

MAR/APR 2021 ISSUE NO. 2

THE SLICE

THE OFFICIAL NEWSLETTER OF THE UR PHILOSOPHY CLUB



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LETTER FROM THE EDITOR

What a busy couple of months we've had here at the Philosophy Club publishing house! In February, we welcomed Ethan Rozario ('21), Katie Kirby ('24) and Eva Vanatta ('24) to the newsletter team. They have brought wonderful creative energy to the project. We are debuting a set of new articles in the newsletter, including Logic for Laurels, Dear Socrates, and Beyond UR. We hope they will become audience favorites. And we have an online presence as well -- see the announcement below for the link to our new website.

Now, we are so excited to bring you the March/April issue of *The Slice*! We hope that you'll find it even richer, funnier, and warmer than before. The Philosophy Club has many exciting events coming up. We eagerly invite you to take part in Susan Wolf's visit and the annual exec team elections. There are so many opportunities for you to engage with our material too. Take a stab at the new puzzle competition, or share your thoughts on the bi-monthly hot takes!

In this unique year, the newsletter team has found that we value our communities more than ever. Our hard work on this newsletter reflects how precious we find our philosophy family. Consider this issue a love letter to you all!

Anna Cheng, Editor of The Slice

"The Slice" refers to Dr. Schaubers proclivity to use chocolate cake as a key thought experiment when discussing weakness of the will, ethics, law, or just about anything!



The University of Richmond's Philosophy Club

We are very pleased to announce the debut of the official website of the UR Philosophy Club! You can find us at <https://sites.google.com/view/urphilosophyclub/home>. We will use this platform to be the public face of our club, host longer content, post announcements, and share fun content from our community. The website will also be a repository for all our past newsletters. Note that for questions about the department itself, please continue to visit <https://philosophy.richmond.edu/>. Please drop by our new online home!



The website is designed and updated by Anna Cheng and Annie Waters.



“Should we be unconditionally committed to acting morally?”

If this question intrigues you, we have some exciting news! The UR Philosophy Club will be hosting a discussion with philosopher **DR. SUSAN R. WOLF** this spring.

Professor Wolf serves as the Edna J. Koury Professor of Philosophy at the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill. She works on ethics, philosophy of mind and philosophy of action. Many of her notable works explore the demands of morality and other questions in normative ethics. Professor Wolf has received many national awards for her scholarship and teaching.

We will convene around the end of March to discuss Wolf's 2015 paper “**One Thought Too Many: Love, Morality, and the Ordering of Commitment**.” Details about the event will be announced shortly on our website and through the philosophy email distribution list.

In “One Thought Too Many,” Wolf discusses the tension between intuition and morality in the context of love. Wolf draws from Bernard Williams' famous "one thought too many" thought experiment. We expect the loving husband to save his wife over another person in equal danger without engaging in serious moral deliberation before he acts. Wolf argues that, when pushing this intuition further, we find a compelling example of how the ideal of love may be fundamentally opposed to the ideal of morality. An ideal lover would not be able to be unconditionally committed to acting morally.

Students interested in this event should visit our website, where we have posted a pdf of the paper under the tab “One Thought Too Many.” Participants should read the paper before the discussion. To submit questions for Wolf, please use the form on the “Contact” tab on the website or email urphilosophyclub@gmail.com.



SENIOR SPOTLIGHT

Ethan Rozario

This month's interview features Ethan Rozario, the first creative director of The Slice. Ethan is a senior double majoring in philosophy and cognitive science. Read on to learn about Ethan's philosophical interests and future plans!



What made you decide to study philosophy?

Dr. Schuber roped me in after I took Ancient Greek with her. In a lot of the classes I had taken before then, big questions arose which I was dying to have answered. For example, in studying calculus, I wondered about the ontological status of numbers and mathematical ideas (before even I knew what ontology was!). In my anthropology class, I wondered to what degree ethics and truth in general are relative to cultures. Taking a philosophy class was the first time questions like these took center stage, and I fell in love with the field.



What do you want to do after college, and how do you see your philosophy studies helping you achieve those goals?

I am looking at three potential paths: pursuing graphic design, studying computer science, and going into environmental studies. Concerning graphic design, I think that philosophy has allowed me to think critically about what it means to be creative and why people engage in art. Concerning computer science, ideas I've gotten from classes about logic and philosophy of mind have pointed me in the direction towards this field. Concerning environmental studies, Jeppe's environmental ethics class has allowed me to think critically about our duties to the natural world. Speaking of which...

What's the best philosophy class you've taken, and why?

Jeppe's environmental ethics class absolutely blew me away. The readings in this class really struck me, and the ideas discussed in them continue to linger in my mind most days. Before this class, I had a love for nature, but that love was formless and had little power over my actions. I did not yet understand what constituted my relationship with the environment. Jeppe's class taught me how to go about valuing nature in a principled way, and the clarity which came with that has instilled within me a strong sense of duty towards the planet.

If you could have dinner with any philosopher (dead or alive), what would you discuss/argue with them about?

Probably Chuang Tzu. I'd ask him to tell me some jokes.





THE DEAD PHILOSOPHERS BUFFET

Gilles Deleuze

In this section of the newsletter, we want to share with you the life and works of philosophers whom we find intriguing, whether for their dynamic ideas or fascinating lifestyles. We hope that you will find inspiration in the diversity of the tradition we are a part of. Maybe you'll find yourself looking through one of their texts, too!

wrote with psychoanalyst Félix Guattari. In the book, he describes the philosopher as a ‘friend’ to concepts — one who nurtures the concept and ... well, I’m not sure exactly what he means by that. But I can say that his work presents a radical departure from academic philosophy. He challenges how we approach conceptualization. Deleuze proposes that truth is not a static structure with built-in hierarchies. Rather, it is a dynamic, ‘rhizomatic’ structure whose branches shoot out in all directions, constantly forming new connections and reshaping itself. “**There are no points or positions in a rhizome, such as those found in a structure, tree, or root,**” he wrote. “**There are only lines.**” I can’t do Deleuze’s work justice, but if this sounds intriguing, I’d suggest starting with his book *Spinoza: Practical Philosophy*.



Gilles Deleuze was a key French philosopher of the late 20th century. If you took Philosophical Methods, you have likely come into contact with his book *What is Philosophy?* which he

- Ethan Rozario

TAKE THE L: LOGIC FOR LAURELS

Location, Location, Location

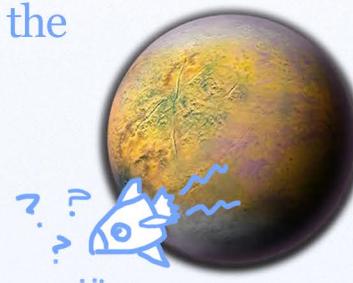
We are debuting a logic puzzle competition in this issue of The Slice! Vie for the honor of intellectual superiority, public recognition, and a \$20 gift card. Send in your answer before March 28th to urphilosophyclub@gmail.com, or send it through the form on the "Contact" tab of the website. We will gloriously honor the author of the first correct answer received. Winners will be posted on our website in early April and also announced in the following newsletter. Students from any discipline, professors and alumni are all encouraged to participate. May the best logician win!

The planet Loki is twice the diameter of Earth, but, since it contains fewer heavy metals, has approximately the same mass as Earth. Unfortunately, while Loki has an Earth-normal gravity and atmosphere, it has no stable magnetic pole and is subject to violent storms that wreak havoc on navigation systems, as the first Terran Planetary Survey mission to Loki has discovered. Prior to the dispatch of a rescue team, the last transmission from the Survey mission was as follows:

MOST OF SUPPLIES LOST IN EARTHQUAKE. HAVE LOST OUR BEARINGS — LOCATION UNKNOWN. YESTERDAY WENT TEN KILOMETERS DUE SOUTH, TEN KILOMETERS DUE EAST, AND TEN KILOMETERS DUE NORTH AND ARRIVED RIGHT BACK AT STARTING POINT, BUT STILL OUR LOCATION UNKNOWN. SEND HELP.

How many points on the surface of Loki satisfy the claims made by the survey team:

- (i) Exactly one
- (ii) Exactly two
- (iii) More than two.



— Courtesy of Dr. Goddu, metaphysician, logic wizard and puzzle connoisseur

RECAP: SENIOR CELEBRATION

On Saturday, February 27th, the Philosophy Club held a virtual senior celebration. The club recognized the seniors' hard work and encouraged them as they embark on the next stage of their lives. Among those recognized were **Anna Cheng**, **RJ Conk** and **Alec Greven**.



Anna is currently a part of the Humanities Connect program on campus. She is looking forward to her summer development internship. Anna has applied for an amazing job opportunity in Alaska starting in September.

RJ is working on his senior thesis about responsible beliefs. He'll be attending graduate school in the fall, where he'll study inorganic chemistry. As exciting as his research sounds, we all hope that he will be careful around the explosive equipment.

Alec is writing his senior thesis about freedom of expression. His work focuses on the implications of censorship. He has applied to two exciting master's programs with Oxford through the Jepson School.

Anna and Miriam have the same birthday - March 12th!

The other participants shared sweet and hilarious memories about the seniors. At the end of the celebration, attendees were asked to vote on a gift for the seniors. The winning book is “*Tao Te Ching*” by Laozi, translated by Ursula K. Le Guin! We will present each senior with a copy of this book at the end of the year.

Thank you to Magnolia Stuart, who did a wonderful job of organizing and hosting the event. Thank you so much to everyone who attended. We are so proud of all the seniors’ hard work, and we wish them all the best in their futures!



DEAR SOCRATES

Socrates, I have a paper due in a week but I know I'm going to procrastinate. Any advice?

I must say, reader, I'm not sure what you mean by "procrastinate." I simply aim for the good, so I'm not sure how I'd ever do something against my interests. However, if you do find yourself in this situation, you should try my writing method. When I'm getting ready to start my next philosophical treatise, I like to discuss my ideas with my peers. Before the pandemic, I enjoyed walking up to unsuspecting people in the agora and striking up a conversation to flesh out my argument. Try a masked conversation with six feet of distance or a zoom call with a fellow philosopher. To inspire you to start your paper, I'd recommend asking a series of questions about a math-based example to remind your peer that you're smarter than them. By the end of the conversation, you'll be so convinced of your philosophical skill that your paper will write itself.

Socrates, how are you dealing with the lack of social activities due to the pandemic?

The pandemic has certainly made it difficult to lounge around the agora and speak to strangers about philosophy. As much as I miss those stimulating conversations, quarantine has given me a lot of opportunities to think. I have all the time in the world to read an interesting argument, ruminante on its implications, and draft a long email of questions for the author. When I'm not philosophizing, I've been enjoying Animal Crossing. My island is almost the ideal society, but I'm unsure that a raccoon named Tom Nook can be a philosopher king.

Do you have any burning philosophical questions, or just need some life advice? Submit your questions to Socrates to urphilosophyclub@gmail.com or on the form under the "Contact" tab of our website.

PUBLICATION AND CONFERENCE OPPORTUNITIES

Publishing or presenting your writing at a conference is a great way to grow as a philosopher. It's also nice to have your work recognized by people outside your classroom! Most journals are looking for work around 5,000 words, and most conferences look for work around 3,000 words. High-quality papers that you have produced in any philosophy seminar or even a 200-level class would be great candidates.

Building on a list provided by Dr. Will Reckner, Anna has compiled a spreadsheet with updated publication and conference opportunities for philosophy undergraduates. To see this document, please visit the "Publication and Conference" tab of our website. The document aims to be a comprehensive list of all active opportunities. It includes the most recent deadlines for each organization. Most deadlines have passed, but these are good benchmarks for these organizations' call for future papers. Deadlines will be slightly different each year. PhilEvents (philevents.org) and the APA website (apaonline.org) may also have more information.

As of March 2021, we suggest students submit their papers to Johns Hopkins' National Undergraduate Humanities Research Symposium! The deadline to submit an abstract is April 1st. There is a registration fee, but you may apply for a UR grant to defray the cost, which will reimburse you once you are accepted. Interested students can follow this link: <https://krieger.jhu.edu/macksey-symposium/registration/>.

Here is some general advice. For more tips, please visit our website!

Some journals will not allow you to submit the paper you send them anywhere else. Some journals do allow this. You must inform them if your paper is accepted elsewhere, or you must pull your submissions from all other journals if they accept you. You can submit and present the same paper at several conferences.

If you are not accepted, take heart -- all of us who have published any work know that you will receive ten rejections for every one acceptance, or more! It is always worth asking whether they will provide you feedback, if they don't specify that they do not provide feedback. Keep improving and submitting your work.

Conferences often ask participants to comment on other papers at the conference, so be on the lookout for that request. Some conferences will publish the best works in a journal. Journals will often send you revisions that you will work on over a series of back-and-forth emails with them.

Believe in yourself and just do it! Sending your papers to undergraduate philosophy journals and conferences should not be daunting. After all, they are made for students like you! Many UR philosophy students have successfully published, presented at conferences, or attended workshops. These can be great opportunities to travel, meet new philosophy friends, gain confidence, and learn about the field. It's also a good way to test whether you might be ready for grad school. UR also offers a yearly travel grant for student researchers.

If you have any more questions about publishing, send us a note at urphilosophyclub@richmond.edu or through the form on the “Contact” section of our website. We'd be happy to connect you with students who have been published or presented previously.

Have you published a paper or presented at a conference? Let us know! We are seeking to provide a repository of publications and conference achievements of our students. We want to brag about how amazing our department is and encourage other students to put their work out there! Message us at urphilosophyclub@gmail.com or through the form on the “Contact” section of the website.

Ask a professor to nominate a really good piece of student writing we could feature, or if they know of any new student or professor achievements. We would love to give them a shout-out!. They can send it to urphilosophyclub@gmail.com or submit a nomination through the “Contact” section of the website.





- Katie Kirby

BEYOND UR

Julian Scott on Law School

Julian Scott is a first-year law student at Washington University in St. Louis. This summer, he will be interning with the Federal Public Defenders for Western Washington. At UR, Julian was an honors philosophy student. His thesis studied Christine Korsgaard's The Sources of Normativity. In his free time, Julian enjoys walking to Forest Park and exploring the abandoned art deco resort. Feel free to reach out to Julian at j.e.scott@wustl.edu if you have any questions or want to talk about law school!



Would you recommend taking a gap year after graduation before going to law school? Are most of the students coming straight from undergrad, or is there a wider age range?

I did not take a gap year and I do not regret it. People straight out of undergrad probably comprise a bare majority. However, many of my classmates have been out of school for a while (lots have been paralegals, several worked in business, one is a chemistry PhD).



How was your transition from undergrad to law school? Was there a significant cultural shift between our philosophy department and your current experience?

I hesitate to answer because my first year has been overshadowed by COVID (for instance, I haven't even been to the library in person yet). But I will mention these as a couple of big differences: First, law classes are much bigger and much less centered on open discussion than our philosophy department. Second, I have noticed that my classmates here at WashU are much more politically outspoken than at UR, particularly liberals. Lots of people say that law school is really competitive and everyone is looking to stab everyone else in the back. I have definitely not encountered that. The people I know are mainly nice, supportive, and unpretentious.

What classes/experiences during your undergraduate years prepared you the best for graduate study in law school?

I first want to emphasize that there is no set path. I studied philosophy, one of my study buddies did economics, another did sociology, and another was a certified engineer. But with that in mind, as my torts professor put it, "Law is words." Knowing how to read carefully and think about what you've read is really crucial. Do what you need to hone those skills.

Were you sure you wanted to go to law school throughout the entirety of the application process? Do you have any advice for what to consider if a student isn't totally sure that law school is for them?

My advice: talk to people about it! Most people I know and most of the lawyers I've talked to are perfectly willing to chat. If

there's something you're worried about, ask. Even if you don't have anything specific, a good standby is, "would you walk me through the average day/week?"

What are the best and most challenging parts of being in law school? Is there anything you wish you knew before matriculating?

The best part of law school is being able to see the practical operation of law, a cornerstone of our society, laid bare. Every case raises the question of how to apply our values (due process, justice, fair dealing, democracy) to a very particular situation.

Some law school tropes can seem intimidating. The amount of reading can sometimes be rough (as much as three hundred pages a week), but I have generally found the workload similar to a five-unit semester at UR. Professors actually do that thing you see in all the movies: most of class is questioning random students about the reading. Surprisingly, that's not as awful as it sounds. After all, everyone says ridiculous things (I told my property professor last fall that ownership of a painting in the case had been gained by conquest) and nobody else remembers or cares (my property professor still agreed to be a reference for me). The bottom line is this: 1L year is all about the learning curve. No one comes in knowing how to be a great law student. Everyone makes mistakes, and the professors understand that.



It's almost time for the annual philosophy club elections!

Candidate Nomination

Monday, April 5th: elections open at 8 a.m. ET, send a call for nominations

Wednesday, April 7th: nominations close at 5 p.m. ET, nominations consolidated

Thursday, April 8th: candidates informed of nominations

Friday, April 9th: candidates declare their intention to run by 5 p.m. ET

We will be using a ranked-choice voting system for the first time. We will post the voting procedure, courtesy of Magnolia Stuart, in late March on our website under “Announcements.” Please take a look!

We are currently deliberating on how we can introduce the candidates to you before the vote. We are considering offering candidates the use of the website to share essays, photos, and videos. Note that exec team positions are open to current officeholders who would like to run again.

We want this procedure to be amenable to all in the department. If you have any suggestions, questions or concerns, please feel free to email Dr. Schauber at nschaube@richmond.edu or us directly at urphilosophyclub@gmail.com.

COMMUNITY HOT TAKES

In this section of The Slice, we will highlight YOUR “hot takes” on big philosophical issues! Our hope is that this will help bring philosophical dialogue outside the classroom and get our student community to engage intellectually with each other more. If you have a hot take on either or both of the two prompts, send us a paragraph of no more than 150 words to urphilosophyclub@gmail.com or on the form under the “Contact” tab of the website before the next issue. Due to space constraints, prioritize exploring interesting positions. Feel free to submit with your name or request anonymity. Our editors will curate a selection of responses to present in the newsletter.

March/April 2021:

Does anyone have free will?



If I steal a loaf of bread from you and eat it, when does the bread cease to be yours and become mine?

Hot take: all we know about Socrates is philosophical fan-fiction.

JUST FOR LAUGHS

Overheard:

“What we owe to axe murderers”

A Kantian would say that if an axe murderer asks where your mother is and you lie, you’re required to apologize to them for not giving them the respect they deserve as an autonomous human being.

— Meghna

How many Marxists does it take to change a lightbulb?

None. The lightbulb contains the seed of its own revolution.

Source: <https://www.psychologytoday.com/us/blog/hide-and-seek/201303/top-10-philosophy-jokes>



Why did the chicken cross the road?

Aristotle To actualize its potential.

David Hume Out of custom and habit.

Epicurus For fun.

Jacques Derrida Any number of contending discourses may be discovered within the act of the chicken crossing the road, and each interpretation is equally valid as the authorial intent can never be discerned, because structuralism is DEAD, DAMMIT, DEAD!

Jean-Paul Sartre In order to act in good faith and be true to itself, the chicken found it necessary to cross the road.

Karl Marx It was a historical inevitability.

Ludwig Wittgenstein The possibility of “crossing” was encoded into the objects “chicken” and “road”, and circumstances came into being which caused the actualisation of this potential occurrence.

Machiavelli So that its subjects will view it with admiration, as a chicken which has the daring and courage to boldly cross the road, but also with fear, for whom among them has the strength to contend with such a paragon of avian virtue? In such a manner is the princely chicken’s dominion maintained.

Nietzsche Because if you gaze too long across the Road, the Road gazes also across you.



Pyrrho What road?

Zeno of Elea To prove it could never reach the other side.

Source:

https://philosophynow.org/issues/13/Why_did_the_chicken_cross_the_road

Have a joke you want to see in the next newsletter? Please make submissions to philosophyclub@gmail.com or on the “Contact” section of the website.

Thank you for reading!

Any feedback for us? Anything
you want to be
featured in the next newsletter?
Please contact us at
urphilosophyclub@gmail.com or
through the 'Contact' tab on the
website.

