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WKU Philosophy & Religion

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# PHILOSOPHY AND RELIGION NEWS

## From the Department Head's Desk

*In Praise of Cherry Hall*

I love Cherry Hall. I love its stately appearance, the wear of the marble staircase, the seasoned woodwork, and the bells in the cupola. I even love the crazy temperature variations between the classrooms and offices.



Most of all though, I love what Cherry Hall represents. It represents rigorous scholarship and high academic standards. It represents deep and sustained reflection and critical inquiry into the literature, history, philosophy, and religion that make up human culture. It is a celebration of creative energy and the pursuit of excellence.

Cherry Hall is home to three departments (English, History, and Philosophy & Religion) that are central to the classical liberal arts education. For generations students and scholars have called Cherry Hall home—their intellectual home. They have read and written, thought and learned in the classrooms and offices and even the halls.

Dedicated in 1937, Cherry Hall in fact is re-dedicated each year through the good work done by faculty and students. Its noble stature atop the Hill is spiritually affirmed through that good work.

As I write this in the quiet and cold of winter break, waiting for everyone to return for spring semester, I couldn't help but think of all the wonderful scholars, teachers, and students who breathe life into Cherry Hall each year.

Eric Bain-Selbo, Department Head

VOLUME 6, ISSUE NO. 2  
JAN/FEB 2013

In this issue . . .



Dr. Liu Leheng from Wuhan University (library pictured above) comes to WKU to teach Chinese philosophy in the spring

2



The 39<sup>th</sup> Conference on Value Inquiry is coming to WKU. The meeting will be held April 11-13 on the main campus.

3

## Congratulations December 2012 Graduates!

The joy of the holiday season is heightened by the graduation of many of our philosophy and religious studies students. We certainly think we have some of the best students on campus, and we're proud of their accomplishments. Of course, our joy is tempered by the thought that they also will no longer be in our classrooms and visiting our offices (but they always can come visit!). Congratulations to all of the

following students.

**Asian Religions and Cultures major:** Daniel Shouse

**Religious Studies major:** John Hamilton, LeeAnn Horton, and Derek Royalty.

**Religious Studies minor:** Paige Embry, Carly Hicks, and Lindsey Mattingly.

# Thank You Very Much!

## *Several Philosophy and Religion Faculty Move to Full Retirement*



*A few years ago the Department of Philosophy and Religion held a special reception for several faculty members moving to transitional retirement. Between Potter College Dean David Lee (far left) and Department Head Eric Bain-Selbo (far right) are (from left to right) Arvin Vos, Alan Anderson, Jan Garrett, and John Long.*

In the past year, four wonderful and dedicated educators in the Department of Philosophy and Religion have finished their transitional retirement period (teaching for the department half time) and have moved on to full retirement. They are Alan Anderson, John Long, Edward Schoen, and Arvin Vos. Each man made important and substantive contributions to the life of the department. Each had an great impact on the lives of our students.

While we are saddened to lose their expertise in the classroom, we know that they are not riding off into the sunset. Knowing them, they simply are off to experience new sunrises. All the best gentlemen.

## Wuhan Scholar to Teach Bi-term Course

As part of the Department of Philosophy and Religion's Faculty Exchange Agreement with Wuhan University, Dr. Liu Leheng will be coming to WKU in the spring. Dr. Liu will be teaching a survey course on Chinese philosophy (PHIL/RELS/ARC 401) during the second bi-term. The course (taught in English) will cover Confucian, Daoist, and Buddhist thought from ancient times to the present day. The course is suitable for advanced students in Philosophy, Religious Studies, and Asian Religions and Cultures—as well as other students who have a deep interest in Chinese philosophy.

Dr. Liu received his PhD in August 2012 from Hong Kong University of Science and Technology, specializing in Confucianism, Daoism and Chinese Buddhism.



*Image from Google maps.*

# SVHE

## *International Organization Moves Into Cherry Hall*

In 1923, a group of religion scholars founded The National Council on Religion in Higher Education with the objective of promoting inquiry into values in higher education. Ninety years later, that organization now calls Western Kentucky University its home (Cherry Hall 313).

In 1975, the organization changed its name to the Society for Values in Higher Education—reflecting both its broader humanist orientation and its increasingly interdisciplinary character. Today the Society's membership roll includes teachers and scholars from the natural sciences to the social sciences, from the humanities to the performing arts. It also includes professionals like physicians and lawyers.

Dr. Eric Bain-Selbo has been Executive Director of SVHE for two years, and with the help of Potter College Dean David Lee and WKU Provost Gordon Emslie, he was able to bring the organization to WKU.

To learn more about the Society and its upcoming annual meeting at the University of Denver, visit its website at [www.svhe.org](http://www.svhe.org).

## STUDENT AND ALUMNI NEWS

**David Leonhardt**, 2012 Religious Studies graduate, successfully defended his Honors Thesis on November 28, 2012. His committee (Joseph Trafton, Larry Snyder, and Elizabeth Gish) awarded him the level of "Pass with Distinction." The title of his thesis was "The Concise Guide to the Modern Calvinist/Arminian Debate."

**Daniel Shouse**, 2012 Asian Religions and Cultures graduate, has been admitted into the MA in Religious Studies program. He also has been awarded a graduate assistantship to support his studies.

**Terry Shoemaker**, MA student in Religious Studies, published an article entitled "God, Guts, and Glory: An Investigation of Relational Support Mechanisms for War Veterans Provided by Religious Communities." The article appears online in the *Interdisciplinary Journal of Research on Religion*.

Please send any student or alumni news to [eric.bain-selbo@wku.edu](mailto:eric.bain-selbo@wku.edu).

## *Conference on Value Inquiry Hosted by Western Kentucky's Philosophy Program*

The Philosophy Program at Western Kentucky University has landed one of the most important interdisciplinary conferences for 2013. Thanks to the initiative of Dr. Audrey Anton and with support from her colleagues, WKU will be hosting the 39<sup>th</sup> Conference on Value Inquiry. The meeting will be held April 11-13 on the main campus, and will focus on the theme "Virtue, Vice, and Character."

The Society for Value Inquiry organizes a conference each year for the purpose of bringing together those scholars whose work represents differences in interests, outlook, and expertise on questions of value. Participants range from budding scholars to the most esteemed researchers in their fields, and they come from colleges and universities all over the world. As one of the largest and most diverse conferences of its kind, the annual Conference on Value Inquiry has a long and rich history that stretches back several decades. The conference has been organized around a variety of themes such as business ethics, free will and science, globalization, multiculturalism, liberty and equality.

In addition to the many scholars who will share their research in response to the Call for Papers, the meeting will feature keynote addresses by Dr. Julia Driver and Dr. John Doris, both from Washington University in St. Louis.

The Department of Philosophy and Religion appreciates the generosity of the Potter College of Arts and Letters, WKU Department of Psychology, and the Society for Values in Higher Education for their support in co-sponsoring this important conference. For a copy of the Call for Papers, visit the departmental website and click on the appropriate link on the left-hand side of the page.

## Other Faculty News

**Dr. Audrey Anton, assistant professor of philosophy**, published "Respecting One's Elders: In Search of an Ontological Explanation for the Asymmetry Between the Proper Treatment of Dependent Adults and Children" in *Philosophical Papers* (41:3, pp. 397-419). She also published a chapter entitled "Does Technology Make Old Age Obsolete?" in *Morality and Spirituality in the Contemporary World* (edited by Chandana Chakrabarti and Sandra Jane Fairbanks, and published by Cambridge Scholars Press). Dr. Anton also was busy on the conference trail. She presented "Knowing No Better: Plato's Socrates as Blame Incompatibilist" at the annual meeting of the International Plato Society in Ann Arbor, MI in October. In December she presented "Ancient Justice and Mercy: East and West" at the Eastern Division meeting of the American Philosophical Association in Atlanta.

**Dr. Eric Bain-Selbo, department head of philosophy and religion**, published two articles co-written with Dr. Paul Markham. The first was entitled "Did I Teach Them That? The Implicit Power of Democratic Education," and was published in the *eJournal of Public Affairs*. The second was entitled "To Practice What One Preaches: Deepening Civic Education," and was published in the *Journal of College and Character* (13:4). Dr. Bain-Selbo also gave a presentation entitled "Educating for Economic Justice" at the annual meeting of the Association for Integrative Studies in Oakland, MI in October.

**Dr. Bella Mukonyora, associate professor of religion**, presented a paper contrasting two African concepts of God and Nature at the International Society for the Study of Religion, Nature & Culture (ISSRNC) in August. This conference was hosted by Pepperdine University in Malibu. Since then Dr. Mukonyora gave two public lectures on Global Christianity. The first of these was part of a request from the Kentucky Humanities Association Speakers Bureau and was given in November in Owensboro. The second public lecture was delivered in December at Berea College near Lexington. To mark the end of her term as a member of the American Academy of Religion Task Force on Sustainability, Dr. Mukonyora presented a paper on the challenges to be faced by

teachers of religion and the environment. She received a "Certification of Appreciation" for services rendered to the American Academy of Religion for her work with the academy's Steering Committee of the Religion and Ecology Group (1997-1999) and her contribution to the success of annual meetings through membership of the Task Force on Sustainability (1999-2012). Finally, Dr. Mukonyora took part in a roundtable discussion of two volumes of *African Traditions in the Study of Religion in Africa* (edited by Afe Adogame, Ezra Chitando and Bojali Bateye, and recently published by Ashgate). The books highlight a variety of theoretical and methodological challenges facing scholars of religion from post-colonial Africa.

**Dr. Jeffrey Samuels, associate professor of religious studies**, presented his work on Buddhism in Malaysia at the American Academy of Religion in November. His paper was titled: "Colonial State, Christian Missionaries and Bumiputras: Buddhist Identity in Malay-Muslim Malaysia." He also presented "Malaysian Sinhalese Buddhist Temples as Religious Non-Government Organizations: Diaspora Engagement Across the Indian Ocean" at the Diaspora and Development: South Asian Diaspora Development in South Asia conference, at the National University of Singapore. Dr. Samuels published two book chapters during the fall semester. The first one, "Ordination (*Pabbajja*) as Going Forth? Social Bonds and the Making of a Buddhist Monastic" appeared in *Little Buddhas: Children and Childhoods in Buddhist Texts and Traditions*, ed. By Vanesa R. Sasson (New York: Oxford University Press) and the second "Merit is in the Heart: The Emotional Dimension of Merit-Making Practices in Contemporary Sri Lanka" appeared in *Embedded Languages: Studies of Sri Lankan and Buddhist Cultures*, ed. By Carol Anderson *et al* (Colombo: Godage International).

**Dr. Ian Schnee, assistant professor of philosophy**, Ian Schnee presented a paper titled "Transmission Failure and Factive Warrants" at the New Jersey Regional Philosophical Association Conference in November.

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*As you consider your contribution to the New Century of Spirit campaign for Western Kentucky University, please remember that you can designate your gift to the Philosophy and Religion Department.*

*Your contributions are critical to the life of the department and its students.*

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### PHILOSOPHY AND RELIGION NEWS

Department of Philosophy and Religion  
Western Kentucky University  
1906 College Heights Blvd.  
Bowling Green, KY 42101