



The Phi Sigma Tau Bulletin

A Publication of the Department of Philosophy, Southwest Texas State University

Fall, 1995

Premier Issue

Issue 1

Fall 1995 Speaker Series Values and Morals in the University

The fall semester is waiting in the wings with a full slate of enriching activities for *Phi Sigma Tau* members and students of philosophy. Central to these activities will be a set of four distinguished speakers who will be brought to campus to discuss the general topic "Values and Morals in the University."

Hazel Barnes, Professor of Philosophy Emeritus at The University of Colorado, Boulder, will begin the discussion September 14 with a lecture on "Learning Who You Are and Teaching It to Others." Professor Barnes, who is the author of *The University as the New Church* (1970) will address the

evolution of her ideas and will assess their significance for universities twenty-five years after the publication of her original work.

Next to take up the dialogical mantle will be David Hoekema, who will discuss "Moral Community on Campus" in a lecture scheduled for September 29. Professor Hoekema is Dean of Calvin College and is a former Executive Director of the American Philosophical Association. He recently published his second book in the field of ethics and academia, *Campus Rules and Moral Community: In Place of In Loco Parentis* (1994), in which he argues for the importance of the university's role in creating conditions for moral growth.

Then on October 9 Edward Leroy Long, Jr., Pearsall Professor Emeritus at Drew University, will focus on "Predicaments and Promises of the Learning Experience." Using ideas developed in his 1992 work *Higher Education as a Moral Enterprise*, Long will discuss the tacit "covenant" relationship intrinsic to education. He will suggest that a conception of the university as a moral community more adequately captures this essential relation than more narrow

conceptions which restrict the university's mission to one of securing knowledge or preparing students for the work force.

The fourth and culminating lecture will be on November 1 by Robert Kane, Professor of Philosophy at the University of

Schedule of Speakers

September 14	Hazel Barnes
	<i>Learning Who You Are and Teaching It to Others</i>
11 a.m., San Marcos Room	
September 29	David Hoekema
	<i>Moral Community on Campus</i>
2 p.m., Chautauqua Room	
October 9	Edward L. Long, Jr.
	<i>Predicaments and Promises of the Learning Experience</i>
11 a.m., San Marcos Room	
November 1	Robert H. Kane
	<i>Searching for Absolute Values in a Pluralistic World</i>
3:30 p.m., San Marcos Room	

In This Issue

Bright Ideas	2
About <i>Phi Sigma Tau</i>	2
<i>Phi Sigma Tau</i> Initiation	3
Opportunities	3
Faculty Notes	3
Alumni Search	3
Lab Report.	3
Words from the Chair	4

Texas. Professor Kane, who teaches the philosophy honors course for undergraduates at UT, has received

Continued on page 2

2 several awards for excellence in teaching and is the author of *Free Will and Values* (1985). During his two days on the SWT campus he will share his ideas about philosophically justifying the search for objectivity in the face of pluralism and uncertainty and the obligations of the university in regard to this endeavor. These ideas

are the dominant themes of his most recent book, *Through the Moral Maze: Searching for Absolute Values in a Pluralistic World* (1994).

It is noteworthy that in addition to their public lectures, all of these individuals have agreed to make themselves available for interaction with students and faculty in the

philosophy department's newly refurbished critical thinking/dialogue room in LA 367. (For more information see Bright Ideas.)

We hope everyone will plan now to take advantage of these opportunities for stimulating conversation and intellectual growth.

Φ Σ Τ

Bright Ideas

An SWT Original: Combining practice in critical thinking with authentic philosophical dialogue

Some new developments in the department of philosophy this fall will make it possible to meet more effectively the needs of students taking General Philosophy (Phil. 1305), a required course for all SWT students.

Phil. 1305 is a "hybrid" course which represents the pioneering efforts of the SWT philosophy department in regard to the teaching of both critical thinking and the conceptual content of philosophical discourse. Half of the course develops the essential skill of critical thinking, and the other half introduces students to the disciplinary perspective of philosophy through a study of basic philosophical issues. The two components complement each other, since philosophical investigations in effect are critical inquiries into basic questions about reality and human experience and the use of critical reasoning and argumentation to arrive at and defend possible answers to these questions.

Now, as of this fall, we have augmented instruction in 1305 by converting one of our classrooms (LA 367) into a critical thinking lab. The lab mirrors the two aspects of the course. Half of it is devoted to the technical study of critical thinking; this half of the lab houses computers programmed to assist students with practice in building arguments and identifying fallacies of reasoning. The adjoining half of the lab is a "Dialogue Room" reserved for philosophical conversation and dialogue... for critical thinking in action. Again, Southwest Texas seems to be breaking some new ground with this novel approach. While other universities typically have an area set aside for dialogue and some have computer labs for the study of logic, none have joined these areas as we have in our specific attempt to identify better ways to help students learn to think critically. (For more about the critical thinking lab, see *Lab Report* in this issue. For scheduled dialogue dates and times, see *Important Dates* on the insert included with this issue.)

About Phi Sigma Tau

According to the *Phi Sigma Tau Manual*, the Society "was founded at Muhlenberg College in 1930 as Alpha Kappa Alpha, with chapters at colleges in Maryland and Pennsylvania. It remained in this regional status until October, 1955, when it was incorporated as *Phi Sigma Tau*, a national honor society in philosophy. Its essential purpose was and is to promote ties between philosophy departments in accredited institutions and students in philosophy nationally. Both on the local and national levels, *Phi Sigma Tau* considers its organization as instrumental: a means for developing and honoring academic excellence as well as philosophical interest. In addition to providing a means of awarding distinction to students having high scholarship and interest in philosophy, the Society also promotes interest in philosophy among the general collegiate public."

There are currently well over one hundred active *Phi Sigma Tau* chapters throughout the United States. Southwest Texas State University's *Delta* chapter was organized in 1983 with Professor James Treanor serving as faculty advisor. The first initiation ceremony was held in April of 1984.

Here is a list of courses being offered in the spring of 1996:

2312 History of Philosophy Since 1600 (Writing Intensive)

Modern philosophical thought through the nineteenth century.

3318 Reason, God and Nature (Writing Intensive)

An analysis of the concept of God, terms predicated of God, and theological propositions. An attempt to determine the nature of religious utterances in comparison with those of everyday life, scientific discovery, morality, and imaginative expression. Prerequisite: Three hours of lower division philosophy, 3301, or consent of the instructor.

4350 Philosophy of the Arts (Writing Intensive)

A critical and historical analysis of the nature of aesthetic experience and creative genius. Prerequisite: three hours of lower division philosophy, Philosophy 3301, or consent of the instructor.

4388 Problems in Philosophy (Writing Intensive)

Prerequisite: three hours of lower division philosophy, Philosophy 3301, or consent of the instructor.

Section 251 Ethics in Government and Public Administration

An examination of philosophical ethics in public administration theory and practice. Taught by Dean Geuras.

Section 252 Science and Religion

An examination of the nature and scope of both science and religion and the relationship between them. Topics include the so-called warfare between science and religion in the Copernican and Darwinian revolutions and the implications of current work in cosmology, biology, and artificial intelligence for contemporary religious and scientific thought. Taught by Glenn Joy.

Remember, *Phi Sigma Tau* will meet the following Mondays at 4 p.m.:

September 11

September 18

*October 2

*October 23

*Those who received a letter in July about *Phi Sigma Tau* plans for fall should note that these meeting dates differ from the schedule of meetings contained in that letter. (At that time speaker dates were tentative.)

IMPORTANT DATES

<p>September 8 (Friday)</p>	<p><i>Phi Sigma Tau</i> Initiation 5 p.m. at The Glade Amphitheatre SWT West Campus, across from UPACC</p> <p>A reception honoring new inductees and Professor James Treanor, advisor emeritus of SWT's <i>Delta</i> chapter of <i>Phi Sigma Tau</i>, will follow the ceremony at 132 Quail Creek Dr.</p>	<p>September 28 (Thursday)</p>	<p>Dialogue with Prof. Hoekema 2:30-4:30, LA 367</p>
		<p>September 29 (Friday)</p>	<p>Lecture: David Hoekema 2 p.m., Chautauqua Room</p>
		<p>October 2 (Monday)</p>	<p><i>Phi Sigma Tau</i> meeting 4 p.m. (location to be announced)</p>
		<p>October 9 (Monday)</p>	<p>Lecture: Edward L. Long, 11 a.m., San Marcos Room</p>
<p>September 11 (Monday)</p>	<p><i>Phi Sigma Tau</i> meeting 4 p.m. at 132 Quail Creek Dr. Guest speaker: Prof. Jeff Gordon</p>	<p>October 10 (Tuesday)</p>	<p>Dialogue with Prof. Long 2:30-4:30, LA 367</p>
		<p>October 23 (Monday)</p>	<p><i>Phi Sigma Tau</i> meeting 4 p.m. (location to be announced)</p>
<p>September 14 (Thursday)</p>	<p>Lecture: Hazel Barnes 11 a.m., San Marcos Room. Dialogue with Prof. Barnes 2:30-4:30, LA 367</p>	<p>November 1 (Wednesday)</p>	<p>Lecture, Robert H. Kane 3:30 p.m., San Marcos Room</p>
<p>September 18 (Monday)</p>	<p><i>Phi Sigma Tau</i> meeting 4 p.m. (location to be announced)</p>	<p>November 2 (Thursday)</p>	<p>Dialogue with Prof. Kane 2:30-4:30, LA 367</p>

DIALOGUE DATES/TIMES

BARNES			
September 14	Panel Discussion	2:30-3:30	LA 367
	Open Dialogue	3:30-4:30	LA 367
HOEKEMA			
September 28	Panel Discussion	2:30-3:30	LA 367
	Open Dialogue	3:30-4:30	LA 367
LONG			
October 10	Panel Discussion	2:30-3:30	LA 367
	Open Dialogue	3:30-4:30	LA 367
KANE			
November 2	Panel Discussion	2:30-3:30	LA 367
	Open Dialogue	3:30-4:30	LA 367

(over for Spring '96 courses)

Phi Sigma Tau Initiation Scheduled for September 8

The *Delta* chapter of *Phi Sigma Tau* will initiate new members at a ceremony scheduled for Friday, September 8 at 5:00 p.m. at the Glade Amphitheatre on West Campus. A reception will follow honoring new inductees and Professor James Treanor, *Delta* chapter's first advisor, at the home of Jo Ann Carson, who will serve this year as acting faculty advisor. If you meet eligibility requirements (see below) and wish to become a member of *Phi Sigma Tau*, contact Professor Carson at 396-1323 or 245-2285 before September 5.

Eligibility Requirements

You are eligible to join *Phi Sigma Tau* if...

- ☛ you have 9 hrs. of philosophy courses with at least a B average,
- ☛ you have a cumulative GPA of at least 2.75.

Interested students who do not currently meet eligibility requirements are nevertheless welcome and encouraged to participate in all *Phi Sigma Tau* activities as associate (non-voting) members and may receive our chapter newsletter upon request.

Opportunities

The Philosophical Society of Texas has announced a 1995 President's Award of \$2,000 for an outstanding original essay written by a senior or graduate student attending a Texas college or university.

Topic:

The Oceans: The Origin, the Mystery, the Myths

Specifications:

2,000 words (10 pages)

Deadline:

September 30, 1995

If you are interested, contact Jo Ann Carson for more information.

Faculty Notes

Congratulations to Professor Marie-Luise Kalsi for her promotion to full professor, to Audrey M^cKinney for getting tenure, and to Professor Jo Ann Carson for getting her Ph.D. this summer. And best wishes to Professor James Treanor in his retirement. We will miss you.

Alumni Search

Do you have current addresses of former philosophy majors or minors or students who have been initiated into SWT's *Delta* chapter of *Phi Sigma Tau* in past years? If so, contact Beverly at 245-2285.

News Flash!

3

As we go to press with this first *Phi Sigma Tau* Bulletin word has just come in that plans are currently underway for a debate which will take place on the SWTSU campus this fall between J. Michael Orenduff, former Chair of the SWT philosophy department (now President of New Mexico State University) and John Silber, former Chair of the UT philosophy department (now President of Boston University). More details about this provocative encounter will be forthcoming.

Lab Report

Some really big things are going on in the Critical Thinking Lab this year. We are exploring some of the ways that computers and philosophers can live together in peace and harmony. Before the end of the semester, we hope to have internet access through the CTL, and soon after that, we should have our own home page. On the one hand, internet access will suddenly give *Phi Sigma Tau* students and SWT philosophy faculty access to many scholars and scholarly resources around the world. But on the other hand, it will give other philosophers around the world access to us.

The philosophy department is also developing some instructional materials for use in the teaching of critical thinking, and any member of *Phi Sigma Tau* who wishes to help may do so. There are two different types of materials. First, we are writing interactive software for use in the Critical Thinking Lab. The tutorial portion of this software will be in hypertext, and we hope to eventually put it up on the internet. The workbook portion will be a large database of arguments from which students or professors may select suitable practice questions. There will also be a testing portion which will allow professors to monitor the progress of each student. Second, we will be producing instructional videos for use in classrooms or in the dialogue room.

For the software production, we need people to collect examples of arguments, programmers, and editors, and for the videos, we will need actors, scriptwriters, and camera crews. Whatever talents you have can probably find a showcase somewhere in this project. So please contact Dr. Skipper if you want to contribute to the software project, or contact Dr. Gordon if the video project is more to your taste.



Words from the Chair

Words? These are the words that I am hearing in welcome back talks this fall: new beginnings, enthusiasm, excitement, rejuvenation, electric ideas, renewal, challenge, and flowing juices (a favorite expression of President Supple's).

If I too am expected to utter words like these, then I have gotten that matter out of the way. But what about wisdom? Did anyone think about asking the chair of philosophy for some wisdom? These words too often capture the state of mind that students and faculty members are in as they begin the year; they capture what these people hope awaits them. However genuine these feelings and expectations are, they amount to nothing unless they guide us throughout the semester in how we interpret and give meaning to our experiences. Does a paper due at mid-semester become the symbol of a burdensome existence, one more assault upon a psyche which is already numbed by too much reading, one further tightening of the academic vice which will not be released until semester's end? Or are we willing still to approach this assignment, however pressing the demands of the semester are becoming, with enthusiasm and excitement and think of this paper as a challenge and as a vehicle for rejuvenation through contact with electric ideas? If you've gotten the drift of my words, you've gotten the wisdom too.

More words to describe the fall? A new critical thinking lab (LA 367) with a computer lab which gives new meaning to "electric ideas" and an area for philosophical discourse, an exciting speaker series, a revitalized honor society, and a rejuvenated philosophy library for philosophy majors and minors (LA 355) -- enough to make anyone's juices flow.

For a good fall semester and for wisdom over words!

Uince Linggi