



Benditt Retires

It is with mixed feelings that we announce the retirement of Dr. Theodore Benditt, effective May 31, 2017. During his 38 years at UAB Dr. Benditt served the College of Arts and Sciences as Professor and Chair. He served as Interim Chair of English as well as serving as Chair of Philosophy.

Dr. Benditt was an undergraduate at the University of Pennsylvania, where he majored in American Studies and then went to Penn's law school. During his time at law school, he became interested in philosophy. After completing law school and after being admitted to the bar in Pennsylvania, he decided to pursue philosophy; he completed his PhD at the University of Pittsburgh. Before coming to UAB, he taught at Duke University and the University of Southern California. Dr. Benditt has published two books and over 30 articles, including "Private Land Ownership and Its Limitations," published in 2015.

From 1984 until 1998 he served as dean of UAB's School of Arts and Humanities. He has served as president of the Alabama chapter of the Jane Austen Society of North America, and has published articles on Jane Austen.

Dr. Benditt will be returning for Fall semester as Adjunct faculty, teaching The Rule of Law.

Philosophy Department Video

The Department of Philosophy is proud to announce the completion of a department video. Spearheaded and directed by Dr. Matt King, the video, "What is Philosophy?" is now available on the UAB YouTube channel (<https://youtu.be/Ng3WWpRjIT8>).



New Ethics Track in the Works

The UAB Philosophy Department is excited that our proposed Ethics Track is getting closer to reality. We expect the proposal for the track to be reviewed by the University of Alabama System Board of Trustees this summer and Alabama Commission on Higher Education (ACHE) this fall. Hopefully, the Ethics Track will be approved and fully in place by Fall 2018. This track will appeal to students who are interested in focusing on ethical questions and reasoning in their time as an undergraduate. It will tailor the Philosophy major at UAB to fit many of our students' interests in ethical and social issues, including those aiming to work in business, law, and health professions.

As a result of this focus, the Ethics Track may be of particular interest to students seeking double majors. For example, students in health professions majors could benefit from the training that the Ethics Track would provide in reasoning about ethical decisions that arise in health care, whether as a physician, nurse, or administrator. Suitable majors might include those in Biology, Chemistry, Nursing, and Neuroscience, many of whom already take Bioethics. And the Philosophy Department has a focus on medical ethics, with several faculty who specialize in this area. Ethics is also closely connected to questions in the law, so students aiming to go to law school might major in Philosophy on the Ethics Track along with a degree in Government, History, or Justice Sciences. All in all, we are excited by the potential benefits to UAB students of adding the Ethics Track to our major.

New Courses

Superheroes

Matt King

This course examines the ethical dimensions of reading minds, the justifications of vigilantism, and whether greater power means greater responsibilities. It explores personal identity through Multiple Man and the Hulk, while asking whether Lois is thinking about Superman when she is thinking about Clark Kent.

Environmental Ethics

Mary Whall

Environmental Ethics examines the ethical obligations that human beings have to the natural world. It considers how our traditional ethical frameworks can be expanded to include nonhuman animals and the natural environment, and emphasizes the moral standing of future generations. Environmental ethics considers the role that technology plays in environmental degradation and questions ways in which it might help us to reverse the problems it has created. Some of the issues it addresses are sustainability, conservation, environmental pollution, climate change, genetically modified organisms, and environmental racism.

Epistemology & Philosophy of Science

Kevin McCain

Considerations of parsimony (simplicity) often guide our choice of theories. This is true not only in science, but also in philosophy and even everyday life. Although we rely on judgments of parsimony when deciding which theories to believe, is it rational to do so? In this course, we will explore answers to this question. In particular, we will examine the role that parsimony plays in theory choice in biology, psychology, philosophy, and our ordinary lives.

Computer Ethics

Marjorie Price

The use of computers and the Internet has given rise to a number of special moral issues. These issues include ones about privacy, free speech, intellectual property, security, responsibility, and the economic well-being of people. This course

aims to answer some of these questions. It considers different possible answers and the arguments for them. It examines the concepts of privacy, free speech, property, and information and establishes general principles about them. Students are asked to use this background to analyze cases.

Science, Knowledge, and Reality

Marshall Abrams

Last fall, our course "Science, Knowledge, and Reality" did double duty both as a regular Philosophy course and as a course for the UABTeach program. This is an old course taught with a new purpose. It shows how understanding the history of science can help us to understand philosophical questions about the nature of scientific evidence and the nature of reality. The UABTeach program prepares science majors to have the option of becoming high school and middle school science teachers. One of its requirements is for students to take a specially designated philosophy of science course or history of science course. "Science, Knowledge, and Reality" allows UABTeach students to better understand what science is and where it came from, and to think about how to use the resulting understanding in their science teaching. Our "Science, Knowledge, and Reality" course is not only for UABTeach students, though. The course will be offered this fall for anyone interested in learning more about philosophy and science: Philosophy majors, UABTeach students, and all other students are welcome.

Big Idea Talks

November 2016

In "Why your parents should not pay for college," Dr. Welch, our newest faculty member, argued that if we are sincerely committed to fair equality of opportunity and sincere in our recognition of 18-year-olds as adults, we ought to insist that parents not help fund college education.

March 2017

Dr. Marjorie Price presented her Big Idea Talk on "What Philosophers Have to Say about Sex and Marriage."

Colloquium Speakers 2016/2017

Jeremy Fischer (UA Huntsville) – Sept. 9 "Knowing Our Emotions"

Julia Haas (Rhodes) – Dec. 2 "A Penny for Your Thoughts: A Neuroeconomic Model of Moral Cognition"

Eddy Nahmias (Georgia State) – Jan. 20 "How to Do Things with Punishment: Expanding the Communicative Theory of Punishment"

Neil Sinhababu (Nat. Univ. of Singapore) – Feb. 15 "Credence in Psychological Explanation"

Rekha Nath (Univ. of Alabama) – Mar. 3 "Fat Stigma and Health"

Jemison Lectures

Deep South Philosophy of Biology Workshop

**TUESDAY
FEB 21ST
5:00 PM**

**JEMISON VISITING
PROFESSOR LECTURE**
UAB Alumni House
1201 10th Avenue South

**Love and Reason in a Dark Time:
Why the Struggle to Stop Climate Change
Failed and What it Means For Our Future**

Dale Jamieson, PhD
New York University



A Visiting Professor of Law, A.B. Baker Professor of Bioethics, and Chair of the Transdisciplinary Studies Program at New York University, Dr. Jamieson is also Distinguished Visiting Professor at the Dickson Poon School of Law at King's College London, and Adjunct Professor at the University of the Sunshine Coast in Australia.

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Jemison Visiting Professorship in the Humanities
and the Department of Philosophy

**UAB COLLEGE OF
LAW AND BUSINESS**
Leading the world, one case at a time

We were pleased to host Dale Jameison, a philosopher from NYU, who is famous for his work in environmental ethics. Dale gave a public talk at the UAB Alumni House, as well as a professional talk to members of the UAB Philosophy Department in our departmental library.

The Philosophy Club

The Student Fellowship of Philosophy (a.k.a. Philosophy Club) is a student organization with members from across campus who share two common interests: philosophy and fun. The Philosophy club has made tremendous strides in the past few years. It has moved from an unrecognized club that met once or twice per semester to an officially recognized student club that meets weekly or bi-weekly. Club attendance has grown from around 10 students at one or two meetings per semester to 15-30 students each meeting. To say that the Philosophy Club is thriving would be an understatement! Some

Deep South Philosophy of Biology Workshop



March 31 – April 1, 2017, 8:45 a.m. – 5:45 p.m.
University of Alabama at Birmingham, Campbell Hall 405

Keynote
Lindley Darden (Maryland), March 31, 4:00 p.m.
A Diagrammatic Framework to Aid Discovery
of Genetic Disease Mechanisms

Friday, March 31	
Jamal Juma (FSU) (with Samantha White) (UNC)	8:45-10:00am
Mathematical Epistemology and the Biological Causal Web Theory	
Nicholas Jones (UAB)	10:15-11:00am
Non-Mechanistic Epistemology with Mechanistic Science	
John Doolan (Miss. State & Univ. of Miss. Med. Ctr.)	1:15-2:30pm
Total Dependence: How Top-down Causal Inference Progress	
Michael Riese (FSU)	2:30-3:45pm
Complexity and Causation: The Frontier of War	
Keynote: Lindley Darden (Maryland)	4:00-5:00pm
A Diagrammatic Framework to Aid Discovery of Genetic Disease Mechanisms	
Saturday, April 1	
Chia-Ing Peow (Rice)	8:00-10:00am
Open Reflection: Philosophy?	
Laura Singer (UAB, Unleashed)	10:15-11:00am
My Life as a Philosopher: The Unintended Consequences of the Ontological Imagination	
Richard Richardson (UAB)	1:15-2:30pm
Reichenbachian Causation and the Biology of Homology	
Baron Morgan (Miss. State)	2:30-3:45pm
A Causal Role Account of Signs	
Marshall Abrams (UAB)	4:00-5:00pm
Selection for Misrepresentation? Predictive Error Minimization, Erroring, & Culture	
Daniel Burdette (Unleashed)	5:00-6:00pm
Identification in Biological Practice	

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March 31-April 1, 2017 the department sponsored the first meeting of the Deep South Philosophy of Biology Workshop organized by Dr. Marshall Abrams. The workshop featured a wide range of talks by speakers from Florida State, Louisiana State, Mississippi State, Tulane, University of Alabama (Tuscaloosa), University of Alabama in Huntsville, and UAB, with keynote speaker Lindley Darden from the University of Maryland. In addition to members of the Philosophy Department, the workshop was attended by professors from other departments, graduate and undergraduate students, and former UAB students. Speakers commented on the pleasant and intellectually fruitful atmosphere of the workshop.

recent activities (aside from regular meetings) include bringing in guest speakers from places like Notre Dame University and Georgia State University, cosponsoring a "Great Debate" between UAB faculty, and competing in Homecoming week festivities. The impressive student leaders have many more plans in the works.

This semester (Fall 2017) the club will meet every other Friday from 3:20pm to 4:20pm in the UAB Philosophy Library (HB 425A)

The first meeting will be the second week of classes (Friday, September 8), and elections for officers will be held the following week (September 15). Everyone is welcome to join the club and/or run for office—it does not matter whether you are a philosophy major/minor; it does not even matter if you have never taken a philosophy Class.



***Come join us!
It's going to be a great semester!***

Faculty Goings On

Matt King

Dr. King recently directed the project that produced the department's new video! It is already live on UAB's YouTube page, and you can view it there (<https://youtu.be/Ng3WWpRjIT8>).

Together, with Dr. May, Dr. King secured a Faculty Development Grant to organize a workshop here at UAB in March on "Responsibility and Mental Illness".

Dr. King is presenting on "Interminable Blame" at the Rocky Mountain Ethics Congress in August, and will be one of 8 selected speakers at the New Orleans Workshop on Agency and Responsibility in November. The title of his talk is "Skepticism about the Standing to Blame".

Mary Whall

Dr. Whall attended UAB's Sustainability Workshop and subsequently developed a new course, Environmental Ethics. She also attended a workshop in Washington, DC focusing on environmental issues.

Josh May

Dr. May spent two weeks at Duke University as a fellow for the Summer Seminar on Neuroscience and Philosophy (ssnap.net). He learned from leading researchers about methods in neuroscience, such as functional magnetic resonance imaging (fMRI) and electroencephalography (EEG). Fellows also studied brain anatomy and heard presentations of cutting edge research being done by philosophers and neuroscientists from around the world. The ultimate aim of the seminar was to bring philosophers and neuroscientists together to learn about each discipline and foster collaboration. Dr. May will be working with Hyemin Han (University of Alabama) and Clifford Workman (University of Chicago) on a series of studies examining how stories of moral exemplars motivate people to emulate them.



Dr. May's hand moves involuntarily as his brain is stimulated with TMS. Dr. May learns about the human brain by dissecting one.

Brynn Welch

In April, Dr. Welch led a 3-day seminar for biosafety professionals pursuing continuing education through the American Biological Safety Association. The seminar was an introduction to bioethics, as well as a discussion of a few prominent ethical dilemmas that have arisen in biosafety over the last few years.

Kevin McCain

Dr. McCain has been very busy. He has published his second book, —*The Nature of Scientific Knowledge: An Explanatory Approach* (Springer, 2016), and has participated in and presented at several conferences. Dr. McCain was an invited participant (commentator-at-large) for the Varieties of Understanding capstone conference, held June 22-24, 2016. He was invited to deliver the Distinguished Alumnus Address for the 9th Biennial University of Rochester Graduate Epistemology Conference on October 21-22, 2016, although he had to decline invitation due to scheduling issues. Dr. McCain was a commentator at the APA Pacific Division meeting (April 2017), and an invited participant at the 9th Annual Orange Beach Epistemology Workshop which was held in May.

Dr. McCain plans to present a paper at the Alabama Philosophical Society's annual meeting (September/October 2017) addressing an objection to the viability of inference to the best explanation. He is also an Invited presenter at the Southeastern Epistemology Conference (October 2017) and will be presenting on the topic of skepticism about memory

Marshall Abrams

Professor Abrams will give two talks this summer at the International Society for History, Philosophy, and Social Studies of Biology, meeting in July in São Paulo, Brazil. Professor Abrams's presentations are on "Imprecise probability in evolution and mechanism", and "Evolutionarily distributed prediction error minimization: R-strategies and selection for misperception", which is part of a panel he organized on "Philosophy of Neuroscience: Broader Implications for Philosophy of Science". The first of these talks expands on a presentation Abrams gave last Fall at the Philosophy of Science Association meeting in Atlanta.

In April, Professor Abrams participated in a panel discussion, "From Eye to Mind", focusing on scientific and philosophical connections to Jessica Angel's installation art work "Facing the Hyperstructure" at UAB's Abrams-Engel Institute for the Visual Arts. The panel included Angel and UAB neuroscientist Kristina Visscher, and was moderated by AIEVA's interim director John Thomas Fields.

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Gregory Pence

Dr. Pence published a book, *What We Talk About When We Talk about Clone Club*, about the bioethics of the show *Orphan Black*, which highlights the lives of several cloned sisters. This publication got him invited to speak at Dragon.com in Atlanta last September, where he met actress Katie ("Starbuck") Sackhoff, of *Battlestar Gallatica*. His *Medical Ethics* textbook entered its 8th edition with McGraw-Hill and featured a new chapter on Alcoholism/Addiction. Greg gave invited talks at Georgia State University and Mississippi State University, coached the Bioethics Bowl team that managed to get to Ogden, Utah during a shutdown in Atlanta by Delta of two thousand flights, and did six podcasts about bioethics on StraightTalk, MD. He also continues to direct the Early Medical School Acceptance Program, which continues to attract Philosophy majors (last year, about six went on to professional schools) and which this year attracted a record number (17) of freshman.

Introducing our Adjunct Faculty



Andy Ball, PhD
Research and Teaching Interests:
Epistemology, Formal and Informal Logic,

Ancient Philosophy
(especially Aristotle),
Philosophy of Science



Laura Seger, MA
Research and Teaching Interests:
Bioethics, Negative Results in Science, Depictions of Scientists in Media, Use of Narrative in Science & Medicine.

Lynn Stephens, PhD

Dr. Stephens retired in 2012 and has been teaching one course a year for us during the Spring.

He divides his time between Birmingham and Colorado.

Introducing our new Administrative Associate



Donna Miller

Donna Miller replaced Kristi Barlow, who – after earning her MPH, graduated to working for the office of UAB’s Dean of Engineering. Donna graduated from UAB with a degree in Psychology and has most recently worked under The Office of the Vice President for Research as an Office Associate II. She has over 23 years experience at UAB in various capacities.

Ethics Bowl Teams



The Bioethics Team, Utah, 2017
Sponsored by Dr. Pence



The Ethics Team, Orlando, 2016
Sponsored by Dr. May

Alumni Update

Amiya Ahmed ('14) is in his second year of medical school at Maryland.

Brad Barnett ('06) is an urban planner and works as a co-director for Sasaki Strategies in Boston.

Georgia Bidy ('84) runs an Antiques business at the Hanna Antiques Mall on Southside.

Anand Bosmia ('09) graduated from UAB medical school and is a resident in psychiatry at LSU.

Christina Cooley ('04) after getting a law degree, a medical degree from UAB, and doing an internship in emergency medicine, is studying film in Los Angeles.

Lillie Flowers ('12) earned her Masters in Social Work at UAB and works as a social worker in Portland, Or.

Jessica Francavilla (2010) will begin an MA in Industrial Organizational Psychology this Fall.

Julie Gafnea ('12) graduated from UA School of Law in 2016 and is working at BBVA Compass.

Aaron Getman-Pickering ('17) is a Clinton Scholar in Abu Dhabi and will be a White House Intern in the summer of 2017.

Frank Harris ('15) is in his second year of law school at the Birmingham School of Law.

Christiaan Heersink ('17) will enter UAB medical school in July 2017.

Ian Hoppe ('13) is a guitarist and vocalist for Jasper Coal and managing producer of news video for Reckon, the investigative reporting brand of AL.com

Mallick Hossain is in his 4th year of a 5-year PhD in Economics at the University of Pennsylvania. He will soon marry Noora Siddiqui, who is a 2nd year student at UAB medical school.

Karan Jani ('15) will enter Columbia College of Medicine and Surgeons in New York City in August 2017.

Aileen Jong ('17) will enter dental school in the Fall of 2017.

Jason Lott ('02) after finishing his residency at Yale in dermatology, became US Director of Medical Affairs for Dermatology for Bayer, International.

Matt Malone ('07) is a new Assistant Professor of Pediatrics at the University of Arkansas at Little Rock.

David McNaron ('79) retired from teaching Philosophy at Nova University in Ft. Lauderdale and moved to Jacksonville, Fla.

Brandon Murphy ('14) is in law school at Temple University.

Michelle Nguyen ('17) will enter UAB medical school in July of 2017.

Joshua Renz ('15) will begin his first year of law school at UNC this Fall.

Susan Rohwedder ('16) will begin a MA program in Counseling at UAB this Fall.

Frank Romanowicz ('92) married his partner, Bob Hill, and retired. He still sponsors thought-provoking lectures around Birmingham.

Rachael Rosales ('13) graduated from Harvard Medical School and begins her residence in Psychiatry at Harvard (Brigham Hospital) in late June 2017..

Elizabeth Bannister Scissum ('10) had a baby and her husband graduated from medical school in Mobile.

Parita Sutaria ('17) will enter UAB medical school in July 2017.

Stefanie Tubbs ('05) graduated from Harvard Law School in 2017 and is working at a law firm in Philadelphia.

Amos Jasper Wright ('06) works as an Urban Planner in Fayetteville, La and recently had a book of short stories accepted for publication.

Josh Zaslowski ('13) is in his third year of law school at Duke University.