

Smoke Signals



VOLUME 3

AUGUST 2009

Rhodes Scholar Rhett Martin Delivers Keynote Lecture at UCA Phi Sigma Tau Conference

Calendar of Events

August 20 - Fall 2009 semester classes begin

October 15-16 - Fall Break

December 12 - Winter Commencement

January 16 - Spring 2009 semester classes begin

March 20-28 - Spring Break

May 8 - Spring Commencement

Arkansas Gamma Chapter of Phi Sigma Tau International Honor Society of Philosophy hosted the Second Annual Central Arkansas Undergraduate Philosophy Conference in the UCA Student Center during the Spring 2009 semester. The conference featured a variety of paper presentations, panel discussions, and the keynote speaker, UCA Alumnus Rhett Martin.

Upon graduating summa cum laude from UCA with a B.A. in Philosophy, Rhett Martin studied Classics at Harvard University for a year before receiving his Master's Degree in Ancient History from Oxford University where he was a Rhodes Scholar. He received his Juris Doctorate from Harvard University Law

School. Rhett currently serves as a judicial clerk for the Arkansas Eighth Circuit Court of Appeals. His keynote address, "Lockean Liberties in a Hobbesian World," explored the philosophical ramifications of the War on Terror on civil liberties.

The conference also featured paper presentations by UCA Honors College Student William Strigel (*Art, A Primordial Approach*) with commentary by Arkansas Gamma Chapter President Caleb Norris. UCA Student Darren Braswell presented a paper (*An Abnormal Solution to the Problem of Other Minds*) with commentary by UCA PHiRE Club Officer Joe Wilson. In addition, there was a Marx panel discussion and



Rhett Martin

2002 UCA Alumnus, Rhodes Scholar, and Harvard Law School Graduate

PHiRE Essay Contest panel presentation.

UCA Department of Philosophy and Religion, PHiRE Club, and UCA SGA co-sponsored the conference.

Humanities Lecture Series Explores Jewish Inroads Into The American Civil Rights Movement

UCA's Philosophy and Religion Department, The Jewish Federation of Arkansas, The Crain-Maling Jewish Cultural Center, and UCA World Cultures and Humanities Institute co-sponsored a lecture series focusing on the American Jewish experience during the American Civil Rights Era. *Let My People Go! Judaism, Civil Rights, and The American South* was a three-night public lecture series held at Hendrix College and UCA from

November 5-8 2008.

The lecture series brought together three influential figures to give insight into legal, social, and historical issues focusing on American Jewish contributions to the U.S. Civil Rights Movement.

Phil Kaplan (Arkansas Jewish Community Leader and Little Rock Attorney) shared his experiences as a Jewish attorney in his lecture, "Legal Perspectives on Judaism and Civil Rights in Arkansas," in the Mills Center at Hendrix College.

Charney Bromberg (1960s Jewish Civil Rights Activist) spoke of his journey as a young Jewish civil rights activist in Mississippi in the early 1960s in the UCA Student Center Ballroom.

Dr. Stuart Rockoff (Goldring/Woldenberg Institute of Southern Jewish Life) delivered a lecture, *Historical Perspectives on Jewish and African-American Relations During The Civil Rights Era*, in UCA's Brewer-Hegeman Center.

Faculty News

Dr. Clayton Crockett replaced Dr. Jim Deitrick as Director of the Religious Studies program in January 2008. He has co-edited a book with Slavoj Žižek and Creston Davis called, *Hegel and the Infinite: Religion, Politics and the Dialectic*, to be published by Columbia University Press in 2010. Dr. Crockett is on sabbatical in Fall 2009. **Dr. Jim Deitrick** was elected to the executive board of the Asian Studies Development Program's Association of Regional Centers in Fall 2008. He is currently writing *Asian Religions: An Introduction to the Religious and Philosophical Traditions of Asia* for Wiley Blackwell Press, while simultaneously working with Dr. Swasti Bhattacharya of Buena Vista University on an anthology of primary readings to accompany the text. **Dr. Jesse Butler** presented his work on introspection to the international conference *Toward a Science of Consciousness 2008*. He also recently published an article on technology and human nature titled, "Unterminated: The Integration of the

Machines," *Terminator and Philosophy: I'll Be Back, Therefore I Am*, (Blackwell Philosophy and Pop Culture Series). **Dr. Ron Novy** advanced to the rank of Lecturer in Philosophy & the Humanities in UCA's University College in Fall 2008. He currently published, "Why Good Help is Hard to Find: Henchmen, Friends, and Aristotle," in *Supervillains and Philosophy* (ed. Ben Dyer) Open Court, 2009. **Dr. Charles Harvey** edited a special edition of the journal, *Philosophy in the Contemporary World*, devoted to Ralph Ellis' work on "Love, Religion and the Psychology of Inspiration." Harvey's essay "Narcissism, Fundamentalism and Cosmological Ingratitude" was also included in the volume. **Dr. Jacob Held** recently published, "Marx via Feuerbach: Species-Being Revisited," *Idealistic Studies* (Vol. 31, Issue 1, Spring 2009) and "One Man's Trash is Another Man's Pleasure: Obscenity, Pornography, and the Law," in *Porn and Philosophy*, edited by Dave Monroe, Wiley-Blackwell

(Forthcoming, 2009). **Tanya Jeffcoat** presented, "Ecological Individualism: Reconstructing the Deweyan Self" at the 2009 Mid-South Philosophy Conference. In addition, she was appointed faculty co-sponsor of UCA's P.R.I.S.M. Gay-Straight Alliance in May 2009. **Phillip Spivey** was recently elected to the Jewish Federation of Arkansas Board of Directors. He will serve as Interim Director of the UCA Religious Studies Program in Fall 2009. **Dr. Benjamin Rider** presented his work at two national conferences this year. In April 2009, at the annual meeting of the Ancient Philosophy Society in Baltimore, MD, he presented a paper on self-knowledge in Plato's *Alcibiades Major*. In July 2009, he presented a paper on the ethics of life-extension technology at the Society for Philosophy in the Contemporary World meeting. He recently had a paper on luck in Plato's *Euthydemus* accepted at the annual meeting of the Society for Ancient Greek Philosophy in October.

Alumni Report

Rhett Martin '02 will become a Researcher for the Governance Studies Program at the Brookings Institution in Washington, D.C.

Mike Cantrell '03 received a Ph.D. in Philosophy from Baylor University, and will pursue a J.D. from UALR's William H. Bowen School of Law in 2009.

Laine Mitchell '06 received a J.D. from George Mason University in May 2009, and recently took the Virginia Bar Exam.

Blake Vernon '06 completed a M.A. in Philosophy from Northern Illinois University in Spring 2009.

Nick Simmons '06 plans to obtain his

Ph.D. in Philosophy from the University of Kansas in 2010.

Kristen Fox-Eason '08 has been accepted to University of Wisconsin-Madison's dual degree program (Ph.D. in Political Science and a J.D.) in Fall 2009.

Student Awards

Joe Wilson is the winner of the 2008/2009 PHiRE Essay Contest. He presented his essay, "Comfort and Dis-ease: The Problem of Anxiety," as a panel presentation at the Second Annual University of Central Arkansas Undergraduate Philosophy Conference on April 10. The two runners-up (**Kent Ridings** - "Look Before You Leap" and **Aaron Youmans** - "Parmenides Part II") also presented their essays during the conference panel session. Wilson's essay was published in the April 2009 Journal of Phi Sigma Tau, *Dialogue*.

Joe Wilson received the 2008/2009 Outstanding UCA Philosophy Student Award.

Drew Aylesworth received the 2008/2009 UCA Outstanding Students of the University Award.

David Russell attended the 2008 Summer Institute For Diversity In Philosophy at Rutgers University. The seven-day program is designed to introduce undergraduate students from diverse backgrounds to the various areas of specialization within the discipline of philosophy, give students a



UCA Philosophy, Writing, and Honors Interdisciplinary Studies Major David Russell

various views about what it means to be a professional philosopher. David received an all-expense paid stipend from Rutgers University to attend the program.

PHiRE Film and Lecture Series Sparks Intellectual Curiosity

For the past six years, UCA's Department of Philosophy and Religion has hosted a film series. Faculty lectures were added to the film series in 2007/2008 with great success. Three films and three lectures were held in Main and Harrin Halls. The films and lectures addressed important aspects of contemporary philosophical and religious issues. These events were only open to UCA students currently enrolled in philosophy and/or religious studies courses, faculty, and alumni.

Three films were shown and discussed in Fall 2008: *A Clockwork Orange*, *The Big Lebowski*, and *Marjoe*. Two lectures were presented in conjunction with the films: Dr. Jeff Mitchell, Associate Professor of Philosophy at Arkansas Tech University, "Exile in a Cultural Chernobyl: The Frankfurt School and America," and Dr. Benjamin Rider, UCA Assistant Professor of Philosophy, "The Ethics of Super-longevity: Should we cure death?" In addition, there was a panel debate on Artificial Intelligence led by Dr. Charles Harvey, Dr. Jesse Butler, and Dr. Ron Novy.

In Spring 2009, three films were viewed: *Modern Times*, *Religulous*, and *A Scanner Darkly*. Three lectures were presented: Dr. Charles Bane and Phillip Spivey's "Mutual Assured Connections: Philosophy and Literature Through the Lens of Filmmaker Stanley Kubrick," Dr. Jim Shelton's "The End of Enlightening Science: Or How We Now Know Everything," and Dr. Jeff Williams' "The Doctrine of Jihad in Islam." For PHiRE Film and Lecture Series information, contact Phillip Spivey at pspivey@uca.edu.

Holocaust Survivor Agi Geva Shares Testimony at UCA



United States Holocaust Memorial
Museum Office of Survivor Affairs
Volunteer Agi Geva

After being deported with her mother and two sisters to the Auschwitz concentration camp in 1944, Agi Geva's life was forever changed. Geva shared her powerful testimony to the Central Arkansas community in UCA's East McCaslain Ballroom on March 11, 2009.

UCA PHiRE Club Vice-President Eric Wilson introduced Geva to a maximum-capacity audience from the UCA and Central Arkansas community. Geva spoke movingly of her father, who died when the Nazis occupied Hungary in 1944. She also recalled the all-pervasive confusion and fear that was pervasive in

Poland's Auschwitz concentration camp. Geva's lecture was supplemented by a visual presentation of family photos and of her hometown in Hungary, Budapest. Afterward, she answered questions from the audience.

Agi Geva's visit to UCA was sponsored by UCA's Student Government Association, UCA PHiRE Club, UCA Department of Philosophy and Religion, UCA Humanities and World Cultures Institute, University of Arkansas Community College at Morrilton, and The United States Holocaust Memorial Museum in Washington, D.C.

PHiRE and Phi Sigma Tau Elects New Officers for 2008/2009

UCA's Phi Sigma Tau and its Philosophy and Religion Club (PHiRE) proved to be dynamic and vital aspects of the Department of Philosophy and Religion in 2008/2009. New officers, an undergraduate philosophy conference, and an end-of-the year picnic were on the slate for last year's events.

The 2009/2010 PHiRE Club Officers are Eric Wilson - President, Shelli Mann - Vice-President, and Megan Jackson - Secretary/Treasurer. The PHiRE Club organized a trip to the

Mid-South Undergraduate Philosophy Conference held at the University of Memphis in Spring 2009. The PHiRE Club also celebrated another year of learning at a pot-luck picnic held at Dr. Charles Harvey's home. Dr. Gary Thiher served as 2008/2009 PHiRE Club Faculty Advisor.

Phi Sigma Tau (Arkansas Gamma Chapter) will elect new officers in Fall 2009. The 2009/2010 Phi Sigma Tau Faculty Advisor will be Dr. Jesse Butler. Interested philosophy majors and minors should contact the UCA De-

partment of Philosophy and Religion for more information.

Founded in 1930, Phi Sigma Tau is the International Honors Society in Philosophy. UCA's Phi Sigma Tau Chapter was organized Fall 2006, and is dedicated to acknowledging high quality undergraduate scholarship and research in philosophy. Undergraduate students are eligible for active membership if they have completed two semesters of college, rank in the upper 35% of their class, and have completed at least two semester courses in philosophy.

Message From The Chair



Dr. Charles Harvey
Professor of Philosophy
and Chair of the UCA
Department of Philoso-
phy and Religion

Greetings graduates! This past year saw the continuation of our student-driven interdisciplinary seminar series: "Perception" was this past year's theme and it featured faculty speakers from philosophy, psychology and biology. It was also our 2nd year hosting the Phi Sigma Tau Annual Undergraduate Philosophy Conference in the spring, with guest keynote speaker our own alumnus Rhett Martin, recently graduate from Harvard Law School. Dr. Benjamin Rider (Ph.D.: University of Texas, Austin) specialist in ancient philosophy was added to our faculty roster, making us a department of 13. Faculty members were busy in other ways as well, editing one journal, publishing 21 articles, and giving 26 professional presentations – local, national and international. A number of our faculty members were promoted to new ranks in the professoriate and a number of our graduates are starting new, exciting careers.

Please keep us informed about your selves, feel free to attend some of our events, and pass this on to alumni whom we may have missed. Wishing you all the very best.

Endowment Contribution and Alumni Contact Information



Support Philosophy and Religious Studies at UCA!

If you make a contribution to the UCA Foundation (Buffalo Hall, UCA, Conway, 72035), then you can earmark your gift specifically for the Philosophy and Religion Endowment, or the Mehl Scholarship Fund (224 Harrin Hall). All donations are tax-deductible. We appreciate your support!

Endowment Contributions Support On-Campus Speakers, Student Conference Travel, and Book Scholarships

Name: _____ **Graduated in:** _____

Current Address: _____

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