



EASTERN MICHIGAN UNIVERSITY

# PHILOSOPHY

## 2025 Newsletter



Our 2024 Fall Reception was a great success! We had pizza! We played games!

Students, alumni, and friends, please join us for the 2025 Fall Reception. It will take place September 8 at 5:00 at the EMU Lakehouse.





**Last fall, Eastern Michigan students competed for the first time in the Intercollegiate Ethics Bowl!**

Five students competed as EMU's first ever Ethics Bowl team at the Central States Regional Ethics Bowl Tournament in Fall 2024. Ethics Bowl is a national competition that emphasizes thoughtful, charitable dialogue, ethical reasoning, and civil disagreement rather than adversarial debate. The tournament, held at Marian University in Indianapolis, took place on November 16. Team **members Aleksei Alward** (Philosophy), **Jay Christensen** (Philosophy), **Ramses Leon** (Africology & African Studies and Political Science), **Drew Hengy** (Philosophy and History), **Allie Zwiker** (Information Assurance & Cyber Defense) equipped themselves admirably against teams from universities with long Ethics Bowl traditions and almost toppled the team that won the whole tournament in one of their matches. Coaches and philosophy professors Kris Phillips and Peter Higgins were extremely proud of team members' extemporaneous speaking and ethical reasoning skills. The team will return to Indianapolis again in November 2025 with its sights set on qualifying for the national tournament.



And here is the EMU team in action!



If you are a current EMU undergraduate student and you are interested in being a part of this year's Ethics Bowl team, contact Professor Phillips at [kphill50@emich.edu](mailto:kphill50@emich.edu).



# The 15th annual Undergraduate Conference in Philosophy

EMU's Undergraduate Conference in Philosophy (UCiP) began in 2011. At that time, it was student follow through on an aspirational goal. Needless to say, those students could not have known that



their hard work would turn into a decade and a half of international, annual meetings of undergraduate philosophers! At the heart of UCiP is the dedication of EMU Philosophy students – a torch passed from one cohort to the next for going on 15 years. This year's team of student organizers, **Aleksei Alward, Wes Bostwick, Josh Caine-Welch, Amy Gardner, Brett Jensen, Austin Meek, Justin Reamer, Edgar Vasquez, and Dylan Wolfe**, pulled together another two-day UCiP, featuring

philosophy from around the globe. Next year the torch will be passed to another group of EMU students, ensuring that Philosophy's premiere co-curricular event continues to deliver for undergraduate philosophers everywhere.

This year, Dr. Hallie Liberto, from Maryland University shared her research and her mentoring time with all conference goers. Her enthusiasm for philosophy and willingness to share her own journey made her an excellent addition to our long line of terrific keynote speakers.



Two of our own students presented papers, **Aleksei Alward** and **Jason Folk**. Other EMU students participated in a key component of our conference, serving as commenters. This feature of conference not only mirrors Philosophy's professional conferences, it serves as the starting point for future conversations and the possibility of transformative critique. Thanks to **Eli Card, Priya Ghotane, Gracie Hand, Jay Christensen, Jacqueline Deinek, Jonah Huskey-Wright, and Evertt Peabody**, as well as **Aleksei** and **Jason**, for serving in this critical role.

Papers covered philosophers from Plato and Kierkegaard and topics from epigenetics to decolonial feminism. As always, the conference was a total blast! Students traveled from nearby institutions, like Wayne State, and from as far as Shuyun NIU in Hong Kong.

Feeling like helping out? We are always looking for volunteers and attendees. This year's conference is **November 8th and 9th**. Mark your calendar and be in touch! If you'd like to help fund the conference, we're looking to get our endowment to the level we can start drawing funds – donate here (<https://www.emich.edu/foundation/give/>). We're fund number 02879.

# Acta Cogitata

ACTA COGITATA



Acta has now exceeded 48,000 downloads. Very cool!

Thanks to the tireless work of **Edgar Vasquez** and **Amy Gardner**, Volume 12, 2024, made it to print! (So to speak anyway, since the journal is housed in our very own Digital Commons.) This year's volume included papers by Bridget Boczar, Benjamin Cambell, Kerrigan Miranda, and our very own **Nicole Reid**. Nicole's paper is her second to be selected for the journal. Her paper, "Hermeneutical Injustice and Special Education," is definitely worth a read. All volumes of Acta Cogitata can be found here:

<https://commons.emich.edu/ac/>

## Philosophy Club

The Philosophy Club provides a forum for philosophical inquiry across a wide range of contemporary topics with discussions led by students.

We are grateful for the service and dedication of those who held leadership positions in Philosophy Club this past year:

President: **Edgar Vasquez**

Vice President: **Aleksei Alward**

Secretary: **Amy Gardner**

Treasurer: **Justin Reamer**

Faculty Advisor: **Dr. Jeremy Proulx**

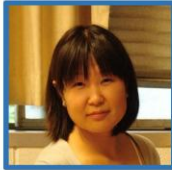


# Philosophy Speaker Series

2024-2025 Eastern Michigan University Philosophy Speaker Series

## Envisioning Transcultural Feminist Futures: A Case Study of Chinese Feminist Philosophy in Transcultural Contexts

Sponsored by the Department of History & Philosophy



Dr. Yuanfang Dai  
Michigan State University



This talk is a philosophical reflection of the Chinese feminist scholarship from the mid-1990s to the present. I argue that the intellectual development of Chinese feminist scholarship in the past several decades is significantly influenced by US-oriented global feminism and international feminism, but at the same time, Chinese feminist scholarship evolves from an existing history and through its reflections on the complicated relationship between global influences and local Chinese feminism.

THURSDAY, November 7  
5:00-6:30 pm, Pray-Harold 219

2024-2025 Eastern Michigan University Philosophy Speaker Series

## The Dialogues of Confucius: A Lost Classic and Its Philosophical Significance

Sponsored by the Department of History & Philosophy



Dr. Brian Bruya  
E.M.U.



The *Dialogues of Confucius* (*Kongzi jia yu ji* 孔子家語) is an unexplored resource for the philosophy of Confucius. In this presentation, I will discuss the history of the text and make a case for it as a lost classic that can still speak to us today. Due to questionable critiques, the *Dialogues of Confucius* fell into disrepute centuries ago. Recently excavated texts and a more rigorous examination reveal that the book deserves reconsideration as a work that dates from not long after the death of Confucius. I'll make a case for its relevance today by reconstructing from it a multi-level theory of governing that is a cyclic process proceeding from the moral psychology of the individual to social organization, to the society as grounded in natural processes, and to the metaphysics of the natural processes themselves. I will compare this multi-level cyclic process to contemporary Western economic and political theory that is based on the rational individual, majoritarian democratic rule, the social contract, and which is vulnerable to the tragedy of the commons.

Thursday, December 5  
5:00 – 6:30 pm  
Pray-Harold 219  
Reception to follow

2024-2025 Eastern Michigan University Philosophy Speaker Series

## Adapting Environmental Hope

Sponsored by the Department of History & Philosophy



Dr. Allen Thompson  
Oregon State University

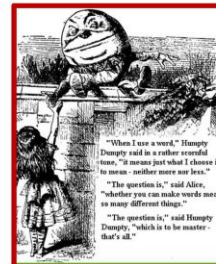


**Abstract:** This talk is about how a virtue of hope is possible in the face of unfolding, impending, and irreversible anthropogenic global environmental change. I argue that saving historic nature (the ecosystems, biodiversity, and climate conditions characteristic of the Holocene) cannot be the object of the virtuous person's environmental hopes for the Anthropocene because such hopes involve denial. Nonetheless, a disposition to hope well is a virtue, and hopes about life on Earth under new and unstable environmental conditions should not be abandoned. I describe how a virtue of environmental hope for the Anthropocene is possible, but this requires that the objects and even the concept of hope itself be suitably adapted. We should embrace but pass through despair to grieve the loss of significant parts of historic nature, yet we must act as though we can save it. Then we should develop a radical hope akin to courage that human capacities for adaptation and flourishing, along with other systems of life on the planet, are resilient and up to challenges presented by novel and very difficult conditions of an emerging new ecological world order.

THURSDAY, March 6<sup>th</sup>  
5:00-6:30 pm  
Pray-Harold 219

2024-2025 Eastern Michigan University Philosophy Speaker Series

## HOW TO DO THINGS WITH WORDS AS A MORAL ERROR THEORIST



Moral substitutionists are moral error theorists who attempt to use ordinary moral language to perform speech acts that do not commit moral error. In this presentation, I explore the viability of moral substitutionism as a linguistic practice. I find that current moral substitutionists are likely to have many of their moral speech-acts misfire. However, I argue that moral substitutionists can ensure speech act success by tailoring their moral substitutions to the goals of a given discourse. I call such a practice "substitutional pluralism" because it entails shifting between the various versions of moral substitutionism.



Dylan Wolfe  
E.M.U.

THURSDAY, MARCH 20  
5:00-6:30 pm, P-H 219

For information on upcoming talks, all of which are free and open to the public, be sure to check out the [Philosophy Speaker Series page](#).

**We hope to see you at the 2025-2026 events!**

# Endowed Scholarship Recipients

The **Esther Walker Barnard Endowed Scholarship** was established by a supporter of the Department of History and Philosophy and is awarded annually to an outstanding philosophy major.

- 2025 Recipient: **Jason Folk**

The **George Rhodes Endowed Scholarship** was created in memory of a philosophy major who passed away while he was an EMU student and is awarded annually to an outstanding philosophy major.

- 2025 Recipient: **Olivia Niemenski**

The **Sophia Endowed Scholarship** was established by Professors Kate Mehuron, Jill Dieterle, and Margaret Crouch and is awarded annually to an outstanding philosophy major or minor.

- 2025 Recipient: **Everett Peabody**

The Friends of History and Philosophy Scholarship was created by the faculty and friends of the Department. The recipient alternates between the History Program and the Philosophy Program.

- 2025 Recipient: **Jonah Huskey-Wright**

The **Stephen G. Cassar Memorial Endowed Scholarship** was created by Professor George Cassar in honor of his brother and is awarded annually to an outstanding philosophy M.A. student.

- 2025 Recipient: **Joshua Caine-Welch**

# Prize and Award Recipients

The **Philosophy Prize** is given annually to outstanding graduating students.

- 2025 undergraduate recipient: **Aleksei Alward**
- 2025 graduate student recipient: **Edgar Vasquez**

The **Outstanding Essay Award** is given in recognition of excellence in philosophical writing.

- 2025 undergraduate recipient: **Amara Kwesiaku**, for her essay "A Plurality of Psychiatric Kinds and its Implications for the Diagnostic Kind Model of Mental Disorders."
- 2025 graduate student recipient: **Dylan Wolfe**, for his essay "Moral Substitutionism, Speech Act Theory, The Conversational Record, and Substitutional Pluralism"



# Departmental Honors

**Louise Missome-Engohang** graduated with Departmental Honors in Philosophy.

Thesis: *"The Effects of Racial Gaslighting on Community Policing: An Exploration of Contemporary Hermeneutical Injustice within Marginalized Communities"*

Faculty Mentor: Jill Dieterle

## Undergraduate Symposium Presentations

**Aleksei Alward**

Paper title: "Critiquing Innate Knowledge in Plato's Philosophy of Education"

Faculty mentor: Kris Phillips

**Jason Folk**

Paper title: "A Scientist and a Journalist Walk into a Bar: An Exploration of the Inner Workings of Science-Media Relations"

Faculty mentor: John Koolage

**Jonah Huskey-Wright**

Paper title: "From Kalipolis to Capitol Hill: Plato's Oligarchic Parallels to the US Political System"

Faculty mentor: Kris Phillips

**Nicholas C. O'Donnell**

Paper Title: "Xiao: A Pillar of Social Structure and Connecting Link Between Confucian Texts"

Faculty Mentor: Brian Bruya

## Graduate Research and Creative Activity Conference Presentations

**Joshua Caine-Welch**

Paper title: "Determining the Nature of Tian"

Faculty mentor: Brian Bruya

**Amy Gardner**

Paper title: "Liking, Preferring, Enjoying: Hao and Confucius' Philosophy"

Faculty mentor: Brian Bruya



**Brett Jensen**

Paper title: "The Panoptic Effects of Technology"

Faculty mentor: Kate Mehuron

**Austin Meek**

Paper title: "Autonomy in the Dialogues of Confucius"

Faculty mentor: Brian Bruya

**Justin Reamer**

Paper title: "On Triage"

Faculty mentor: John Koolage

**Edgar Vasquez**

Paper title: "The Confucian Dilemma of Service in an Unjust World"

Faculty mentor: Brian Bruya

**Dylan Wolfe**

Paper title: "Moral Substitutionism, Speech Act Theory, The Conversational Record, and Substitutional Pluralism"

Faculty mentor: Jill Dieterle

## Master of Arts Graduates

**Austin Belanger-lott**

Capstone Paper: "Why Representation is in Need of Empathy Practices"

Committee: Professor Kate Mehuron (advisor), Professors John Koolage and Peter Higgins (readers).

**Amy Gardner**

Capstone Paper: "Why Girls Can't Just Have Fun: Video Game Worlds and Gendered Embodiment"

Committee: Professor Laura McMahon (advisor), Professors Kate Mehuron and John Koolage (readers).

**John Milkovich**

Capstone Paper: "Social Civility Theory and Epistemic Injustice"

Committee: Professor Jill Dieterle (advisor), Professors John Koolage and Michael Scoville (readers)

### **Edgar Vasquez**

Capstone Paper: "Tripping Upwards: On Psychedelic Moral Intervention"

Committee: Professor Brian Bruya (advisor), Professors Kris Phillips and John Koolage (readers).

### **Dylan Wolfe**

Capstone Paper: "How To Do Things with Words as a Moral Error Theorist"

Committee: Professor Jill Dieterle (advisor), Professors John Koolage and Michael Scoville (readers)

## **Graduate and Professional Schools**

Several of our students were accepted to outstanding graduate and professional programs:

### **Philosophy Undergraduate Majors and Minors:**

- **Baharia Azad**, Ph.D. program in Political Science at the University of Chicago.
- **Louise Missome-Engohang**, MA program in Public Policy at Harvard University.

### **Philosophy Masters students:**

- **Joah DeCasas**, Ph.D. program in philosophy at the University of British Columbia.
- **Amy Gardner**, Ph.D. program in philosophy at Marquette University.
- **John Milkovich**, Ph.D. program in philosophy at the University of Kansas.
- **Dylan Wolfe**, Ph.D. program in philosophy at the University of Nebraska.



# Additional Student Accomplishments

## Undergraduate Philosophy Majors and Minors:

**Aleksei Alward** presented “What Exactly are You Sorry For? An Application of Philosophy of Language to Disability and Unwanted Apologies” at the University of L Philosophy’s Humphrey Colloquium and “Ritual Propriety and ‘Proper’ Emotions: How Li and Feelings Interact in the Dialogues of Confucius” at the Midwest Conference in Chinese Thought and, with Amy Gardner and Edgar Vasquez (two of our graduate students), “The Benefits of Departmental Pluralism” at the EMU Faculty Development Center’s Flipping the Script conference in November. This paper will be published in the conference proceedings. Finally, Aleksei will be starting our MA program in the fall.

**Bahria Azad** will be attending the University of Chicago in the fall, in pursuit of a Ph.D. in Political Science.

**Jason Folk** received an Undergraduate Research Stimulus Award from EMU to do research this summer with Professor Koolage. He also received the Gold Medalion Award from Student Life for Exemplary Community Engagement. He was selected for the 2025 Student Voting Honor Roll by the ALL IN Campus Democracy Challenge, which recognizes students for their outstanding efforts to increase college student voters and democratic engagement on campuses. He was part of EMU’s forensic team, which placed fifth in the nation at last week’s American Forensics Association National Speech Tournament; individually, he reached the quarterfinals in extemporaneous speaking, program oral interpretation, and dramatic interpretation.

**Priya Ghotane** has been studying philosophy at Oxford University this academic year. She received the Gilman Scholarship to fund her studies.

**Jonah Huskey-Wright** received the Gregory W. Stevens Scholarship from CAS. He will be at Oxford University in the fall for a study abroad semester, and has an internship this summer with the Washtenaw County Prosecutor’s office, criminal division.

**Amara Kwesiaku** was awarded the Collins’ Endowed Scholarship in Chemistry by EMU’s Department of Chemistry.

**Louise Missome-Engohang** received a 2025 EMU Women of Excellence Award. She will be attending Harvard University in the fall, in pursuit of a Masters degree in Public Policy.

## Philosophy Graduate Students:

**Joshua Caine-Welch** will be presenting a paper at the ASLE 2025 conference. He and Amy Gardner are co-presenting “Ontological Technology and Multiplicitous Selves: Cultural-Medical Revealing as Producing Being-between-Worlds in Psychiatric Institutions” at the Phenomenologies of Mental Health, Well-Being, and Flourishing conference.

**Amy Gardner** presented “Fondness and Action: Hao as Moral Motivation in Confucius’ Philosophy” at the Midwest Conference on Chinese Thought. Amy is one of the co-authors//co-presenters of “The Benefits of Departmental Pluralism,” presented at the Faculty Development Center’s Flipping the Script conference, and co-author of “Ontological Technology and Multiplicitous Selves: Cultural-Medical Revealing as Producing Being-between-Worlds in Psychiatric Institutions,” which she and Joshua Caine-Welch will present at the Phenomenologies of Mental Health, Well-Being, and Flourishing conference. Amy will be attending Marquette University in the fall, in pursuit of a Ph.D. in philosophy.

**Austin Meek** presented “A Virtue Responsibilist Approach to Epistemological Extremism” at Kent State University’s graduate conference and “The Cultivated Self” at the University of Nebraska’s graduate conference, both in March 2025.

**John Milkovich** presented “That Won’t DO Anything! Toward a Dualistic Conception of Liberation as a Response to Problematic Legalism” at the 42<sup>nd</sup> International Social Philosophy Conference.

**Edgar Vasquez** presented “Platforming Experts, and Authority” at Ohio State University in September and “The Confucian Dilemma of Service in an Unjust World” at the Midwest Conference in Chinese Thought in April. Edgar was awarded the Best Abstract Award for Humanities at the EMU Graduate Research Conference. Finally, Edgar is one of the co-authors/co-presenters of “The Benefits of Departmental Pluralism,” presented at the Faculty Development Center’s Flipping the Script conference.

**Dylan Wolfe** will be attending the University of Nebraska in the fall, in pursuit of a Ph.D. in Philosophy.

## Alumni News

**Mohammed Abouzahr (BS 2005)** develops vaccine dashboards for local health departments in Michigan through the University of Michigan’s School of Information. On the side, he works with a linguist analyzing semantic groupings for both research and educational tool development. Mohammed also notes that his vegan black rice kimbap has come a long way these last few weeks.



**Brody Erlandson (BS Math with a minor in PHIL, 2019)** earned an MS in Data Science at the University of Michigan and is now in the third year of his Ph.D. studies in Statistics at Colorado State University.

**Ryan Lemasters (MA 2019)** was awarded the Anthony C. Genova Scholarship at the University of Kansas. The scholarship is given annually to a student who has performed exceptionally in the graduate program. He was also awarded the Robinson Award in recognition of the best unpublished philosophical essay written by a graduate student in their program.

**Collin Lucken (MA 2020)** completed his Ph.D. at the University of Cincinnati. His dissertation is titled *Engineering Progress in Science*. He will be a Postdoctoral Associate in AI and Humanity at Bowdoin College.

**Josh Lyon (2<sup>nd</sup> Bachelors student)** completed his Doctor of Nursing Practice, with a specialty in Occupational Health, at the University of Michigan. Josh is also enrolled in the Chinese Studies Masters program at UofM, and received a full ride scholarship for next year to complete the program.

**Wenxuan Shen (MA 2021)** presented “Reconstructing Confucius’ Theory of Parental Virtues” at the Northeast Conference on Chinese Thought last November. He presented “Philosophy as Justification: A Critical Examination of Cross-Cultural Psychological Studies” at the Midwest Conference on Chinese Thought in April 2025. In August, he presented “What are Global Injustices and How are they Reproduced?” at Wuhan University’s Summer School in Political Philosophy. Shen is pursuing a graduate certificate in Global Studies alongside Ph.D. work in the Philosophy program at the University of Tennessee.

**Lauren Williams (BS 2019, MA 2021)** continues to teach Feminist Theory at EMU. In the fall, Lauren navigated co-teaching for the first time, which produced its own set of opportunities, philosophically and pedagogically. Additionally, she took on the challenge of teaching an Honors section of Feminist Theory, which was particularly enriching. Lauren is currently thinking about the feminist implications of AI usage in academics and beyond.

Lauren was recently promoted to the rank of PTL2. She remains an active member of her union, the EMUFT, contributing to communication processes and maintaining the social media footprint of the union.

# Faculty News

**Professor Brian Bruya** is looking forward to teaching Comparative Philosophy (PHIL 493/593) in the fall, in which students will explore how to compare philosophical concepts over time and across traditions. He will also offer one or two (depending on interest) non-credit courses in the Classical Chinese language (no prior experience required (and no homework)—contact him for details), and he will continue Go Cultivate Yourself!—his weekly self-cultivation club (in which the homework is you; contact him for details). Over the past year, Brian gave a lecture entitled, “The Dialogues of Confucius: A Lost Classic and Its Significance” at EMU, a lecture on his book *Ziran* for a research conference at Esalen, and, via the University of Michigan’s Center for Chinese Studies, a lecture on using C. C. Tsai’s comics in the classroom for K-12 teachers at MSU. He is looking forward to the publication later this school-year of his co-translation (with Wenwen Li) of the *Dialogues of Confucius* (Princeton University Press), the first complete English translation of the Kongzi Jia Yu 孔子家語. Finally, he is delighted to announce that his latest addition to C. C. Tsai’s philosophy comics series was released, entitled *Mencius: A Cure for Chaos*.



**Professor Jill Dieterle** returned to the role of Chair of Philosophy this past academic year. She spent a considerable amount of her time reacquainting herself with administrative policies and processes at EMU (things have changed since she was last Chair!). She remains the Undergraduate Advisor, too, so don’t hesitate to contact her if you need advising.

Professor Dieterle received a Summer Research Award to work on a project entitled “Blame and Shame in the Obesity Game.” This project is an outgrowth of a paper she presented in Rome, Italy last summer: “Parental Rights and Food Justice.” She is excited about the upcoming academic year and looks forward to teaching Social Epistemology in the winter.



If anyone asks you what you can do with a Philosophy degree, let them know that **Professor Peter Higgins** became Associate Dean for Budgets and Facilities for the College of Arts & Sciences this year. He believes he may be the first non-scientist to hold this position! In his new role, Peter spends much of his time studying spreadsheets in order to manage the college’s \$50 million budget and find resources for improving CAS facilities. In scholarly news, a paper Peter completed some time ago, “Gender and Migration,” with Amy Reed-Sandoval, will be published in the Handbook of Migration Ethics (Springer, 2025). Peter is also working on an article, “The ‘Brain Drain’ Debate,” which he was invited to contribute to The Philosophy of Migration: A Collaborative Introduction, edited by José Jorge Mendoza, to be published by Routledge in 2026.





**Professor John Koolage** is now serving as Department Head for History and Philosophy. He is still getting his footing in this new role, but he is happy to serve his communities in this new capacity.

This past year, Professor Koolage taught a highly enjoyable Philosophy of Science class focused on social procedural objectivity, philosophy of archeology, and animal minds. He also taught an equally enjoyable, though quite different, Introduction to Philosophy class. As always, the students in these classes were a true joy.

In research, he produced a book chapter on curiosity and creative conversations for Brynn Welch's *Innovations in Teaching Philosophy*, and an essay on nature for Lee Fearnside's *The Ohio Frontier: Animal Conservation Then and Now*. He has two articles under review, one with Dr. Kris Phillips and another with recent MA graduate, Amy Gardner. Professor Koolage also continues to publish articles on academic leadership with a group of authors from around the MAC, including two articles in *The Department Chair: A Resource for Academic Administrators*, with another forthcoming this winter. This group was also just contracted for a book project. In slightly more embodied news, he is presenting a paper on evidence as it pertains to monuments this summer, with Dr. Eve McGlynn, at the North American Society for Social Philosophy's conference. As a final note, his current philosophical research is directed at developing a paper on mindshaping and epistemic niches.

It was another great year for the Undergraduate Conference in Philosophy! EMU philosophers welcomed undergraduate philosophers from around the country and abroad and enjoyed Dr. Hallie Liberto's visit. This conference continues to be one of Professor Koolage's favorite events. He requests that you consider giving to the Endowed Fund for the Undergraduate Conference in Philosophy (02879) by way of the EMU Foundation (<https://www.emich.edu/foundation/give/>). Finally, Dr. Koolage wants you to know you're welcome to stop by the department to say hi or chat philosophy. Please consider this your invitation to pop in.

This past year **Professor Laura McMahon** was on parental leave in the fall, and then on a Faculty Research Fellowship in the winter to continue work on her project on phenomenology and democratic transformation. She presented two chapters of this work in fall 2024: "The Politics of Vulnerability: Merleau-Ponty, Butler, Family Systems Theory, and the Israeli-Palestinian Conflict" as part of the Philosophy Speaker Series at Toronto Metropolitan University, and "Difficulties of Democracy: Derrida, de Beauvoir, and the Desegregation of the University of Georgia" as an invited plenary talk at the annual meeting of the Canadian Society for Continental Philosophy. In the fall, Professor McMahon concluded her term as Secretary-Treasurer for the Society for Phenomenology and Existential Philosophy (SPEP). This summer, Professor McMahon was promoted to the rank of full professor, and in Fall 2025 will begin the position of Faculty Associate for General Education at EMU. She looks forward to teaching PHIL 601 this fall, and to



teaching PHIL426/526: Topics in Gender and Philosophy this winter, and to new and continuing work with MA students.



**Professor Kate Mehuron** recently published a review of Kieran Setiya, *Life is Hard: How Philosophy Can Help Us Find Our Way* (Riverhead Books/Penguin Random House LLC. New York, NY. 2022) in *Philosophical Practice*, 20/2, July 2025. During her 2025 winter leave, she started two new projects with a phenomenological focus. The first is a critical study of Paul Ricoeur, *Freud and Philosophy: An Essay on Interpretation*. Ricoeur's work is of special interest because of his discussion of the relation between hermeneutics, phenomenology, and Freud's early *Project for a Scientific Psychology*. The latter was a key source in Dr. Mehuron's article "Memory Reconsolidation: Hope for a Terminal Analysis?" (*Journal of Cognition and Neuroethics*). She hopes to expand on this paper, with a stronger account of the hermeneutic and phenomenological aspects of Freud's analytic method. Dr. Mehuron's second project is Merleau-Ponty's aesthetic writings, especially on painting, "Cezanne's Doubt" (1945), "Indirect Language and the Voices of Silence" (1952), and "Eye and Mind" (1960). She took an inspiring fourteen week painting class, during which she thought often of Merleau-Ponty's work on the subject of art, visual perception, and the role of diacritical values in phenomenological experience. So, her enjoyable hobby drove her back to Merleau-Ponty's seminal texts, always of interest to her. The focus of this second project concerns how art-making can be an important part of philosophical practice.

Meanwhile, Kate Mehuron continues to coordinate her new non-profit organization, Equality Chelsea. This organization, with the help of others, led a 200+ June Pride march and picnic in Chelsea, MI, with Representative Debbie Dingell as a featured speaker, and Joanna Whaley, an EMU alumna who has facilitated, with Dr. Mehuron, several educational events in Chelsea that are focused on LGBTQ+ social justice issues.

**Professor John Ouko** presented a paper titled "E-waste and Global Justice: A Cosmopolitan Negative-Rights Approach" at the African Studies Association 67th Annual Meeting held in Chicago, Illinois, in December 2024. He also presented a paper titled "The Philosophy of Foreign Aid: Beyond Odera Okura's Quest for the Right to a Human Minimum" at the Kenya Scholars & Studies Association (KESSA) 16th Annual Conference held in Atlanta, Georgia, in September 2024. Professor Ouko was also a 2025 Michigan High School Ethics Bowl judge. In addition to the above, Professor Ouko peer-reviewed an article for the following journals: *Philosophies* (February 2025) and *Religions* (June 2025).








**Professor Kristopher Phillips** had one paper accepted for publication and has been working actively on his first book (under contract with Lexington Press), which he expects to submit in September. The paper, "Virtuous Dialogues in Epistemic Communities: Helping Students Understand the Value of Citations" is co-authored with Dr. Cassie Finley (Harvard University) and is forthcoming in the volume *Innovations in Teaching Philosophy* (Bloomsbury). He also published a public-facing piece, "Metaphilosophical Teaching" in *The Philosophers' Magazine*, and continued in the role of Editor-in-Chief for the journal *Precollege Philosophy and Public Practice*, publishing his second volume in the summer. Dr. Phillips has a handful of additional scholarly projects including a co-authored paper with Dr. Koolage on graduate education, and another co-authored paper with Dr. Finley on philosophy and character education. This year he and Dr. Higgins coached EMU's first Ethics Bowl team as they competed in the Midwest Regional Division. He is looking forward to coaching again this coming year. In addition, he won an award this year: The Western Michigan University Alumni Achievement Award for Philosophy. Dr. Phillips has continued to serve on the APA's Taskforce on Recruiting Majors, has been appointed Treasurer for the International Margaret Cavendish Society, joins the APA's Committee on the Teaching of Philosophy in July, and continued in his role as EMU's Philosophy Graduate Program Coordinator.

This past year, **Professor Jeremy Proulx** continued his involvement in higher education labour activism, focusing on collective action related to budget cuts to higher education and on more equitable treatment of non-tenure track professors, the other half of the instructional workforce at EMU and elsewhere. Professor Proulx also worked to develop a non-credit 'microcredential' in Logic that will be offered through the Professional Programs and Training office at EMU. This was part of a university-wide effort to increase the number and types of microcredentials that EMU offers, enabling students to gain valuable experience and knowledge in areas they may not have access to otherwise. Professor Proulx also made a presentation on the incorporation of so called 'career readiness' skills in philosophy classrooms, a written version of which is set to appear in the Faculty Development Center Teaching Blog.



**Professor Michael Scoville** was on Faculty Research Fellowship last fall, during which time he worked on a project exploring connections between deliberative democracy and climate justice. That project culminated in a paper, "The Community of Justification, Democratic Deliberation, and Climate Justice," presented in February 2025 at a joint meeting of the International Society of Environmental Ethics and the American Philosophical Association. Professor Scoville has since expanded the paper into a journal-length article. He is currently working on a book chapter, focused on concepts of nature, which will be included in a forthcoming edited volume.

The background of the page is a faded, high-angle photograph of a large, multi-story brick building. The building features a series of arched windows on the upper floors and a prominent arched entrance on the ground floor. Green trees are visible on the left and right sides of the building.

For this coming academic year, Professor Scoville received a grant from the Upshur Institute for Civic Education (UICE) to create a student-centered learning community at EMU. The learning community will focus on the theory and practice of deliberative democracy for environmental problem-solving. Professor Scoville is excited to see how the UICE project evolves in conversation with students and colleagues this year.

Beyond his research and teaching, Professor Scoville will continue to serve on the leadership team that coordinates the Environmental Science and Society (ENVI) program at EMU, in addition to serving on several committees within the Philosophy section. Professor Scoville is looking forward to another year of working with students, of engaging in research, and of serving the EMU academic community. He is always happy to hear from current or former students, so feel free to email him ([j.michael.scoville@emich.edu](mailto:j.michael.scoville@emich.edu)) if you want to connect about anything!



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