



The Chronicles of the Examined Life

The Philosophy Club Newsletter

SEPTEMBER 18, 2007

FALL SEMESTER

*"It is the mark of an
educated mind to be able
to entertain a thought
without accepting it."*

-Aristotle

*"There is only one thing a
philosopher can be relied
upon to do, and that is to
contradict other
philosophers."*

-William James

*"To be great is to be
misunderstood."*

-Ralph Waldo Emerson

*"Go on, prove me wrong.
Destroy the fabric of the
universe. See if I care."*

-Terry Pratchett

Club Update

by Josh May

Hello all. Welcome to the Fall semester of 2004 at Sac State. It took a while to get things off the ground with the club, but I am proud to say that everything is up and running. We've had some successful events this semester already with more to come.

With the change in administration here, there have been a few other changes as well. First, we have created a new static email for the club that may be used from now to the end of time... So, from now on you can always email the current president at:

csusphilclub@hotmail.com

Secondly, we have made the club mailing list static as well. Furthermore, you can add yourself to (or remove yourself from) the mailing list via the club web page at:

www.csus.edu/phil/philclub.htm

(which is linked from the department's website as well)

Thirdly, we have changed the general club meetings from weekly to approximately every other week, because we know everyone is busy with school and attending a club meeting every week just adds too much to the workload. Currently, general meetings are *every other Thursday from 12:00 - 1:00 PM in Mendocino Hall room 1032*. Sometimes the meetings get cancelled, but we have been posting flyers in key locations on campus on the week of the meeting. So, if you have that time free, stop by any of the meetings to chat about philosophy, talk about event ideas, etc. The general meetings are intended to be a casual get-together for people to hang out and "touch base" with the club. The events, on the other hand, will be less frequent than the meetings and will have a specific purpose, such as Professor McCormick's argument "Against the Immortality of the Soul" that he presented in October.

Keep in mind that events, meetings, and other news are announced via email to the mailing list... so sign up to keep updated with club news. If you don't have an email address, or hate the internet, or you're just simply computer illiterate, then rest assured that there should be flyers posted consistently to announce events and meetings (but not necessarily all club news).

Well, we hope you are enjoying your semester and if not, then maybe some good old wholesome Philosophy Club events throughout the semester will soothe your soul!

Upcoming Events:

Are Embryos Little People?

Prof. Anderson will speak on this controversial subject
Wednesday, Nov. 10th
3:00 – 4:30 PM
Lobby Suite, 1st floor Union

General Meeting

Thursday, Nov. 18th
12:00 - 1:00 PM
Mendocino room 1032
Let's figure out what would be a good movie to watch for a movie night!

Movie Night

Details TBA...

Faculty Recommended Readings

We asked the philosophy faculty here at Sac State to tell us what book, article, or any other type of reading they would recommend to philosophy students as a "must read" (especially for students planning to pursuing philosophy beyond the undergraduate level). Here's what some of them said:



Clifford Anderson

Recommendation:

A Theory of Justice by John Rawls and the *Encyclopedia of Philosophy*

Why:

The Encyclopedia of Philosophy has very good articles on virtually anything a student of philosophy might be interested in. In ethics, *A Theory of Justice* has had the greatest influence on philosophers in that field in recent times. Unfortunately, it's a 500 page book, but he does have a trimmed-down version of about 200 pages called *Justice as Fairness: A Restatement*.



Christina Bellon

Recommendation:

Plato's *Republic*

Why:

This may be basic, but I think everyone who is seriously interested in philosophy should read Plato's *Republic*, cover to cover in its entirety and slowly, carefully, and with some imaginative and analytic focus (these aren't contradictory). In large part, I think this is worth serious reading and reflection because of what it contains -- epistemology, metaphysics, ethics, and politics, careful argumentation along with some classic examples of important fallacies -- but partly also for what it lacks -- namely a satisfactory answer to just about every question posed to Socrates within its pages. This may be why it prompted so much and such sustained response.

It is also important for the ways in which Plato combines these "subfields" in philosophy -- bringing together the metaphysical, epistemological, and aesthetic in answering what seems a straightforward ethical question. Too frequently today, when we study and learn and engage in philosophy, we treat these as though they are unrelated and disparate subjects, linked within philosophy only by a shared reliance upon logic. In the *Republic*, Plato shows us their fundamental interconnection. I'm not sure I could say the same thing about any single other text, except maybe Kant's *Metaphysics of Morals* (both parts together) -- mostly because reading it thoroughly might correct some of the serious misunderstandings of Kant's ethics and their relation to his metaphysics and epistemology.



Bradley Dowden

Recommendation:

Cambridge Dictionary of Philosophy, edited by Robert Audi

Why:

This dictionary is the most reliable and accurate of the available dictionaries, and the entries are composed by the top researchers in their fields. The writing style is uniform across the many articles and is clear and crisp thanks to good copyeditors. The book will last a lifetime; it's not something you read once and then are done with.

Philosophy Jokes:

Seen on a restroom wall:
"God is dead: Nietzsche.
Nietzsche is dead: God."

Descartes walks into a café and sits down ready to order. A waiter comes up to him and asks,
"Do you need a menu?"
Descartes replies,
"I think not," and he disappears!

Overheard in 18th century England:
"Did you hear that George Berkeley died?
His girlfriend stopped seeing him."

What did the Buddhist say to the hot dog vender?
"Make me one with everything."

What's the difference between a philosopher and an engineer?
About 50,000 a year.

How many Marxists does it take to change a light bulb?
None. Every light bulb contains the seeds of its own revolution.

:) hahahahahahahaha



Gale Justin

Recommendation:
Introduction to Morality by Gilbert Harman

Why:
Because I learned a lot by reading it!



David Long

Recommendation:
Freedom from the Known by Jiddhu Krishnamurti

Why:
There's far too much known in academic philosophy.



Randy Mayes

Recommendation:
"The Naturalists Return," by Philip Kitcher
"Naturalism and the A Priori," by Penelope Maddy

Why:
I'm not a big book person, but these are two long articles I'd recommend. I regard these as essential reading for anyone interested in understanding what philosophy is about today.



Matt McCormick

Recommendation:
Kinds of Minds, by Daniel Dennett

Why:
There are many books to recommend in philosophy (I have a bunch of recommended books on my philosophy site -- www.csus.edu/indiv/m/mccormickm). However, I just read *Kinds of Minds* and found it to be very accessible and informative. It's a good read for any philosophy student.



Patti Nogales

Recommendation:
The Theatetus by Plato, *The Metaphysics* by Aristotle, *Metamagical Themas* by Douglas Hofstadter, *Philosophy of Language* edited by A.P. Martinich

Why:
You asked for one book, but I can't narrow it down to less than these four! They all have great philosophical significance.

Announcements:

Symbolic Logic II

Prof. Pyne will be teaching Phil 160 (Symbolic Logic II) in the Spring as a Phil 199 (Special Problems) course. This is a required course for the Logic and Philosophy of Science (LSCI) concentration. Be sure to contact Prof. Pyne if you are interested in taking it!

Help at Orientation

Mary Shepherd is looking for students who will guide campus tours during orientation. Payment is a \$9 gift certificate for Century Theaters for each day. Contact Mary at shepherdm@csus.edu if you are interested in any of the following days at 3pm:

Mon, Nov. 15: 4 guides
Wed, Nov. 17: 2 guides
Tues, Nov. 30: 3 guides
Wed, Dec. 1: 3 guides
Mon, Dec. 6: 3 guides



Thomas Pyne

Recommendation:

"The Identity of Indiscernibles" by Max Black, an essay printed in the journal *Mind*

Why:

No other essay plunges one right into the metaphysical issues surrounding space like Black's essay. It's short, but chock full of metaphysical goodness.

About the Club Officers

Josh May [President]

Age: 21

Class level: Senior

Interested in: Philosophy of Religion, Epistemology, Applied Ethics

Other interests: playing music, computers, web design...

Contact info: csusphilclub@hotmail.com, (916) 441-4363

Jennifer Fischer [Vice-President]

Age: 23

Class level: Senior

Interested in: Philosophy of Language

Other interests: rock climbing, making music, writing poetry, drawing...

Contact info: thegirlyouwant@msn.com, (916) 567-0911

Chris Baad [Treasurer]

Age: 22

Class level: Junior/Senior (officially junior)

Interested in: Philosophy of Religion, Epistemology, Morality (Ethics)

Other interests: baseball, road cycling, computers, guitar, music...

Contact info: chris.baad@gmail.com, (916) 230-3117

Mike Furlong [Secretary]

Age: 22

Major: Philosophy and Studio Art

Hometown: Napa, CA

Contact info: distorsion22@yahoo.com, (916) 381-8856

Philosophy Club of CSUS

6000 J Street
Student Activities Box # 144
Sacramento, CA 95819

E-mail

csusphilclub@hotmail.com

Website

www.csus.edu/phil/philclub.htm

Faculty Advisor

Clifford Anderson, 278-7829

