms available (Powhatan Apartments)
5:00 - 8:00 p.m.  Registration (Richmond Room)
4:15 - 6:30 p.m.  Dinner (North Cafeteria)

Thursday, August 1
7:00 - 8:30 a.m.
8:30 a.m. - 5:00 p.m.
9:00 a.m. - 12:00 p.m.
9:00 - 9:20 a.m.  (TBA)
9:30 - 10:30 a.m.
10:30 - 10:45 a.m.
10:45 - 11:45 a.m.
11:15 a.m. - 1:30 p.m.
1:30 - 3:00 p.m.
3:20 - 4:50 p.m.
4:15 - 6:30 p.m.
8:00 - ??

SESSION I
Coffee Break

SESSION II
Registration (Richmond Room)
Book Display (Norfolk Room)
Graduate Seminar (Battan 921)

SESSION III
Lunch (North Cafeteria)

SESSION IV
Dinner (North Cafeteria)

SESSION V
Breakfast (North Cafeteria)
Registration (Richmond Room)
Book Display (Norfolk Room)
Graduate Seminar (Battan 921)

SESSION VI
Wine & Cheese Reception (TBA)

Saturday, August 3
7:00 - 8:30 a.m.
8:30 a.m. - 5:00 p.m.
9:00 a.m. - 12:00 p.m.
9:00 - 10:00 a.m.
10:00 - 10:30 a.m.
10:30 a.m. - 12:30 p.m.
11:15 a.m. - 1:30 p.m.
1:45 - 3:00 p.m.

Breakfast (North Cafeteria)
Registration (Richmond Room)
Book Display (Norfolk Room)
Graduate Seminar (Battan 921)

SESSION VII
Coffee Break

SESSION VIII
Lunch (North Cafeteria)

PRESIDENTIAL ADDRESS
(Kaufman 100) Betsy Newell Decyk (California State University - Long Beach)

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A Report on the APA-AAPT Workshops at the APA Central Division

In response to calls for more recognition and support of teaching in the profession, the APA and AAPT jointly sponsored a set of workshops at the APA Central Division meeting in Chicago, April 24-25, 1996. The keynote address Wednesday night was given by Dr. Peter A. French, Director of The Ethics Center at the University of South Florida. His presentation, entitled "Who Cares About Virtual Iphigenia?: Old Wine, New Bottles? Old Dogs, New Tricks?" encouraged teachers of philosophy for a variety of reasons — including the nature of our current students and the economic realities of academia — to search for new, effective ways to teach philosophy and stimulate philosophical curiosity and inquiry. Dr. French has, for example, made a number of movies on philosophical themes like heroism, duty, and evil, and he is currently developing a virtual reality ethics scenario.

During the next morning there were two parallel sessions of workshops. The first session featured workshops on teaching the basic introductory courses in philosophy. Wanda Teays (Mount St. Mary's College) presented a workshop on Critical Thinking, Nancy Slonneger (Transylvania University) gave a workshop on writing and argument analysis in Introductory Philosophy, and I gave a workshop on combining both theory and application in an Introductory Ethics course. The second set of workshops centered on particular teaching strategies or issues. Ann Garry (California State University, Los Angeles) led a discussion on beginning to teach, Richard E. Hart and Thomas F. Slaughter, Jr. (both from Bloomfield College) explained their experiences at a multicultural, multiracial college and the implications of their experiences for teaching, and Kevin Galvin (East Los Angeles College) engaged participants with strategies for collaborative and cooperative learning. At a concluding session Eric Hoffman, Executive Director of the APA, moderated a panel discussion which featured thoughts about teaching from Rosalind Ladd (Wheaton College, former president of the AAPT and new Chair of the APA Committee on Teaching Philosophy), Eugene Kelly (co-editor of the APA Newsletter on Teaching Philosophy) and Martin Benjamin (Michigan State University and coordinator of APA-AAPT workshops for graduate students).

While the participation was smaller than we hoped (34 registrants), discussions were thoughtful and thought-provoking. Evaluations of the sessions show an enthusiastic response for continuing this kind of program. I am hoping that next year we can do a set of teaching workshops at both the APA Central Division meeting and at the APA Pacific Division meeting. I am suggesting (see the message from the Executive Director) that the AAPT Board form an ad hoc committee to coordinate with the APA Committee on Teaching and the APA Divisions. The AAPT should also be considering workshops to suggest to the APA.

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From the President...

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I would like to thank everyone who participated because you showed there is both an interest in, and a need for, discussions of teaching at the center of our profession. I thank all the presenters for contributing their expertise about teaching. It is wonderful when people who have developed techniques and strategies for effective teaching are willing to share their information and insight with others. I thank Eric Hoffman who planted the idea for this teaching workshop and did most of the behind-the-scenes organization to be sure that the idea grew and flourished. Furthermore, I thank the AAPT Board, the APA Committee on Teaching, and the APA Central Division for their support of this project. Finally, I would like to thank the people who contributed ideas as part of the original planning: Gary Baran, Daseia Cavers, Daryl Close, Sharon Crasnow, Peter Franta, Kevin Galvin, Cyn-D Gobatie, Richard Hart, Gary Iseminger, Rosalind Ladd, Mark Lenssen, Hugh McCann, Wanda Teays, and Charlotte Witt.

Teach well!

Betsy Newell Decyk
California State University
Long Beach
Long Beach, CA

SEND YOUR SUBMISSIONS

Submission on disk (or E-mail) are much appreciated. Most major PC word processor file formats are fine although formatting is best preserved in WordPerfect 5.1 or MicroSoft Word for Windows. We prefer MS-DOS, but both DOS and Macintosh diskette formats can be read. If you submit a file on a Mac diskette, be sure to save your file in text (ASCII) format just in case we can't read your word processor's file format. Please include a paper copy of your submission.

Files may be sent as E-mail to:
76170.2351@compuserve.com
or by FAX to:
419-447-9605

If you need help, call us at (419) 447-6442 (Tiffin University) or (419) 772-2197 (Ohio Northern University).—The editors

N.B. The new newsletter editor may have different requirements beginning with the Fall 1996 issue, but they probably will not be very different from those above.

WANTED: NEWSLETTER EDITOR(S)

Due to retirement, this newsletter needs a new editor or editors. AAPT News is published three times a year, with issues in the Fall, Spring, and Summer (November, March, and July). The editor is responsible for obtaining, evaluating, and editing newsletter text. In many cases, material is provided on a regular basis: e.g., the “Letter from the President”, the “Letter from the Executive Director”, and Mary Ann Carroll's “QQ's.” In other cases (e.g., the “Philosophy Teaching Exchange”), the editor will need to actively seek submissions from AAPT members.

The editor will work closely with Michael Novotny, the typesetter at the Philosophy Documentation Center (Bowling Green State University). Mike does the page composition (following the story placement requests of the editor), bids out each issue to area printers, and jobs out the labeling and mailing of the newsletter. Although the editor need not be a computer “techie,” he/she should be familiar with the basics of page composition and layout, word processor file formats, and must have the computer resources necessary to provide clean copy in computer file format to the PDC. All copy editing and page composition details are the responsibility of the editor, not of the PDC. The editor of AAPT News is a member of the AAPT Board of Officers.

The new editor's first issue will be Fall, 1996. Material should be in the hands of the Philosophy Documentation Center by October 1. A very good place to solicit newsletter material (teaching exchange items, book reviews, etc.) is at the summer teaching conferences.

Both of us belong to the APA. The Proceedings and Addresses of the APA are a valuable source of information for AAPT News, as is The Philosophical Calendar, published by the Conference of Philosophical Societies. Access to the Internet's philosophy resources has also been useful to us in obtaining and/or verifying information for the newsletter.

We have enjoyed our work on the newsletter and are very willing to assist the new editor in learning the ropes.

The Editors, AAPT News

AAPT Treasurer's Report, June 12, 1996

AAPT Non-Profit Business Account
Citibank, Smithtown, New York Branch

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Respectfully submitted,

Richard Hart, Treasurer (AAPT)
June 6, 1996

Members:

Registrations for the upcoming 11th International Workshop/Conference on Teaching Philosophy (IWCTP) are flooding in! As you know, the deadline for early registration was June 1, 1996. Although anyone may register for the conference at any time, after this deadline we will not be able to guarantee housing accommodations in the Old Dominion University Powhatan Apartments and there will be a late fee of $25. Other housing accommodations are available for those who register late (e.g., Old Dominion Inn is within a couple of blocks of campus). If you would like to register as a member of the AAPT, please make sure that your membership is up to date. The expiration date should be printed on the address label of this issue. If your membership has expired or will before August 1, please be sure to enclose the $20 membership dues. If you prefer, you may enclose $30 for 2 years.

The program for the 11th IWCTP program includes many new and interesting workshops and we are fortunate to have attracted many new presenters. This time around we had 97 proposals from over 100 philosophers in and out of the country! (A list of the workshops to be presented is included in the glossy flyer which was mailed to all members of the AAPT earlier in May. If you have not received this flyer, or know someone who would like to receive one, please contact me and I will get one in the mail immediately.) In addition, we are in the process of planning two social events - a wine and cheese reception tentatively scheduled for Thursday evening (August 1), and a cookout & ice cream social tentatively scheduled for Friday evening (August 2).

At the 11th IWCTP Business Meeting of the AAPT, we will be considering several items of importance.

(1) During the last election, an amendment was passed which made the past Executive Director of the AAPT a member of the Board of Officers. However, no term was specified in this amendment. We will be discussing our options for correcting this problem.

(2) We will be considering election procedures, exploring options for bringing practice into line with those procedures laid out by the Constitution.

(3) The Board of Officers will be accepting nominations for four (4) members of a Nominating Committee. The Nominating Committee will be responsible for nominating at least one person each for the positions of Vice President and for each At Large member of the Board of Officers, and for conducting the subsequent election. This Committee will be elected by a majority vote of AAPT members at the Business Meeting, and members will serve two-year terms.

(4) Once elected, the Nominating Committee will be accepting nominations for Vice President and At Large members of the Board of Officers from the floor.

(5) The Board of Officers will need to appoint a Program Committee and Chairperson for the 12th International Workshop/Conference on Teaching Philosophy in 1998. This Committee will be responsible for organizing the workshops at the 12th IWCTP. This involves soliciting and reviewing workshop proposals, scheduling workshops, making any arrangements necessary for AV and computer equipment, etc. Nominations will be solicited from informational questionnaires to be distributed at the conference, and through informal discussion with AAPT members. Terms will be determined by the Board of Officers.

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(6) The Board of Officers will also be ap-
pointing an **APA Liaison Committee**, 
consisting of three AAPT members, one 
from each division of the APA. The pri-
mary responsibility of the liaisons will 
be to organize the teaching workshops 
at APA divisional meetings. Nomin-
ations will be solicited from informa-
tional questionnaires to be distributed at 
the conference, and through informal dis-
cussion with AAPT members. Terms will 
be established by the Board of Officers.

(7) The Board of Officers will appoint a 
**new editor** (or editors) for the official 
newsletter of the Association - *AAPT 
News*. After ten successful years as edi-
tors, Daryl Close and Mark Lenssen will 
be resigning after this issue of the news-
letter. A job description for editor can 
be found in this issue. Nominations 
will be solicited from informational questionnaires to be distributed at the conference, and through informal dis-
cussion with AAPT members. Term(s) 
will be decided by the Board of Officers 
in consensus with the appointee(s).

(8) The AAPT will be seeking a **host** for 
our 12th International Workshop/Con-
ference on Teaching Philosophy in 
1998. If you are interested in exploring 
the possibility of hosting this confer-
ce at your college or university, 
please contact Nancy Slonneger (Execu-
tive Director), Betsy Decyk (President), 
or James Campbell (Vice President).

As you can see, we have quite a few things 
to take care of at the Business Meeting. This meet-
ing is scheduled for 9:00-9:50 a.m. on Friday, Au-
gust 2 (Kaufman 100). I hope that as many of you 
as possible will attend.

I look forward to an exciting and successful 
conference, and hope to see you there!

Sincerely,
Nancy Slonneger, Ph.D.
AAPT Executive Director
Transylvania University
300 N. Broadway
Lexington, KY 40508-1706
(606) 269-0601
aapt@music.transy.edu

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**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 class-
room, or how a certain software program (or 
movie, video, game, novel, etc.) can be used in 
the classroom to deepen understanding and en-
hance discussion of philosophical issues. So, 
here’s the chance! Whether you have been using a 
text (film, etc.) for years or have only experi-
enced it for one semester, we are inter-
ested 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.
Sometimes it is difficult to get intro students to appreciate the importance of doing language analysis. If you insist that they do it, they may very well tell the department chairman on you, who will in turn call you into his office and say that some students have been complaining about you and, when the time comes for merit raises, you will get zero, zilch, nada, nil, and nothing. All because you forced students to analyze concepts.

Well, if this has been the reason why your salary is about the same as it was ten years ago, we can help you get that big raise you have deserved for so long. What you do is to show how language analysis has practical benefits because it is a necessary condition for etiquette. For instance, take the concept of "same treatment." We are happy to provide you with a concrete example of how a correct analysis of it can prevent someone from being embarrassed at a dinner party if they are the President:

“All people should be treated the same, in the case of doing the same thing. Just because the President is at a dinner party doesn’t mean he can eat first.” (Furthermore, just because the President is at a dinner party doesn’t mean he can throw up at the table either.)

We bet you also have the problem of getting students to appreciate the topic of Knowledge. That happens to be one we like a whole lot, and you probably do too; no wonder you want students to feel the same. For starters, just tell them:

“Almost anyone, young or old, can give their views on what they believe knowledge is made up of.”

Point out there aren’t too many topics that will allow that. (For instance, we bet Arithmetic wouldn’t stand for young and old people giving their views on what makes it up. And if young people tried to give their views on what they believe makes up cosmology, it would probably cause a riot.)

In your lecture on Knowledge, tell the budding philosophers (who have the potential for becoming researchers at the Qqs Center) that one really neat thing about a definition of knowledge is that their own definition of it is sort of like their own underwear:

“Your own definition of knowledge may fit you, but will it fit someone else?”

Your students may ask, what is to be gained from a definition of knowledge? Now you are in a position to give them one of the surprises of their lives; tell them it would give them something they can never have too many of, and that is VARIABLES:

“A definition of knowledge would give us variables to follow in deciding when to accept information as knowledge and no longer question its validity.”

And what special variables these are; explain how this kind will save them time and energy (and, ipso fatso, greenbacks) when it comes to deciding whether to question the validity of received information. When you are baby-sitting—oops, sorry, we meant lecturing—and the topic is Knowledge, no doubt you distinguish it from mere belief. However, to do this expertly you need to point out the different characteristics of each. So first say,

“Believing something is not a defying characteristic of it being true.”

And then go on to make the distinctions among types of characteristics. In this case you might want to distinguish between defying ones and agreeable ones. (Just a thought.)

Having been Director of the Qqs Center for almost an eternity, we have acquired quite a few pedagogical tricks from our research staff. Being as how Descartes is somebody intro students think is really off the wall, we have come up with some ways of making him look like he really is just a regular guy. We begin by noting that just as

“Descartes falls into meditation… Descartes realizes that as a man who sleeps as much as he must mention his dreams.”

To further prove that Descartes is a regular person just like them, point out that

“he believes that when he is awake he is where he is and is doing what he is doing. He says when he looks down on himself the body he sees is his and not someone else’s. Descartes also says that a person is who he/she is no matter what he/she tries to be or not to be. But he, like me, is only human and because of this he does sleep, consequently, he dreams.”

However, we philosophy teachers don’t want our intro students to think Descartes is just as regular a guy as they are. So you have to take some wind out of their sails by referring to his theory:

“In Descartes’ theory, the central idea is based upon the mind being where the entire world as you as a human see everything happening and where you partake in life as well, all while you are asleep.”

Who in their right mind could possibly think Descartes was as normal as Intro students?

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Quotable Quotes...
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The following (as expressed by a QQs researcher) provides additional evidence that Descartes was out of step with really regular guys:

"I feel he is being a bold individual, believing what he knows to be true and forming beliefs for himself."

This impression is subject to interpretation, however, because of the word "bold." If our researcher intended to compliment Our Boy, the "bold" must be interpreted to mean "courageous" and therefore it is a good thing that he had the fortitude to believe what he knows to be true and to form beliefs for himself!!! Amen and Hallelujah!!! (Sometimes we get carried away.)

But there is another meaning of "bold"—it's how our ninth-grade civics teacher used to characterize us. In that sense, someone who is BOLD is unduly forward and brazen in manners. (We have no idea why our civics teacher used to call us bold. All we did was to make an insightful remark here and there such as "Governments are composed of nothing but a bunch of fools" or to ask intelligent questions like "What's so great about the dictatorship at that school?" or "Who gave YOU the authority to impose a dress code around here?") This sense of "bold" makes Descartes appear to be someone who is merely trying to stir up trouble and who has the audacity to actually believe what he knows to be true and to actually form beliefs for himself, with no outside indoctrination. If that don't beat all.

One of our researchers objects that Descartes' dreaming and doing stuff like that did not help with the point of view perspective or with identity:

"Dreaming, meditating, and out-of-body experiences only take the point of view perspective out for a joy ride. For wherever the person goes in his conscious or subconscious, there it will perceive its existence. The identity that person has will always tag along with the point of view. This is why point of view is so important to existence and this is what matters to personal identity."

We sense there is something pretty profound here, don't you? We aren't sure but it probably has to do with a person's identity being a real drag on the point of view, being as how it insists on tagging along with it everywhere it goes.

So just where is point of view, you ask?

"The point of view lies wherever the human being receives and distributes information, feelings, emotions, etc. From this it can be said that the human being feels with its mind that it exists with its body. This is what point of view is all about. The fact that where a person is, is only where a person perceives itself to be. No amount of self-actualization can take a person out of the reality it perceives."

We wish we had known about this a lot earlier before spending our life savings on psychotherapy trying to become self-actualized because we naively thought that would take us out of the reality we perceive.

Not all our researchers think point of view is what really matters in personal identity. For instance: "What I think really matters in personal identity is the soul. It's absurd to view something like the material body that's so obviously temporary as a means to identify an eternal person. If there's nothing more to us than a body, then why do we refer to a dead person as 'passed away'? The body certainly hasn't passed away anywhere—it's still right there. You can still talk to it, but there will be no response because what illuminates the body has truly passed away."

From time immemorial we personally have been wondering why we refer to a dead person as "passed away." (Being an eternal person like the rest of you has made it possible for us to wonder about something for as long a time as immemorial.) Nor could we figure out why a dead person wouldn't respond when we talked to it; did we say something rude? Was it our breath? Come to find out, the person's light went out. This made us start to wonder about some other things: what is the normal wattage for a person's light? If it goes out too soon can the person get their money back? Do they make longer lasting light bulbs? And should you buy one even though it's more expensive?

All these musings triggered a humongous worry about our existence and we became ridden with anxiety to the nth degree—what if our OWN light was out? We realized that we were doubting our existence in the world. Then what? We wanted to know. A staff member told us:

"If you doubt your existence in the world, then there is a large possibility that you do not exist."

Well, this just about caused us to have a full blown panic attack. To ward it off we went back to our Executive Suite in the QQs Center and had a few beers with a couple of those little blue pills. We then realized that "large" is a relative concept; and since we didn't know HOW large a possibility it was that we didn't exist and relative to WHAT, chances were that there might also be a large possibility that we DID exist.

We told all this to Dr. Reality and asked for some feedback:

"I do believe...that I do exist, without a doubt. However, I also believe this not because it was proven to me after much research and intense thought, but because I simply believe it is so considering I don't necessarily have to touch or see or rationalize every aspect of my life to have faith in its existence."

Being real supporters of and believers in the argument from analogy, we felt justified in applying Dr. Reality's remarks to ourselves and so we got a whole lot more confident about believing in our own existence. And so can you.

Mary Ann Carroll, Director of the QQs Center, located at Appalachian State University where proving our existence is a way of life.
Calendar of Events

July 31-August 4, 1996 - 11th International Workshop/Conference on Teaching Philosophy, Old Dominion University, Norfolk, VA. Sponsored by AAPT. See inside this issue for more details.

Internet: rc2z@andrew.cmu.edu

December 27-30, 1996 - American Philosophical Assoc. (APA), Eastern Div., Atlanta Marriott Marquis, Atlanta, GA.

March 26-29, 1997 - American Philosophical Assoc. (APA), Pacific Div., Claremont Resort & Conference Center, Oakland, CA.


These listings are drawn in part from Nancy Simco (ed.), The Philosophical Calendar, published by The Conference of Philosophical Societies.
American Association of Philosophy Teachers
Membership Dues Form

Memberships are for the period beginning with date of payment of dues. Upon receipt of dues, your name will be placed on the mailing list and you will receive AAPT News beginning with the next issue scheduled.

The expiration date of your membership will be listed on the address label for each newsletter. 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.

**MEMBERSHIP RATES**

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(The full amount for life membership may be paid over the period of one year)

**MEMBERSHIP BENEFITS**

INCLUDE:

* Discount on conference registration
* Subscription to AAPT News
* Subscription to AAPT-L (upon request)
* Access to the AAPT Web Page

Please detach and return this form with your membership dues to: Dr. Nancy Slonneger, AAPT, Transylvania University, 300 N. Broadway, Lexington, KY 40508.

Name: ____________________________________________
Address: __________________________________________
City: ______________ State/Province: ______________ Country: ______________
Zip (+4) __________ Telephone: (W) __________ (H) __________
E-mail Address: __________________________________

Is this a renewal ____ or new membership ____?

Please check membership type: Regular ____ Student ____ Emeritus ____ Life ____

Do you need a copy of the AAPT Constitution? Yes ____ No ____

TOTAL AMOUNT ENCLOSED: $__________