

**PROPOSAL FOR APA GRANT FUNDING  
FOR FREDERICK DOUGLASS PHILOSOPHY CONFERENCE AT  
WEST CHESTER UNIVERSITY OF PENNSYLVANIA**

**Abstract**

The Frederick Douglass Philosophy Conference will be an annual conference held at West Chester University of Pennsylvania (WCU) in West Chester, Pa., beginning in the fall semester of 2012. The Department of Philosophy at WCU will host the conference, which, in the spirit of Frederick Douglass, who relentlessly sought the inclusion of African-Americans and women into American social and political life, will aim at the recruitment of African-Americans and women to study philosophy at the graduate level for the MA in philosophy at WCU. The conference will begin on Thursday evening, November 1, 2012, with a dinner and keynote address for conference attendees. On Friday, November 2, 2012, there will be four paper presentations from the conference participants with commentary on each paper from current MA students at WCU; two in the morning from 10 AM to Noon, followed by lunch; and two in the afternoon from 1:30 PM to 3:30 PM.

**Purpose**

The purpose of the Frederick Douglass Philosophy Conference is to target African-American and women students to study for the MA in philosophy at WCU. People in these groups are historically underrepresented in philosophy. Such objectives are beneficial to the profession as they will help to increase both racial and gender diversity in academic philosophy.

**Groundwork**

Access to prospective graduate students in the target groups will be facilitated with relationships that WCU's philosophy department already has with faculty at some of the nation's top philosophy departments. At Pennsylvania State University, WCU has contacts with the Edwin Erie Sparks Professor of Philosophy, Robert Bernasconi, and with Professor Kathryn Gines, founder of the Collegium of Black Women Philosophers; at Rutgers University, WCU has contact with Distinguished Professor of Philosophy Howard McGary; at Duquesne University, WCU has contact with Professor George Yancy; and at the University of Memphis, WCU has contact with Distinguished Professor of Philosophy Bill E. Lawson. Contacts with these professors will likely provide a consistent stream of African-American and women prospective graduate students to attend the conference.

WCU is home to the Frederick Douglass Institute (FDI), an academic institute whose mission is dedicated, in part, to "deepening the intellectual heritage of Frederick Douglass." There is perhaps no better way to deepen that intellectual heritage than to actively seek the presence of graduate students such as African-Americans and women, who are members of historically underrepresented and marginalized groups in philosophy. The Frederick Douglass Institute has two full time Graduate Assistantships that provide full tuition waiver and a stipend. Students admitted to the MA program in philosophy at WCU will be eligible to apply for these assistantships.

In addition to the FDI, WCU is also part of the Frederick Douglass Collaborative (“the Collaborative”). The Collaborative consists of the FDIs on the campuses of each of the fourteen (14) state-sponsored institutions in the Pennsylvania State System of Higher Education (PASSHE), and its stated goal is “to prepare Pennsylvania’s students for the 21st century by encouraging and supporting intercultural literacy and knowledge that are required of them as citizens of the Commonwealth and the world.” This goal is enhanced by the Frederick Douglass Philosophy Conference insofar as increasing racial and gender diversity in academic philosophy both encourages and supports “intercultural literacy and knowledge.”

In addition to this existing diversity infrastructure, WCU is uniquely suited to graduate study in philosophy, as it is the only one of the fourteen universities in the PASSHE with a graduate program in philosophy, and has affordable tuition, and graduate assistantships with the Frederick Douglass Institute. Moreover, WCU’s proximity to Philadelphia means that it is near many universities that will likely have students who are interested in graduate study, but may need the benefit of a terminal MA prior to enrolling in a doctoral program in philosophy.

## **Plan**

## **Budget**

- (1) Travel and lodging for 4 conference participants: \$2,800.00
- (2) Travel, lodging, and honorarium for conference keynote speaker: \$1,500.00
- (3) Food: \$1,000.00
- (4) Advertising: \$700.00

Total Cost: \$6,000.00

## **Timeline for Planning and Disbursement of Funds**

August 15, 2012: Keynote speaker confirmed

August 31, 2012: Call for papers issued

September 15, 2012: First disbursement of funds in the amount of \$1,700.00 for advertising and food

September 30, 2012: Call for papers deadline

October 8, 2012: Authors of selected papers notified

October 12, 2012: Second disbursement of funds in the amount of \$4,300.00 for travel and lodging for conference participants, and for travel, lodging, and honorarium for conference keynote speaker

## **Fiscal Agent**

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## **Other Funding Sources**

Other possible funding sources for the Frederick Douglass Philosophy Conference include the WCU Department of Philosophy, and the WCU College of Arts and Sciences.

## **Assessment**

Assessment measures will include surveys of conference participants and attendees, and a post-conference meeting of the steering committee for overall evaluation of the conference, and considering how to improve the conference.

## **Advertising**

Off campus advertising will occur electronically through a call for papers, accompanied by an electronic flyer to all local universities (Temple, Drexel, LaSalle, University of Pennsylvania, etc.). The conference will also be advertised through the Greater Philadelphia Philosophy Consortium (GPPC). On campus advertising will consist of flyers and posters displayed in and around campus buildings, as well as electronic notifications to faculty, staff, and students.

## **Appendix**

The steering committee consists of myself, Dr. Timothy J. Golden, Associate Professor of Philosophy at WCU, who will chair the steering committee, Dr. Helen Schroepfer, Associate Professor of Philosophy and Chair of the Department of Philosophy at WCU, and Dr. Matthew Pierlott, Assistant Professor of Philosophy and Graduate Coordinator at WCU. Drs. Schroepfer and Pierlott will serve as *ex officio* members of the steering committee, considering that their academic leadership positions as department chair and graduate coordinator at WCU are crucial in the efforts to recruit African-Americans and women to graduate study at WCU.

As for my experience and activities that are relevant to this project, an abbreviated version of my CV appears below. To highlight my background, experience, and commitment, I am a graduate of the University of Memphis's Ph.D. program in philosophy; a program that is nationally and internationally recognized for its commitment to racial and gender diversity in academic philosophy. I thus understand the importance of initiatives such as the Frederick Douglass Philosophy Conference. Indeed, as a graduate student at the University of Memphis, I

participated in the Ida B. Wells minority recruitment conference for graduate students. Through this experience, I have learned the importance of careful planning for the recruitment of African-Americans and women to academic philosophy. Moreover, while a graduate student at the University of Memphis, I also served as Co-Director of the annual Philosophy Graduate Student Association Conference. This involved the same kind of planning that is necessary for this project.

Finally, I must emphasize that my commitment to diversity in academic philosophy is strong, and is evidenced in the following two ways. First, my scholarship reflects favorably on my commitment to diversity insofar as my dissertation research, recent publication, and works in progress further the development of not only African-American philosophy, but also put African-American philosophy in conversation with canonical figures in European philosophy. This makes for the kind of diversity that the Frederick Douglass Philosophy Conference aims to promote. Second, as a graduate student, I often hosted students at my home and entertained them when they came to the University of Memphis on recruitment trips. This kind of hospitality is crucial in making the kinds of impressions that need to be made to get students interested in coming to WCU, and I intend to continue this kind of hospitality at WCU.

**TIMOTHY JOSEPH GOLDEN**

*Curriculum Vitae*

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**ACADEMIC APPOINTMENTS**

2011-Present Associate Professor of Philosophy  
West Chester University of Pennsylvania

**EDUCATION**

2011 **Ph. D.**, Philosophy, University of Memphis

2006 **M.A.**, Philosophy, West Chester University of Pennsylvania

1993 **J.D.**, Texas Southern University, Thurgood Marshall School of Law

1990 **B.S.**, Criminal Justice, West Chester University of Pennsylvania  
Double Minor: Philosophy and Political Science

**AREAS OF SPECIALIZATION:**

Nineteenth/ Twentieth Century Continental Philosophy  
African-American Philosophy/Critical Race Theory  
Philosophy of Religion/Philosophical Theology

**AREAS OF COMPETENCE:**

Ethics  
Philosophy of Law  
Ancient and Medieval Philosophy  
Modern Philosophy

**Dissertation:** "Onto-Theology, Subjectivity, and the Alchemy of Transcendence"

**Committee:** Thomas J. Nenon (Chair), Bill E. Lawson, Sarah Clark Miller,  
Kas Saghafi and Gordon D. Marino (external reader)

### **Dissertation Abstract:**

I argue that there are three distinct but related manifestations of epistemic desire. First, epistemic desire is religious in nature and results in onto-theology or, as Heidegger put it, the “god of philosophy.” I argue that inasmuch as onto-theology is a product of the human interest in totality and completeness, it is amenable to oppressive ends when human interests are corrupt. I argue that Kant limits this kind of epistemic desire through transcendental idealism and that Kierkegaard limits it through his claim that “truth is subjectivity.” Second, epistemic desire is hyper-scientific and indicative of a totalizing tendency of Western philosophy. Husserl limits this sort of epistemic desire with the phenomenological reduction; a reduction that he refined more so than he invented; a reduction that was in full force during the institution of chattel slavery. The “proto-phenomenological reduction” (PPR) of chattel slavery is the third manifestation of epistemic desire, and I argue with Levinas that it has oppressive social and political ends. Arguing for abolition, a conception of subjectivity emerges from Frederick Douglass that is a corrective to the PPR of American chattel slavery: one that favors a theology of liberation instead of onto-theological obstructions to the meaning of existential subjectivity.

### **PUBLICATIONS**

#### *ARTICLES*

1. “From Epistemology to Ethics: Theoretical and Practical Reason in Kant and Douglass”  
*Journal of Religious Ethics* (forthcoming)

#### *WORKS IN PROGRESS*

1. “Kant and Christian Ethics”
2. “Subjectivity in Kierkegaard and Douglass”
3. “Repetition, the Dionysian, and the “Death of God”:  
Reading *Sonny’s Blues* through Kierkegaard and Nietzsche”
4. “Overcoming Reason: Kant and Climacus on Dialectics”

### **ACADEMIC SERVICE**

*Hiring Committee for Moss Chair of Excellence, University of Memphis\**  
*Co-Director, Philosophy Graduate Student Association, University of Memphis*  
*Teaching Assistant, Department of Philosophy, University of Memphis*  
*Assessment Committee, Department of Philosophy, West Chester University*  
*Graduate Assistant, Frederick Douglass Institute, West Chester University*  
*Frederick Douglass Institute Campus Advisory Board, West Chester University*  
*President, West Chester University Philosophical Society*

\*Graduate Student Representative