

# Committee on Public Philosophy

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## *2015-2016 Membership*

Lynne Tirrell, chair (2017)

Erin McKenna (2016)

Tom Rockmore (2016)

David Schwartz (2016)

Samantha Brennan (2017)

Lucius T. Outlaw Jr. (2017)

Dorothy Rogers (2017)

Kai Draper (2018)

Sarah-Jane Leslie (2018)

Justin R. Weinberg (2018)

To: APA Board, and Amy Ferrer, Executive Director  
From: Lynne Tirrell, Chair, Committee for Public Philosophy  
Re: APA Public Philosophy Committee Activities, 2015-2016.  
Date: 23 June 2017

There are both risks and rewards to doing philosophy in public, and our committee has worked hard to help philosophers navigate through these issues. 2015-2016 was a year in which the risks became very clear, with some egregious public attacks on several of our members. Accordingly, we worked with other members of the APA to draft a statement against Bullying and Harassment, and we sponsored a session on “Navigating the Perils of Cyberspace” (see below).

**NEW BOARD STATEMENT:** Our committee, in cooperation with others at the APA, worked to draft a statement for the Board on Bullying and Harassment.

<http://www.apaonline.org/page/bullyharass>

**MEETING SESSIONS:** The sessions we sponsor at APA meetings are a crucial part of our work. We sponsored six sessions at three divisional meetings this year, as listed below. All sessions were very well attended. In previous years, we sponsored two at each meeting: one session on a topic of public concern, and one on methods of doing public philosophy. This year we changed the pattern, and sponsored only one each at the Central and Pacific. Next year, we plan to go back to two at each, offering six in total. These are already being planned.

#### Eastern Division 2016 : Washington DC

##### Navigating the Perils of Public Cyberspace: Toward New Norms of Public Engagement

- Margaret Crouch (Eastern Michigan University) “The Implications of Anonymity in Social Media”
- Karen Frost-Arnold (Hobart and William Smith Colleges) “Strategies for Dealing with Online Harassment”
- Jason Stanley (Yale University) “Fear and Loathing”

Chair: Justin Weinberg (University of South Carolina), member of the Committee on Public Philosophy

##### Philosophy for the Public: Reports from the Field and National Endowment for the Humanities Grants

- Lynne Tirrell (University of Massachusetts Boston) “Philosophy in Public: Modes of Engagement and Topics of Choice”
- Peter Fristedt (National Endowment for the Humanities) and Mark Silver (National Endowment for the Humanities) “NEH Philosophy Grants: The Public Scholar and Public Programs”
- Michael Lynch (University of Connecticut) “Writing Philosophy for the Public”
- Gaurev Vazirani (Yale University) “WiPhi: Developing Online Public Philosophy”

Chair: Lynne Tirrell

Central Division 2016: Chicago:

“Roundtable: *Philosophy Meets Journalism*”

- Myisha Cherry (U. Ill/Chicago)
- Ronald Feemster, (journalist, professor of Journalism, Emporia State University College)
- David V. Johnson, (Opinions editor Al Jazeera America)
- Jason Stanley (Yale University)

Pacific Division 2016: San Francisco:

Justice in the City

- Laurie Shrage (Florida International University)
  - Ronald R. Sundstrom (University of San Francisco)
  - Andrew Valls (Oregon State University)
- Chair: Shelley Wilcox (San Francisco State University)

Public Speech/Hate Speech

- Alex Brown (University of East Anglia)
  - Robin Jeshion (University of Southern California)
  - Rachel McKinney (Massachusetts Institute of Technology)
- Chair: Lynne Tirrell (University of Massachusetts Boston)

**OP-ED CONTEST:** The Op-ed Contest for Op-eds and blog posts published in 2015 had over 100 nominations. Nominations closed in Spring 2016, and the awards were be given at the Eastern Division Awards ceremony January 2017.

We decided that in the future, nomination is limited to APA members.

Op-Ed Contest Winners: 2014 Op-Ed (includes blogs)

- Mariana Alessandri (University of Texas, Pan American) for “Companions in Misery”
- Adam Hosein (University of Colorado, Boulder) for “Prosecuting Torture”
- Patrick Lin (California Polytechnic State University) for “The Robot Car of Tomorrow May Just Be Programmed to Hit You”
- Kate Manne (Cornell University) for “In Ferguson and Beyond, Punishing Humanity”
- Gordon Marino (St. Olaf College) for “A Life Beyond ‘Do What You Love’”

**BERRY FUND AWARDS:** The committee has \$5000 annually to distribute as grants to members for projects engage in public philosophy. The decision about what to fund rests entirely with the committee. We have funded many different kinds of projects. The current leaning of the committee is to give priority to public events.

2015-16 BERRY awards: 6 awards, Total: \$3860

- Philosophy and Fiction Prize. Helen De Cruz, organizer (Oxford Brookes U). Winner: Lisa Schoenberg (Cheney U, Pennsylvania) for her short story, "Adjoiners". Part of the prize is the publication of the story in the June 2017 issue of *Sci Phi Journal*. Judges: Eric Schwitzgebel, Meghan Sullivan, and Mark Silcox. Grant amount: \$1000
- High School Philosophy Camp at the University of Kentucky. Caroline Buchanan, organizer. \$1000.  
One week intensive philosophy camp for high school students.
- "Rethink," A Philosophy Outreach Program in the New York City Area. Adam Blazej, organizer. \$960. Run by a consortium of graduate students from Columbia, CUNY Graduate Center, Fordham, and The New School, with community partner organizations, to work with out of school and at-risk youth. Grant covers transportation, paying for MetroCards.
- Brooklyn Public Philosophers: Ask a Philosopher Booth, Brooklyn Farmers Market. Funding for Tent and Banner. Ian Olasov, organizer. \$350.
- Philosophy and Music Interdisciplinary Public Humanities Project at the University of California Santa Barbara. Zachary Rentz, organizer. \$1000. An oral history of philosophy and music with senior citizens in SB.
- We also used the Berry Fund to pay the expenses of David V. Johnson, Op-Ed editor of Al Jazeera America, to come to the Central Division Meetings in Chicago, for the session on Philosophy meets Journalism.