

Smoke Signals



VOLUME 5

2010/2011

UCA Department of Philosophy and Religion Instrumental in Bringing Three Scholars to the UCA Campus in 2010-2011

Calendar of Events

January 12 - Spring 2012 semester classes begin

January 16 - Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. Holiday

January 31 - Peter Rollins lecture

March 17-25 - Spring Break

May 5 - Spring Commencement

May 28 - Memorial Day Holiday

August 10 - Summer Commencement

UCA's Department of Philosophy and Religion continued to be one of the most active philosophy and religious studies programs in the Mid-South. The department was active in coordinating three lectures on the UCA campus in 2010-2011.

Fall 2010 began with a series of lectures addressing issues in philosophy and religious studies. **Dr. Creston Davis** (Professor of Philosophy and Religion, Rollins College) gave a lecture entitled, "Jefferson's Monticello: Contradiction, Ideology, and the Foundations of America." In his lecture, Davis critically questioned popular national myths surrounding US President Thomas Jefferson, and explored the dichotomy between idealistic

and realistic portrayals of America's religious origins.

Dr. George Yancy (Associate Professor of Philosophy, Duquesne University) delivered a lecture exploring the problems of racial identity-making in relation to critical race theories entitled, "White Gazes and Black Bodies or What it Feels Like to be an Essence."

In Spring 2011, the Crain-Maling Center for Jewish Culture at Hendrix College and UCA partnered to bring to the Central Arkansas area Jewish scholar **Dr. Dan Ben-Canaan** (Professor of Research and Writing Methodology, Heilongjiang University, China). Dr. Ben Canaan's



Dr. George Yancy

Associate Professor of Philosophy at Duquesne University

lecture, "The Chinese Perception of the Jewish People," addressed popular Chinese stereotypes of the Jewish people that were introduced by early twentieth-century Christian missionaries into China.

Renowned Religious Studies and Philosophy Scholar to Speak at UCA in Spring 2012

Peter Rollins, a popular writer, lecturer, storyteller and public speaker, will give a talk at UCA on Tuesday, January 31, 2012, at 7pm in the Ballroom of the Student Center. This lecture is entitled "The Idolatry of God: Christ and the End of Religion," and it is free and open to the public.

Rollins is a representative of a newer emergent Christianity, and he is the author of a number of

books, including *How (Not) to Speak of God*, *The Orthodox Heretic*, and his latest book which is *Insurrection: To Believe is Human To Doubt, Divine*. Originally from Northern Ireland, where he founded a community called Ikon, a faith group that has gained an international reputation for blending live music, visual imagery, soundscapes, theatre, ritual and reflection to create 'transformance art', Rollins now lives in Greenwich, Connecticut.

He has a PhD from Queens University in Belfast, and he has presented all over the US and

around the world. According to Dr. Clayton Crockett of UCA's Department of Philosophy and Religion, Rollins "is the most exciting and compelling voice of contemporary Christianity who is willing to push institutional Christianity beyond its present forms."

This lecture is being sponsored by the UCA Department of Philosophy and Religion, UCA Honors College, and The Norbert and Carol Schedler Fund.

Department Sponsors Evening With Holocaust Survivor Martin Weiss

Martin Weiss shared his heroic story of survival during the Holocaust on March 9, 2011 in Conway Senior High School's James H. Clark Auditorium.

"An Evening with Holocaust Survivor Martin Weiss" was sponsored by Conway Senior High School, UCA Department of Philosophy and Religion, UCA Department of History, UCA College of Liberal Arts, University of Arkansas Community College at Morrilton, and United States Holocaust Memorial Museum.

Martin Weiss was one of nine children born to orthodox Jewish parents in Polana, a rural village in former Czechoslovakia. In March 1939, his life was changed dramatically when Nazi Germany and its allies occupied Polana. Jews were subjected to dis-

crimatory legislation. After the German invasion of the Soviet Union, conditions in Polana worsened. Two of Martin's brothers were conscripted into forced labor battalions. The family soon learned that some Jews from the area had been deported to the occupied Ukraine where they were killed by SS units. In May 1944, Martin and his family were deported to the Auschwitz-Birkenau killing center. Martin, his father, brother, and two uncles were selected for forced labor; the other family members were sent to the gas chambers. Martin and his father were sent to the Mauthausen concentration camp in Austria, and then to the sub-camp of Melk, where they were forced to build tunnels into the side of the mountains. His father perished there. Martin was liberated from Gunskirchen, a subcamp of



Mauthausen, in May 1945.

In an interview, Martin Weiss spoke movingly about the lessons learned from his experiences during the Holocaust: "In spite of our bad experiences, we behaved civilly and it puzzles me even today. To understand our behavior, I have to give credit to our parents, who instilled in us the ethics and morals of our ancestors."

UCA Philosophy and Religion Welcomes New Faculty Member



In Fall 2011, the UCA Department of Philosophy and Religion welcomed new faculty member **Nicholas Brasovan** to the university. Brasovan is a PhD candidate at the University of Hawaii where he earned his MA. His dissertation title is

Ecological Humanism in the neo-Confucian Worldview of Wang Fuzhi (1619-1692).

He also possesses a Certificate in Chinese Language and Culture. Brasovan has taught philosophy at the University of Hawaii, worked as an adjunct instructor at Indiana University Northwest and Indiana

University/Purdue University in 2009, and lectured on Chinese classics at Beijing Foreign Studies University in 2007.

Nick's academic service includes posts as Managing Editor of *China Review International* and Office Manager for the Confucius Institute in Indianapolis.

Dr. Jacob Held Awarded 2010/2011 CLA Faculty Award

UCA Department of Philosophy and Religion congratulates **Dr. Jacob Held** (UCA Assistant Professor of Philosophy) for receiving the 2010/2011 UCA College of Liberal Arts Outstanding Faculty Member Award. Dr. Held (Marquette University, 2005) has taught in the department since 2006, and has played a vital role in the development of student internships in philosophy at UCA.

Dr. Held's area of specialization is Legal and Political Philosophy, Marx, and 19th Century Philosophy. He is the co-editor of *James Bond and Philosophy: Questions Are Forever* (Open Court Press, 2006), and editor of the recent title, *Dr. Seuss and*

Philosophy: Oh, The Things You Can Think! (Rowman and Littlefield, 2010).

In addition to numerous publications and speaking engagements, Dr. Held serves as the Central Division Co-Chair of the North American Society for Social Philosophy and as a member of The American Philosophical Association's Committee on Indigenous Philosophers.

Well known for his research and service, Dr. Held is also known for his dynamic and engaging teaching style. In Spring 2012, he will be teaching *Contemporary Moral Problems* (PHIL. 2325), and *Legal and Political Philosophy* (PHIL. 3325).



2010/2011 UCA College of Liberal Arts Outstanding Faculty Member Award Recipient **Dr. Jacob Held** (left) with CLA Dean, **Dr. Maurice Lee** (right)

UCA Alumnus To Serve US Court of Appeals (8th Circuit)

Dr. Mike Cantrell '03 has been selected to serve as a law clerk for The United States Court of Appeals for the Eighth Circuit. Federal judicial clerks are attorneys who work closely with individual Article III federal judges, and provide legal analyses of questions arising under federal law or under state law between parties of diverse states. The United States Court of Appeals for the Eighth Circuit is the court of final decision for over 99% of appeals from federal district courts and state supreme courts in Arkansas,

Iowa, Minnesota, Missouri, Nebraska, and North and South Dakota.

Dr. Cantrell received a BA in Honors Interdisciplinary Studies - Philosophy and Sociology from UCA (2003) and a PhD in Philosophy from Baylor University (2009). He has taught philosophy at Baylor University, and was a Research Fellow at St. Olaf College.

He has attended and will receive a JD in Law from the University of Arkansas at Little Rock's William H. Bowen School of Law in 2012.



Student Awards and Achievements

T.J. McDonald '11 was awarded The UCA College of Liberal Arts Award for 2010/2011. He received a BA in Religious Studies with departmental honors.

In addition, T.J. was named UCA's University Student of the Year for the 2010-2011 school year. He was the winner of the 2011 UCA Philosophy and Religion Essay Contest. T.J. co-founded of the UCA Religious Studies Club, and published in the *Intermountain West Journal*.

In Fall 2011, UCA Religious Studies Club hosted a panel discussion in the new Business Auditorium entitled, "What should the role of religious organizations be on a public university campus?". UCA Religious Studies Club President **Tony Morando** moderated the discussion, and the student panelists were **Timothy Snediker**, UCA alumnus **Kale Anderson**, and **Travis Gibbs**. Alumni and major/minors are invited and encouraged to attend all UCA philosophy and religion student organization events.

Follow UCA Philosophy and Religion now on Facebook! UCA Department of

Philosophy and Religion now sponsors 3 Facebook groups open to majors/minors, friends, and alumni. Department Administrative Assistant Kim Newman and UCA students are the administrators of the groups:

UCA Department of Philosophy and Religion (General News, Contacts, and Events)

PhiRe UCA Philosophy and Religion Club (The official UCA Philosophy and Religion Club)

UCA Religious Studies Group (UCA Student Club for the Study of Religion)

PhiRe, Phi Sigma Tau, and Religious Studies Club Elects New Officers for 2011/2012

UCA's PhiRe, Phi Sigma Tau, and Religious Studies Club proved to be dynamic and vital aspects of the Department of Philosophy and Religion in 2010/2011. Election of new officers, informal faculty-student discussions, and public panel discussions were on the slate for last year's events.

The 2011/2012 PhiRe Club Officers are **Taylor Sutton** - President, **Josh Price** - Vice-President, and **Justin Wertz** - Secretary/Treasurer. Dr. Benjamin Rider serves as the

2011/2012 PhiRe Club Faculty Advisor.

Phi Sigma Tau (Arkansas Gamma Chapter) elected new officers in Spring 2011: **Taylor Sutton** - President, **Justin Wertz** - Vice-President, and **Josh Price** - Secretary-Treasurer. The 2011/2012 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 on how to join Phi Sigma Tau.

The 2011/2012 UCA Religious Studies



Club Officers are: **Jacob Roberts** (left, Secretary/Treasurer), **Tony Morando** (middle, President) and **Zach Bly** (right, Vice-President). Dr. Clayton Crockett is the faculty advisor.

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 another installment of our student-driven interdisciplinary seminar series: “Feminism” was this past year’s theme and it featured Dr. Taine Duncan from philosophy, Dr. Gayle Seymour from art history and Ms. Mimi Rohweder from sociology. As noted in the body of the Newsletter, our students took multiple awards this year: we were particularly proud of the fact that four of the five Outstanding College Students issues from our department, including T. J. McDonald who was also recognized as Outstanding University Student.

We had close to twenty students graduate from the department’s degree programs – a new record. Faculty members stayed busy outside as well as inside the classroom: 3 faculty-authored books published, 1 edited book published and one faculty-authored book forthcoming, 19 articles/books chapters published, in addition to a number of book reviews. The faculty gave 17 professional presentations – local, regional, national and international.

Finally, we’re happy to welcome Mr. Nicholas Brasovan, ABD, from the University of Hawaii: Nick will be teaching Asian Philosophy and Religion courses for the department with his specialty in Chinese philosophy. 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 Department of Philosophy and Religion (UCA Alumni Services, Buffalo Alumni Hall, UCA Box 4925, Conway, 72035), then you can earmark your gift specifically for the Philosophy and Religion Endowment, or the Mehl Scholarship Fund. All donations are tax-deductible. We appreciate your support! For online giving, you can go to :

<http://community.uca.edu/page.aspx?pid=387>