Welcome—and welcome back—to the Philosophy Department for the 2020-21 academic year. A special welcome to ACLS Fellow in the Philosophy of Race César Cabezas, who recently completed his PhD at Columbia University with a dissertation titled “Structural Racism and the Explanation of Durable Racial Inequality.” He will be teaching a class in Spring 2021. Also a special welcome to our new graduate students: Bryce Herndon, Nathan Kramer-Kurland, Clara McKnight, and Mang Su.

The Fall Semester begins with us functioning mostly remotely due to the Coronavirus epidemic. We are offering a few hybrid classes, but most classes and all Department events will be taking place by Zoom for the foreseeable future. We will try to make the most of this change from normal functioning while looking forward to a time when the epidemic will be over. During the semester, all faculty will have office hours by Zoom, and the xerox room will function as the supply room (the central office and kitchen will be closed). Our administrators Sonia Lawson and Belinda Wilson will also be working remotely and are easily reached by e-mail.

The 2019-20 academic year finished remotely due to the coronavirus, but we managed to hold almost all the events planned for the year (all except for the
annual Beardsley lecture). We had a full schedule of Colloquia, Works in Progress, Workshops, First Friday Pizza Lunches, and Undergraduate Philosophy Club meetings. Departmental prizes were awarded as usual: The Nordev Prize for the best preliminary examination papers was awarded to Jason Cutmore and Stanley Konoval. The Departmental Prize for Graduate Student Teaching was awarded to Arthur Krieger. The Ira Lawrence Family Award for the strongest academic performance by a Philosophy major went to Matthew Majewski, and the Tom Meyer Memorial Award for community building activities among undergraduates in Philosophy to Anderson (John) Harris.


Fulbright Postdoctoral Fellow Katherina Kinzel, who visited us in Fall 2019, is starting a position as Assistant Professor of Philosophy at the University of Utrecht, the Netherlands.

Graduate Students received the following awards in the College of Liberal Arts:

Arthur Krieger won the CLA Instructor of Record Teaching Prize. Meryl Lumba was awarded a CHAT Fellowship for 2020-21 for her dissertation project, “Hegel, Comedy, and Coping: Moving Beyond the End of Art.”

Graduate student Kate Brelje received a Winterthur Research Grant to support research on her dissertation, “Kinship, Consumption, and Awe: Cultivating a case study based relational plant ethics of care.” Graduate Student George Ausilio published “Descartes’s Epistemic Commitment to Telescopes and Microscopes” in Dialogue: Canadian Philosophical Review.

Undergraduate student Bonnie McClelland (2019) was awarded a Fulbright Grant to teach English in Germany in 2020-21. Two undergraduates received LAURA Awards from CLA for research with faculty members: Callum Orme (with Colin Chamberlain) for “Do Minerals Dream? Margaret Cavendish’s Panpsychism” and Andrea Paleos (with Kristin Gjesdal) for “Germaine de Staël on Implicit Bias.”

Last year the Undergraduate Mentoring Program was organized by Brooke Sharp and Arthur Krieger. The departmental chapter of the international organization Minorities and Philosophy was organized by Daniel Remer, Manasa Gopakumar,
Raciel Cuevas, and Jessica Brown. Meryl Lumba served as Graduate Representative, and Manasa Gopakumar organized the graduate student Works-in-Progress meetings. Ziqian Zhang edited this Department Newsletter. Many thanks to all of you for your work!

This coming year the Undergraduate Mentoring Program will be led by Max Engleman and Jason Cutmore. The departmental chapter of Minorities and Philosophy will be organized by Jessica Brown, Raciel Cuevas, Manasa Gopakumar, and Brooke Sharp. Arthur Krieger will serve as Graduate Representative and Raymond Ackerman will organize the Works-in-Progress meetings.

We are grateful to our two administrators, Sonia Lawson (Philosophy Department Coordinator) and Belinda Wilson (Administrator for Philosophy, Economics, and Africology) for mastering the complex computer systems required to manage admissions, enrollment, reimbursements, supplies, and examinations. They have also managed the transition to remote work seamlessly. We also thank graduate students Kate Brelje and Arthur Krieger who helped everyone in the Department transition to Zoom teaching in the middle of the Spring Semester.

We plan to continue Departmental Colloquia this Fall over Zoom. Dorit Bar-On (University of Connecticut) will meet with us on October 16, and Myisha Cherry on November 13. To avoid Zoom fatigue, we will read their papers in advance and spend Zoom time in discussion. Likewise, we are moving First Friday Pizza Lunches to Zoom (minus the pizza) and are planning informal discussions along the lines of Kieran Setiya’s “Five Questions” podcast with four members of the Department: Lee-Ann Chae, Jerry Vision, Lindsay Craig and César Cabezas. Undergraduate students will serve as interviewers. Other events for the Fall are in the planning stage.

In the Spring, Lee-Ann Chae is organizing an online conference, called “Contemporary Challenges for Just War Theory” (March 12-13, 2021). It is being funded by a Global Studies Event Grant, from the Global Studies Program at Temple. Looking forward to the following year, Lee-Ann Chae has planned an in-person conference, scheduled for September 17-18, 2021, called “Peace and Nonviolent Resistance.” The keynote speakers will be Karuna Mantena and Cheyney Ryan. It’s being funded by the philosophy department, GPPC, and the Society for Applied Philosophy. In addition, Eugene Chislenko is co-organizing an online conference called Philosophy and the Climate Crisis, for June 11-12, 2021.

We wish you all a happy and successful academic year.

Kristin and Miriam
Visiting Speakers

AY 2019-2020


Visiting Speakers

- David Chalmers (NYU): “Intentionality, Australian-Style”

Graduate Courses

Spring 2020
- Problems in Aesthetics (Lara Ostaric)
- Theory of Knowledge (Eli Alshanetsky)
- Kant (Espen Hammer)
- Greek Philosophy (David Wolfsdorf)
- Seminar in Ethics (Eugene Chislenko)
- Seminar in Metaphysics (Gerald Vision)

Fall 2020
- Philosophy of Medicine (Miriam Solomon)
- History of Aesthetics (Lara Ostaric)
- Environmental Philosophy (Espen Hammer)
- Philosophy of Mind (Gerald Vision)
- Philosophy of Language (Eli Alshanetsky)
- Seminar in Social and Political Philosophy (Lee-Ann Chae)
Faculty News


Faculty News


• **Lindsay Craig** was invited by Temple’s Honors Program to give a talk during Homecoming weekend for parents and students that highlighted her course, Honors Ethics in Medicine. She was promoted to Associate Professor of Instruction in the summer of 2019.

• **Kristin Gjesdal** this year has mostly worked on her monograph *The Drama of History: Ibsen, Hegel, Nietzsche* (forthcoming with OUP). She has also worked on two co-edited volumes: *Sculpture: Historical and Contemporary Perspectives* (with Fred Rush and Ingvild Torsen), Routledge: London (forthcoming) and *Women Philosophers in the Long Nineteenth Century: The German Tradition* (with Dalia
Faculty News

Nassar), Oxford: Oxford University Press (forthcoming 2020). Many of her talks were cancelled/postponed. The talks she has given and was supposed to give were the following: “Hermeneutics and Politics: Herder, Schleiermacher, Stäel,” The University of Copenhagen; “Philosophizing with Ibsen,” The Anderson Lecture, The University of Oregon; “Hermeneutics and Politics: Herder, Schleiermacher, Stäel,” Department of Philosophy, Johns Hopkins University; “Staël’s Hermeneutic Philosophy,” McMaster Lecture Series, Toronto; Keynote: “Diversifying Hermeneutics, “The University of Oregon, NASPH Annual Meeting; Keynote: “Staël’s Hermeneutic Philosophy,” Bonn International Summer School in German Philosophy. She received a LAURA Grant to work on an exciting project with Andrea Paleos, one of our talented Undergraduate Students!

Faculty News


Faculty News


**Faculty News**

- **David Wolfsdorf** published *On Goodness* (Oxford University Press 2019); *Early Greek Ethics*, as editor and contributor (Oxford University Press 2020). In addition to the editorial work he did for *Early Greek Ethics*, he has two chapters in the volume: “The Ethical Philosophy of the Historical Socrates” and “On the Unity of the Dissoi Logoi.” He also has two forthcoming chapters: “Civic and Anti-Civic Ethics among the Sophists” (*Cambridge Companion to the Sophists*, J. Billings and C. Moore, eds., Cambridge University Press); “The Nature and Value of Pleasure in *Magna Moralia* 2.7.1-27, 1204a9-1206a36” (*Aristotle’s Other Ethics*, C. Bobonich et al., eds., Oxford University Press). He is currently working on a sequel to *On Goodness* tentatively titled *On Purpose and Meaning*. He gave a talk at Princeton University relating to the sophists chapter, and he has been invited to give a talk and conduct a seminar at Trinity College in Dublin. He received an award from the College of Liberal Arts at Temple University to support the cost of hiring a specialist indexer to create an *index locorum* and a general index for *Early Greek Ethics*. 
Sharing Teaching Experiences

• **Eli Alshanetsky:** “I was touched by the warm welcome to the department and was grateful for the opportunity to share my research with the students in my graduate seminar in the fall. As I’m sure is the case for other faculty members, the transition to online teaching has presented a unique challenge. I was pleasantly surprised by the students’ flexibility and willingness to participate in intellectual exchange in these new formats.”

• **Colin Chamberlain:** “Like many others, the transition to online education part-way through the semester was quite an experience. This was the first time teaching online for me so I didn’t know what to expect. I was impressed by how many of my students continued showing up and remained engaged. In my history of modern class, for example, we spent the last month or so talking about Margaret Cavendish’s natural philosophy. Cavendish holds that nature is an infinite and eternal material plenum. Apart from God, matter is everything, everywhere, and always. Human beings, plants, animals, minerals and so forth are simply patterns of motion in the material whole of nature. Cavendish also argues, however, that matter is alive and sentient. Unpacking these arguments kept us entertained, I think, and provided a welcome distraction.”

• **Eugene Chislenko:** “I had an especially meaningful experience teaching The Ethics of Diversity in the Honors Program in Fall 2019. We covered a wide range of topics from biodiversity and climate change, through various forms and effects of oppression and internalized oppression, to diversity at school and work in areas such as canon, admissions, inclusion, and solidarity. It was a wonderful, small group of 12 students, and most class days combined multiple short student presentations with open discussion and some time for personal reflection and conversation, including time for each person to talk about their life story and relate it to the topics of the course. The class was eye-opening and emotional for I think everyone, and was one of my favorite things I’ve done as a teacher.”

• **Lindsay Craig:** “After working all year, my advisee, Honors student Ben Burch, successfully completed and defended his Honors Scholars Project on energy as a hyperobject. Ben used the work of Timothy Morton (2013) to reframe the way we think of energy in order to help explain why renewable energies haven’t been
more widely adopted to combat climate change and to supplement strong moral arguments that such energy sources should be embraced.

- **Kristin Gjesdal**: “I very much enjoyed both my classes this past year: Co-teaching nineteenth-century philosophy in the fall with Fulbright Fellow Dr. Katherina Kinzel (now Assistant Professor at Utrecht) was a sheer joy. I also enjoyed teaching my undergraduate course ‘Unruly Women’ in the spring, and was impressed by the quality of the students’ work and how well they coped with the unexpected shift to on-line teaching.”

**An Interview with César Cabezas**

In your dissertation, you develop a philosophical account of structural racism. Before we look at your account, can you tell us what structural racism is? More specifically, can you tell us what social phenomena will fall under the term “structural racism”?

**CC**: I think of structural racism in terms of racially oppressive social structures. Structural racism is primarily a global system of race-based oppression—also known as global white supremacy. However, there are also racially oppressive social structures at the national, sub-
An Interview with César Cabezas

national, and local levels. In the U.S. context, some candidates for the label structural racism are police departments (local level), the criminal justice system (sub-national level) and the United States as a whole (national level). In my view, identifying cases of structural racism requires a combination of conceptual analysis and empirical research.

Your understanding of structural racism presupposes that racism can be predicated of institutions. This challenges the mainstream view that racism is a matter of individuals’ beliefs and attitudes. Can you explain how racism is possible at the structural level?

CC: According to the dominant individualist view of racism, the primary referent of the term ‘racism’ are individual agents. Derivatively, the individualist view also considers individuals’ beliefs, actions, and intentions as possible referents of the term ‘racism’. In this picture, the main question is whether this or that agent is a racist. This question is often normatively loaded insofar as calling someone a racist implies strong moral condemnation. Ac-  

According to the structuralist view, social structures are also appropriate referents of the term ‘racism’. The structuralist view of racism has its origin in Ture and Hamilton’s account of institutional racism in Black Power: The Politics of Liberation in America, and has been further developed by anti-racist activists and scholars ever since.

At its core, the structuralist view proposes a shift of perspective in our understanding of racism as a social problem. While the individualist view considers the problem to be primarily a matter of racist beliefs, actions and intentions among individual agents, the structuralist view highlights the harms that social institutions and structures inflict on non-white communities (e.g. mass incarceration, police violence, race-based disparities in wealth, education, and health care). Social structures that inflict harms on non-whites are good candidates for the label of structural racism. Of course, in my account, there are other theoretical and empirical considerations for ascribing racism to social structures, which I cannot fully outline here.
An Interview with César Cabezas

Does structural racism have anything to do with racial ideology? If so, what is the role racial ideology plays in the development of structural racism? Relatedly, can you specify how racial ideology operates at the societal level?

CC: Racial ideology plays a key role in structural racism. Racial ideologies inform, legitimate and accommodate racially oppressive social structures. Let’s take an example of how racial ideology informs the agency of individuals in racially oppressive social structures. Racial ideologies can act as explicit or implicit rules that inform the behavior of participants in a social structure. For example, the racial ideology that associates black people with criminality informs the implicit (if not explicit) rule in many U.S. police departments to treat black citizens as inherently suspect. Following this racist rule, police officers tend to over-police black neighborhoods, and subject black people to unnecessary stops, searches, excessive force and arrests. Partly due to these effects of racial ideology in the practice of policing, police departments in the U.S. inflict systematic harms on black people and thus count as structurally racist.

You elaborate your account of structural racism in terms of racially oppressive social structures. Can you spell out what your account consists in? Relatedly, can you clarify the two concepts that are central to your account (i.e., social structure and oppression)?

CC: In my view, structural racism refers to racially oppressive social structures. I define social structures as networks of social relations that are recursively reproduced by individual agents through their participation in social practices. Individual agents recursively constitute social structures through their collective action. At the same time, their collective action is informed by those very social structures in the form of schemas and rules that shape their behavior. Social structures are not mere epiphenomena of human activity; they also have the power to influence that activity by constraining, enabling and motivating human agency. Social structures are oppressive when they organize social groups in social relations whereby some group (or groups) suffers from an unjustly inflicted harm, while another group (or groups) benefits from the same harm.
One characteristic of racially oppressive social structures is that they inflict harms on members of a racialized group, which simultaneously benefit members of another racialized group. In addition, hierarchical racial schemas are central in framing how agents within racially oppressive social structures interpret and interact with each other and the material world. Another defining feature of racially oppressive social structures is the recurrence of racialized practices of categorization and differential treatment that produce racial hierarchy. Lastly, structural racism reproduces relations of oppression, and sometimes domination, among racialized groups.

You argue that your account of structural racism will help us explain why racial inequality is durable. Can you say something about how that works, especially with regard to the durability of racial inequality in the United States?

CC: Racially oppressive social structures in the United States (and in other racialized societies) motivate individual agents to organize their social practices in ways that harm non-whites while simultaneously benefitting whites. This racially disparate allocation of harms and benefits engenders social relations of race-based advantage and disadvantage. Structural racism explains durable racial inequality insofar as it motivates agents who benefit from these social relations to act in ways that preserve those advantages. This motivational effect of structural racism ensures the support (active or passive) of enough advantaged agents to maintain racial inequality. My dissertation develops this explanatory claim with reference to a recent sociological case study of a U.S. high school in which white parents support social practices that reinforce racial disparities in students’ educational attainment. As the case study makes clear, white parents’ support for these social practices is rooted in their desire to preserve the competitive advantages that their children derive from them.

The last question is more of a personal one. What are the top five books that have inspired your philosophical career?


(César Cabezas interviewed by Ziqian Zhang)