

# DEPARTMENT OF PHILOSOPHY

## FROM THE HEAD'S DESK

Joshua Mozersky

Philosophy, if I were asked to sum it up, is the pursuit of understanding: of ourselves; of the world we inhabit; of the relationship between the two. When I am asked what the point is, my answer is simple. Understanding is the point and we do much of what else we do to achieve it, not the other way around. This is not to say, however, that improved understanding has no tangible benefits. We all have to make our way in a complex, often confusing world. A refined view of oneself and others certainly can't hurt. Over 2,000 years ago, Plato warned of the rise of the demagogue, and Aristotle pondered the risk to democracy of economic inequality. Perhaps had society better heeded the words of the great philosophers, we would be better off today. Whether acknowledged or not, a philosophical outlook guides most social and political movements, as well as most lines of thinking. As we traverse the streams of our lives, jumping from stone to stone, knowledge of the great contributors to our discipline will help anyone to find the solid landing spots, or at least avoid the dangerous ones.

As the Head of a Philosophy Department in 2016, one is constantly working to navigate numerous bureaucratic and financial challenges while trying, in some small way, to nurture and support your colleagues' contributions to the project of human understanding. Not an easy task at the best of times, but certainly a worthy one, rewarding in many respects.

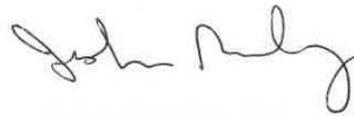
I think our department is in many ways a manifestation of the power of philosophy, having found endless ways to thrive and contribute despite the obstacles we may face. As you can read in this newsletter, our faculty continue to create world-class research, our

graduate students are among the strongest we have ever seen, and our undergraduate classes are thriving. The most recent Kennedy Lecture, by Cheryl Misak (University of Toronto) was a combination of historical scholarship – on the philosopher/mathematician Frank Ramsey – and philosophical insight rarely seen anywhere; a fitting kick-off to our colloquium series, which continues to flourish.

On the sadder side of things, our department must accept a number of recent and pending retirements, including Jerome Bickenbach, Jackie Duffin, and Henry Laycock. I extend my deepest gratitude for their years of marvellous service to our department, our university, and our discipline. I wish all of them the best and hope they will continue to make their presence felt in the department for many years to come.

A key challenge will be that of finding a way to turn this spate of retirements into an opportunity for renewal and rejuvenation, with new hires. A tough assignment in the current financial climate, but one to which I remain dedicated.

All in all, it has been another outstanding year in our department. With the help of our outstanding community of faculty, staff, students, and alumni, the future looks bright indeed.



### POWER OF PHILOSOPHY

*Our department is in many ways a manifestation of the power of philosophy, having found endless ways to thrive and contribute despite the obstacles we may face.*

# QUEEN'S PHILOSOPHERS IN ACADEMIC LEADERSHIP ROLES

Queen's philosophers serve their academic community in various ways. Dr Mercier, for instance, served as President of the Canadian Philosophical Association from 2012-2013. Many faculty members serve on the editorial boards of leading philosophy journals. Remarkably, three Queen's philosophers currently serve as Editors of such journals in their respective areas of specialisation. Dr Kumar is an Executive Editor of the *Canadian Journal of Philosophy*, Dr Sismondo serves as Editor-in-Chief of *Social Studies of Science*, and Dr Schuklenk is a long-serving Editor of two international journals, *Bioethics* and *Developing World Bioethics*.



## FACULTY PROFILES

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### DAVID BAKHURST

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Dr Bakhurst continues his research on philosophy of education, and with the help of funding from the Spencer Foundation and the Philosophy of Education Society of Great Britain, he is at work on a sequel to his 2011 book, *The Formation of Reason*. In the past few months, Dr Bakhurst presented work from this project in Oxford, Cambridge, Leipzig, Dublin and London. He also has forthcoming a contribution to the Blackwell's *Companion to Wittgenstein* (co-authored with Cheryl Misak) and a chapter in a book on pragmatism in Britain. Once he completes his existing projects, his next task will be to prepare a collection of his papers on Russian philosophy, which has been commissioned by the publisher Brill.

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### JAQUELINE DAVIES

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Winning two teaching awards were among the highlights of 2015 for Jacqueline Davies. She was named the Queen's winner of the Ontario Undergraduate Student Alliance Teaching Award. She was also thrilled to receive the 2015 Queen's Alumni Award for Excellence in Teaching. As a Queen's alumna it is a remarkable honour to be included in the roll of names that include some of her former teachers, including the late A.R.C. Duncan. Jacqueline also enjoyed the opportunity to see the University from new perspectives in 2015, serving as Acting Head of the Department of Gender Studies for the year. She also welcomed the opportunity to engage with Jewish Studies at Queen's, presenting formal comments on Daniel Boyarin's 2015 Rosen Lecture *Did Jewish Women Have a Diaspora?* Continuing in an interdisciplinary vein, her most recent publication "The

criminalization of sexual commerce in Canada: Context and concepts for critical analysis," *Canadian Journal of Human Sexuality*, came out in 2015. This coming academic year she looks forward to teaching her newly developed course PHIL 275 *Thinking Gender, Sex and Love*. Her current research and community activities are focused on women's prison solidarity, especially at the former Prison for Women in Kingston.

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### RAHUL KUMAR

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Dr. Kumar has published several articles over the past year, including "Risking and Wronging" *Philosophy and Public Affairs*, "Contractualism and the roots of responsibility" in *The Nature of Responsibility*, "Intergenerational Justice" in the *Oxford Handbook of Distributive Justice*, "Lyons on racial history and racial injustice" *Criminal Justice Ethics*, and "Contractualist reasoning, HIV cure trials and the moral (ir)relevance of the risk/benefit ratio" *Journal of Medical Ethics*. This last paper emerged from a workshop at Harvard Medical School on ethical challenges in research seeking a cure for HIV. It brought together researchers, clinicians, policy experts, and philosophers with no prior background in the area and allowed them to learn from one another. The paper is the product of many very fruitful and enlightening conversations over those few days. Dr Kumar is currently working on two projects for the *Canadian Journal of Philosophy*, in addition to his normal editorial work. The first a symposium on T.M. Scanlon's recent book, *Being Realistic about Reasons*, featuring several critical papers by internationally recognized experts in metaethics and a lengthy reply to critics by Scanlon. The second is an edited volume of papers exploring emerging issues in the area of obligations to future generations. It will appear in early 2017, published by Routledge as part of a *CJP* book series. In 2016-17 Dr Kumar will

be a Visiting Professor at the University of Toronto's Centre for Ethics where he will be working on a project on non-consequentialism and intergenerational ethics.

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### WILL KYMLICKA

Twenty years ago, Will Kymlicka published *Multicultural Citizenship*, which has gone on to influence academic and policy debates around the world about how to govern modern diverse societies. Translated into 20 languages, Oxford University Press recently listed it as one of the "10 academic books that changed the world".

While multiculturalism goes in and out of political favour, the question of how a multicultural democracy can work remains central to both philosophical and social science in inquiry. In his most recent work, Kymlicka has joined with several of his colleagues – particularly Keith Banting in the Queen's School of Policy Studies - to explore the links between diversity and solidarity. It is widely believed that the more cultural, racial and religious diversity there is within society, the more difficult it is to sustain a sense of national solidarity. This is sometimes called the "progressive's dilemma": pursuing greater recognition for diversity may make it more difficult to sustain solidarity for the economically disadvantaged. Kymlicka and Banting's findings are more optimistic: they suggest that a form of multicultural solidarity is indeed possible. Their volume – *Solidarity in Diverse Societies* – will be published shortly by Oxford University Press, and Kymlicka has been invited to discuss its findings to various international audiences, including the International Panel on Social Progress, the Successful Societies Program of CIFAR, and the Swedish Social Democratic Party.

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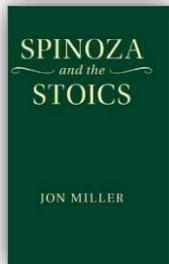
### HENRY LAYCOCK

Thanks to a six-month sabbatical leave, Dr Laycock has been able to spend half of the past year bringing a major research project close to completion. The work is a 21st Century argument for the truth of an ancient metaphysical world-view, promoted by the philosophers of Asia Minor around 2600 years ago. According to this view, underlying the physical bodies which populate our cosmos there must exist a sort of undifferentiated fluid continuum, out of which the multiplicity of discrete objects can emerge. The resulting book, portions of which have already been submitted and favourably reviewed by a major academic publisher, is provisionally entitled *The Boundless*. Dr Laycock has also published an article *Identity, Ontology and Flux* in the collection *Dynamic Being*, and the photo-essay, *Palaces of the Moors*, in the *Queen's Quarterly*.

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### JON MILLER



Dr Miller published *Spinoza and the Stoics* (Cambridge University Press) in 2015. This long-awaited monograph offers a close comparison of the views of Spinoza and the Stoics on a range of metaphysical, epistemological, psychological and ethical issues. It has already been reviewed in the *Times Literary Supplement*. Dr Miller reports that he is as much relieved as he is pleased to have it published, for now he can move onto other things. While he will continue to

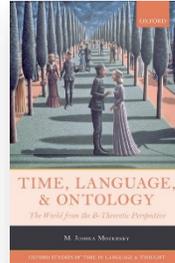
work on Spinoza as well as the Stoics, his next big venture is a study of happiness in late medieval and early modern philosophy.

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### JOSHUA MOZERSKY

2015 saw the publication of Dr Mozerky's book, *Time, Language, and*



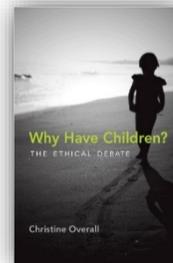
*Ontology: The World from the B-Theoretic Perspective*, from Oxford University Press. Relatively accessible accounts of the book can be had by checking out his interviews for the *New Books in Philosophy* podcast and *3 a.m. Magazine*. He also published a review in *Metascience* and gave talks at the University of Ottawa, the University of Toronto, and the Queen's University School of Computing. Dr Mozerky continues to do research for his next book project, *Natural Structure*, and on various issues related to time.

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### CHRISTINE OVERALL

Christine Overall gave the *Invited Address* at two Queen's University convocation ceremonies in June 2014, and June 2015. In 2015 her



book, *Why Have Children? The Ethical Debate* (MIT Press 2012) was published in both an Italian translation and a Spanish translation. Dr. Overall won the Queen's University Prize for Excellence in Research (Humanities) in 2014. Her talk, "From Conception to Death: Creating a Philosophy of the Body," was presented at the Prizes for Excellence in Research Public Lectures at Queen's in April, 2015. Her edited book, *Pets and People: The Ethics of Our Relationships with Companion Animals*, will

be published by Oxford University Press (USA) in 2016.

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### NANCY SALAY

Dr Salay has been working on various critiques of representational theories of cognition that she has been making over the past several years with a view to translating them into a positive alternative view. The first paper to emerge from this effort, "Representation: Problems and Solutions," offers a sketch of a two-systems view of cognition – a non-representational perceptual system coupled with a representational language-dependent one – and looks at some consequences of the view.

Dr Salay also created a popular (as opposed to academic) online course on mindfulness meditation in which she integrated some of the ideas she has been developing in this new view into a daily meditation practise. <https://www.udemy.com/free-your-self-mindfulness-meditation/learn/> In addition to practical instruction, the course also provides some philosophical background so that people can think about their own mental states in new and, ideally, more helpful ways. Her first such course, that offers tips and techniques

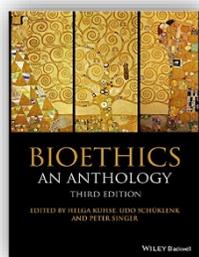
based on the latest findings in cognitive science for brain training, went over the 2000 student mark this past year. <https://www.udemy.com/think-bright/learn/> She also participated in a lively and inspiring reading group initiated by Dr Bakhurst in which participants discussed Michael Oakeshott's idea of *The Conversation of Mankind* and its relation to education in the humanities. Drs Bakhurst and Fairfield collaborated to produce an anthology dedicated to the same topic, *Education and the Conversation of Mankind*. In her chapter Dr Salay argues that, contra the current trend toward "active" learning that denigrates lecture-based teaching, when the classroom lecture unfolds as a dialogue between instructor and student, it is deeply cognitively transformative.

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## UDO SCHUKLENK

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Dr Schuklenk had an exceptionally busy year. He consulted for *MSF/Doctors without Borders* during the Ebola outbreak in West Africa on a difficult ethical challenge the organisation faced with respect to experimental drugs and Ebola patients. Notwithstanding extensive travels between North America, Europe and West Africa he managed to publish a number of journal articles including a high-profile piece on "Treatment resistant major depressive disorder and assisted dying" (*Journal of medical ethics*, 41, (2015): 577-583 with Suzanne van de Vathorst). Dr Schuklenk also saw to fruition the 3<sup>rd</sup> edition of a mainstream bioethics textbook, with Helga Kuhse and Peter Singer, *Bioethics – An Anthology*, Wiley-Blackwell 2016. He continues to serve as Editor of *Bioethics*, the official journal

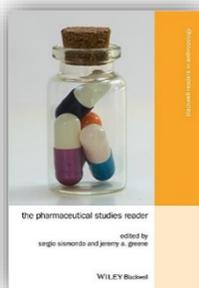


of the International Association of Bioethics, and gave a number of keynote presentations, addressing meetings organised by institutions as diverse as the United States Food and Drug Administration, National Institutes of Health and Center for Disease Control, as well as the German National Ethics Council and that country's National Academy of Sciences. Dr Schuklenk maintained a high media profile in country, remaining one of the Canadian media's go-to experts on the ethics and politics of assisted dying in Canada. He also manages a small Canadian bioethics emailing list. Email him in case you would like to be added to that list, [udo.schuklenk@queensu.ca](mailto:udo.schuklenk@queensu.ca)

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## SERGIO SISMONDO

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Dr Sismondo co-edited with Jeremy Greene *The Pharmaceutical Studies Reader*. Wiley-Blackwell, 2015. Among the eight or so chapters, articles and editorials he published was one very short article in the *Canadian Medical Association Journal*, which might be of interest to our readers. "How to make opinion leaders and influence people." *Canadian Medical Association Journal* 187, (2015): 759-760. Dr Sismondo remains Editor-in-Chief of the journal *Social Studies of Science*. It was ranked

first by the Institute for Science Information among journals in history and/or philosophy of science, on the basis of impact factor and most other measures. When not busy publishing, Dr Sismondo also supervised 2.5 PhD and 4 MA students to completion, and served as an examiner on 6 other defenses. He taught a graduate summer school at the University of Vienna, Department of Science and Technology Studies and was the invited keynote speaker at a Brazilian conference on science, technology and society. It was held in Rio de Janeiro in October 2015.

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## CHRISTINE SYPNOWICH

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Dr Sypnowich was on sabbatical in 2014-15, so she had a low profile in the department. With the exception of chairing the Equity and Women's Concerns Committee, she had no departmental obligations. That Committee put on a very successful talk with Guelph philosopher Karyn Freedman — cousin of Zach Bernstein, the undergrad rep on the committee who recommended we invite her — discussing her recent book about her traumatic experience with sexual assault. The talk was very successful: timely, very well attended, and certainly compelling. So it was well worth the diversion from research. The rest of the time Dr Sypnowich reportedly hunkered down and worked on her own projects, mostly at home. She notes, 'my spouse and colleague, David Bakhurst, was also on sabbatical, and we had a couple of wonderful trips, giving talks in Oxford (where we met as grad students) and London, as well as travelling in Cambridge and Venice. I finally finished my manuscript on *Equality and Flourishing*, and have a book contract which is spurring me on to do some final revisions before it goes to press, hopefully in the spring. Being back in the department among students and colleagues is great, despite the wistfulness that often attends the return to life as a philosophy foot soldier!'

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## EMERITUS PROFESSORS

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### CARLOS PRADO

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Dr Prado published the article "Ageism and Elective Death," in the journal *Ethics, Medicine and Public Health*, Vol. 1, No. 4, Oct-Dec. 2015. He also gave a much acclaimed lecture on *Descartes* at the Agnes when Queen's unveiled the Bader's gift of a famous portrait of Descartes in early 2016

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### LORNE MACLACHLAN

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Dr MacLachlan, in addition to delivering a well-attended colloquium talk, also published the entry on "Bradley: Logic," in the *Internet Encyclopedia of Philosophy*.

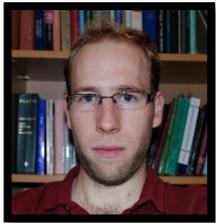
# POSTDOCTORAL FELLOWS

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ANTHONY FISHER

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Anthony Fisher is the Bader Postdoctoral Fellow in Philosophy at



Queen's University and Honorary Research Fellow in the School of Social Sciences at the University of Manchester. He received his PhD from Syracuse University in 2012 and subsequently held a Visiting Assistant Professorship at Dalhousie University. In 2014 he became a Newton International Fellow of the British Academy at the University of Manchester. His research interests are

metaphysics and history of philosophy. His articles have appeared in the *Canadian Journal of Philosophy*, *Journal of the American Philosophical Association*, *Metaphysica*, *Philosophia*, *Philosophical Studies*, and *The Monist*. He has forthcoming articles in *Pacific Philosophical Quarterly* and *Synthese*.

His interests in the history of philosophy derive from his historical-mindedness of contemporary metaphysics and his desire to understand how metaphysics today was shaped by the period immediately before it and the period before that period. His main project is on the history of metaphysics in the twentieth century. He is currently studying the metaphysics of Donald C. Williams and David Lewis in its historical context. He recently presented a paper at the Queens' philosophy colloquium on *Donald C. Williams's Defence of Real Metaphysics* and is editing a collection of published and unpublished essays in metaphysics by Donald C. Williams.

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ANGELA PEPPER

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Dr Pepper joined the Philosophy Department as the 2015-16 Postdoctoral Fellow in Animal Studies, coming from the University of York in the UK.



She writes, *I have been delighted to join the active community of students and faculty working on animal ethics here at Queen's. I have since been working on two projects. The first concerns the place of nonhuman animals in our theorizing about global distributive justice. There is a flourishing literature on cosmopolitan theories of global justice, but animals are almost always invisible within these theories, even though the current global order maintains*

*and exacerbates much of the institutionalized violence done to nonhuman animals. The second project investigates the entitlement of nonhuman animals to political representation and political voice. I presented my most recent research on Political Agency and Nonhuman Animals at the Queen's Philosophy Colloquium and will be presenting it at future workshops at CRÉ in Montreal, and the University of Amsterdam. Aside from my research, I have also been teaching PHIL 296 Animals and Society this term, which explores the complexity of human-nonhuman animal relationships from an interdisciplinary perspective. Whether in the UK or here in Canada, university students are rarely asked to*

*reflect on our relationships with animals, but the wide diversity of the student cohort – which includes students from Life Sciences, Environmental Studies, Psychology, History, Gender Studies, and Film and Media, to mention only a few background disciplines – is an indication that there is a great deal of untapped student interest in these issues. I'm pleased the Department is offering this innovative course, and enjoy being able to teach it.*

## STANDING ROOM ONLY EVENT

The Equity and Women's Concerns Committee (EWCC) consists of two faculty members, one graduate student, and one undergraduate student. According to the 2011 department constitution, the EWCC "promotes awareness and education about issues faced by equity seeking groups; it serves as a point of contact within the department for members seeking



advice on equity related matters; and it liaises with relevant on campus offices and resources, as well as the Canadian Society for Women in Philosophy."

In 2015, The Equity and Women's Concerns committee's initiative was to

raise awareness and have a dialogue about sexual assault and violence against women. The committee invited Associate Professor of philosophy and author Karyn Freedman, to speak on her book *One Hour in Paris*. Freedman's book addressed her experience with rape, the aftermath and recovery from it, and the challenges she faced from rape culture. The format of this event was a panel discussion and a Q&A. Freedman discussed how her view of human nature changed significantly after her rape, how PTSD affected her philosophical views on Reasons and Passions, and the significance of narrative in women's recovery from sexual violence. The event was a great success as the auditorium was full with attendees, there was a high level of participation from the audience, and we sold out of Freedman's books after the event.

*Marilena Danelon and Zach Berinstein* (student representatives on the Committee, on photo with Karyn Freedman in the middle)

## SELECTED DOCTORAL STUDENT PROFILES

Our Department continues to attract highly competitive applications for admission to our Graduate programs. Here are two profiles about two of our current doctoral students.

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NGA-YIN (AGNES) TAM

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Nga-Yin (Agnes) Tam is in her second year of doctoral studies in philosophy for which she was awarded the Sir Edward Youde Memorial Overseas Honorary Fellowship by the Hong Kong Government. She works with Dr Will Kymlicka, and is an affiliated scholar



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of the Animals in Philosophy, Politics, Law & Ethics research group, and a member of the local advocacy group, Queen's Animal Defense. She holds a LLB from the University of Hong Kong, and a M.Sc in Political Theory from the London School of Economics. Before her academic pursuits, she worked with PETA, SPCA, and Animal Legal Defense Fund and conducted animal legal research and advocacy for the Asia-Pacific region. Her Ph.D. topic grows directly out of her disillusionment with the existing strategies of legal reform for animals. The oppression of animals cannot be solved just by tinkering with the law, but requires large-scale moral change. But how does such moral change take place? This is the focus of her Ph.D. dissertation, inspired both by her animal advocacy and also by the political turbulence in her home Hong Kong. The increasing scale of human rights violations, and the increasing risks of violence, fuel Agnes's sense of urgency to find legitimate and effective ways to bring about moral progress in general. Queen's Department of Philosophy, highly esteemed for its excellence in social and political philosophy, offers Agnes her dream place for reflection.

Philosophers have rarely tackled the question of how large-scale moral progress takes place, leaving that to historians and sociologists or media pundits. But quite recently, two influential philosophers - Elizabeth Anderson and Anthony Appiah - have tackled this question head on, and Agnes' aim is to critically evaluate their accounts, and to see what they imply for animal advocacy. Anderson's account relies on a particular theory of social epistemology, and the importance of social movements or experiments in living in generating "bias correction". Appiah's account relies on a particular theory of moral emotions and the importance of honour in motivating moral change. Agnes will argue that both accounts provide useful starting points for thinking about the challenge of rethinking our habits of meat-eating, and that both push us in the direction of a more pragmatist conception of democratic change, unlike the more abstract rights-based arguments that have dominated animal advocacy to date. The pragmatist tradition has said very little about our relations with animals, but Agnes will argue that Deweyan pragmatist democracy may be key to enabling large-scale moral change on this issue.

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## JOSHUA LANDRY

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Josh Landry is a fourth year Ph.D. student in the Department of Philosophy who is working with Dr Schuklenk. Josh's dissertation focuses on redefining a standard of care for medical decision-making by requiring that medical practitioners adhere to three conditions when proposing treatments to their patients:

- 1) That treatments are not physiologically futile;
- 2) That treatments are not ethically inappropriate; and
- 3) That treatments are endorsed by empirically-supported clinical practice guidelines.

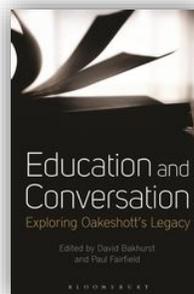
Josh found that his initial interest on this topic arose as he completed a practicum in clinical and organizational ethics at the Ottawa Hospital, and contributed as a research investigator to a study reviewing the impact of palliative care consultations on resource utilization in the last 48-72 hours of life (of patients). Results of this study were later published in the *Journal of Palliative Care*, and demonstrated a significant reduction in the amount of resources used when palliative care consultations were conducted earlier in a patient's decline. The results of this study not only left Josh with questions about appropriate prioritization and resource utilization, but also

questions related to the provision of treatments that may be futile or otherwise ethically inappropriate (given prognosis and proximity to death of the surveyed cohort).

Josh has also been working since January 2015 as a Regional Ethicist with the Champlain Centre for Health Care Ethics in Ottawa. He has recently co-authored several peer-reviewed publications, been invited to speak internationally at the Cambridge University International Consortium for Bioethics Education and Bioethics Retreat, both held in Paris, France, and was invited as expert bioethics consultant to the federally-appointed "Expert Panel on Options for a Legislative Response to Carter v Canada" in late 2015. Josh managed to publish a number of articles in peer reviewed journals, including *Health Policy*, *International Journal of Ethics Education*, *Cambridge Quarterly of Healthcare Ethics*, and the *Journal of Palliative Care*.

## FACULTY PROJECTS

### EDUCATION AND CONVERSATION



Drs David Bakhurst and Paul Fairfield have collaborated in editing a volume of new essays in the philosophy of education. The book, entitled *Education and Conversation: Exploring Oakeshott's Legacy*, will be published by Bloomsbury Academic in May, 2016. The book explores themes from the educational thought of the British philosopher Michael Oakeshott, who famously described education as "an initiation into the conversation of mankind". As a political thinker, Oakeshott was an arch conservative, but his conversational model

of education often strikes a chord among progressive philosophers of education seeking to defend the values of liberal education against the increasing trends towards specialization and managerialism in educational policy and practice.

The international cast of contributors includes a number of Queen's philosophers, past and present. In addition to essays by David and Paul, Christine Synowich examines the tension between Oakeshott's conservatism and his educational ideas, and Nancy Sallay draws on contemporary brain science to vindicate the educational potential of conversation. Past Queen's professors include Cheryl Misak, who taught in the Department in the late 1980s before moving to the University of Toronto, and Scott Johnston, who was cross-appointed to our Department before his move to Memorial University a few years ago. Other contributors include Barry Allen (McMaster), who writes on Oakeshott's early work, Sebastian Rödl (Leipzig), who discusses education and autonomy, and Babette Babisch (Fordham), who compares Oakeshott's conception of school to J.K. Rowling's Hogwarts (this is especially fitting, since Bloomsbury published the Harry Potter books in the UK!).

David says of the project:

*“A few years ago, both Paul and I independently developed interests in philosophy of education. He published Education After Dewey in 2009 and I wrote The Formation of Reason in 2011, so naturally we started to talk and we set up a little research group, now called EPiC (Education and Philosophy in Conversation). Putting together a collection of original essays by different authors is never an easy task, but it was a great pleasure to work with colleagues in the department, as well as those further afield. Paul was a terrific co-editor, because he combines a passion for ideas with a calm demeanor. So whenever things didn't go to plan, and I was climbing up the wall, he always had something wise to say. This is a good time to reflect on the future of education, to try to reclaim the importance of learning for its own sake, and the idea of education as an intellectual adventure, themes that Oakeshott stressed in his writings.”*

## ‘APPLYING’ ETHICS IN AN EBOLA OUTBREAK?

One of those questions that excite a fair number of ethicists is whether there can be such a thing as applied ethics. Bioethicists consider themselves to be academics ‘doing’ applied ethics. I am one of those academics. My own take on academic research has always been that the questions that we choose to address are to some extent moral choices that we make. I aim to tackle ethical problems solutions to which could improve the well-being of sentient beings, human and non-human alike. A case in point is a recent research project that came unexpectedly my way.

Back in the early 1990s I published a doctoral thesis making the case for why patients suffering catastrophic illness should be permitted access to experimental drugs without having to enroll in trials involving placebos, dummy



-pills. It seemed to me that coercive offers that ask dying people to accept a 50:50 chance of getting a placebo are ethically indefensible. I don't mean to persuade you here of the soundness of my views. The upshot of my thesis was that patients could only be considered true volunteers in such trials if they had an alternative access avenue to the unregistered medical intervention tested in a placebo controlled trial.

Fast forward to late 2014. The Ebola outbreak was in full swing in West Africa. I got a call from someone in Paris who works for a large medical NGO that is internationally well-known for looking after Ebola patients when no one else is. The NGO had heard about my work on access to experimental agents and was wondering whether I could help develop a regime based on which they could offer unregistered medical interventions to patients in their emergency treatment centres. After all, we have no successful Ebola virus treatment. Oh, and would I be willing to travel to West Africa, talk to Ebola survivors, visit remote villages where the virus had killed large numbers of people, as well as emergency treatment centres

where Ebola patients were cared for, so I would get a better picture of the problem. Well, it was either that, or teaching a graduate course in bioethics where the outbreak would also have been on the agenda.

Within record time I got a million vaccines into my blood stream – I exaggerate ever so slightly here - kindly provided by Kingston's public health unit, and eventually found myself on a plane ride to Brussels, from there on to Casablanca and on to Freetown, Sierra Leone's capital. The accommodation wasn't quite what academic conference goers take for granted. We had only generator produced electricity for a few hours each day and had to contend during most nights with temperatures in the mid 30s plus humidex, without access to working fans or air condition. Suddenly what seemed like an exciting trip remained an exciting trip, but with unexpectedly serious downsides at the creature comfort end of things.

It turned out to be the case that the work that I had done during my doctoral research came in very handy during conversations with government ministers, senior clinicians as well as Ebola survivors and their families. I came up with an ethically defensible framework that would permit the NGO to decide under what circumstances it should or could offer catastrophically ill patients access to unregistered medical interventions, who to give them to in case there is more need than there are quantities of experimental agents available, who should be held accountable in case patients get hurt by such agents, and answers to a fair number of other weighty ethical questions.

The work done was of sufficient quality or importance that it netted me invitations to address meetings of clinical researchers organised by the United States Food and Drug Administration, National Institutes of Health and Centers for Disease Control as well as a gathering organised by the German National Ethics Council and that country's National Academy of Sciences.

So, is it possible to ‘apply’ ethics? I don't know. What I do know is that it was well possible within this particular project to address a series of practical ethical questions and to provide answers that were both action guiding as well as action justifying. That's good enough for me.

*Udo Schuklenk*

## ALISTAIR MACLEOD DEMOCRACY, GLOBAL JUSTICE, AND HUMAN RIGHTS CHAMPION

Alistair Macleod, in collaboration with Carol Gould (CUNY Graduate Center, New York) and Margaret Moore (Queen's), has been organizing and participating in a series of research workshops on Democracy, Global Justice, and Human Rights for the past ten years.



The workshops have been held every couple of years in whatever city happened to be the location for the biennial World Congress of the International Association for Philosophy of Law and Social Philosophy (or IVR, as the Association has been known since its founding in Germany in 1909). The first two-day workshop in this series took place in Granada (Spain) in May 2005 and the most recent in July 2015 in Washington DC, and there were meetings in the intervening years in Krakow (Poland), Frankfurt (Germany), and Belo Horizonte (Brazil).

In addition to Gould, Moore, and Macleod, the regular contributors to this decade-long project have been Tom Christiano (Arizona), Andreas Follesdall (Oslo) and Daniel Weinstock (Montreal and McGill). Participants in some of the more recent workshops have included Chris Essert (Queen's), Rainer Forst (Goethe University Frankfurt), Andrew Lister (Queen's), John Mandle (SUNY Albany), and Pablo Gilabert (Concordia). The normal practice has been for the (eight or so) participants in these recurring workshops to circulate among themselves, a month or two in advance, the papers they have prepared on the sub-theme chosen for the year in question.

The papers are then presented over a two-day period at open sessions attended by up to fifty philosophers, political scientists and lawyers. For example, all the papers for the most recent workshop in Washington were on some aspect of the sub-theme "Human Rights, Justice, and Solidarity: International Institutional Implications."



Papers discussed at these workshops have resulted in publications of various sorts. For example, some were published in 2006 in a

special issue of *The Journal of Social Philosophy on Democracy and Globalization* which Gould and Macleod coedited. More recently, a couple of Macleod's papers formed the basis for his contribution to a symposium on "Rights and Recognition" published in 2013 in the same journal. And some of Gould's papers provided preliminary formulations of the argument of her book on *Interactive Democracy: the Social Roots of Global Justice* (Cambridge University Press 2014), which won the American Philosophical Association's 2015 Gittler Prize, an annual award that is "given for an outstanding scholarly contribution in the field of the philosophy of one or more of the social sciences."

The photo was taken during the 2013 Belo Horizonte, Brazil workshop, from left to right: Alistair Macleod (Queen's University), Carol Gould (Graduate Center, City University of New York), and Tom Christiano (University of Arizona).

*Alistair MacLeod*

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