Committee on the Teaching of Philosophy

2013-2014 Membership

Daw-Nay Evans, chair (2015)
Matthew Altman (2014)
Katheryn Doran (2016)
Joseph Farrell (2015)
Christina Hendricks (2014)
Jennifer Mulnix (2015)
Wendy Turgeon (2016)
Jana Mohr Lone, ex officio (2015)
Thomas Urban, ex officio (2016)
Tziporah Kasachkoff, newsletter editor
Eugene Kelly, newsletter editor
David Concepción, AAPT president
Committee on the Teaching of Philosophy

2014 Committee Report
submitted by Daw-Nay Evans, Chair (2012-2015)

2013-14 Committee Membership

Committee Chair
Daw-Nay Evans

Associate Chair
Alexandra E. Bradner

Committee Members

David Concepcion
Jana Mohr Lone
Thomas Urban
Sanford Goldberg
Jennifer Morton
Jennifer W. Mulnix
Katheryn H. Doran
Joseph M. Farrell
Wendy C. Turgeon
Tziprah Kasachkoff
Eugene Kelly

(1) The Committee sponsored one session at the 2014 APA Pacific Division meeting.

(a) “Open Online Course in Philosophy,”
Speakers: Mara Harrell, Carnegie Mellon University
Richard Scheines, Carnegie Mellon University
Hjördis Becker, Christian-Albrechts-Universität zu Kiel
Karin Brown, San Jose State University
Janet Stemwedel, San Jose State University
Anand Vaidva, San Jose State University
I. Teaching Committee Personnel Changes

Three new members joined the committee on July 1, 2014: Alexandra Bradner, as associate chair, Sanford Goldberg, and Jennifer Morton. Matthew Altman and Christina Hendricks completed their terms on the teaching committee June 30, 2014. We would like to thank them for their service. Daw-Nay Evans stepped down as chair on August 26, 2014. We would like to thank him for leading the committee over the past two years.

II. Committee Chair Transition

On August 18, 2014, Daw-Nay Evans asked Alexandra Bradner, Associate Chair, if she would mind serving as acting chair of the committee. On August 26, 2014, Cheshire Calhoun, APA Chair of the Board of Officers, asked Alexandra to accelerate her appointment as chair, which normally would have occurred on July 1, 2015. In explaining this procedure, Calhoun wrote: “Chairs and associate chairs are selected and appointed by the board of officers with advisory input from the committees, or in the case of vacancies occurring mid-year by the chair of the board (me).” A new associate chair will be appointed just before the last year of Alexandra’s term as chair.

III. Teaching Committee Activity at APA Divisional meetings

Christina Hendricks organized a teaching committee session for the 2014 APA Pacific Division Meeting: “Open, Online Courses in Philosophy.”

The following philosophers participated in the panel:

Mara Harrell and Richard Scheines, “Blended Learning with Online Courses”

Hjördis Becker, “Facilitating Learning Among Online Egos: Impression Management in MOOCs and the Role of the Teacher”

Karin Bron, Janet Stemwedel, and Anand Vaidva, “Social Technological, Ethical and Pedagogical Issues Surrounding the Use of MOOCs in University Level Philosophy Courses”

Katheryn Doran is organizing a teaching committee session for the 2014 APA Eastern Division Meeting: “Teaching Philosophy in Non-Traditional Settings.” Katheryn Doran, Joe
Farrell, and Wendy Turgeon reviewed abstracts. We received 9 submissions. The call for abstracts appears below in section VII as attachment A.

The following philosophers are scheduled to participate in the panel:

Moderator/Chair: Katheryn Doran

Amy Wilson, ‘Talking About Us’ at the Baobab Centre: Philosophy as Therapy With Young Refugees”

Michael DeWilde and Abigail DeHart, “Unchained Melodies: Tales from Teaching in Prison”

Jamie Robertson, “Ethics Workshops for Non-Philosophers: Challenges and Insights from an Activity-based Approach to Philosophical Teaching and Learning”

Mark Zelcer, "Wartime Ethics"

Alexandra Bradner is organizing a teaching committee session for the 2015 APA Central Division Meeting: “Experiential Learning in Philosophy.” Joe Farrell, Jennifer Morton and Wendy Turgeon are reviewing abstracts. We received 27 submissions. The call for abstracts appears below in section VII as attachment B.

Katheryn Doran is organizing a teaching committee session for the 2015 APA Pacific Division Meeting: “Teaching Mistakes, Classroom Disasters, Course Challenges, Failing Lessons.” Alexandra Bradner, Joe Farrell, Jennifer Mulnix, and Wendy Turgeon are reviewing abstracts. The call for abstracts is still open. The call for abstracts appears below in section VII as attachment C.

David, Katheryn, and Wendy met for dinner at the 2013 Eastern Division meeting. The teaching committee is hoping to arrange more face-to-face meetings like this at future APAs.

IV. Grant Reviewing

In early September, 2014, a subcommittee consisting of Alexandra Bradner, Katheryn Doran, David Concepcion, Jana Mohr Lone, Jennifer Mulnix, and Wendy Turgeon reviewed and provided feedback to the National Office on 13 small grant proposals. During this (fairly extended) process, Katheryn suggested that we develop a set of grant reviewing guidelines specific to the teaching committee, so we don’t have to develop such guidelines de novo each year. The committee plans to discuss her suggestion at our next meeting.

One of the small grant proposals we received to review was proposed by a member of the teaching committee (and, as it happened, a member of the review subcommittee as well). In future years, we would like to see the proposals anonymized before we receive them. In addition, grants that present a potential conflict of interest within the context of a
particular committee might be sent to a different committee. We resolved this issue by asking the member in question to submit ratings for all of the grants, but his/her own. We then asked that he/she recuse himself/herself from the subsequent discussion of the grant ratings. The member in question graciously obliged.

In other grant work, Alexandra Bradner, Chair, provided feedback for the Executive Director on a request for funds in early September, 2014.

V. Other Initiatives

After a discussion with Dave Concepcion and others at the summer 2014 AAPT conference, Wendy Turgeon noted in an August 5, 2014, e-mail to the committee that the JAPA editorial board did not include any member with a direct interest in and experience with SoTL (scholarship of teaching and learning). She wrote: “The journal is just beginning so this might be an excellent time to draft a proposal which encourages the editor and editorial board to welcome submissions in this area and expand the mission of the journal to address pedagogy as well as scholarship.”

Alexandra Bradner, Katheryn Doran, Joe Farrell, Jana Mohr Lone, Jennifer Morton, Jennifer Mulnix, and Thomas Urban expressed their support for the idea. Sanford Goldberg said he had no strong feelings on the issue, but was happy to support group’s verdict. Daw-Nay asked that one of the committee members take the lead on drafting a letter to the editorial board for interested committee members to sign. David Concepcion agreed to draft the letter. The committee had an extended e-mail discussion about a few paragraphs, and sent the revised letter out to three other APA committees for their consideration. At one point in the discussion, in response to a question, Thomas Urban clarified that ex officio members are voting members of APA committees.

We sent the signed letter to the JAPA editorial board on August 26, 2014. Our letter is included below in section VII as attachment D. JAPA editor John Heil wrote back on September 26, 2014, to say, among other things: “We appreciate the importance of teaching in philosophy and agree that it would be a mistake to adopt a policy against considering papers solely because they concerned teaching. The Journal will consider papers on any topic of interest to members of the APA and assess those papers on the basis of their philosophical merit.” His letter is included below in section VII as attachment E.

The teaching committee would like to express its thanks to Wendy and David for their activism/initiative on behalf of the importance of teaching philosophy and, in particular, to David, for taking the time to craft such a careful and representative letter.

Vi. Future plans

The teaching committee hopes to meet this year, at least virtually. Our agenda might include: establishing some standing grant and abstract reviewing guidelines, developing a frequently updated online platform for highlighting pedagogical innovations,
brainstorming ways to keep R1 faculty engaged in the discussion of teaching and learning, and considering other initiatives of interest to our committee members.

VII. Attachments

A. Call for abstracts for the 2014 Eastern Division Meeting

Call for panel proposals.

The APA Committee on the Teaching of Philosophy invites proposals for a panel on teaching philosophy in non-traditional settings at the Eastern Division meeting of the APA, December 27-30, 2014 in Philadelphia, PA.

Panel presentations could be on teaching philosophy in, for example, community libraries, prisons, elder hostels, or indeed in settings we haven’t even thought of to list.

We are interested in proposals about presentations on pedagogical information and insights, on the particular intellectual challenges these settings present, and especially, on what you have learned about teaching philosophy, and about philosophy, from your experiences.

An upcoming issue of the Newsletter on Teaching Philosophy will also focus on this topic, soon after the panel takes place (dates to be announced soon). All panelists will be invited to submit their papers (in the proper form, whose guidelines can be found online in the Newsletter itself). Those not presenting may also wish to submit a paper on the topic to the Newsletter.

Both individual submissions as well as proposals for several panelists together are welcome. Please send a title, an abstract of no more than 500 words, and your name, and email address to Katheryn Doran at kdoran@hamilton.edu. Deadline is June 30, 2014.

B. Call for abstracts for the 2015 Central Division Meeting
Dear ‘First Name’,

The American Philosophical Association’s committee on the teaching of philosophy invites abstracts for panels at the APA’s 2015 Central Division and Pacific Division meetings.

Panel on Experiential Learning (Central Division Meeting)

The committee seeks 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, Missouri.

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.

Please submit as an email attachment an abstract of 500–750 words prepared for anonymous review to alexandrabradner@gmail.com by September 25, 2014. Include your name, affiliation, and contact information in the body of the email. 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 in October 2014. If you have any questions, please contact Alexandra Bradner.
D. Letter to JAPA Board re the inclusion of SoTL papers

8/25/14

John Heil, Editor-in-Chief, *Journal of the American Philosophical Association*

cc  Associate Editors and Advisory Editors of *JAPA*
Amy Ferrer, Executive Director, American Philosophical Association [APA]
APA Board of Officers
APA Committee on Inclusiveness in the Profession Committee
APA Committee on Pre-College Instruction in Philosophy
APA Committee on Philosophy in Two Year Colleges

We recommend that the *Journal of the American Philosophical Association* [JAPA]*
• accept for consideration for publication manuscripts concerning teaching and learning in philosophy
• add at least one philosopher who is expert in teaching and learning to the board of Associate or Advisory Editors

**DISCUSSION**
(1) Refusing to review manuscripts regarding teaching and learning is antithetical to a published statement from *JAPA*. In the FAQ [http://www.apaonline.org/?page=journal] *JAPA* states: “Authors from all fields of philosophy are invited to submit articles.” The scholarship of teaching and learning is a field in philosophy; philosophers publish in this area.
It may be argued that the journal *Teaching Philosophy* and the *APA Newsletter on Teaching* already exist, and so *JAPA* need not be concerned with publishing scholarship concerning teaching and learning.

Presumably *JAPA* will not exclude papers concerning Ethics/Social-Political Philosophy because *Ethics* exists. Nor, we hope, will it exclude papers concerning feminism or African American philosophy simply because the *Newsletter on the Status of Women* and the *Newsletter on the Status of Blacks* exist. In the latter two cases, *JAPA* might be especially interested in welcoming submissions from those subfields, as papers on such topics have been marginalized in other prominent philosophy journals. We believe SoTL papers are also overlooked.

(2) The APA can advance two aspects of its mission simultaneously. The APA has four principal activities: support scholarship, support teaching, support career development, and advance philosophy and philosophers with advocacy. Not every effort of the APA need pursue each of these activities. However, it is puzzling that among all areas of study pursued by philosophers that the one – the scholarship of teaching and learning [SoTL] – that could advance two aspects of our mission at once, is explicitly excluded from consideration by *JAPA*. If there is a misunderstanding of the nature of scholarship of teaching and learning among *JAPA*’s board, we offer an all-too-brief primer in Appendix A, and are happy to further discuss the nature of SoTL with the board.

(3) Publishing papers concerning teaching and learning helps *JAPA* accomplish its mission. *JAPA* is committed to “publishing readable papers that can be appreciated by philosophers not already steeped in the subject matter” and “publishing papers that draw from and appeal to diverse philosophical constituencies and traditions.” Papers regarding teaching and learning in philosophy are often models of rigorous but accessible work, easily appreciated by philosophers who are not expert in SoTL. Indeed, there is no philosophical constituency more diverse than the group philosopher-as-teacher. The broadest possible range of philosophers will benefit from this work.

A majority of philosophers are employed at institutions where the teaching aspect of their work is more important than the scholarship aspect. Many institutions balance teaching and learning and have enshrined the Boyer model into their promotion & tenure and salary & merit processes. The fact that philosophers with careers that prioritize research are the minority among all working philosophers has two implications for *JAPA*. First, excluding papers regarding teaching and learning from *JAPA* is to miss an opportunity to show by deed that the new APA is evolving to better serve the majority of philosophers.

Second, *JAPA* aims to publish “papers from early-career philosophers...” Again, many early-career philosophers both work at institutions that credit SoTL in P&T and wish to publish research concerning teaching. *JAPA* will well serve its own mission of assisting early career philosophers by accepting manuscripts regarding teaching and learning.

(4) The Scholarship of Teaching and Learning is an area of academic expertise. As with any area of expertise, those who do not study the relevant literature, present, and publish in this field are not in a position to properly evaluate the quality of a manuscript in the sub-discipline. As such, it is necessary to have at least one teaching and learning expert on the
The JAPA board to ensure that only the highest quality teaching and learning papers are published.

Pedagogical expertise is developed through study and practice, as is, say, expertise in writing papers on topics in metaphysics. Some philosophers are satisfied with being content area experts and pedagogical novices. However, philosophers throughout the non-research-1 landscape of higher education (and many of us in it, too) want the journal of our professional association to help us advance our pedagogical expertise by providing us with the best articles available regarding teaching and learning in philosophy.

We encourage JAPA to act on our modest request. We desire JAPA to consider manuscripts on teaching and learning in philosophy and publish those that merit dissemination. To do so JAPA should have at least one board member with expertise in philosophy SoTL.

We look forward to your response.

Respectfully,

The American Philosophical Association, Committee on Teaching
The American Philosophical Association, Committee on Pre-College Instruction in Philosophy
The American Philosophical Association, Committee on Philosophy in Two-Year Colleges

Appendix A

For over 40 years, members of various academic fields have applied their discipline-specific research methodologies to the study of the teaching and learning in their fields. Philosophy SoTL [scholarship of teaching and learning] is not discipline-neutral, a sub-set of Philosophy of Education, nor “teaching tips.” (See bibliography below for illustration of this distinction.) Scholarship of Teaching and Learning involves systematic study of teaching and/or learning and the public sharing and review of such work through presentations, performance, or publications.” In 1990, Ernest Boyer codified the Scholarship of Teaching as one of the four modes of scholarship pursued by academics in

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higher education. Hundreds of institutions have enshrined “The Boyer Model” in their promotion and tenure processes.

**Philosophy of Education**


**Philosophy SoTL**
[http://www.pdcnet.org/teachphil/free](http://www.pdcnet.org/teachphil/free)

[http://www.pdcnet.org/teachphil/free](http://www.pdcnet.org/teachphil/free)

[http://www.pdcnet.org/teachphil/free](http://www.pdcnet.org/teachphil/free)

**Discipline-Neutral SoTL**

[http://digitalcommons.georgiasouthern.edu/ij-sotl/vol8/iss2/7](http://digitalcommons.georgiasouthern.edu/ij-sotl/vol8/iss2/7)

**Teaching Tips**
Washington University in St. Louis, Center for Teaching and Learning  
[http://teachingcenter.wustl.edu/strategies/Pages/teaching-first-day.aspx](http://teachingcenter.wustl.edu/strategies/Pages/teaching-first-day.aspx)

**E. JAPA editorial response re the inclusion of SoTL papers**

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4 Scott Jaschik, “‘Scholarship Reconsidered’ as Tenure Policy,” *Inside Higher Ed.* (2007),  
Alexandra Bradner, Acting Chair  
APA Committee on the Teaching of Philosophy

Dr. Bradner:

This is in response to your communication of 26 August 2014 (on behalf of three APA committees) regarding the Journal of the American Philosophical Association.

We appreciate the importance of teaching in philosophy and agree that it would be a mistake to adopt a policy against considering papers solely because they concerned teaching. The Journal will consider papers on any topic of interest to members of the APA and assess those papers on the basis of their philosophical merit.

We agree as well with your suggestion that the Editorial team include 'at least one philosopher who is expert in teaching and learning'. As it happens three members of the Governing committee satisfy this description. Indeed, several members of the editorial team have worked actively on projects directed at teaching (and learning) and some have published papers on teaching.

I should add that at its December meeting the Journal’s Governing Committee will be considering how best to address discussions of what might be categorized as issues in the profession.

The Journal is gradually taking shape in a way that we hope will make the world a better place philosophically. On behalf of the Governing Committee, thank you and the committees you represent for your suggestions.

Cordially,

John Heil, Editor  
Journal of the American Philosophical Association