This product is meant for educational purposes only. Any resemblance to real persons, living or dead is purely coincidental. – Batteries not included. No user-serviceable parts contact with eyes and skin. swelling develops or if any of the following occurs: itching, extremities, loss of balance or coordination, slurred speech, sweating, or heart palpitation— temporary blindness, profuse
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Jeff Strayer: For me, 2011 was a productive year of research that progressed well into 2012. I continue to work on my next book Haecceities: Essentialism and the Limits of Abstraction and have recently completed perhaps the 25th version of a 40-page section of the work on artistic identity in the Haecceities series. The limits of abstraction can only be identified through the use of language, and the Haecceities Series consists of a number of language-based artworks that I am producing that are designed to identify those limits. The series is divided into 12 sequences that are themselves partitioned into segments that consist of a number of individual pieces of language that I call ‘specifications.’ A specification singles something out with which all or part of an artwork is meant to be identified. The specifications of the Haecceities series use language to engage essential conditions of making and apprehending works of art. More specifically, they engage essential elements of what I term an “artistic complex”—an entity that results from, and includes, a person’s attention to a perceptual object on which the identity of a particular artwork depends. I call a specification a ‘Haecceity’ when it utilizes, as it addresses, essential elements of artistic complexes in the determination of the identity of what is singled out by the specification. More particularly, Haecceities single out what I call ‘idealional objects,’ (an object is idealional when it depends on comprehension of a specification that refers to it, such that no object would be that particular object apart from that comprehension). More about this, including the introduction to Haecceities: Essentialism and the Limits of Abstraction and artworks from the Haecceities series, can be found on my website, jeffreystrayer.com.

Join our department’s student “Phi-Club” on Facebook. Log into your Facebook account, search for “Phi-Club IPFW,” and connect!

Hello everyone and welcome to our spring 2012 newsletter!

There are many things I feel we should share with you, our alumni, but before I talk about a number of those, let me first mention that it is with great relief that we announce that Kathy Squadrato is quickly recovering from a surgery she had to undergo last fall. We expect to welcome her back in the summer. During Kathy’s absence, we needed three people to do her job: Ashley Albrecht, Kent Young, and Jeff Lauer joined us for the spring term—and we are happy to have them.

You may have heard about a book that caused quite some ripples when it was published last year. Academically Adrift, written by sociologists Richard Arum and Josipa Roka (and their graduate students), finds that almost half of college students nationwide don’t learn much during their years away at school; if they do learn something, then one of the crucial factors for success (among many, many others, of course) seems to be how demanding their faculty was. The reason I’m mentioning this is because it puts into a broader context what many philosophy faculty are doing these days: namely, trying to find new ways to engage students.

Clark Butler, for example, polled students to discover what they find interesting in the area of applied ethics, and as it turned out, many are concerned with political issues. He followed up on this poll with a class on the Occupy Movement. This is only the second course nationwide on this extremely important political-social-moral phenomenon, and students from as far away as California are following Clark’s analyses and watching the televised portions of it. See for yourself and find videos of the PHIL 493 American democracy. Also, in April, the Center for Applied Ethics held a conference on the topic of the crisis of American democracy.

Another exciting project is the outreach and service-learning project started by Jennifer Casel-dine-Bracht. There has been a growing awareness that it makes sense to teach philosophy to children, and Jennifer’s project brings local students to a Fort Wayne homeless shelter where they engage children in philosophi-

In closing, I wish to mention that Ken Long has passed the baton of “alumni relations” to Mike Spath, which means Mike is now in charge of the newsletter you’re holding in your hands. We are grateful for Ken to have it started and for always pushing for new and more effective ways for you to be involved and share something, do let us know!

All our best and yours in discourse,

Jeffrey Strayer
Indiana University–Purdue University Fort Wayne, Department of Philosophy Newsletter, No. 4, Spring 2012

Faculty News

Clark Butler: I held a meeting in March to discuss philosophically the idea of a new political party dedicated to rationally motivated dialogue, in a collaborative search for the truth that gives an equal voice to the weak. The subject of such dialogue concerns what policies, laws, or beliefs should be wedded to any consensus position which it may reach at any point in time, since any such consensus can be overthrown by new scientific evidence and new dialogical reasoning.

Joyce Lazier: I just got back from the American Association of State Colleges and Universities (AASCU) conference held in San Antonio, Texas where I co-presented with Vice Chancellor William McImney and Samantha Birk (Center for Enhancing Learning and Teaching, CELT).

During the presentation, I’ve observed various projects in my IPFW modern philosophy class (see Chair’s letter, page 1). In February, I presented with Samantha Birk at the Fort Wayne Teaching Conference at IPFW. Our topic was “Nineball Teaching: Sneaking in Preparation Using Mockingbird’s Theme,” and I am working on an upcoming CELT program with Assistant Professor Kirsten Ataguoz (fine arts) about using Voice Thread in class. In late March, I traveled to Wisconsin to present at the Association of Core Texts and Courses (ACTC) 18th Annual Conference. My presentation is entitled “Transcendental Deduction of the iPad: How Use of the iPad Resuscitated Core Texts.” I have submitted a paper proposal to the American Association of Philosophy Teachers 19th International Workshop-Conference on Teaching Philosophy and am preparing a proposal for the 2012 conference of the International Society for the Scholarship of Teaching and Learning (ISSOTL). I am also working on a curricular change integrating the iPad for PHIL 110, Introduction to Philosophy. I am the Faculty Fellow for Project MobilEdU, where my duties include attending several small informal meetings helping faculty with their iPads and encouraging classroom innovation. I also serve on the steering committee for the College of Arts and Sciences’ University Community Conversation (UC) series.

Kenneth A. Long: I continue to do research in the area of scientific realism. Currently my focus is on the extent to which a realist approach to science is compatible with what is called a semantic (or modeling) conception of theories. The class I taught in Fall 2011 on scientific realism allowed me to systematize and clarify my thoughts on an important dimension of this debate. I am also engaged in reworking our PHIL 120, Critical Thinking, and PHIL 150, Logic, in a format specifically designed for the use of iPads. A related project is to put together a critical thinking assessment test for use by our department and perhaps later by the university in efforts to assess student-learning outcomes. On a more personal note, I became a grandfather for the first time this spring!

Ann Margret Rice: When were you at IPFW? I was at IPFW in the 1980s through the 1990s. I had a successful first career culminating in a position as director of sales and marketing for the Goshen Holiday Inn. I returned to college hoping to complete my undergraduate degree in occupational therapy. It was then that I took my first philosophy course as an elective. The class was with Clark Butler, who had just finished writing a book, and we used that book for the second time. As an experiment, he decided to teach it from back to front! I was happy about this and also because I received my ever-ecstatic first A in any college course!

Jeffrey Lauver (LTU): My article about Sharon Crowder’s Toward Civil Discourse: Professional Functionalist will soon be published in the Journal of Religious Communication. I continue to work on aspects of argumentation theory currently focusing on Stephen Toulmin’s notion of field-variance and charges of vilification.

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The fact of death is not a new problem. What counts as death, though, is challenged by our ever-increasing ability to replace our natural systems with mechanical devices. Take artificial nutrition and hydration: by the end of the 20th century, they had become routine parts of healthcare at the end of life. Before the dawn of medicine’s mechanical age, if the kidneys failed, the patient died; if the heart stopped, the patient died; if the lungs stopped, the patient died. These conditionals no longer hold true. So we are left to ask: Should we resuscitate? Should we hook up a ventilator? Should we hook up the dialysis machine? As we reach the twilight of our lives, the use of these tools is complicated by our diminishing ability to consent. Patients near the end of life are often unconscious, or cognitive impairments keep them from understanding what's going on. When the patient cannot answer these questions, whom do we ask? Who will act as a surrogate decision-maker for the patient?

The answer is often based on the state in which one happens to be. For example, Illinois has a rigidly defined sequential ordering of legally recognized surrogate decision-makers. If both spouse and an adult child are available, the spouse makes the decision for the patient and not the adult child. In Indiana, however, the structure is quite different. If there is no appointed guardian or healthcare power of attorney, legally recognized surrogates are lumped together. If the spouse, adult children, and siblings are available, they make the decision together. Both approaches have their problems. In Illinois, if the patient is estranged from her spouse, that makes no difference. In Indiana, if an estranged brother from California arrives, he would get just as much say as the spouse who’s been providing home care for the patient.

Taking these difficulties to heart, let’s say that you go to this website—http://bit.ly/lbRVkh (thanks to Joyce Lazier for this particular link)—and fill out the appropriate materials to identify your healthcare decision-maker (Do this!). How then should that person decide what to do? Ideally, they would make a “substituted judgment,” which aims to imitate the decision that the patient would have made, if they could. In the worst-case scenario, the patient never discussed her values, views, or hopes for end of life care. Left without clear direction, surrogates glean from past conversations what the patient would have wanted in this unimagined future.

A living will provides one method for avoiding underdetermined directions. In this kind of document, patients identify explicitly what they want under certain circumstances. These directions range from wanting every medical intervention under every conceivable scenario to wanting no interventions at all. Many living wills however strike a more nuanced approach: resuscitate, but no intubation; provide antibiotics and pain management, but no resuscitation; and so on. Such living wills are caught on the horns of a dilemma: keep it general enough to cover all cases and it requires interpretation to implement (the guidance isn’t perfectly clear); make it specific enough to give clear guidance and it doesn’t cover all cases.

It might seem, then, that the clearest living wills sit at the extremes—do nothing or do everything. But even here, doubt gets a foothold. Say someone states that they do not ever want intubation (the placing of a ventilator). This reaction may be to the idea of spending the last few weeks of one’s life unconscious (or, even worse, conscious!) hooked up to a ventilator, bed bound, medicated, and unable to talk. Now let’s imagine that the person who wants no intubation is brought to the ER, unable to breathe. The physician judges that the individual could be put on the ventilator for a few hours and then, likely, return to the life he had before. Should the surrogate approve the doctor’s recommendation for an intubation? Or suppose someone wants everything to be done. She suffers an acute event that leaves her in a coma from which the physicians do not believe she will ever awake. To continue to care for her will exhaust the family’s assets and put them into crushing debt. Does she still want everything to be done?

It would be reasonable to conclude, given all I’ve noted above (and the other problems with living wills that I have not had time to touch on), that living wills are useless. However, here’s why they still prove valuable. They get people to do exactly what my son did—talk seriously about their own death. By confronting and discussing his own death, the patient, through the living will, provides guidance for surrogates. When your partner, your children, your siblings are looking at you as you lie in hospital bed, asked to make excruciating decisions, the living will can give them insight into the kind of decision you would make, an insight that may make a difficult situation just a little bit easier.

To sum up: Assign a Healthcare Power of Attorney (HCPOA) and make up a living will to discuss with the person you assign as your HCPOA.
I submitted for publication a paper on the epistemology of evolutionary computation (genetic algorithms), and I am working on articles on the epistemologic risk in science and on the metaphysics of possibility as related to scientific models. On the latter, I have plans to write a book.

As a pilot program, I am investigating the prospects of using iPads as personal response systems (a.k.a. clickers) both in introductory courses (PHIL 120 and PHIL 110) and in more advanced courses (PHIL 351, Philosophy of Science). I have designed two new courses on philosophy of social sciences and a course on scientific reasoning for spring 2013.

Erik S. Ohlander: I continue with my research in the field of Sufi studies in particular and Islamic social, cultural, and religious history in general. I recently published a book chapter, “Behind the Veil of the Unseen: Dreams and Dreaming in the Classical and Medieval Sufi Tradition,” in a collective volume of original research essays entitled Dreams and Visions in Islamic Societies (2012). This book was edited by Özgen Felek (Stanford University) and Alexander Knysh (University of Michigan). I also published the article “Sufism” in the new Oxford Handbook of World Philosophy (2011) and the entry “Karānma” in the monumental Encyclopedia Iranica (2011). In fall 2011, I presented a paper entitled “Travel and Exchange in the Sufi Mediterranean: The Extraordinarily Ordinary Case of Ibn al-Qastallān” and served as a respondent for a panel (The Fall of the Image: Finding and Losing Oneself through Iconoclasm) at the American Academy of Religion’s annual meeting in San Francisco. Additionally, I organized a panel sponsored by the Middle East medievalists (on which I also presented a paper) at the Middle East Studies Association annual meeting in Washington, D.C., entitled Networks of Exchange in Medieval Muslim Societies. I also served as chair of another panel, entitled Mystical, Moral, and Legal Philosophy, at the same conference.

Abraham Schwab: In March, Wiley published Philosophy and a “Game of Thrones”, in which you’ll find my essay, “‘You know nothing, Jon Snow’: Epistemic Humility beyond the Wall.” A too short investigation of the intersections of epistemology and the first four books in the Song of Ice and Fire series, it represents my first foray into the intersections of pop culture and philosophy. Let me know what you think! I’m considering a contribution to “Enders Game” and Philosophy next. I also co-authored with Christopher Bradley (sociology) an op-ed for the Journal Gazette about student attitudes and understanding of the healthcare system and health reform.

Within the more hallowed hallways of academia, the Journal of Medicine and Philosophy published my essay, “Epistemic Humility and Medical Practice.” It continues my investigation of the intersections of epistemology and clinical decision-making. The American Journal of Bioethics published a co-authored commentary on the differences between privacy and confidentiality as well as an article that suggests the creation of a new category of risk for evaluating research in medicine (I was a contributing author).

I am also spearheading an effort (with the help of Shelley Hart in the Center for Applied Ethics) to establish an undergraduate certificate in medical ethics—something that will be of interest to current and former students who want to know more, be involved with, or be better prepared to address the ethical issues that arise within our healthcare system.

Michael Spath: I continue to be very busy in the community. I am executive director of the Indiana Center for Middle East Peace, which hosted The Forgotten People conference, featuring David Beckmann, president of Bread for the World; Lynne Hybels, Willowcreek Church; Princess Kasune Zulu, AIDS activist; and Rev. Mitri Raheb, International Center of Bethlehem. We also welcomed to Fort Wayne Christian Peacemaker Team (CPT) members who have served in Iraq and Palestine; recent U.S. State Department Ambassador to Yemen and author Edmund Hull, who—along with IPFW Professor James Lutz—spoke about Al-Qaeda and the U.S. “war on terror”; and Dalia Eshkenazi Landau, founder of the Open House of Ramle in northern Israel and the main character of Sandy Tolan’s internationally-acclaimed The Lemon Tree.

The Center also sponsored a Unity Walk, as well as the fourth annual Interfaith Prayer for Human Rights, with representatives of nine religious traditions. I hosted in Fort Wayne and on campus the Venerable Arjia Rinpoche and Tibetan Buddhist monks from the Dehra Dun Monastery in India. While in Fort Wayne, they created a sand mandala at the downtown public library.

When were you at IPFW?
I was at IPFW from the ‘90s through the ‘00s. I had a successful first career culminating in a position as director of sales and marketing for the Golden Holiday Inn. I returned to college hoping to complete my undergraduate degree in occupational therapy. It was then that I took my first philosophy course as an elective. The class was with Clark Butler, who had just finished writing a book, and he was teaching that book for the second time. As an experiment, he decided to teach it from back to front! I was hooked from the start, but also because I received my ever- elusive first A in any college course!

Why did you choose to attend IPFW?
I had a late start at college, so getting my feet wet at IPFW made sense. Later I attended both Purdue and Western Michigan, but my experience and education at IPFW was more applicable in every way, and I was able to develop terrific relationships with my professors.

What are you doing now, and tell us about your family life, etc.?
Upon graduation, although encouraged to pursue graduate studies in philosophy, I tended a managerial position at Goshen Public Library as head of adult and young adult services, absent my Master of Library Science (MLS) degree. After several years as a librarian, I decided to try another. This time I landed in Fairchild’s “Introduction to Philosophy” course and discovered that I liked philosophy. Given my success in Butler’s course, I decided to try another. This time I landed in Fairchild’s “Introduction to Philosophy” course and discovered that I liked philosophy. I was enamored with Spinoza (Kathy Squadrito introduced me to Spinoza), and I decided to think more deeply about those concepts I mentioned before—recognizing oneself in the Other and the Other in oneself. Of course, I found myself in good company with all those deep, tormented souls who had the same aim. After being denied admission to the occupational therapy program at Western Michigan, I decided that IPFW would be home and philosophy was the natural choice for a major. Every lecture I participated in and each test I took, I couldn’t have felt more at home. Philosophy was a terrific major for me!

Was there a particular area of philosophy that you wanted to study? Why?
I was enamored with Spinoza (Kathy Squadrito introduced me to him) and Kant, especially his categorical imperative. I became interested in deontological ethics, and because of him, dealing with ethical issues. The work we did in both Shelly Benveniste’s and Bill Breming’s classes really justified age-old philosophical dilemmas with modern issues so that it was not only challenging, but also relectively and appreciably relevant.

I am working on papers on the philosophical aspects of Squadron’s class on animal ethics. I was drawn to concepts associated with pantheism. My father was an environmentalist who worked from home, so I grew up surrounded by his cohorts: outdoor enthusiasts, Department of Natural Resources, Environmentalists, and so on. Thus, I had a connection to the natural world and welcomed the opportunity to explore concepts that dealt with the relationship between God and nature other than the more accepted monotheistic view.

Was there a particular class or professor who made you realize “philosophy was for you”?
Without a doubt, the professor was Fairchild. He really became my mentor at the time I was struggling to find my true vocation in my life, and we developed a relationship and friendship that I will forever cherish. I never forgot his opening line on the first day of our intro class: “If I’ve done my job well, you will know less at the end of the semester than you do today.” This certainly proved true for those of us who opened ourselves to the idea that we were really being taught, that we could learn from others, and that the pursuit of lifelong discovery was at the heart of a life well-lived. The concepts of recognizing myself in the Other, of truth, beauty, and elegance, and the idea that all things exist in a matter of parts or attributes that are best understood not on their own but by their relationship to other things—a table has meaning because of a chair, we know light because we know dark, and so on—all these ideas were made transparent during his lectures.

How would you answer someone who asked you how philosophy helped you in your profession?
I am a manager in the public sector. Certainly, my studies in the area of ethics have served me well. I’ve also added that philosophical study is at the root of all studies, including business, math, computer science, music, physics, biology, medicine, and so on. I can think of no better platform from which to engage any profession or to further one’s education in a specific field. Philosophy teaches you to think.

How did your study of philosophy help you integrate your philosophical thinking with the world you entered when you graduated?
My study of philosophy has helped me to reconcile my past short-comings with my future potential. I was free to try deeper, to unpack as it were, and to be introspective without judgment. Of course, I found myself in good company with all those deep, tormented thinkers! Philosophy really helped to shape my liberal worldview, especially those concepts I mentioned before—recognizing oneself in the Other and understanding how our differences can actually serve to enrich our discourse rather than discourage it.

I realize you are very busy with your work and your family, but do you read anything philosophy related?
Yes, if looks like Where the Wild Things Are, The Giving Tree, and Green Eggs and Ham count!

What was your philosophy department experience? What was your IPFW experience?
Our department was quite small at the time, so I took a bit of refuge there. I found an environment where I was both challenged and supported. Fairchild had the most influence on me and so I continue to stay in touch today. Squadrito also was a terrific professor, although at first I was intimidated by her class in modern philosophy. I remember her talking about oral exams at Washington University, and because of him, dealing with ethical issues. The work we did in both Shelly Benveniste’s and Bill Breming’s classes really justified age-old philosophical dilemmas with modern issues so that it was not only challenging, but also appreciably relevant.

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Hello everyone and welcome to our spring 2012 newsletter!

There are many things I feel we should share with you, our alumni, but before I talk about a number of those, let me first mention that it is with great relief that we announce that Kathy Squadrato is quickly recovering from a surgery she had to undergo last fall. We expect to welcome her back in the summer. During Kathy’s absence, we needed three people to do her job! Ashley Albrecht, Kent Young, and Jeff Lauer joined us for the spring term—and we are happy to have them. You may have heard about a book that caused quite some ripples when it was published last year. Academically Adrift, written by sociologists Richard Arum and Josipa Roka (and their graduate students), finds that almost half of college students nationwide don’t learn much during their years away at school; if they do learn something, then one of the crucial factors for success (among many, many others, of course) seems to be how demanding their faculty was. The reason I’m mentioning this is because it puts into a broader context what many philosophy faculty are doing these days: namely, trying to find new ways to engage students. Clark Butler, for example, polled students to discover what they find interesting in the area of applied ethics, and as it turned out, many are concerned with political issues. He followed up on this poll with a class on the Occupy Movement. This is only the second course nationwide on this extremely important political-social-moral phenomenon, and students from as far away as California are following Clark’s efforts online in the hope that it will be a model for others. Joyce Lazier taught a course on the crisis of American democracy. Another exciting project is the outreach and service-learning project started by Jennifer Caseldine-Bracht. There has been a growing awareness that it makes sense to teach philosophy to children, and Jennifer’s project brings local students to a Fort Wayne homeless shelter where they engage children in philosophical inquiry. Stay tuned for more details on this program!

Many faculty members in the department joined the IPFW iPad cohort to explore the potential new technologies—tablet computers in particular—have in engaging students better and making the learning and teaching experience more fun and also more immersive. After all, we want our students to take away many things from our classes, and if new gadgets do the trick, we should embrace them. Thus, it was our department that sponsored the first iPad class ever offered on our campus. Every student in a section of PHIL303, History of Modern Philosophy—a course you all have taken—was given an iPad. Joyce Lazier taught it, and instead of having students write a final paper, she instructed them to use iMovie to turn the paper into some sort of documentary film. The results were very encouraging; just by forcing students to read their paper repeatedly as a narrative for the iMovie project increased the quality of the papers. Check out for yourself! You can find a link to the video projects on our department homepage (ipfw.edu/philosophy). Currently, various philosophy faculty are busy redesigning many of our entry-level courses—Introduction to Philosophy, Ethics, Critical Thinking, and Principles of Logic—so that we can start offering iPad sections of those courses as soon as possible (hopefully even this fall). Will it work out? Will we see the efforts many faculty members put into it be rewarded? We hope, but don’t yet know.

In closing, I wish to mention that Ken Long has passed the baton of “alumni relations” to Mike Spath, which means Mike is now in charge of the newsletter you’re holding in your hands. We are grateful for Ken to have it started and look forward Mike’s contributions. As always, if you have suggestions and ideas as to what we could include, or if you want to be interviewed and share something, do let us know!

All our best and yours in discourse,

Bernd Buldt