CALL FOR WORKSHOP PROPOSALS

12th International Workshop/Conference on Teaching Philosophy
July 30 - August 3, 1998 • Mansfield University of Pennsylvania

About AAPT: Founded in 1978, the American Association of Philosophy Teachers (AAPT) is devoted exclusively to the advancement and improvement of philosophy teaching at all educational levels. Since the first Workshop/Conference in 1976, over 2,000 philosophy teachers have attended sessions at locations all over the United States and Canada. As always, the AAPT's goal is to host an educational, informative, enjoyable, noncompetitive conference, where those interested in the teaching of philosophy can bring their families to share in the experience.

About Mansfield: Mansfield University is located in rural Tioga County in North Central Pennsylvania about thirty miles south of Corning, New York and fifty miles north of Williamsport, Pennsylvania. Hiking, rafting, cycling, horseback riding, canoeing, swimming, shopping and sightseeing opportunities are available only minutes away.

How to Propose a Workshop: Interactive workshops on any area, problem or aspect of teaching philosophy are welcome. We especially encourage workshops which demonstrate the use of technology in teaching philosophy, collaborative learning models, strategies for using service learning in the classroom, and innovative ideas and techniques for teaching introductory courses, critical thinking, ethics, applied ethics, aesthetics, philosophy of religion and feminist philosophy. You may send more than one proposal.

For each proposal, send four copies of the following:

• Cover page (separate from the proposal) which includes: (a) your name, school affiliation (if any), address and phone number, (b) title of proposed presentation, (c) anticipated length of presentation (60 or 90 minutes), (d) style of presentation (e.g., workshop, poster, conversation, demonstration, etc.), (e) a list of any special equipment needed, and (f) a one-paragraph abstract (100-200 words) suitable for use in the conference program.

• Proposal (one to three pages) which includes: (a) the title of your presentation, but without your name (for blind reviewing purposes), (b) a summary of your presentation: what it covers and seeks to achieve; its methods and techniques; what participants will do and experience, (c) a list of handouts and materials you plan to provide, and (d) any additional information which the program committee might need to know in making its selections.

Where to Submit Proposals: Proposals may be submitted via e-mail or U.S. postal service (snail mail). For snail mail, send four copies to: Arnold Wilson, University College - Univ. of Cincinnati, 3304 French Hall, Cincinnati, OH 45221-0246. For e-mail, send in ASCII (text) format to Louisa Moon at: lmoon@mcc.miracosta.cc.ca.us

1st deadline for proposals: December 1, 1997
2nd deadline for proposals: December 15, 1997

Note: Proposals submitted by the 1st deadline date will be given preference in the schedule. Proposals submitted by the second deadline date will be accepted as schedule space permits.

Any questions may also be addressed to Louisa by phone (760) 757-2121 x6241 or e-mail.

See the Conference Website for More Information: http://www.mnsfld.edu/depts/philosop/98confin.html

Table of Contents

Call for Workshop Proposals 1
12th IWCTP to be Held at Mansfield University July 30 – August 3, 1998 2

From the President James Campbell

Philosophy Teaching Exchange 4
E-Mail Discussion Lists in the Classroom Mark H. Dixon

Calendar of Events 8
I guess by this time we can all admit that we are glad to be back in the classroom after a summer of doing other things. One of the "things" I was doing was spending some time thinking about teaching. (I suspect that I am not alone here.) One of the issues that I was especially puzzling over is the method of teaching philosophy classes, especially in beginning courses like "Introduction to Philosophy" and "Introductory Ethics."

As I recall from my undergraduate days when I took these classes, the main activity in the classroom was the attempt to find the argument in the reading assigned for the session and then to evaluate that argument related to justice or the self (or whatever our larger topic was). I also recall that this seemingly valuable activity often degenerated into something less. On the part of the students, the failing resulted all too often from our insufficient preparation—either with the reading, or with life—that handicapped our efforts to contribute in any meaningful way to the discussion. On the part of the instructor, the failing resulted all too often from what I think is a flaw within the argument model of philosophy teaching.

While it is not a bad model in itself, in the hands of an instructor who has forgotten that arguments are the machinery of philosophy, not its soul, the argument model can become a simplifying device that short-circuits inquiry. Can we assume, for example, that a philosophical argument is understandable on its own, or is there a need to know more about the cultural aspects of the philosopher's life and work? Is our interest in evaluating the argument itself, and consequently inclined toward the development of counter-examples, or are we attempting to understand the idea or perspective that is being articulated, however (un)successfully by means of the argument?

Over the years, I have tried on occasion to make use of the argument model in my teaching, but never with much success. I am much more comfortable with a model that, for want of a better name, I will call the person model of teaching. Rather than attempting to extract the argument of a philosopher from the selected reading without any concern for the philosopher's larger life, the person model comes to the position being argued for indirectly, only after an attempt to understand the author's larger picture of which the material under examination is a part. This person model is thus neither an easy method to use, nor a quick one. We cannot simply attack, for example, a Platonic dialogue or a Cartesian meditation with a single-minded focus on the words. I have to consider the larger meaning of culture and the author's place in it.

My recent worrying has not been related to whether I should continue to do what I do. The person model will remain my primary method of teaching in introductory classes. My worrying, rather, has been over attempting to develop the pedagogical principles behind this method. I cannot claim, for example, as some other philosophy teachers can, that I am teaching students to argue better by developing their skills to articulate and defend their positions. What I am attempting to develop in my students is something different: the ability to 'distance' themselves from their ideas, to 'step outside' what is familiar and to enter into a new perspective. The goal of this person model is to help students become better interpreters of the perspectives of others so that they can use these additional perspectives to address philosophical, and other, questions.

While my pedagogical principles are not fully developed, my theoretical justification comes from the works of George Herbert Mead, the American philosopher and social psychologist. Central to his work is an internal dialogue between the values and traditions of one's society (which Mead calls the "me") and one's choosing to make use of or react against this inheritance (which he calls the "I"). In his terms, the model I am using focuses upon the "me" portion; and I am attempting to furnish the students with more material from these traditions to make use of, or against which to react.

For example, in a unit in an introductory class considering the nature of a work of art, I find myself far less interested in...
TEACHING PHILOSOPHY SESSIONS
AT APA-EASTERN MEETING

Sunday, December 28—11:15 a.m.—1:15 p.m.—Room 301
Topic: Philosophy and Life at Two-Year Colleges
Session One
Chair: Lowell Kleiman
Speaker: Gertrude Postl, "The Undifferentiated Manifold: Philosophy at the Two Year College"
Commentator: Allyson Robichaud

Session Two
Speaker: Joram Graf Haber, "The Value of Life"
Commentator: James Pearce

Sunday, December 28—11:15 a.m.—1:15 p.m.—Room 304
Topic: Teaching Chinese/Asian Philosophy
Chair: Xunwu Chen
Speakers: Peimin Ni, "Teaching Chinese Philosophy On-site"
Robin Wang, "The Mutual Development of Teaching and Learning—Confucian Method of Teaching Chinese Philosophy"
Commentator: Xinyan Jiang

Sunday, December 28—5:15 p.m.—7:15 p.m.—Room 301
American Association of Philosophy Teachers
Chair: Jim Campbell
Presenters: Gail Presby, "Teaching African Philosophy in the Introductory Philosophy Curriculum"
James P. Friel, "Teaching the Philosophy of Volunteering and Citizen Apprenticeship in the Philosophy Curriculum"
Richard Hart, "Teaching American Philosophy in the Introductory Philosophy Curriculum"
Jim Campbell, "Teaching American Philosophy in the Introductory Philosophy Curriculum"

Sunday, December 28—5:15 p.m.—7:15 p.m.—Room 308
Topic: Integrating Race and Gender into Philosophy Classes: A Discussion
Chair: Mark D. Morelli
Speakers: Julie M. McDonald, Arnold L. Farr

Sunday, December 28—7:30 p.m.—10:30 p.m.—Room 304
Topic: Ethical Issues in Undergraduate Education
Chair: Randall Curren
Speakers: Martin Golding, "Intellectual Respectability and the Marketplace of Ideas" (1997 APE Distinguished Lecture)
Karen Hanson, "Curricular Controversies"

Robert Gurland, "Teaching Virtue: A Moral Imperative"
Respondent: Martin Golding (to Hanson and Gurland)

Monday, December 29—9:00 a.m.—11:00 a.m.—Room 305
Topic: Panel on Creating Textbooks in Philosophy
Session One
Authors’ Perspectives
Panelists: Steven M. Cahn, Eugene Kelly, Ed. L. Miller, Louis Pojman

Session Two
Editors’ Perspectives
Panelists: Ted Bolen, Ken King, Sarah Moyers, Gregory Pence

Monday, December 29—1:30 p.m.—4:30 p.m.—Room 301
Topic: Augustine
Chair: Philip L. Quinn
Speakers: Peter King, 'Augustine on the Impossibility of Teaching'
Gareth B. Matthew, 'The Socratic Augustine'
Respondent: William E. Mann

From the President
(continued from page 2)
pushing for a definition that would yield the necessary and sufficient conditions for some object’s being a work of art than in uncovering why humans as we know them all seem to produce and value art. I am less interested in formulating evaluative criteria, or in deciding whether the artist’s intentions are relevant to these criteria, and more interested in issues like the role of museums in society, the familiar distinction between the artistic and the practical, and possible connections among such activities as music-making and souvenir-collecting and story-telling and sports-watching.

I am not proposing that the person model take over in introductory philosophy classes. (Even I use other models on occasion.) Students need to sharpen their skills at personal expression, and they need to develop their evaluative skills in a public arena. But I firmly believe that they will have more to express if they are more familiar with the idea and perspectives of others, and they will be better able to evaluate if they can consider the positions under evaluation from a number of different points of view.

What do you think about such methods of teaching philosophy? Is there another model that you use? This is just one of the topics that we can discuss when we assemble again in July at Mansfield University.

James Campbell
Philosophy Department
University of Toledo
Toledo, OH 43606-3390

NOTES
**PHILOSOPHY TEACHING EXCHANGE**

*A regular feature of AAPT News sharing course materials and classroom experiences*

*Replies to the editors or the author are welcome*

**E-MAIL DISCUSSION LISTS IN THE CLASSROOM**

Mark H. Dixon  
*Ohio Northern University*

**Introduction**

There are certain problems and frustrations that present perennial challenges to the educator. These are (1) how to motivate students to participate in the class, (2) how to determine what materials to cover within the course's time limitations, and (3) how to balance lecture material and in-class discussion.

As Internet access becomes more universal and, in particular, as colleges and universities modernize and enlarge their computer systems, these problems, and the inevitable compromises that result, will become less difficult to negotiate. The tools and services that the Internet offers, in addition to marvelous research capabilities, will allow instructors to concentrate on the more essential course materials without the usual sacrifices in instructor-student and student-student interaction and discussion. Educators will no longer have to decide whether lectures or in-class discussion are more valuable. These tools and services will also present unique opportunities where students can participate without the usual concerns that limit in-class participation.

One such service that is available on almost all campus computers, and which represents an important tool that the instructor can use, is e-mail. While e-mail alone has little value as a classroom tool, except as a means to contact students, in combination with certain software that is also available at most universities and colleges, plain and simple e-mail can become the *e-mail discussion list*.

In this paper I will explore the e-mail discussion list as a classroom tool and explain its structure and possible uses as an addition to the traditional classroom repertoire.

**E-mail Discussion Lists**

First, the basics (to those familiar with e-mail discussion lists I apologize, as this is quite basic). Imagine an association whose members live over a large geographical area. To facilitate communication, the association decides to appoint one member as the association's administrator. To communicate with the others in the association a particular member sends a message to the administrator, who then duplicates the message, consults the membership list, and sends copies to all the other members. While this procedure does maintain communication between the association's members (and even represents a slight improvement over a procedure that requires individuals to duplicate their own messages and send to all the other members), this is, to be sure, a cumbersome and tedious process. Imagine, however, that the messages the members send to the administrator arrive in seconds and that it is possible to automate the administrator's role so that the other member's copies are also sent within seconds. This, in essence, describes an e-mail discussion list. These lists combine automatic administrative processes with normal e-mail technologies to create, what appears at the user level to be, a discussion between the list's members. A special program, the most common being LISTSERV or Majordomo, acts as the list's administrator. The program handles all subscription and information requests, maintains the membership list, and routes all messages between the list's members. The process is simple, fast and effective. Diagram 1 illustrates a basic e-mail discussion list configuration:

![Diagram 1](image_url)
While all the members can contribute to the list and can subscribe and unsubscribe themselves, the list owner is the sole individual that has complete administrative control over the list. The list owner determines who can subscribe and whether subscription requires the owner's approval. List owners can also unsubscribe or remove participants at their discretion. The list can even be set up so the owner acts as moderator, i.e., must approve the messages that the members receive.

Other possibilities are that the list software can archive the messages so that it is possible to search through them and rather than receive each message as it arrives it is possible to receive the messages as a "digest" that contains all the messages over a specifiable period.

The control that the list owners have over the lists is, in part, what makes them such versatile and valuable classroom tools.

**E-mail Discussion Lists as Classroom Tools**

E-mail discussion lists are quite common on the Internet. Indeed, there are several thousand Internet-wide lists, i.e., lists available to all institutions who wish to subscribe to them, and (at a guess) thousands more lists that are location specific, as in the class lists under discussion here. The crucial question, then, is what can I, as an educator, do with an e-mail discussion list? What follows are the most valuable uses I have been able to discover.

1. The most obvious, and perhaps most basic, reason to use an e-mail discussion list is that it represents a convenient means to contact the entire class with important news, notices or schedule changes. One simple message to the list and the list software does the rest.

2. Another important, though still rather basic, use is that it offers a means to get handouts and other supplemental material to students who can, at their leisure, read, save or print out the material.

3. The e-mail list also offers the means to go into more detail on points or questions that arise in class, but which there is no time to cover during the class or which the instructor was unable to answer at that time.

4. In the same vein it allows the instructor to provide the students with amplifications on or additions to lecture notes, or even the lecture notes themselves.

5. On the student side, it offers an excellent forum where the students can inquire about issues that arise in class or about assignments (this latter can be quite invaluable as it allows other students, who perhaps have the same question, to receive the same information).

6. E-mail lists are also excellent media through which to engage in general discussions on specific topics or issues, i.e., they allow students to interact with other students as well as with the instructor, and to pursue these issues in some detail.

7. On a more elaborate level, e-mail lists also are invaluable as a means to construct and engage in activities where students can assume various roles and interact with other students and the instructor while in those roles.

While e-mail discussion lists are invaluable as concerns (1)-(5), it is with (6) and (7) that these lists excel as classroom tools, and I shall discuss these in a bit more detail.

**E-mail Classroom Discussions**

E-mail discussion lists represent excellent general discussion forums where the instructor poses questions and then encourages (and directs) the discussion through comments on the students' responses. The original idea was to begin the discussion with some rather controversial statement or question and then allow the students to more-or-less dictate and control the discussion's course. In retrospect this was rather idealistic since, without some motivation or incentive, simple inertia becomes a serious problem with most students. Thus I made the decision to assume a more active role in the discussions. I began to post, at regular intervals, questions that I thought would incite responses and then to synthesize the common responses and to react to them with either comments or additional questions. I would also request that students enlarge upon their own ideas in order to encourage their participation. It is important here, I believe, to praise the exceptional messages as well as to correct those messages that contain poor or incorrect responses.

This approach had much greater success. When given a question to consider and an open forum in which to present their responses, students began to participate and to interact with one another as well as with me. There was, at the highest point, almost 50% participation in the list, with about 35% regular participation. Given how difficult it can be to motivate students I consider this a success! One unforeseen benefit was that those students who were reluctant to participate in-class often had no

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**Submissions to AAPT News**

Submissions on disk or as e-mail binary attachments are much appreciated. Most major PC word processor file formats are fine although formatting is best preserved in Microsoft Word for Windows 6.0, Microsoft Word for Macintosh 6.0, and WordPerfect 5.1. 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 (e.g., MacWrite II). Please include a paper copy of your submission.

Files may be sent as e-mail from virtually any e-mail system to delose@compserv.com, or by FAX to 419-447-9605. If you need help, call us at 800-968-6446 ext. 3340 (Tiffin University) or 419-772-2197 (Ohio Northern University)—The editors
The Imitation Game: An Illustration

In “Computing Machinery and Human Intelligence,” Alan Turing proposes a test to determine under what conditions it is appropriate to ascribe thought processes to a nonhuman being. As an introduction to this test Turing discusses another game, the imitation game. In Turing’s opinion, the imitation game, with its focus on gender ascriptions, illustrates what is special about thought ascriptions. The imitation games has three participants, a male, a female and an interrogator. Under ideal circumstances the three are in separate rooms and communicate through computer terminals. It is the interrogator’s goal in the game to determine which participant is the male and which is the female through their answers to questions the interrogator sends to the participants over the computer terminals. The male’s goal is to attempt to undermine the interrogator’s decision and the female’s goal is to assist the interrogator to reach the correct determination. The practical consequence, then, is that the male attempts to ‘imitate’ the female in order to fool the interrogator, i.e., the male lies, while the female participant, in general, tells the truth. The sole information the interrogator has to base the final decision on, then, are the answers the participants give to the questions.

When I discuss minds and persons in class I spend some time on the imitation game and its successor, the Turing Test. It is instructive to see the precise differences in the assumptions that underlie these thought experiments and to determine what each can be said to prove. Whenever possible, then, I have the students go through the imitation game in class.

Since the equipment to do this over computer terminals is unavailable in the classroom, this means that we have to do it in person, and this can be quite difficult. The e-mail discussion list, however, offers a excellent forum through which to conduct the game. I choose the male and female participants in secret (and discuss their respective roles with them) and then give the interrogator’s role to the other students in the class. Their goal, then, is to post their questions to the participants on the discussion list. The questions can be on whatever topic the questioner chooses, and can be to either one or both of the participants. The participants write answers to the questions and send them to me so that I could remove their return addresses (this is crucial otherwise it is possible to determine who the senders are through the return address headers that all e-mail messages contain). I then send the answers on to the discussion list. Once the question and answer period is over, we discuss the results in class.

While the entire exercise is perhaps more instructive in what men and women consider to be male and female ideas and attitudes than in what it means to be a particular sex or gender, the game is, in most cases, a success. Indeed, participation on the list often rises to its highest level during the game.

Advantages and Disadvantages to E-mail Discussion Lists

The advantages to the instructor are obvious. E-mail lists represent the chance to both supplement in-class lectures with materials that there would otherwise be no time to consider and to explore the issues the course covers in greater detail. It also offers the instructor a chance to interact with more students, and to a greater degree, than would otherwise be possible. On a practical level, when emergencies occur the e-mail list allows the instructor to contact the entire class with a single e-mail message.

To students, e-mail discussion lists can be no less invaluable. Despite all attempts to create an environment conducive to discussion, the classroom does frighten and intimidate some students. Whatever the causes, it can be a real battle to overcome these barriers. With the e-mail discussion list, however, there is a dramatic change in the dynamics. The interaction is much less formal, participation is more impersonal, and there are no time pressures. Given all this, the students had less hesitation to participate and to contribute their own ideas. The computer mediation appears to provide a distance that reduces whatever threat these students perceive in class. In some cases students who said little in class, but were regular participants in the e-mail discussions, even came to participate on a more regular basis in class.

Perhaps the biggest problem that e-mail discussion lists pose is their time consumption. Once the students began to participate on a regular basis, I spent, on average, one hour per night on the list. Since I can connect to the list at home, however, I could do this whenever I chose so the inconvenience was minimal. The ideal is to start the discussion and then allow the students to continue on their own. I found that on occasion this did happen and student participation alone was able to sustain the conversation. Possible solutions to the occasional lapses in participation might be to assign students as discussion moderators on specific topics, or have them post papers or other class assignments and allow fellow students to comment.

Student Messages and Responses

What follows are actual messages that students sent during a discussion about persons and the differences between animals and human beings. I believe most instructors would agree that, even when there is time, to maintain a discussion at this level in class is quite difficult.
(1) From: L. W.:

Today's discussion helped me understand a lot of these things too. In class we kept bringing up things that showed how we are different from animals and what sets us apart from them. I really don't think we are THAT much different from them if we think in basic terms. The "thing" that makes us different from animals is the level at which we use [our cognitive abilities]. No, M.D.'s cats DON'T sit at home in front of the fireplace thinking about nuclear fission, or different ways to save the world, or even what homework they have to do for class tomorrow. But I think they DO still have cognitive processes that let them think and feel and experience emotion, just like humans do. Even if you compare human beings, we all think on different levels too, don't we?

(2) From: B. M.:

Okay, think about this.

I have read J. M.'s and L. W.'s statements, but I think that something needs to be added to them. The biggest difference between humans and animals in their thinking is that humans can realize that they are thinking. Our cognitive processes have this extra level to [them] that makes us unique from all other life forms and indeed makes us persons.

One could approach the [reasoning] dog in the same way. Dogs may [reason], however, they cannot realize that what they are doing is [reasoning]. Persons can.

Now, I don't want anyone to think that I'm a bad person, but I have to think that if anyone, human or animal, is not capable of this realization for any reason, he or she is not a person. I'm not saying that we should treat them as nonpersons (the mentally handicapped, etc.), but I think that you have to see the fact that there is a difference between them and us. In fact, in comparison to us, they are more similar to animals than they are to persons. I don't want anyone to take that the wrong way. I'm not suggesting that we treat them as animals. I'm merely suggesting that they may not (in the philosophical sense) be able to be considered persons because of the fact that they cannot realize their cognitive processes.

(3) From: K. K.:

You know what? I think that even though this scares me to death, that B. M. does have a point that's worth arguing. I hate to think of the fact that some people may not actually be persons, but it is worth probing the question.

I think that there IS a huge difference between humans and animals: Human beings have the capability to [reason] on a level that animals don't comprehend. I don't deny that they may be able to [reason] small things, but they aren't conscious of the fact that they ARE even [reasoning].

Animals have a tendency to go with instinct rather than reason. If a human being were to see a plate of really spicy, strong food, the human being can say to him or herself "I really want to eat this, but I know it'll make me really sick" and decide not to eat it. The animal, on the other hand, only knows it’s instincts and that it’s hungry—it'll eat it without thinking about it . . . and it'll get sick later.

How does this differ from individuals who are mentally handicapped in some way? A mentally challenged person may not know any better than the hungry animal. They may not be able to [reason] and even know how to be logical. Even if these individuals were able to make simple [connections], they probably wouldn't even be conscious of the fact that they are [reasoning]. I'm not calling these individuals animals . . . but it scares me that a human being may only have the mental capability of a cat or something. I think, however, that no matter HOW much or little mental capability an individual has, that we should always treat a human being like a human being. Regardless of anything: humanity is humanity.

Final Comments

To set up an e-mail discussion list is, on the technical side, quite simple. To determine whether it is possible to set up such lists at your institution, the best person to contact is the individual who oversees or administers the computer system. In most colleges and universities there is a Computer Services, or some similar office, that handles these requests.

Once set up, a little practice is all that one needs in order to learn the various functions and commands to administer an e-mail discussion list.

Additional Information

These World Wide Web sites contain general, as well as more technical, information about e-mail list setup and administration.

Guide to Network Resource Tools—LISTSERV:
http://www.cuhk.hk/guides/earn/listserv.html#information

LISTSERV Guide for General Users:

Majordomo List Owner’s Guide:
http://www.ecn.missouri.edu/lists/list-owner.html

Majordomo Mail List and Archive Site:
http://www.GreatCircle.com/majordomo/

Mark H. Dixon
Ohio Northern University
m-dixon@onu.edu
Calendar of Events


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

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