

Philosophy Department Newsletter

This is the second year of publication for the Philosophy Department Newsletter. We will be publishing periodically concerning items of interest to students of philosophy at Lakehead

Heather Saaltink Memorial Award

Special points of interest:

- The Heather Saaltink Memorial Award
- Dr. Larivière - your Academic Advisor for Winter Term 2017
- New Book Published by Dr. Dufresne
- Meet Dr. Sacchetti-Dufresne

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Rheanna Geisel is this year's recipient of The Heather Saaltink Memorial Award: an honour awarded each year to "a 4th year student athlete, who is active at the Varsity or club level and demonstrates a commitment to environmental protection and social justice, inspiring others to make a difference." Rheanna is a middle blocker on the LU women's Varsity volleyball team. She is currently in her third year of eligibility with the team, and has been playing volleyball for nine years. Of the relationship between her academic and athletic achievement, she says: "what I have learned from the game throughout the years has directly influenced my academic success. Through volleyball, I have learned time management, drive, determination and I have acquired a work ethic, amongst other attributes, that have allowed me to excel in my studies. Being a student athlete is one of the toughest, yet most rewarding challenges I have taken on. Volleyball is what allowed me to get a post-secondary education, which will, in turn, help me achieve my career goal of becoming a lawyer. I'm thankful for all that volleyball and academics have given me thus far and I cannot wait to see where they take me in my future. Thank you for selecting me for the Heather Saaltink memorial award, it's an honour."



Rheanna Geisel photo

Heather Saaltink was a student athlete and Philosophy major who died on December 17, 2008, when the car she was driving was struck by a vehicle driven by a drunk driver.

Academic Counselling



Dr. D. Anthony Larivière photo

Dr. Larivière will be the Academic Advisor for the Winter semester. If you have any questions about course or program selection, or if you would like to explore post-graduate options, he will be happy to help you.

Dr. Larivière has his office on the third floor of the Ryan Building, Office 3005.

Your Degree Audit



Please note

... problems with LU's degree audit software continue to pop up. We recommend that you take a close look at your degree audit and make sure that all of the courses for which you have been registered, both those that have been completed and those still in progress, are being counted the way you think they should. If any problems arise, let Dr. Larivière know and he will help get them sorted out.

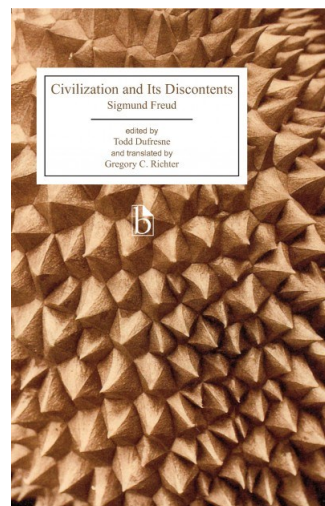
Spring and Summer Courses

PHIL 1118 SDE (ONLINE Spring 1st Term - 3 weeks) Philosophy of the Occult and Paranormal - Dr. L. Pelot
 PHIL/GERO 2511 SDE (ONLINE Spring 2nd Term - 3 weeks) Biomedical Ethics - Dr. R. Matthews
 PHIL/ENST 2013 AA (ON CAMPUS Summer 1st Term - 3 weeks) Environmental Philosophy - Dr. J. Blahuta
 PHIL 1119 ADE (ONLINE Summer 2nd Term - 3 weeks) Philosophy through Popular Culture - Dr. C. Sacchetti-Dufresne

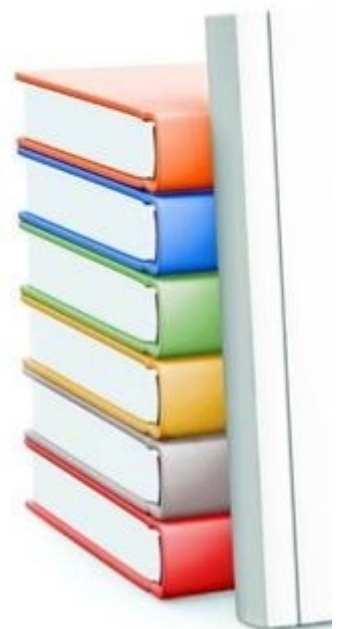
Dr. Dufresne Publishes New Book

Congratulations to Dr. Dufresne on the publication of his latest work: a new translation of Freud's *Civilization and Its Discontents*. This is the third and last in a series of Freud's philosophical works that Dufresne has edited, following *Beyond the Pleasure Principle* and *The Future of an Illusion*.

Translation is by Gregory Richter with an introduction by Todd Dufresne, published by Broadview Press. As Mikkel Borch-Jacobsen, Professor of Comparative Literature and French at the University of Washington in Seattle, observes of this new edition of *Civilization and Its Discontents*:
 "at last a truly critical edition of Freud!"



Civilization and Its Discontents book jacket photo



Department Holiday Gathering

The Philosophy Department teamed up with the LU Philosophy Association for our first Holiday Gathering. Students and faculty gathered in The Study to eat pizza and listen to a presentation by Dr. Larivière entitled “Lies and the Lying Liars Who Tell Them.” The presentation and following discussion opened up interesting perspectives on falsehood, including possible conceptual distinctions between types of lie. When we asked Dr. Larivière to summarize his argument, he had this to say:

I argue that there are at least two ways one can approach the issue of ‘lies’ or ‘political lies’ or ‘lying politicians’ (this was the framework I adopted from Al Franken’s title “Lies and the Lying Liars That Tell Them”). The most obvious of these ways (for me at least) is to give an analysis of the essential concept: “a lie” or “telling a lie”. A useful analysis would be that a lie is a statement or utterance that the speaker believes to be false but which the speaker intends that the hearer should believe it to be true. This is a simple, but ultimately inadequate analysis (since the utterer, given the way we usually use the word “lies”, really intends that the hearer should believe that the utterer believes the utterance to be true, when, in fact, the utterer believes it to be false.) This is quite a complex concept (Daniel Dennett calls it a third-order intention: a belief about a belief about a belief.) Seen this way, we can distinguish lies from other deceptive linguistic practices (e.g. “Look there!” or “Do I look like a thief to you?”) and non-linguistic deceptions (including those practiced by non-humans). The drawback of such an analysis (which I think is the usual one) is that, in the political context at least, it allows one to evade the charge



Dr. Larivière presentation photo



Group Photo (left to right): Dr. Maundrell; Dr. Blahuta; Dr. Dufresne; Ms. Rheanna Geisel; Dr. Sacchetti-Dufresne; Dr. Larivière; Prof. Niittynen

of lying or being a liar either by claiming that one sincerely believes the utterance in question or by turning the issue into a semantic one about truth (either “How do we know [or does one know] or can we know...?” or, following Pontius Pilate, by asking “What is truth?”) I think these evasions are quite familiar to us.

The second way to approach the issue is to focus on the normative dimensions of the issue. What makes lying wrong (if and when it is wrong)? What makes liars bad people (supposing that being a liar is vicious)? When we look at the issue this way we focus on normative concepts such as ‘fairness’ or ‘sincerity’ or ‘honesty’ or ‘deception’ or ‘exploitation’ rather than semantic ones, such as ‘truth’ and ‘falsity’, or descriptive ones, such as ‘lie’. The virtue of approaching things this way is that it accords well with what we often say we care about in the case of politicians or the political sphere — such as whether, by their policies, they are aiming at the good, or whether they have our interests in mind or at heart — and it exposes the evasions mentioned above for what they are: covers for private or narrowly parochial interests rather than the public good or common weal.



In related news...

The Oxford Dictionary’s Word of the Year 2016 is *post-truth*.

Philosophy Welcomes Our Contract Lecturers in Winter 2017

Dr. Clara Sacchetti is a part-time instructor and adjunct professor in the Departments of Philosophy and Anthropology at LU. She is a Visiting Fellow of The Mariano A. Elia Chair in Italian-Canadian Studies (York University, Toronto) as well as an Invited Member of the International Dance Council/Conseil international de la danse, UNESCO (Paris, France). She holds a doctorate in Social Anthropology, York University and was a Post-Doctoral Fellow at the University of Toronto, 2011-12.

While trained in Anthropology, Dr. Sacchetti-Dufresne has an abiding interest in social philosophy and social epistemology. She is currently preparing a book manuscript (Wilfrid Laurier University Press) that explores the work of Simone De Beauvoir, Monique Witting, J. L. Austin, Michel Foucault, Pierre Bourdieu, and Jacques Derrida in relation to Judith Butler's formulation on the subject and its epistemological implications for

anthropological knowledge. She is the lead editor of *Reflections on Critical Multiculturalism and Dance* (Wilfrid Laurier University Press) and a co-editor of two books of relevance to contemporary critical social theory—*Superior Art: Local Art, Global Context* (Definitely Superior Art Gallery, 2012) and *The Economy as Cultural System* (Bloomsbury, UK, 2013). She has also written and/or co-written chapters in *Where is the Field? Exploring Labor and Migration Studies through the Lenses of Fieldwork* (Studia Fennica Ethnologica, 2012); *Renegade Bodies: Canadian Dance in the 1970s* (Dance Collection Danse Press/es, 2012); and *Transitions in Marginal Zones in The Age of Globalization: Case Studies from the North and South* (Northern Studies Books, 2010). She has published journal articles that variously examine capitalism, multiculturalism, dance and identity, visual culture, and post-structuralism in *Italian Canadiana*, *Diskurs*, *Migration Letters*, and *The Semiotic Review of Books*.

Dr. Sacchetti-Dufresne has taught students from a wide array of disciplinary backgrounds, but is most impressed by philosophy and philosophically-inclined students. She is teaching Philosophy 1119: Philosophy Through Popular Culture, , and Philosophy 3419: Philosophy and Gender during the Winter Semester.



Dr. Clara Sacchetti-Dufresne photo

Morris Lecture 2016-17 Guest Speaker, November 15, 2016

The Philosophy Department hosted this year's Morris Lecture. Professor Kristin Andrews, York University's Department of Philosophy



Dr. Andrews photo

delivered a lecture entitled "*Moral Behavior in Other Animals*," in which she made the argument that some species of non-human animals satisfy criteria for personhood and should, therefore, be accorded moral standing.

A native of Nashville, TN, her father's work with the DuPont Company required the family Andrews to relocate frequently while she was growing up. She joined the Philosophy Department at York after completing her PhD at the University of Minnesota in Minneapolis, and is now happy to call Toronto home. Professor Andrews has received national and

international acclaim for her work on the animal mind, and her research has taken her as far afield as Borneo to study the behaviour of orangutans in the wild. A detailed account of that work can be found in *Do Apes Read Minds? Toward a New Folk Psychology* (MIT Press, 2012). Professor Andrews was named to the Royal Society of Canada's College of New Scholars, Artists and Scientists in 2015. She is currently beginning work on a major research project on the study of moral behaviour in animals funded by a five-year SSHRC Insight grant. We wish her well in this new project, and hope that she will be back to visit us at LU again in the future.

***Westworld*, A TV Series for People Who Think?**

HBO's *Westworld* is a TV series inspired by the 1973 movie of the same name which was written and directed by Michael Crichton. The current version is the creative work of Jonathan Nolan and Lisa Joy, written by Nolan and Joy along with Halley Gross. In both versions, rich tourists visit a theme park recreation of an old Western town populated with robot townsfolk, including gunslingers and saloon girls. In the 1973 version, the robots end up going HAL9000/*Jurassic Park* on the tourists. The HBO version reverses that story-line by having the robot hosts become self-aware and legitimately resentful of their mistreatment and exploitation by their human creators and "guests." The abuse and degradation to which Dolores (Evan Wood), the sweet young robot farm-girl, is subject at the hands of the sadistic Man in Black (Ed Harris) drives home the point early on that our sympathies belong with the robots. What makes this more than a mash-up of AI fantasy and horse opera, however, is the ingenious insertion of some philosophy of mind.

In Episode 3 ("The Stray"), Dr. Ford (Anthony Hopkins), one of the co-creators of *Westworld*'s robot technology, mentions a book which had served as the inspiration for their AI engineering: *The Origin of Consciousness in the Bicameral Mind*, by Julian Jaynes. *Origin*, published in 1976, had, in turn, been inspired by pioneering work on the brain by Roger Sperry. It was Sperry who won the Nobel prize for, amongst other things, having discovered that the two hemispheres of the brain can function independently of one another once the nerve bundle joining them, the corpus callosum, is severed. Building on the notion that the human brain is a composite of functionally disparate components, Jaynes suggested that what we call consciousness is a phenomenon that developed within the recent past, dating to about 3,000 years ago, and enabled by natural language use. In short, talking to others makes possible "talking to oneself," and talking to oneself is what we really mean by "thinking." *Origin* and Jaynes



Westworld branding photo

have largely faded into obscurity since the 70's, but those familiar with Daniel Dennett's *Consciousness Explained* of 1989 will recognize definite parallels in Dennett's claim that mind is nothing other than the neural organization made possible by running linguistic software on the wetware brain. Dennet maintains a version of this theory to this day. In *Westworld*, it is becoming clear that the robots are acquiring self-awareness through being loaded by their designers with the very software that made us conscious. Thus Episode 3 has Bernard Lowe (Jeffrey Wright), the head of *Westworld*'s "programming division" - who we later find is actually a robot himself - secretly reading Lewis Carroll to a robot child. Who knows where this might lead?

HBO has announced that there will be a Season 2 of Westworld



Westworld frame from TV series photo



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What is Philosophy?

Philosophy is concerned with the most fundamental questions: "What is truth? What is knowledge? What is the good? What is justice? How should we live?" However, philosophy is not just a subject of study but a discipline involving the practical skills of thinking.

Philosophy will Include:

*study of assumptions and concepts in science and society
examination and criticism of fundamental ideas
critical and practical thinking*

If you have news or information that you would like us to share in the newsletter or on our website, forward to rmaundre@lakeheadu.ca

Visit our website

<https://www.lakeheadu.ca/academics/departments/philosophy>

Lakehead University Philosophy Student Club



The Philosophy Students' Club became active again with a renewed beginning in 2015 with 26 members – so look to get involved!

For information go to their Facebook page "Lakehead University Philosophy Society."



Are You Graduating Spring 2017?

Are you planning on Graduating after the Winter term? Let us know by completing the "Intent to Graduate" form online through your myInfo portal NOW! By completing the "Intent to Graduate" form now it will ensure that you are included in the graduation assessments at the end of the 2017 Winter term and ensure that you receive information about the Spring Convocation ceremonies including guest tickets, regalia and other important details.

Watch for details about our annual Graduation Fair that is scheduled for March 2, 2017. Everything graduation to make sure you celebrate in style.

If you are uncertain of your Philosophy Degree completion, please see Dr. Larivière