



HIGH POINT UNIVERSITY
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Department of Religion and Philosophy Newsletter Spring 2021



High Point University Ethics Bowl Team: 9th Annual Ethics Bowl Champions

Note From The Chair

Recently, the faculty of the Religion and Philosophy department have been working on revising the language about our mission. As part of those discussions, we agreed that we aim to be “a community of vibrant, rigorous and life-changing conversations.” As you can see from the activity chronicled here, those conversations have not abated during the pandemic. We are so proud of the accomplishments of our students (and we can’t wait until we can see behind their masks once again)! Thank you for reading and letting us share a bit of the life of our department with you.

Warmly,

Rev. Dr. Chris Franks
cfranks@highpoint.edu

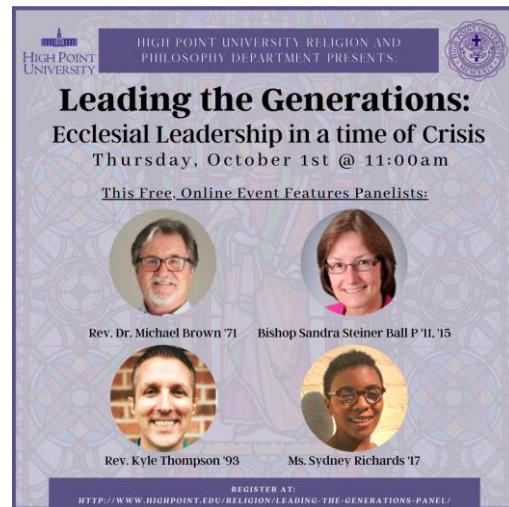
Student News

- The department wants to congratulate **Jessica Homan '20 and Jacob Lancaster '20** for graduating with departmental honors in 2020.
- Dr. MacArthur and Mr. Ostrowski led their **Ethics Bowl** team to victory at the 9th Annual Ethics Bowl Championship in 2020. The team included **Garrett Hill '20, Ally King '20, Matthew Knipfer '21, Jacob Lancaster '20, Tate Powell '20 and Gia Scirrotto '21**. In Fall 2020, the Ethics Bowl team has continued to meet virtually.
- In May 2020, departmental honors graduate and **Parker-Locke Award winner Jacob Lancaster '20** received a full scholarship to Duke University Divinity School and received HPU's University Award for Achievement.
- Inductees to the Philosophy Honor Society **Phi Sigma Tau** in Spring 2020 were **Aurora Jaques '20, Garrett Hill '20, Jessica Homan '20 and Brett Kramer '20**.
- Dr. Moses' Fall 2020 Biblical Justice class held a **Canned Food, Winter Clothing and Mask Drive** in November to collect donations for Open Door Ministries and the Piedmont Christian Home. Student **Gabrielle Woolpert '24** said, "We loved the experience of giving and seeing others happy due to something that we did for the benefit of those in need. These times are odd to say the least, but we are happy we hosted a drive to help in the safety of those who are at high risk for Covid-19."
- The **Faith and Reason Forum** student discussion group has continued to meet during the pandemic. They completed a year of discussions around Martin Luther King, Jr.'s sermons last year, and this year are hosting discussions around Renegade Ministry, a book about an innovative, missional church in Winston-Salem, North Carolina.
- The HPU **Philosophy Club** student discussion group also continued to meet during the pandemic. They had several meetings in Fall 2020 during which they discussed issues such as the trolley problem and the question of nature versus nurture.

Department News

In lieu of the department's traditional Faculty Lecture series, the department hosted a virtual panel for church leaders called "Leading the Generations: Ecclesial Leadership in a Time of Crisis."

The panel featured HPU alumni and friends from a wide variety of ministry contexts.

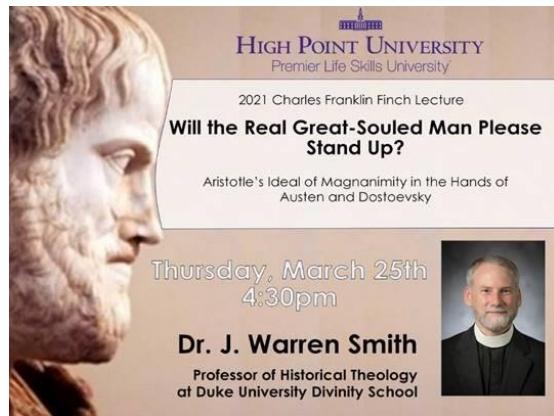


The department's annual Fall lecture also went virtual this year. It was co-sponsored by the Women's and Gender Studies Program.

It was delivered by Dr. R. Marie Griffith, Director of the Danforth Center on Religion and Politics at Washington University in St. Louis.

The lecture, which commemorated the 100th anniversary of women's suffrage in the U.S., was titled, "The Battle for Women's Rights in American Religion and Politics."

We continued to go virtual with the department's annual Charles Franklin Finch Lecture. This year's lecturer was Dr. J. Warren Smith, Professor of Historical Theology at Duke University Divinity School. Dr. Smith gave a lecture entitled, "Will the Real Great-Souled Man Please Stand Up? Aristotle's Ideal of Magnanimity in the Hands of Austen and Dostoevsky."



Faculty Updates

Rev. Dr. Chris Franks (Chair)



I am enjoying teaching the courses that are most frequently in my rotation: Environmental Ethics, New Testament Studies, Globalization and Christian Ethics, Early Christian Thought, and Medieval Philosophy and Theology. As pre-ministry advisor, I also mentor and assist students in learning about seminaries and divinity schools, and lead Faith and Reason Forum, which this year is reading and discussing a book about an innovative new church in Winston-Salem. I also love serving as club advisor for the Student ECO Team.

Rev. Dr. Joe Blosser



I continue to work on Service Learning classes throughout the University, including my own. This Fall, I'll be teaching the Ethics of Education and Gender and Social Justice, which are both service learning courses. The first places students as tutors in an elementary school, and the second places students at non-profits all over the city of High Point, where they work to increase justice and equity.

I also oversee the Civic Responsibility and Social Innovation minor, which prepares students to be active participants in the democratic life of our nation. And finally, I oversee the HPU AmeriCorps VISTA program. We've had several of our department's students stay to be VISTAs. It's basically like doing the Peace Corps, but in the U.S. Students live and dine on campus for another year, while working full-time to alleviate poverty in our city. It's a great opportunity for recent HPU graduates, and recruiting for these positions began in March 2021.

Dr. Claudine Davidshofer

I teach Business Ethics on a regular basis, which I enjoy doing because it gives me the opportunity to introduce students from all across the University to core issues in ethics and philosophy. Last Spring, I created and taught a new course on Existentialism, which covered both religious existentialism and non-religious existentialism. This coming Fall, I look forward to teaching Ancient Philosophy, because Aristotle is my most favorite philosopher!



Dr. Ashley Dreff



After three semesters at High Point University, I have been elected to serve as General Secretary of Archives and History of The United Methodist Church, and relocated to New Jersey in January 2021.

In this role, as a "minister of memory," I will advise and craft the mission and vision of The United Methodist Church by engaging with and promoting its history.

Dr. Beth Hupfer

Though I was slated to teach four sections of Business Ethics in Fall 2020, my baby boy Charlie decided to come a little early and I only got about 2 weeks into the term before I went on maternity leave! I am occasionally sleep deprived, but glad to be back with students this Spring teaching Civic Responsibility and Social Innovation (a service learning course), Logic and Critical Thinking, and Business Ethics. In the Fall, I am teaching Logic again, and I am excited to teach my FYS on Harry Potter and Understanding Good and Evil for the first time in a while.



Dr. Amy MacArthur



Despite the challenges the pandemic presented to everyone this semester, the current circumstances have offered unique opportunities for learning and growth in the classroom. In the fall semester of 2020, I taught Bio-Medical Ethics, Political Philosophy, and Modern Philosophy. Especially in the case of Bio-Medical Ethics, the pandemic has provided numerous opportunities for discussing the ethics of the health care system and the practice of medicine in the United States.

In Political Philosophy, the pandemic as well as the national election and the current racial climate following the events of the summer provided plenty of material for discussing topics like freedom and the limits of government, democracy and social justice. In Modern Philosophy, among other things students got the chance to discuss the metaphysics and epistemology of the most difficult and best philosopher ever, Immanuel Kant (though there wasn't really a way to tie in the pandemic to his views). Mr. Ostrowski and I have continued HPU's participation in the NCICU annual Ethics Bowl by meeting (virtually) with a team of students to work on this year's cases (the topic this year is fittingly the Ethics of Pandemics). In the meantime, the book project I instigated in the summer of 2019 (on Kantian Group Agency!) has been in Covid-hibernation, but will hopefully get a refresh soon.

Mr. Thaddeus Ostrowski



I, along with Dr. MacArthur, continue to work on ethics bowl during the pandemic (which is this year's relevant topic: ethics during a pandemic), even though the competition will be modified (and that we won last February!). In addition, I am excited to be teaching and developing some new courses recently (Evil, Suffering, and God, Family Ethics, and Theories of Comedy). Finally, I moved offices again, but I am delighted to be back in David Hayworth Hall with my departmental colleagues.

Recent Faculty Research

Rev. Dr. Chris Franks (Chair)

- Moderated a virtual panel for church leaders called "Leading the Generations: Ecclesial Leadership in a Time of Crisis," on Oct. 1, 2020
- Published a book review of Mary Hirschfeld's *Aquinas and the Market* in *International Journal of Systematic Theology*

- Planning a Spring Faculty Lecture on living out Christian peaceableness in economic life, and is currently working on a book on the meaning of the cross of Christ

Rev. Dr. Joe Blosser

- Completed a revise and resubmit of “An Economics of Sufficiency” in *Journal of Religious Ethics*
- Submitted “How Can I Uproot the System’: Justice-oriented Outcomes from Community Based Research in Schools,” with Allison Blosser, under review
- Forthcoming article “And It Was Good: Building an Ethics of Sufficiency,” *Journal of the Society of Christian Ethics* in 2021
- Awarded an AmeriCorps VISTA Grant to host 9 VISTAs at HPU

Dr. Claudine Davidshofer

- Published "Kierkegaard's Response to the Hegelian Necessity of the Past: Possibility, Actuality, and Necessity in Kierkegaard's *Philosophical Fragments*" *International Philosophical Quarterly* (forthcoming in June 2021)

Dr. Beth Hupfer

- Planned the 2020 North Carolina Philosophical Society Conference as the NCSP Secretary-Treasurer (cancelled at the last minute due to COVID)
- Invited to referee an article for the journal *Philosophy Compass* on distributive justice
- Completed a revise and resubmit for a journal on a new paper “Humanitarian Nations”

Dr. Amanda Mbuvi

- Working with a group of scholars from different institutions on a project funded by a grant from the Henry Luce Foundation to develop public facing approaches to studying and teaching religion
- Presented at the Annual Meeting of the American Academy of Religion
- Participated on a panel in the Slavery, Resistance, and Freedom section at the Annual Meeting of the Society of Biblical Literature
- Published “Seeing Ourselves in Books: A Children’s Book about Transracial Adoption and the Common Sense of Jewish Family and Identity in the United States” in *The Journal of Jewish Ethics*
- Published a book chapter “Singing the Songs of Zion in Babylon”
- Published “Black Jews Matter: Solidarity Begins Beyond the Limits of Whiteness” in *Contending Modernities*,

- Presented at the Annual Meeting of the Society of Jewish Ethics
- Serves on the board of the Society of Jewish Ethics as a Program Co-Chair
- Created the exhibit for Genesis 2:4b-8 with student Gabrielle Banks
- Gave the plenary response at the joint Annual Meeting of the Society of Jewish Ethics, the Society of Christian Ethics, and the Society for the Study of Muslim Ethics
- Gave a lecture at Wake Forest called “Growing Up Black and Jewish: Navigating Double Identities and Discrimination”
- Led a teach-in on “Black Theology and Black Power” at the invitation of students in Kappa Alpha Psi Fraternity as part of their Black Excellence Week
- Panelist in the “From Ashkenormativity to Anti-Racism” webinar series hosted by the Greensboro Jewish Federation
- Guest on several podcasts, including Great Bible Teachers and First Readings: The Old Testament Lectionary Podcast, and Bible for Normal People

Dr. Robert Moses

- Elected as co-chair of the Pauline Theology Committee of the Society of Biblical Literature beginning in January 2021
- Published, “The God of the Sabbath for Humans: Reading Mark 2:23-28 within the Context of Ancient Sabbath Debates,” in *Talking God in Society: Multidisciplinary (Re)constructions of Ancient (Con)texts*, NTOA/SUNT 120, 2 vols., ed. Ute E. Eisen and Heidrun Mader (Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 2021)

How to Donate to the Religion and Philosophy Scholarship Fund

Gifts made to support the Religion and Philosophy Endowed Scholarship Fund provide meaningful support to students majoring in these disciplines each year. They are a critical resource to ensuring students can pursue this extraordinary education in a successful way.

If you wish to [make a gift](#) to support these students and our department, you may give online by clicking the button below.

GIVE NOW

You may also mail a check to the address below. Please include "Religion and Philosophy Scholarship" in the memo line.

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