

Smoke Signals



VOLUME 4

AUGUST 2010

UCA Philosophy and Religion Department Hosts An Evening With Religious Studies Scholar Dr. John D. Caputo

Calendar of Events

August 26 - Fall 2010
semester classes
begin

October 21-22 - Fall
Break

October 24-30 -
Homecoming Week

December 18 - Winter
Commencement

January 13 - Spring
2011 semester classes
begin

March 19-27 - Spring
Break

May 7 - Spring Com-
mencement

Most noted for his controversial works, *What would Jesus Deconstruct?* and *The Weakness of God: A Theology of the Event*, Dr. John D. Caputo presented a lecture in University of Central Arkansas's Doyne Health Sciences Auditorium on April 7, 2010. Caputo's lecture, "What is Radical Theology? A Postmodern Proposal," focused on how postmodern philosophical critiques have radically transformed the language of theological discourse.

Caputo is currently the Thomas J. Watson Professor of Religion and Humanities at Syracuse University and has been since 2004. In addition, he has been the David R. Cook Professor of Philosophy at Villanova University since 1968. His critical

work, *The Weakness of God: A Theology of the Event*, won the 2007 American Academy of Religion Book Award for "Constructive-Reflective Studies in Religion." *What would Jesus Deconstruct?* won the Fore-Word Magazine Best Philosophy Book of 2007 Award.

In his UCA lecture, Caputo stressed the importance of understanding religion as an Event that is culturally formed rather than simply as a collection of doctrines and dogmas. Religious experience understood as Event reveals the deep connections between human frailty and the world.

The lecture was sponsored by the UCA Department of Philosophy and Religion, College



Dr. John D. Caputo

Thomas J. Watson Professor of Religion and Humanities at Syracuse University

of Liberal Arts, World Cultures and Humanities Institute, Honors College, and the Norbert and Carol Schedler Endowment Fund. Dr. Clayton Crockett was the event coordinator

A Testament to Tolerance: Holocaust Survivor Margit Meissner Speaks At UCA

Over 600 people from the UCA and Central Arkansas community attended an evening with Holocaust Survivor Margit Meissner in Reynolds Performance Hall on March 10, 2010.

After fleeing Nazi-occupied Czechoslovakia as a teenager, Meissner sought refuge in Paris in 1938. She was joined by her mother a year later, only to receive orders by the French police that

Meissner, her mother, and other Jews were to report to an assembly point south of Paris for transportation to a concentration camp.

Having heard rumors of Nazi atrocities being committed in Europe, Meissner purchased a bicycle before the ordered deportation. She rode twenty miles south of France after learning of her mother's deportation to the poorly-guarded Camp de Gurs concentration camp near the French-Spanish border. Margit found her mother, and they both escaped to freedom in Spain and Portugal. Today, Margit lives in

Bethesda, MD. She is the author of *Margit's Story* (2003), and is a Survivor Volunteer for the United States Holocaust Memorial Museum Office of Survivor Affairs.

Margit Meissner's lecture was sponsored by UCA's Department of Philosophy and Religion, Department of History, College of Liberal Arts, University of Arkansas Community College - Morrilton, and United States Holocaust Memorial Museum.

Faculty and Staff News

Dr. Clayton Crockett was on sabbatical in Fall 2009. He published an article co-authored with French philosopher Catherine Malabou, "Plasticity and the Future of Philosophy and Theology," *Political Theology*, Volume 11, Number 1, 2010.

Dr. Jesse Butler presented, "On Acquaintance with Oneself," at the first annual *Science and Nonduality* conference in San Rafael, CA in October 2009. Dr. Butler's presentation offered a critique of underlying dualist assumptions in recent acquaintance-based accounts of self-knowledge. He is currently developing a conceptual framework for understanding the social facets of self-knowledge and presented some initial thoughts on the topic to the 2010 *Midsouth Philosophy Conference* in Memphis, TN. His paper was titled, "I'll Be Your Mirror: Social Self-Knowledge and Rational Deference to Others".

Dr. Benjamin Rider published, "The Ethics of Superlongevity: Should We Cure Death?", in the Spring 2010 edition of *Philosophy in the Contemporary World*. His article, "A Socratic Seduction: Philosophical Protreptic in Plato's *Lysis*", was accepted for publication in *APEIRON*.

Drs. Charles Harvey published an article, "Making Hollow Men," in *Educational Theory* (v. 60, No. 2, 2010).

Dr. Jim Shelton published an article, "Beauty, Play and the Meaning of Life," in *Philo* (Summer 2009).

Mr. Phillip Spivey presented, "A Kantian Critique of Garrett Hardin's, *The Case Against Helping the Poor*," and "Philosophical Reflections on Ethics and Community" at the First Annual Peace by Piece Conference in Searcy, AR. The conference was sponsored by The

Khora Project: Intentional Communities in Support of the Pursuit of Shalom.

Mrs. Donna Peterson, UCA Department of Philosophy and Religion Administrative Specialist for nearly 30 years, retired in Fall 2009. **Ms. Kim Newman** is the new department Administrative Specialist.

Taine Duncan is the newest member of UCA's Department of Philosophy and Religion. She has an ABD in Philosophy from Duquesne University (2010). Her of areas of specialization includes Feminist Philosophy, Critical Theory, 20th-Century Continental Philosophy, and History of Philosophy. Her research interests focus on Autonomy, Power and Participation, and Intersubjectivity.

Alumni Report

Laine Mitchell Goodhue '06 has started her own law practice in Alexandria, Virginia, focusing on domestic relations. She also serves the Court as a guardian ad litem, representing children in abuse and neglect cases.

Kristen Eason Fox '08 has been accepted

into the dual-degree Ph.D. (Political Science) and J.D. program at the University of Wisconsin - Madison.

Matthew Krepps '92 is part owner and teacher at the Circle Yoga Shala in Jasper, AR. The Shala is a retreat center and farm; created and maintained for the purposes of

transmitting the teachings of hatha yoga and sustainable living as a service to humanity's potential, and as a gift of conscious living to the earth. Matt also teaches private classes, advising in personal nutrition and traditional herbal therapy as an adjunct to personal Yoga/Meditation practice.

Student Awards and Achievements

Will Strigel is the winner of the 2009/2010 PHiRE Essay Contest. He presented his essay on individual liberties in relation to the legal case, Lewis v. United States, (445 U.S. 55) in Harrin Hall on April 15. The two runners-up presented their essays as well. **Jeff Lambert** presented, "Saved Games: An Exploration Into The Presentation Of Westernized Buddhism Through Videogames." **T.J. McDonald** presented his essay, "Ameriyana," which addressed the problematic nature of Americanized Buddhism in relation to Eastern Buddhist traditions.

Catherine Brown received the 2009/2010 Outstanding UCA Philosophy

Student Award.

T.J. McDonald received the 2009/2010 Outstanding UCA Religious Studies Student Award.

Achievements

UCA Religious Studies Major **T.J. McDonald** had an article on American Buddhism accepted for publication in the *Inter-Mountain West Journal of Religious Studies*.

T.J. McDonald, **Jeff Lambert**, and **Dr. Jim Deitrick** (UCA Associate Professor of Philosophy and Religion) presented their collaborative research on



2009/2010 PHiRE Essay Contest Winner Will Strigel presents his essay in Harrin

American Buddhism at the national meeting of the Asian Studies Development Program in Hawaii (Summer 2010).

Department Film and Lecture Series Provides Forum for Thought

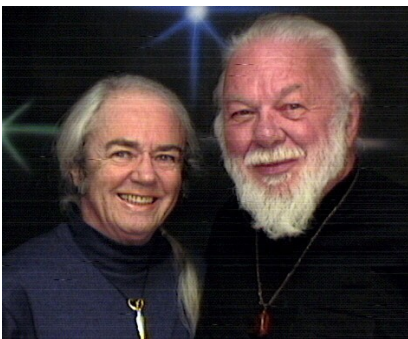
For the past seven years, UCA's Department of Philosophy and Religion has hosted a film series. Faculty lectures were added to the film series in 2007/2008 with great success. Three films and three lectures were held in Main and Harrin Halls for 2009/2010. The films and lectures addressed important aspects of contemporary philosophical and religious issues. These events were only open to students currently enrolled in UCA philosophy and/or religious studies courses.

Three films were shown and discussed in Fall 2009: *The Thirteenth Floor*, *Flight From Death: The Quest for Immortality*, and *Silhouette City*. Three lectures were presented in conjunction with the films: Blake Vernon, UCA Philosophy and Honors College Alumnus, "Truth-schmuth;" Mrs. Tanya Jeffcoat, UCA Instructor of Philosophy, "Deweyan Creative Democracy and the Challenge of Healthcare Reform;" and Dr. Jim Deitrick, Associate Professor of Religious Studies, "America's New Buddhism."

In Spring 2010, three films were viewed: *Eternal Sunshine of the Spotless Mind*, *Malcolm X*, and *God On Trial*.

Two lectures were presented: Dr. Aaron Simmons, Hendrix College Assistant Professor of Philosophy, "Environmentalism and Evangelical Politics," and Dr. Conrad Shumaker, UCA Professor of English, "'We Have No Word for Religion': Spirituality and American Indian Cultures."

Wiccan Scholars Discuss The History of The Church of Wicca



**Wiccan Scholars and Practitioners
Mrs. Yvonne Frost and Dr. Gavin
Frost**

In October 2009, UCA was fortunate to have Dr. Gavin Frost and Mrs. Yvonne Frost speak in the UCA Student Center on "Heretical Witchcraft: Thirty Years of The Church of Wicca."

Dr. Gavin Frost holds a doctorate in physics and mathematics from London University. In 1968, he and his wife, Yvonne, founded the Church and School of Wicca in St. Louis. The church earned its religious tax-exempt status in 1972, although the Church and its branch covens were later subjected to a rigorous IRS investigation. Eventually, the Church and School of Wicca was legally recognized.

The Frosts spoke movingly of the trials and tribulations Wiccans have had to endure throughout the centuries. They explained many of the basic tenets and practices of modern Wicca to over 70 students, faculty, and guests from the Central Arkansas area. Since the founding of the Church, the Frosts have individually and jointly authored numerous books and articles on Wicca.

The Frost's presentation was sponsored by the UCA Department of Philosophy and Religion and the UCA Religious Studies Club.

PHiRE and Phi Sigma Tau Elects New Officers for 2010/2011

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 2010/2011. New officers, informal faculty-student discussions, and an end-of-the year picnic were on the slate for last year's events.

The 2010/2011 PHiRE Club Officers are Shelli Mann - President, Derek Anderson - 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 2010. The PHiRE Club also celebrated another year of learning at a pot-luck picnic held at Dr. Charles Harvey's home. Dr. Benjamin Rider will serve as the 2010/2011 PHiRE Club Faculty Advisor.

Phi Sigma Tau (Arkansas Gamma Chapter) elected new officers in Spring 2010: Shelli Mann - President, Amy Onda - Vice-President, and Derek Anderson - Secretary-Treasurer.

The 2010/2011 Phi Sigma Tau Faculty Advisor is Dr. Jesse Butler. Interested philosophy majors and minors should contact the UCA Department 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 in Fall 2006, and is dedicated to acknowledging high quality undergraduate scholarship and research 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 successful continuation of our student-driven interdisciplinary seminar series: “Health Care” was this past year’s theme and it featured faculty speakers from economics, nursing and honors. 11 of our students attended the Mid-South Undergraduate Philosophy Conference in Memphis, TN, along with 6 faculty members. 14 students graduated from the department’s degree programs. Faculty members stayed busy outside as well as inside the classroom: 1 edited book was published with 3 books forthcoming, 15 articles and 7 book reviews were published, and 16 professional presentations – local, national and international were given. Finally, we are happy to welcome Ms. Taine Duncan, from Duquesne University, who will be teaching Feminist Philosophy, Critical Theory and Gender/Race Issues for the department. And we welcome as well our new administrative assistant, Ms. Kimberly Newman. Please keep us informed about your selves, 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!