

DEPARTMENT OF

# PHILOSOPHY NEWS

FALL 2024

## Greetings from the Chair

Dear Alumni and Friends:

The Department of Philosophy is gearing up for the start of another exciting academic year! Let me take a minute to update you on some of the great things the department accomplished since our last newsletter and preview some of the things we hope to accomplish this academic year.

The philosophy faculty have been very active and very successful this year. Several members of the department were recently promoted: Dr. Eric Godoy was granted tenure and promoted to associate professor, Dr. Daniel Breyer was promoted to full professor, and Dr. Alison Bailey was named University Professor—this is one of the highest honors the University bestows on a faculty member for truly exceptional research and teaching. Dr. Christopher Horvath was appointed to a second five-year term as department chair. In light of the anticipated retirement of Dr. Alison Bailey in December 2024, the Department of Philosophy worked with the African American Studies program to successfully hire a new faculty member with expertise in philosophy of race. Dr. John Lawless joined the department as an assistant professor in fall 2023 with a joint appointment in philosophy and African American Studies. In addition to teaching our courses in Philosophy of Law, Dr. Lawless will develop and teach philosophy courses that serve as elective options within the African American Studies minor. Finally, Dr. Derek O'Connell, the department's academic advisor and assistant to the chair, was recently awarded the College of Arts and Science Excellence Award for Outstanding Service by a member of the Administrative Professional Staff.

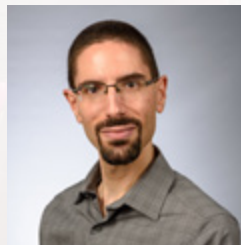
Starting in fall 2023, the department undertook a comprehensive examination of our current curriculum. The committee collected and considered data on enrollment trends, student success measures such as retention and time to degree, trends in faculty



Dr. Eric Godoy



Dr. Daniel Breyer



Dr. Derek O'Connell

teaching assignments, comparisons with comparator and aspirational programs, and changes within the discipline. The department curriculum committee proposed substantive revisions to the curriculum of the philosophy major. Our goals were to make the curriculum more inclusive, decrease barriers to timely completion of the degree, and spread teaching of core courses in the major among more members of the faculty. We will resume discussions of this curriculum proposal in August and plan to reach final decisions about any revisions before the end of November.

A total of 17 students have graduated with a bachelor's degree in philosophy since our last newsletter. The names of all recent graduates are listed elsewhere in this newsletter. On behalf of the department, let me wish each of these graduates a hearty congratulations! Welcome to the ranks of our honored alumni! Speaking of honored alumni—check out what's happening with our graduates in the "Alumni Updates" section elsewhere in this newsletter. If you would like us to acknowledge a recent event in your life (e.g. finished a graduate degree, started a new job, received a promotion, won an award, etc.) send us an email at [Philosophy@IllinoisState.edu](mailto:Philosophy@IllinoisState.edu), and let us know! We'll be glad to include you in a future edition.

In April 2023 and again in April 2024, the Department of Philosophy Scholarship Committee nominated students for the Scott M. Elliott Outstanding New Philosophy Student Scholarship, the Scott M. Elliott Outstanding Continuing Philosophy Student Scholarship, and the Kenneth and Marilyn Kennard Outstanding Graduating Student Scholarship. The faculty selected winners of each of these scholarships, and the winners were announced and recognized at our annual awards ceremony and banquet held the week before spring commencement. During the banquet, we also recognized the winners of the Scott M. Elliott Essay Prize in Philosophy. You can find a list of all the scholarship winners elsewhere in this newsletter. Congratulations to all our scholarship recipients!

At the suggestion from some members of the faculty, the department created a new departmental scholarship: "The Department of Philosophy Leadership Award." Each year, we will award a \$250 scholarship that recognizes a philosophy major for excellence in leadership and involvement. This award will be given to a student each year who has: inspired success, engagement, and a sense of belonging in philosophy students; made meaningful contributions to the department in a way that impacts philosophy students; and/or demonstrated initiative in seeking ways to enrich the experience of philosophy students. The Leadership Award will be funded by the Department of Philosophy Excellence Fund.

## Student Award Winners

### Scott M. Elliott Outstanding New Philosophy Student Scholarship

Michael Bloomfield, 2023  
Ana Djordjevic, 2024

### Scott M. Elliott Outstanding Continuing Philosophy Student Scholarship

Sara O'Dowd and Sneh Vora, 2023  
Adrian Hogan and Robert Reckamp, 2024

### Kenneth and Marilyn Kennard Outstanding Graduating Philosophy Student Scholarship

Erik Lynch, 2023  
William Restis, 2024

### Scott M. Elliott Essay Prize in Philosophy

Erik Lynch, "Forgiveness in a Broken World: Forgiveness, *Disponibilité*, and *Homo Viator*." 2023  
Adrian Hogan, "Aristotelian Nichomachean Ethics Applied to the Exploitation of Undocumented Workers." 2024

## Recent graduates

### Summer 2022

Tre Garner, Leila White, Sam Wolski

### Fall 2022

Deontae Curry

### Spring 2023

Alexus Loreda, Justin Walker

### Summer 2023

Erik Lynch, Kinshasa Taylor

### Fall 2024

Trenton Cintron, Karly Strand

### Spring 2024

Maximilian Basso, Sarah Kerkemeyer, Mandy Kim, Andrew Mostert, Braxton Myers, William Restis, Auston Stealy



Over the last year, the department has helped bring local chapters of two national philosophy student organizations to Illinois State. At the request of some of the students in our major and working with those students, we submitted a petition to create a chapter of Phi Sigma Tau, International Honors Society in Philosophy. Our petition was approved in fall 2023, and the Illinois Upsilon Chapter was officially installed here at Illinois State. We also welcomed an Illinois State chapter of Minorities and Philosophy (MAP). MAP is an international organization

whose mission is to address structural injustices in academic philosophy and to remove barriers that impede participation in academic philosophy for members of marginalized groups. Both organizations join the Illinois State Philosophical Society as official registered student organizations associated with the Department of Philosophy.

I would like to thank all our alumni and friends for your ongoing support of the Philosophy Department. Your participation in our public events and your donations to our Illinois State University Foundation funds are very much appreciated by both the faculty and current student body. If you ever find yourself on campus, please stop by and say hi! I'm looking forward to another successful and enjoyable academic year!



Cheers,

Christopher Horvath Ph.D.,  
Department Chair

## Faculty Updates



Dr. John Lawless

Dr. John Lawless joined the department in August 2024 as an assistant professor with a joint appointment in African American Studies. Professor Lawless earned his Ph.D. in philosophy at the University of North Carolina, Chapel Hill, in 2016. Since then, he has held positions at the University of Pittsburgh, Davidson College, and most recently, Utica University in Central New York. In his research, he explores the relationship between freedom and the rule of law, and the ways in which racist ideologies rationalize serious departures from the rule of law. His current book project focuses specifically on the processes by which people negotiate

racial boundaries in racist communities and on the ways in which these negotiations empower white elites to prevent multi-racial alliances from coalescing in opposition to existing power structures. At Illinois State, Dr. Lawless will teach classes in the philosophy of law and will develop new courses in the philosophy of race in collaboration with the African American Studies program.



Dr. Alison Bailey

It is with great appreciation and admiration that we announce the retirement of University Professor and Director of the Women's, Gender, and Sexuality Studies (WGSS) program, Dr. Alison Bailey, at the end of the fall 2024 semester. With 31 years of dedication to the Department of Philosophy and 20 years at the helm of the WGSS program, Dr. Bailey leaves behind a legacy of outstanding scholarship, service, and leadership at Illinois State University. A retirement reception has been planned in Dr. Bailey's honor to celebrate her time at Illinois State. The reception took place on November 15 at University Galleries.

# Faculty Scholarship Update

## AI and the Humanities: An Interdisciplinary Symposium

Generative artificial intelligence (AI), large language processing models, advanced analytics, reinforced and unsupervised machine learning, predictive prose. Humanist scholars and educators outside of computer science, mathematics, engineering, and cognitive science are now versed in the terminology of AI, but conversations about the potential epistemological, ethical, existential, and pedagogical impact of technologies of human behavior simulation are still young. The Department of Philosophy, along with the Department of English, the Department of Language, Literatures, and Cultures, the School of Communication, and the Women's, Gender, and Sexualities Studies Program will co-host an international symposium on AI and the humanities in April 2025. The AI and the Humanities Symposium is a unique opportunity to foster discussion among scholars, teachers, and students from around the world and across disciplines of the humanities, arts, and connected social sciences. The symposium will be held at Illinois State April 16-18, 2025. Calls for proposals and invitations to keynote speakers went out in August 2024. If you are interested in the symposium, please look for updates on our department website or contact the department at Philosophy. IllinoisState.edu. Funding for the symposium has been generously provided by the Illinois State University Provost Innovation and Enhancement Grant and the Sage Fund.

## Bailey Invited to Present Anti-Racist Scholarship at Arcadia University



Dr. Alison Bailey (center) with Dr. Michelle Reale and Dr. Christopher Varlack executive director of the Center for Anti-Racist Scholarship, Advocacy and Action at Arcadia University

Dr. Alison Bailey was invited to give a series of lectures at Arcadia University on her recent book *The Weight of Whiteness: A Feminist Engagement with Privilege, Race, and Ignorance*. Her visit was sponsored by the Center for Anti-Racist Scholarship, Advocacy and Action (CASAA) and included a lecture to the university community and general public on White Talk, Privilege, and Ignorance—which she argues “is designed, indeed scripted, for the purposes of evading, rejecting, and remaining ignorant about the injustices that flow from whiteness and its attendant privileges”—as well as on privilege and ignorance. The day concluded with a panel discussion on “The Work of Antiracism: Approaches and Barriers,” after which Dr. Bailey was presented with the first-ever CASAA Award for Galvanizing Change.

# Office Updates



Crystal Scheiman

Kudos to Crystal Scheiman, the department's outstanding administrative aide, on receiving The Scott M. Elliott Award for Outstanding Staff: Civil Service in fall 2024. This award is designed to recognize a Civil Service staff member for his or her significant contributions to the College of Arts and Sciences. The Elliott Award recognizes that, on top of Scheiman's exemplary performance in her regular duties, she has demonstrated

an outstanding level of service to the College of Arts and Sciences, and to the larger Illinois State community.

Crystal Scheiman was also featured in an article titled “Wheels of Change: Cycling as a form of civic engagement?” published in the *Redbird Impact* magazine in fall 2024. Scheiman is well known around campus for reducing her impact on the environment by riding her bike to work almost every day—rain or shine (or even snow)! You can view the article at [News.IllinoisState.edu/2024/09/Wheels-of-change-cycling-a-form-of-civic-engagement](https://News.IllinoisState.edu/2024/09/Wheels-of-change-cycling-a-form-of-civic-engagement).



The Department of Philosophy is now a Green Workplace! The department completed the Green Workplace Certification in summer 2024. To achieve the Green Workplace designation, the department had to document our current and future commitment to sustainability practices. The department has always tried to use resources in an environmentally responsible way. We are very pleased to be recognized for our efforts! To view more details about the Green Workplace, please visit [Sustainability.IllinoisState.edu/Commitment/Green-workplace](https://Sustainability.IllinoisState.edu/Commitment/Green-workplace).

# Alumni Updates

Sam Sorich '13 is an award-winning filmmaker. He studied philosophy here at Illinois State from 2011 to 2013 and graduated with a B.A. in philosophy. The department was pleased to host a screening of his latest documentary film *Things Hidden: The Life and Legacy of René Girard* at the Normal Theater in November 2024. Sorich was in attendance for the screening and led a question-and-answer session following the conclusion of the film. This event was co-hosted by our new Illinois State Chapter of Phi Sigma Tau International Honor Society for Philosophy.

Holden Marshall '21 received his Master of Theological Studies and Master of Sacred Theology from Boston University School of Theology. He has been accepted into the University of Pennsylvania's Ph.D. program.

We would like to recognize the outstanding accomplishments of our alumni in upcoming newsletters. If you graduated from Illinois State University and either majored or minored in philosophy and would like us to acknowledge a recent event in your life (e.g., finished a graduate degree, started a new job, received a promotion, won an award, etc.) send us an email at [Philosophy@IllinoisState.edu](mailto:Philosophy@IllinoisState.edu), and let us know! Include a mention of the year you graduated in the message, and we'll include it in our next newsletter!

Did you know that we have a departmental survey open to alumni? Whether you graduated one year ago or 30, please consider taking the survey and letting us know about your experience in our program and what you received from your time here. The survey is anonymous. We use it to assess whether we are meeting our goals as a department, so your input is greatly valued! A link to the survey can be found at [Philosophy.IllinoisState.edu/alumni](http://Philosophy.IllinoisState.edu/alumni).

If you want to provide some non-anonymized feedback, or just want to let us know how you are doing, feel free to reach out directly to [Philosophy@IllinoisState.edu](mailto:Philosophy@IllinoisState.edu)!

## Student Awards

Every year the department offers three different scholarships for outstanding philosophy majors: The Scott M. Elliott Outstanding New Philosophy Student Scholarship, the Scott M. Elliott Outstanding Continuing Philosophy Student Scholarship, the Kenneth and the Marilyn Kennard Outstanding Graduating Students Scholarship. The Department of Philosophy Scholarship Committee nominates eligible students for each of these scholarships, and the faculty selects the winner. In especially strong years, more than one winner for an individual award may be chosen. In addition, each spring, students are invited to submit their work for the Scott M. Elliott Essay Prize in Philosophy. The Department of Philosophy Scholarship Committee reviews the submissions and selects a winner.

These awards are made possible, thanks to the generous support of alumni endowments and private gifts. Donations to our scholarship funds, as well as to our general excellence funds, are always welcome and encouraged. Your support helps our students succeed!





## THANK YOU!

The Department of Philosophy would like to thank all the friends and alumni who have very generously offered their support over the past year. We are fortunate to have three foundation funds that provide vital support to the department and to philosophy students. The Scott M. Elliott Endowment in Philosophy exists due to the generous donation of Mr. Scott Elliott, an alum of both the Department of Philosophy and the Department of Economics. The Elliott Endowment is used to support both faculty and student scholarship. The Outstanding Continuing Philosophy Student Scholarship, the Outstanding New Philosophy Student, and the Scott M. Elliott Essay Prize are all supported by this endowment. This endowment also helps support the Department of Philosophy Colloquium Series. The Kenneth and Marilyn Kennard Fund began with a generous donation from Professor Kenneth Kennard, the first chairperson of the Philosophy Department. This fund supports the Kenneth and Marilyn Kennard Outstanding Graduating Student Scholarship. Finally, the department also receives support from the Department of Philosophy Excellence Fund. Among other initiatives, the Excellence Fund supports the department's Textbook Award, which provides resources to students who need financial assistance in purchasing the books and materials required for their philosophy courses. It also provides funds to allow philosophy students to travel to undergraduate philosophy conferences. The Philosophy Peer Mentorship Program and the Leadership Award are also both supported by the Excellence Fund.

If you are interested in supporting the department and our students, please consider donating to either the Kenneth and Marilyn Kennard Fund or the Philosophy Excellence Fund! You can do so by using the form below or online at [Giving.IllinoisState.edu](https://giving.illinoisstate.edu).

## Student Updates

### New Peer Mentoring Program in Philosophy

The department received a Provost Innovation and Enhancement Grant (funded by the College of Arts and Sciences) for \$3,072 in Fiscal Year 2023 to create the Peer Mentoring Program in Philosophy. Dr. Daniel Breyer serves as director of this mentorship program. Over the summer of 2023, he created a comprehensive and intensive training program for mentors and recruited four outstanding students to serve as peer mentors in the inaugural year of the program. The official purpose of the Peer Mentor Program is to provide students taking philosophy courses with the chance to meet one-on-one or in small groups with peer mentors who have been trained to help them cultivate and refine the fundamental skills needed to read and write philosophy. But those are not the only goals of the Peer Mentorship Program! It is also about helping students—including the mentors themselves—become self-confident learners, while ideally fostering a sense of belonging in the Philosophy Department.

The following students serve as peer mentors: Sneh Vora, Sara O'Dowd, Michael Bloomfield, Robert Reckamp, and William Restis (2023-24). We plan to continue this program using resources from the Department of Philosophy Excellence Fund.



### PHILOSOPHY PEER MENTORS

Meet with a Peer Mentor in Milner Library for help with:

- Reading philosophy
- Writing for philosophy
- Research in philosophy
- Time management skills
- Study skills

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YOU CAN FIND US ON THE MAIN FLOOR (2ND FLOOR) OF MILNER (BY THE LONG TABLES) ON FIRST-COME FIRST-SERVED

BASIS AT:  
MONDAY: 4-6  
TUESDAY: 2-4  
WEDNESDAY: 11-1  
THURSDAY-- 10-12

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Please arrive ready to get it R.I.G.H.T

This can include:

- Try to get through assigned reading
- Have specific questions
- Have read the assignment description
- Be ready to take responsibility for your work
- And more!

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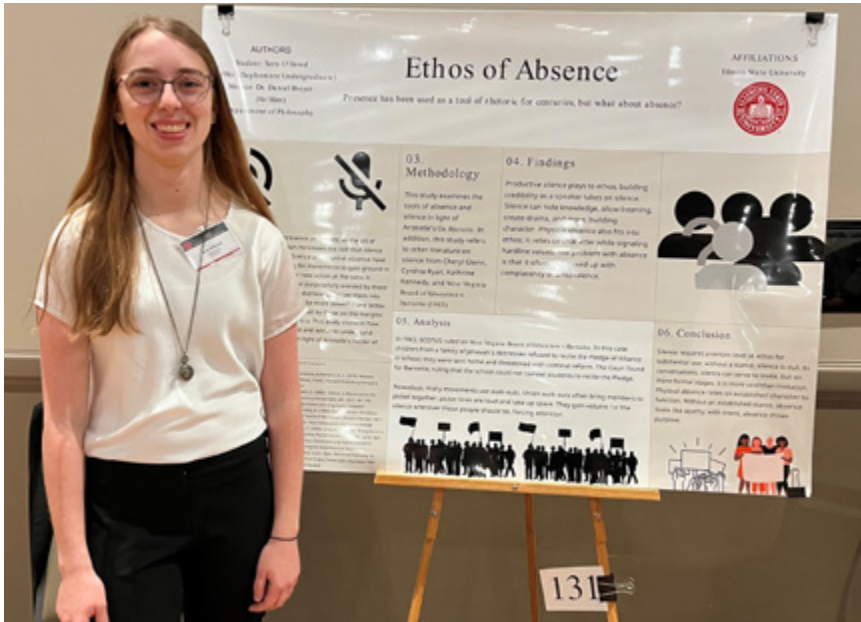
Please note:

Mentors are not experts.  
Mentors cannot and will not do your work for you.  
We are here to help guide you to developing the skills needed to succeed in philosophy.

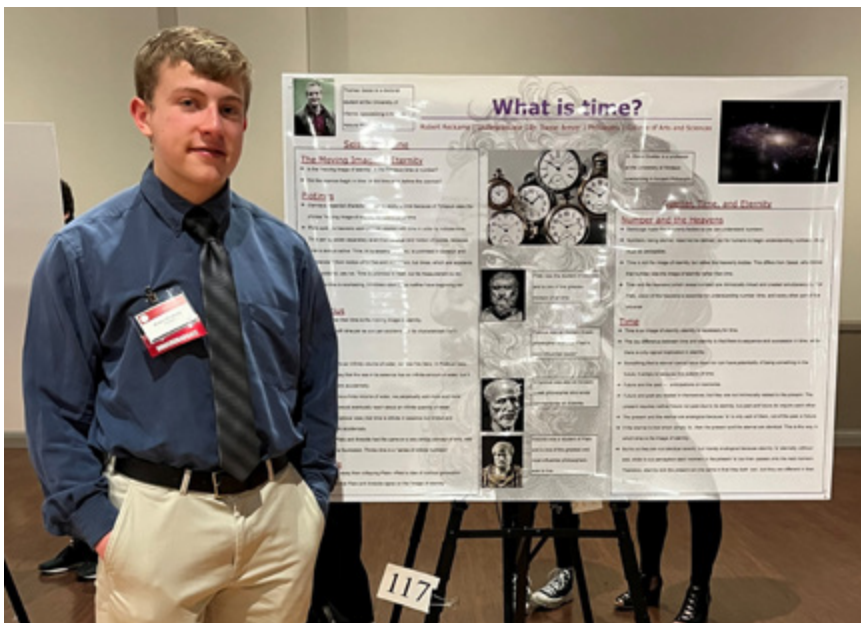


# Undergraduate Philosophy Research

Illinois State hosts an annual University Research Symposium each April. The symposium is an opportunity for undergraduate students to present their own independent scholarship done under the mentorship of a faculty member. Since our last newsletter, two philosophy students have presented posters summarizing their research.



In 2023, Sara O'Dowd presented a research poster titled "The Ethos of Absence." Her study explores the role of silence and physical absence as tools of rhetoric. Silence and absence have become increasingly important rhetorical tools, especially in the hands of those on the political margins. O'Dowd based her analysis on Aristotle's model of rhetoric. Dr. Daniel Breyer served as her faculty mentor.



At the 2024 University Research Symposium, Robert Reckamp presented, "Plato and Time—Can Time Exist Without the Material World?" His research compared the views of two different modern scholars, Thomas Seissl and David Guetter, on Plato's understanding of time as discussed in the *Timaeus*. Dr. Daniel Breyer served as faculty mentor for this project.

## CALL FOR JOB/ INTERNSHIP OPPORTUNITIES


One of the benefits of college is becoming part of a larger network that brings together current and former students, including through opportunities such as internships and jobs. As alumni, you know the benefits a philosophy degree can bring, as well as how the right connection can help in finding that ideal internship or starting job role.


Does your workplace have internships or job opportunities that would be a great fit for our current students or recent graduates? If so, we'd like to help make the connection. Reach out to Dr. Derek O'Connell at [drocon1@IllinoisState.edu](mailto:drocon1@IllinoisState.edu), and he'll work with you to find just the right person for the role!

If you yourself are looking for a new job, remember that in addition to our department's resources, alumni have access to Illinois State University's Career Services office, which has job boards and more. Find more information at [CareerServices.IllinoisState.edu](http://CareerServices.IllinoisState.edu), where you can learn how to get connected as an alum.



For more information, visit [Homecoming.IllinoisState.edu](http://Homecoming.IllinoisState.edu)

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