Committee on the Teaching of Philosophy

2014-2015 Membership

Alexandra Bradner, chair (2018)
Katheryn Doran (2016)
Joseph Farrell (2015)
Sanford Goldberg (2017)
Jennifer Morton (2017)
Jennifer Mulnix (2015)
Wendy Turgeon (2016)
Thomas Urban, *ex officio* (2016)
Tziporah Kasachkoff, newsletter editor
Eugene Kelly, newsletter editor
Andrew Carpenter, AAPT president
APA COMMITTEE ON THE TEACHING OF PHILOSOPHY

2014-15 ANNUAL REPORT

Respectfully submitted on September 30, 2015,
by Alexandra Bradner, Chair

I. Teaching Committee Personnel Changes

On June 30, 2014, four members completed their terms on the teaching committee: Joe Farrell, Jennifer Mulnix, Daw-Nay Evans, who served our committee as its former Chair, and Jana Mohr Lone, who served our committee ex officio as Chair of the APA Committee on Pre-College Instruction in Philosophy. We would like to thank them for their service.

Four new members have joined our committee since our last report. On January 1, 2015, Andrew Carpenter, who serves ex officio as AAPT President, joined the committee. On July 1, 2015, David Concepción, Michelle Saint, and Sara Goering, who serves ex officio as the new Chair of the APA Committee on Pre-College Instruction in Philosophy, joined the committee. We welcome them to the committee and look forward to their contributions.

II. New Online Meeting Schedule

Though the teaching committee conducts most of its work via e-mail, in order to think more deeply and efficiently about new initiatives, we resolved to hold online meetings twice a year, once in January and once in July.

Our first two Skype meetings were productive. We created a two-year Committee calendar, which is now accessible to all of our members as a Google doc. We formalized part of our abstract review process: Committee members’ and organizers’ abstracts must go through blind review; Committee members who have submitted abstracts may not review; each abstract should be read by at least two Committee members; and every Committee member should volunteer to read abstracts for at least two APA sessions each year. We worked on language for a statement about interactive presentations that we plan to include in all subsequent calls for APA session abstracts. Finally, after hearing reports from our APA session organizers and discussing our portion of the APA Code of Conduct, we reserved time to discuss the new initiatives noted below. At present, minutes from these meetings live as Google docs shared only with committee members.

III. Teaching Committee Activity at APA Divisional meetings

The teaching committee held sessions focusing on philosophical pedagogy at every APA divisional meeting during the 2014-15 academic year and plans to do the same during the 2015-16 academic year. We hope to focus our 2015-16 session work on the following activities: producing interactive sessions that reflect the national emphasis on active
learning; increasing session attendance; and reaching out to philosophers at research institutions who are looking to reinvigorate their courses, in light of renewed national interest in the quality of college teaching. What follows is an update on the sessions we have held or organized since our last annual report.

**A. 2015 APA Central Division Meeting**

Alexandra Bradner organized and chaired the session “Experiential Learning in Philosophy” for the 2015 APA Central Division Meeting. The call appears as an attachment below in section IX. Joe Farrell, Jennifer Morton and Wendy Turgeon reviewed abstracts. We received 27 submissions. The following philosophers were selected to participate in the panel:

**Chair**

**Alexandra Bradner**

**Presentation titles**

“Radical Equations as Experience: Dewey on Learning, Quine in a Straight Jacket, and Moses’ Algebra Project,” Matt Ryg, Southern Illinois University

“Learning by Being Someone Else: Using Reacting to the Past to Provide Experiential Learning of Philosophy,” Shoshana Brassfield, Frostburg State; Peter Bradley, Ferris State; and Kamran Swanson, Harold Washington College

“Getting Off the Armchair: Experiential Learning and Philosophy Activism,” Julinna Oxley, Coastal Carolina University

“Philosophy as Transformational Experience: Service Learning in an Urban Garden with Pierre Hadot,” Megan Halteman Zwart, Saint Mary’s College

**B. 2015 APA Pacific Division Meeting**

Katheryn Doran organized and chaired the session “Teaching Mistakes and Failed Lessons” for the 2015 APA Pacific Division Meeting. The call appears as an attachment below in section IX. Katheryn Doran, Joe Farrell, Jennifer Mulnix, and Wendy Turgeon reviewed abstracts. We received 10 submissions. The following philosophers were selected to participate in the panel:

**Chair**

**Katheryn Doran**

**Presentation titles**
“Teaching Philosophy as Performance: A Model and Diagnostic,” George Belic, University of Florida

“When Debate in the Classroom Disrupts The Learning Environment,” Gwendolyn Dolske, Cal Poly Pomona

“How to Break Down Resistance to Student-Directed Learning Strategies,” Nathalie Morasch, St. Mary’s University; Rick Sperling, St. Mary’s University

“How Dare You Make Me Think Critically While I’m Teaching Critical Thinking?: The Laws of Thought and Erasing Identity,” Robin L. Zebrowski, Beloit College

C. 2016 APA Eastern Division Meeting

Katheryn Doran is organizing a session titled, “Advice for Job Candidates: The Teaching Demo,” for the 2016 APA Eastern Division Meeting. The call appears as an attachment below in section IX. Alexandra Bradner, Katheryn Doran, Tziporah Kasachkoff, and Michelle Saint reviewed abstracts.

Initially, we had planned to present a mock teaching demo in which a seasoned teacher would make a series of mistakes for the audience to discuss. We hoped to invite local undergraduates to participate in the session and comment on the mock demo. We asked the APA to cover their registration, and Amy Ferrer agreed to do so. However, as the Committee continued to work on the session, we had a hard time locating someone to star in the mock demo role. Because of this, we returned to a more traditional format. The session on the teaching demo will preview for graduate students the differing teaching expectations at different kinds of institutions, while also offering concrete advice for the demo. We're hoping, in future APA sessions, to continue to think outside the box, so our sessions grow even more interactive, compelling, and inclusive.

For our panel, we solicited submissions only from philosophers who had won teaching awards, published SOTL papers, and served on multiple search committees. We received 10 truly impressive submissions. The following philosophers were selected to participate:

Chair

Katheryn Doran

Presentations titles and Panelists

“Learner-Centeredness, Humility, and Scholarly Teaching,” David W. Concepción, Ball State University

“The Teaching Demo: The Importance of Engaging Students Both Before and In Class,” Stephen H. Daniel, Texas A&M University
“Navigating the Political Landscapes of Faculty Search Committees,” Jamie Phillips, Clarion University

“Presenting Your Future Self: the Teaching Demo,” Anne-Marie Schultz, Baylor University

**D. 2016 APA Eastern Division Meeting**

Wendy Turgeon is organizing a session on the philosophy major titled, “Rethinking the Philosophy Major in Changing Times,” for the 2016 APA Eastern Division Meeting. The call appears as an attachment below in section IX. Alexandra Bradner, Dave Concepción, Jennifer Morton, and Wendy Turgeon reviewed abstracts. We received 20 submissions. The following philosophers were selected to participate in the panel:

**Chair**

**Wendy C. Turgeon**

**Presentation titles**

“Philosophy Curriculum Revision at UNC-Asheville,” Keya Maitra, UNC-Asheville

“Philosophy and a Major in Bioethics,” Richard Dees, University of Rochester

“Reorganizing a Major in Light of General Education Change,” Rory E. Kraft, Jr., York College of Pennsylvania

“Who Majors in Philosophy and Why (or Why Not)? Survey Data from University of Michigan Philosophy Students,” Robin Zheng, Newnham College, Cambridge University and Sara Aronowitz, University of Michigan

“Revitalizing a Struggling Philosophy Program,” Maria Sanders, Plymouth State University

Our hope is that both the session on the major and the session on the teaching demo will attract philosophers who do not self-identify, primarily, as teachers. The session on the major was initially proposed by APA Board member Steven Nadler, in response to the question, “What session topics might draw R1 philosophers into the APA teaching sessions?” We’re anticipating a full house, and we’re thinking about planning additional sessions on the major at future divisional meetings. Through such sessions, the APA might serve philosophy departments, in addition to individual philosophers.

**E. 2016 APA Central Division Meeting**

Michelle Saint is organizing a session on teaching students how to read philosophy for the 2016 APA Central Division Meeting. The call appears as an attachment below in section IX.
Sandy Goldberg, Michelle Saint, and Wendy Turgeon reviewed abstracts. We received 23 submissions. The following philosophers were selected to participate in the panel:

**Chair**

**Tziporah Kasachkoff**

**Presentation titles and Panelists**

“Scaffolding Novices to Intermediate Performance as Readers of Philosophy,” David W. Concepción, Ball State University

“Using Tutorials to Teach (Upper-Level) Undergraduates to Read (Advanced) Philosophy,” Stephen Mathis, Wheaton College (Norton, MA)

“Conveying the Experiential Value of Reading,” Sergia Hay, Pacific Lutheran University


“Teaching and Reading Philosophy with Global Learners,” Ruthanne Soo Hee Pierson Crapo, Minneapolis Community and Technical College

“Performing Knowledge: The Role of Embodiment in Reading Texts/Textual Interpretation,” Tracey Nicholls, Lewis University; George David Miller, Lewis University; Arsalan Memon, Lewis University; Rebecca Scott, Lewis University/Loyola University Chicago

**F. 2016 APA Pacific Division Meeting**

Wendy Turgeon is organizing a session on adjunct/contingent faculty for the 2016 APA Pacific Division Meeting. The call appears as an attachment below in section IX. Wendy Turgeon, Sandy Goldberg, and David Concepción reviewed abstracts. We received 11 submissions. In hopes of identifying co-sponsors, we e-mailed the chairs of several APA committees with relevant charges, the APA Committees on: Philosophy in Two year Colleges, Academic Career Opportunities & Placement, Status and Future of the Profession, Inclusiveness in the Profession, and the Defense of the Professional Rights of Philosophers. Members of the APA’s Committee on the Status and Future of the Profession were especially helpful in recommending people who might submit.

Our hope is to select three or four presenters who can speak to: 1) the effect of the increased use of adjuncts on student learning; 2) the challenges and satisfactions of the adjunct experience; and 3) what the APA might do to better support and serve contingent faculty.
G. 2016 APA Pacific Division Meeting

Finally, we are in the process of discussing whether we want to hold a second session at the 2016 Pacific Division Meeting. This session would be an author-meets-critics session featuring the authors and/or editors of new philosophy textbooks. We would seek to co-sponsor the session with the relevant publishing house(s).

We entertained the possibility of sending a call to publishing houses with philosophical interests and asking these houses to nominate new philosophy titles, from which our committee would select some number of texts for the session. Our hope is that this event would become a recurring session and that, in the future, it would become an honor for authors, editors and texts to be featured in this session.

IV. Newsletter on Teaching

The Newsletter on Teaching appears twice a year, as mandated, and is edited by Tziporah Kasachkoff and Eugene Kelly. Papers received are sent out to two reviewers, and editorial decisions are made, for the most part, on the basis of those reviews. This past year, the editors published some five articles on teaching philosophy, including two in a special edition on teaching philosophy in non-traditional settings, edited by guest Kathryn Doran. The Newsletter reviews books that are either relevant to teaching or intended to serve as classroom resources. Finally, the Newsletter publishes a list of books received and, on occasion, poems or letters from readers regarding teaching. The editors are very interested in publishing papers that emerge from the conference sessions organized by the Committee.

V. Grant Reviewing

In August, 2015, we began our review of five small grant proposals, in order to provide feedback to the National Office. Alexandra Bradner, Dave Concepción, Katheryn Doran, Jennifer Morton, Wendy Turgeon, and Michelle Saint submitted reviews. In future years, we would like to see an automated, online rating form, to make the tabulation of responses less cumbersome.

In other grant work, Alexandra Bradner, Chair, provided feedback for the Executive Director on a request for funds in early June 2015.

VI. Code of Conduct

On September 27, 2015, we forwarded our final version of the “Responsibility of Faculty to Students” portion of the APA Code of Conduct to the APA Task Force on a Code of Conduct, chaired by Nancy Holland. Our portion of the Code appears below as an attachment in section IX. In working on this project, a subcommittee consisting of Alexandra Bradner, Tziporah Kasachkoff, Andy Carpenter, and Wendy Turgeon researched best practices in the Spring of 2015 and then produced a draft code, which was discussed at our Committee’s July 2015 online meeting. The draft was revised, based upon the Committee’s
July feedback, and reviewed again by the Committee in late September. Since then, the Task Force has made two helpful revisions to our portion of the Code.

VII. New Initiatives

Though our APA sessions consume a fair amount of time and energy, we are working on a few new initiatives, in hopes of reaching philosophy teachers who do not attend the divisional meetings.

A. “Dear Philosophy Teacher” Blog or Web Feature

Jen Morton and Michelle Saint contacted APA Blog editor Lewis Powell in hopes of contributing to the development of a teaching resource on the blog through which APA members might ask pedagogical questions and receive feedback. Modeled in tone on the “Ask a Philosopher” website, our Committee would issue an initial call for questions, select a few for the series, compose answers, and then open the floor to comments from other members. Once the feature is up and running (either on the blog or on our Committee’s web page), our hope is that APA members would take over the task of responding to queries. Lewis wrote back that he was looking forward to working with APA committees on blog content and would be in touch as soon as his editorial team was in place.

At our July meeting, we also discussed the possibility of hosting a philosophy teaching listserv, on the model of the POD Network listserv, to share teaching-related links and resources. While some members thought the listserv would be an efficient way to foster community among philosophy teachers, others felt it might both duplicate the AAPT’s listserv and require too much attention. We tabled the idea.

B. APA Teaching Award

Only 12.6% of philosophy PhDs end up in positions that emphasize research over teaching. Despite this fact, there are at least twenty-six APA prizes and awards for philosophical research and none for teaching. Dave Concepción is working on a proposal for an APA teaching award.

C. Working with the American Association of Philosophy Teachers (AAPT)

In an effort to work together on pedagogical issues facing the profession, support one another’s activities, and avoid the duplication of efforts, Alexandra Bradner met with AAPT Executive Director Emily Esch over the phone to discuss joint projects. We decided that the APA Committee on the Teaching of Philosophy would hold its Summer 2016 committee meeting at the biennial AAPT conference, to be held at Saginaw Valley State University, and then meet separately with the AAPT Board to discuss new initiatives.

At this Summer 2016 meeting, we plan to discuss the possibility of holding an AAPT off-year conference alongside the 2017 Central division meeting of the APA, on the model of the concurrent meetings of the Philosophy of Science Association and the History of Science
Society. Such a meeting would introduce APA members who are unfamiliar with the AAPT to its supportive culture and high-level pedagogical discourse, while also providing philosophers who find the research-focused APA meetings irrelevant to their work with an opportunity to attend the APA.

D. Training for Philosophy Teachers

At our January 2016 online meeting, we talked at length about the AAPT’s Summer Seminar on Teaching and Learning in Philosophy for graduate students and new PhDs. Offered in partnership with the APA,

> [t]he seminar helps participants improve their skills as learning-centered teachers. Participants study how to identify and select challenging and transformative learning objectives. By understanding the principles of integrated course design, participants appreciate how to best guide students to the successful achievement of these goals. Further, participants develop educative assessment strategies that allow them to measure success, continue to innovate, and create even deeper learning (http://philosophyteachers.org/teaching-learning-seminars-workshops/).

David Concepción asked whether we should develop or endorse a model for training philosophers how to teach and whether we should seek external funding for this initiative. The AAPT already has a successful model workshop and is interested in expanding their program. So we have been thinking about what role we might play, if any, in that project.

E. Initiatives Proposed by APA Members: Critical Thinking and Ideal Enrollments

From time to time, APA members contact the Committee chair to ask questions and propose projects. This year, we received a request to hold an APA session on critical thinking. Philosophers are often tapped to develop and administer their institutions’ critical thinking programs. At the time of the request, we already had planned our APA sessions for the 2015-16 academic year. But we may return to this issue in 2016-17.

We received two requests to develop enrollment guidelines. Philosophers are routinely under pressure from their administrations to increase class sizes. But larger classes make it harder to hold philosophical discussions and teach philosophical writing. The Modern Language Association has developed enrollment guidelines that MLA members might cite in debates with their local administrators about appropriate enrollments for literature and writing courses. We think the APA should establish minimum, maximum and ideal enrollment numbers for the various kinds of philosophy courses, in order to support APA members in their local conversations with administrators. Our Committee might work on this project during the 2015-16 academic year.

This is what the APA presently says about teaching loads:
Since good philosophical education is instructor-intensive, it is crucial to its quality that philosophy faculty be assigned teaching responsibilities that do not preclude the forms of interaction, assessment, and feedback it requires, either by the number of courses or by the number of students for which they are responsible. Practically speaking, this means that their teaching loads should be at the low end of the teaching load range for non-science faculty, with appropriate provision for assistance in large courses. (At institutions with significant expectations of their faculty in research, publication, and professional activity, moreover, the teaching loads of philosophers must be compatible with these expectations.) (http://www.apaonline.org/general/custom.asp?page=teaching)

VIII. Conclusion

The Committee on the Teaching of Philosophy remains interested in promoting the teaching of philosophy as an area of expertise—i.e. not something at which every philosopher automatically excels, in virtue of holding a PhD in philosophy, but something that requires careful study and attention. Through our APA sessions, we hope to offer philosophy-specific professional development opportunities to APA members, while also highlighting their very best classroom innovations and strategies.

This has been a busy year for the Committee. The work reported here would not be possible without the energy and commitment of our members, all of whom have given generously of their time and all of whom care deeply about the quality of teaching throughout the profession.
Call for Abstracts: Central APA Panel on Experiential Learning

Organized by the APA Committee on the Teaching of Philosophy

Deadline: September 25, 2014

The American Philosophical Association (APA) Committee on the Teaching of Philosophy invites abstracts for a panel on experiential learning in philosophy to take place at the Central Division meeting of the APA, February 18-21, 2015, in St. Louis, MO.

Philosophical work has traditionally involved armchair analysis, so the institutional request to think about designing a course with an experiential learning component can serve as a challenge to philosophers. Nevertheless, many philosophy teachers are thinking creatively about ways to incorporate field experiences, independent research, lab work, experimental work, service learning, and community-based learning into their courses. Through this session, the Committee hopes to share interesting examples of such courses and consider the theoretical questions that surround this pedagogy.

The Committee aims to think about experiential learning quite broadly, but is particularly interested in the following three kinds of presentations: reflective analyses of courses that have included an experiential learning component (i.e. case studies); interdisciplinary investigations that apply recent developments in cognitive science and educational psychology to address the role of field experiences in learning philosophy; and presentations that apply canonical discussions about the role of experience as a constraint on theorizing, knowing, and/or acting to the practice of teaching philosophy.

Individual submissions and joint/co-authored submissions are welcome. The Committee will strive to assemble a diverse panel, including presentations from different institutional settings, course levels, and subfields of philosophy. Please submit as an email attachment a 500-750-word abstract prepared for blind review to alexandrabradner@gmail.com by September 25, 2014. Include your name, affiliation, and contact information in the body of the email. Authors can expect a decision by October 2014. If you have any questions, please feel free to contact me.

Thanks,
Alexandra Bradner, Chair, APA Committee on the Teaching of Philosophy

Call for Abstracts:

Pacific APA Panel on Teaching Mistakes, Classroom Disasters, Course Challenges, Failing Lessons
Organized by the APA Committee on the Teaching of Philosophy

Deadline: October 6, 2014

The American Philosophical Association Committee on the Teaching of Philosophy invites abstracts for a panel on teaching mistakes – or worse – at the Pacific Division meeting of the APA, April 1-5, 2015 in Vancouver, BC, Canada.

The Committee invites panel proposals on teaching mistakes you have made, disasters that have befallen you, or that you have brought on yourself, how you have responded to expected or unexpected challenges in the classroom, and what you have learned about philosophy, and teaching philosophy, from them.

Individual submissions as well as proposals for several panelists together are welcome. The Committee will strive to assemble a diverse panel, including presentations from different institutional settings, course levels, and subfields of philosophy. Please submit as an email attachment an abstract prepared for blind review, 500 word maximum, to Katheryn Doran at kdoran@hamilton.edu by October 6, 2014. Include your name, affiliation, and contact information in the body of the email. Authors can expect a decision by October 10, 2014. If you have any questions, please feel free to contact me at the email address above.

Katheryn Doran, for the Committee on the Teaching of Philosophy

Call for Abstracts: Eastern APA Session on the Philosophy Major

Organized by the APA Committee on the Teaching of Philosophy

Deadline: Monday, August 10, 2015

The American Philosophical Association (APA) Committee on the Teaching of Philosophy invites presenters to submit abstracts for its upcoming session on the undergraduate philosophy major at the Eastern Division Meeting of the APA, January 6-9, 2016, Washington, DC. We are interested, particularly, in how philosophy departments are responding to recent institutional and cultural calls to prepare students more directly for the changing job landscape: How might we balance the needs of current students, given that so few continue in philosophy, with our traditional sense of the major? To what extent should we directly respond to our students’ need to find gainful employment? We also are interested in the following questions:

- How closely should we tailor our majors to our local student populations, to our own faculty members’ strengths, and to the other majors offered on our campuses? How site-specific should the major be?
- How should we balance breadth of subfield coverage with the teaching of reading, writing, and speaking skills?
- What does an effective gateway course look like? What special steps, if any, should a department take to draw majors out of introductory courses?
• Should the history of philosophy serve as a prerequisite to the major, as something students study throughout the major (in every course), or as an optional area of concentration? Should logic serve as a prerequisite, as something students study in several courses, or as an elective?
• How should we think about course progression? For example, should epistemology appear as a sophomore-level course focused on the history of skepticism, as a more sophisticated, jr/sr-level course focused on recent discussions of stakes, or both?
• How should we balance required courses with electives? What is the appropriate number of special topics seminars?
• Which courses can be taught as e-courses, if any, and which courses will not work as e-courses?
• Can or should we require experiential learning courses as part of the philosophy major? Team-based learning? Project-based learning?
• Where in the philosophy major does independent research belong, if anywhere?
• How can we create memorable capstone experiences?
• When designing the major, should we think, specifically, about how to attract and retain more students? What strategies to increase retention and enrollments have worked at your institution?

If your philosophy department has a major that works particularly well (as gauged by retention numbers, major/minor numbers, or graduates’ achievements, for instance), if your philosophy department has recently revamped its major, or if your department is struggling with questions about the major that apply broadly throughout the profession, please consider joining our panel to share your thoughts and experiences. The Committee is aiming to assemble a panel that is diverse in all respects. We hope to include presenters from different institutional settings, philosophical subfields, and departmental organizations (i.e. philosophy departments, philosophy & religion departments, humanities departments, etc.).

To participate in the session, please e-mail Wendy Turgeon (turgeon@optonline.net) by Monday, August 10, 2015, with the following information: In the body of the e-mail, please include your name, institutional affiliation, position, contact information, and a link to the website that describes the philosophy major at your institution. Attached to the e-mail, please include: a cv and a brief (250-to-500-word) abstract explaining what you would like to discuss. The Committee will select 4-6 presenters for the panel by mid-August, 2016. If you have any questions, please feel free to contact me.

Thanks,
Alexandra Bradner, Chair, APA Committee on the Teaching of Philosophy

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**Call for Panelists: Eastern APA session**

“**Advice for Job Candidates: The Teaching Demo**”

Organized by the APA Committee on the Teaching of Philosophy

**Deadline: Monday, August 17, 2015**
The American Philosophical Association (APA) Committee on the Teaching of Philosophy invites philosophers with special pedagogical expertise to participate in a Q&A session for job candidates at the Eastern Division Meeting of the APA, **January 6-9, 2016, Washington, DC.** We plan to begin the session with comments and advice from each expert panelist about how to best deliver an on-campus teaching demonstration, after which we will open the floor to questions from the job candidates in the audience.

We are interested, particularly, in philosophy teachers whose pedagogical work has been recognized as excellent: teachers who have received teaching awards; teachers who are trusted on their campuses to conduct formative and summative teaching assessments for the purposes of tenure and promotion; teachers who serve in some official capacity as pedagogical mentors; and/or teachers who have published in the scholarship of teaching and learning. If you have earned any of these credentials and care deeply about student learning, please consider joining our panel to share your expertise with the next generation of philosophers. The Committee is aiming to assemble a panel that is diverse in all respects.

To apply, please e-mail Katheryn Doran (kdoran@hamilton.edu) by **Monday, August 17, 2015**, with the following information: In the body of the e-mail, please include your name, current or past institutional affiliation(s), contact information, and the number of searches in which you have participated. Attached to the e-mail, please include your cv and a 250-750-word teaching statement that discusses both your credentials and your teaching philosophy. The Committee will select 3-4 panelists by late August, 2015. If you have any questions, please feel free to contact me.

Thanks,
Alexandra Bradner, Chair, APA Committee on the Teaching of Philosophy

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**Call for Abstracts: Central APA Session**

**“Teaching Students How to Read Philosophy”**

Organized by the APA Committee on the Teaching of Philosophy

**Deadline: Monday, September 14, 2015**

The American Philosophical Association (APA) Committee on the Teaching of Philosophy invites abstracts for its upcoming session “Teaching Students How to Read Philosophy,” planned for the 2016 Central Division Meeting of the APA, March 2-5, 2016, Chicago, IL. With this session, we are interested in exploring challenges and techniques associated with teaching students how to read philosophy’s dense, antiquated, and/or translated texts. The Committee is particularly interested in fresh approaches to this problem and in pedagogical strategies that instructors have employed successfully in the classroom. In the spirit of active learning, the Committee asks that presenters not read a paper, but plan a more interactive way to engage their audience of peers.
Questions to consider might include, but are not limited to, the following:

- What skills must students bring to the reading of philosophy and what skills should they take away? What should we do when our students lack the prerequisite skills?
- What techniques might help introductory students when they first encounter our texts? How can we build in our students the confidence required to engage a philosophical text?
- What can we do to improve the reading skills of advanced students, majors, and graduate students?
- How has your teaching of philosophical reading changed and developed throughout your career?
- What is the relationship between teaching students how to read philosophy and teaching students how to write philosophy?
- What can philosophers learn from teachers in other close-reading disciplines, such as comparative literature, English, classics, and religion? Are there philosophy-specific close reading skills?

To apply, please submit an email attachment a 500-750-word abstract prepared for blind review to Michelle Saint (mesaint@d.umn.edu) by Monday, September 14, 2015. In addition to articulating the topic of your presentation, your abstract should explain the way in which you plan to engage your audience interactively. In the body of the e-mail, please include your name, affiliation, and contact information. Individual submissions and joint/co-authored submissions are welcome. The Committee will strive to assemble a diverse panel, including presentations from different institutional settings, course levels, and subfields of philosophy. Authors can expect a decision by late September 2015. If you have any questions, please feel free to contact me.

Thanks,
Alexandra Bradner, Chair, APA Committee on the Teaching of Philosophy

Reminders

Deadline to submit abstracts for the Committee’s session on the philosophy major at the 2016 Eastern Division meeting of the APA: Monday, August 10th.

Deadline to apply to serve as a panelist in the Committee’s session on the teaching demo at the 2016 Eastern Division meeting of the APA: Monday, August 17th.

For more information about APA sessions organized by the Committee on the Teaching of Philosophy, please see our calls posted at: http://www.apaonline.org/group/teaching

Call for Abstracts: 2016 Pacific APA Session
“Our Obligations to Adjuncts”

Organized by the APA Committee on the Teaching of Philosophy

Deadline: Friday, October 2, 2015


According to the AAUP Research Office, non-tenure-track faculty now comprise more than 70% of the professoriate (http://www.aaup.org/sites/default/files/Faculty_Trends_0.pdf). In the humanities, the most recent data from the Delphi Project suggest that 46.2% of all humanists teach part-time, while 22.2% teach full-time, but off the tenure track (http://faqs.thechangingfaculty.org/). We suspect these numbers are on the rise. In this session, we’re calling upon the philosophical community to think about these statistics and the individuals hidden behind them.

The Committee is particularly interested both in presentations from ethicists and social-political philosophers who might use their expertise to think about our obligations to contingent faculty and in presentations from department chairs at institutions with particularly humane adjunct policies. In the spirit of active learning, the Committee asks that presenters not read a paper, but plan a more interactive way to engage their audience of peers.

Questions to consider might include, but are not limited to, the following:

- What do contingent faculty need, in order to do their jobs well? What are they owed?
- How should we figure per-course and full-time salaries for adjunct faculty? What benefits should they receive?
- How does the treatment of contingent faculty vary among public and private institutions? What are the sources of these differences and can they be overcome?
- What policies and programs have other professional organizations initiated to support their adjunct populations?
- How should contingent faculty be represented in institutional governance?
- Reformers have supported the use of accrediting agencies, unions, and high school guidance counselors to bring about change (http://chronicle.com/article/Accreditation-Is-Eyed-as-a/131292/), while others have focused on reducing the number of doctoral students. Which of these and other strategies hold promise for philosophers and why?
To apply, please submit as an email attachment a **250-500-word abstract prepared for blind review and a cv to Wendy Turgeon (turgeon@optonline.net)** by Friday, October 2, 2015. In addition to articulating the topic of your presentation, your abstract should explain the way in which you plan to engage your audience interactively. In the body of the email, please include your name, affiliation, and contact information. Individual submissions and joint/co-authored submissions are welcome. The Committee will strive to assemble a panel that is diverse in all relevant respects. We are planning to notify authors with a decision by Friday, October 9, 2015. If you have any questions, please feel free to contact me.

Thanks,
Alexandra Bradner, Chair, APA Committee on the Teaching of Philosophy

**Reminders**

Deadline to submit abstracts for the Committee’s session on **how to read philosophy** at the 2016 Central Division meeting of the APA: **Monday, September 14th**.

For more information about APA sessions organized by the Committee on the Teaching of Philosophy, please see our calls posted at: [http://www.apaonline.org/group/teaching](http://www.apaonline.org/group/teaching)

Alexandra Bradner, Chair
Committee on the Teaching of Philosophy
alexandraboradner@gmail.com
9/27/15

**“Responsibility of Faculty to Students” Section of APA Code of Conduct**

Composed by the APA Committee on the Teaching of Philosophy

**Notes:** What follows is a draft of the “Responsibility of Faculty to Students” section of the APA Code of Conduct. After examining an early draft as a committee in July 2015, we decided that the prose should be spare and that the code should focus on behaviors that constitute unethical and/or unprofessional conduct toward students as students (—not as citizens, etc.). We chose not to write an aspirational code. Instead of thinking about how we might improve the behavior of philosophy teachers who could be better at their jobs, but are doing nothing wrong, we thought only about conduct the APA should recognize as unethical and/or unprofessional. Though we could have expanded the bulleted items below with reasons, etc., we opted for simple, clear, and direct prose. Task Force chair Nancy Holland asked us to address three topics, in particular: stereotype threat, sexual harassment, and student teaching assistants.

**In researching codes of conduct, we examined MAP’s statement of best practices in the classroom, the MLA code, the AHA code, several state and local K-12 codes, and codes from the National Education Association, the Association of American Educators, the Education**
Council of New Zealand, and the National Association of State Directors of Teacher Education and Certification, among a few other codes from individual universities.

- Philosophy teachers aim to teach their students how to think, write, and speak clearly; how to read, understand, and critique philosophical texts; and how to develop their own philosophies in conversation with other people. Central to the success of this project is the teacher’s respect for student learning and the teacher’s interest in doing nothing to interfere with student learning.

Given this, philosophy teachers:

- Should treat students with dignity, never intentionally embarrassing or belittling them, and always communicating with them in clear, respectful, and culturally sensitive ways.

- Should nurture intellectual autonomy by maintaining a classroom environment in which students might raise hyperbolic doubts and float views that do not reflect prevailing beliefs and values, while at the same time maintaining a classroom environment in which all students—particularly students from disenfranchised groups—feel welcome and supported.

- Should not discriminate against students on the basis of irrelevant differences or tolerate such discrimination against students by other students. Beyond this, teachers should take positive measures both to overcome their own implicit biases and to protect students from stereotype threat, a social psychology effect which suggests that academic performance can be influenced by the anxiety that can accompany negative stereotypes. Teachers should assess the academic performance of each student on its merits.

- Should offer equal educational opportunities to every deserving student.

- Should plan well organized, fair, and level-appropriate courses—courses based upon syllabi that are transparent about the means through which and standards by which students will be evaluated.

- Should select relevant materials to teach and present those materials in an informed and balanced way, incorporating competing viewpoints in the spirit of fairness and with intellectual honesty.

- Should not make malicious statements about colleagues or their courses to students, and should not share with students information about colleagues’ personal lives.

- Should not capitalize upon their authority for private financial gain.
• Should acknowledge any intellectual debt to students who serve as research collaborators.

• Should maintain the confidentiality of student records, information, and communication acquired in the course of professional service in a manner consistent with federal law, state law, and local policy.

• Should call upon the proper institutional resources to assist students who either directly request academic or psychological support, or indicate, through an assignment, that they might need academic or psychological support. Teachers should alert the appropriate campus authorities to students who might pose a danger to themselves or others.

• Should provide students who are writing applications with adequate and timely counseling, and should write informed letters of recommendation. Teachers who doubt their ability to evaluate a student fairly should decline to write a letter.

• Should not exploit student teaching assistants by overusing them or using them to promote personal ends. Philosophy teachers should provide student teaching assistants with adequate preparation, continuing guidance, and informed evaluation and should not expect students, graduate or otherwise, to perform unremunerated or uncredited tasks.¹

• Should not engage in any consensual or non-consensual sexual or sexually related behavior with a student. The APA’s Statement on Sexual Harassment regards sexual harassment as “a serious violation of professional ethics.” The APA Statement and the Report of the 2013 Ad Hoc Committee on Sexual Harassment can be found here: http://www.apaonline.org/general/custom.asp?page=harassment

¹ The phrase “adequate preparation, continuing guidance, and informed evaluation” appears in the MLA Statement of Professional Ethics: https://www.mla.org/repview_profethics