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Department of Religion and Philosophy

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Department of Religion and Philosophy Newsletter

Fall 2023 and Spring 2024



The Parker-Locke Award winners Xuan (Dynasty) Rui (left, '24) and Angelena Antenuci (right, '24).

Note from the Chair

We are pleased to share some annual updates about the accomplishments of our wonderful students and faculty in the department of Religion and Philosophy. From law school acceptances to exciting internships to excellent student research, our students continue to impress. This year we welcomed Dr. Kelsey Spinnato and Dr. Matthew Mitchell to David Hayworth Hall. We hope you enjoy this taste of the 2023-2024 academic year.

Warmly,

Rev. Dr. Chris Franks
cfranks@highpoint.edu

Student News

The Parker-Locke Award for outstanding academic achievement and leadership ability by a graduating major or majors in 2024 went to **Angelena Antenuci ('24)** and **Xuan (Dynasty) Rui ('24)**.

ΦΣΤ (Phi Sigma Tau) is the International Honor Society in Philosophy. To qualify, students must major or minor in philosophy and meet rigorous academic standards demonstrating their commitment to and excellence in the study of philosophy. In Spring 2024, the department inducted Angelena Antenuci ('24), Logan Cabay ('24), Moira Houston ('24), Max Kresock ('24), Haley McCall ('24), Leonardo Moda ('24), Xuan (Dynasty) Rui ('24), and Jordan Vincent ('24). Congratulations, scholars!



Spring 2024 Phi Sigma Tau from left to right: Leonardo Moda, Haley McCall, Moira Houston, Jordan Vincent, Max Kresock.

ΘΑΚ (Theta Alpha Kappa) is the national honor society for religious studies and theology. To qualify, students must major or minor in religion, have completed at least 12 credits in that area, and have a high GPA demonstrating excellence in both the discipline and their overall studies. In the spring of 2024, the department inducted Ethan Muckerheide ('24), Ivy Scott ('26), Sofie Smith ('25), Benjamin Thomas ('25), and Kayla Wylie ('25). Congratulations!



Spring 2024 Theta Alpha Kappa from left to right: Sofie Smith, Kayla Wylie, Ivy Scott, Benjamin Thomas, Ethan Muckerheide.

Student Research

In Spring 2024, **Xuan (Dynasty) Rui** ('24, Media Production and Philosophy double major) and **Kayla Wylie** ('25, History and Religion double major) presented on Honors day at HPU's student research symposium, **High-PURCS**.



Kayla Wylie presenting her poster entitled "In Pursuit of Perfection: Examining John Wesley's Doctrine of Holiness" which she worked on with Dr. Amanda Allen in History.



Xuan (Dynasty) Rui presenting her senior thesis research entitled "The Problem of Evil," which she completed with Mr. Thaddeus Ostrowski.

Darius Cummings ('25) presented at the **2023 State of North Carolina Undergraduate Research and Creativity Symposium**. His presentation was entitled "Specificity and Interpretation in Two Thangkas of the Medicine Buddha."

Student Clubs

Pre-ministry advisor Rev. Dr. Chris Franks gathers **FOCUS pre-ministry group** to connect students discerning a call into ministry. Students support each other and encourage each other in their journeys of discernment. This year's conversations were anchored in a year-long study of the book *Soul Keeping* by John Ortberg.

Dr. Amy MacArthur and Mr. Thaddeus Ostrowski took a team of 6 students to the annual NCICU **Ethics Bowl** competition in Raleigh on February 9-10, 2024. The students who attended were **Autumn Bryan, Wes Singer, Sofie Smith, Sofia Statuto, Will Tepper, and Jordan Via**. The theme for this year was "Ethics in Artificial Intelligence and Cybersecurity." The HPU team took home a semi-finalist trophy, only losing against reigning champions, Queens University of Charlotte.



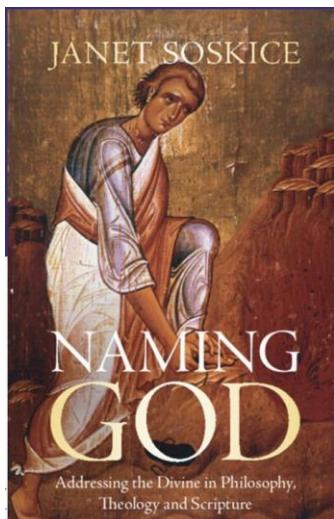
HPU's 2024 NCICU Ethics Bowl Team: Front row, from left to right: Jordan Via, Will Tepper, Sophia Statuto, Sofie Smith, and Autumn Bryan. Back row, from left to right: Dr. Amy Lynn MacArthur, Wes Singer, Mr. Thaddeus Ostrowski.

The Philosophy Club, with Dr. Carl Helsing and Dr. Amy MacArthur as faculty advisors, enjoys a membership of 23 students and hosts biweekly meetings where students lead discussion on a wide range of philosophical topics.

Department News



During spring break, Rev. Dr. Chris Franks, Rev. Dr. Preston Davis, vice president and minister to HPU, and Gwenn Noel, vice president of student life, led a group of 20 HPU students to Greece to follow the footsteps of Paul's second mission. While there, they visited the Parthenon, Olympia, and the Eastern Orthodox monasteries in Meteora. See the department's Facebook page for a video of Rev. Dr. Chris Franks discussing Aristotle's school in Athens, the Lyceum!



The **Spring 2024 Charles Franklin Finch Lecture** was delivered on Mar. 25, 2024, by Dr. Janet Soskice (above, image on the right), Professor of Philosophical Theology at the University of Cambridge, Fellow Emerita at Jesus College, Cambridge, and William K. Warren Distinguished Research Professor of Catholic Theology at Duke University. The lecture was entitled, "Naming God: Philosophy, Theology, and Prayer."

Dr. Beth Hupfer was awarded tenure and promotion to associate professor of philosophy. Congratulations, Dr. Hupfer!

Recent Faculty Research and Activities



2023-2024 Faculty (left to right: Matthew Mitchell, Kelsey Spinnato, Amy MacArthur, Beth Hupfer, Robert Moses, Thaddeus Ostrowski, Chris Franks, Claudine Davidshofer, Matthew Brophy, Carl Helsing, and Caroline Mobley

Rev. Dr. Chris Franks (Chair)

- Started teaching a new Intellectual Discovery course in Fall 2023 on "The Seven Deadly Sins."
- Co-led HPU Chapel pilgrimages to Asheville, NC (Fall Break) and Greece (spring break).
- Convenor for panel session at the Annual Meeting of the Society of Christian Ethics discussing *For the Life of the World: Toward a Social Ethos of the Orthodox Church* in Chicago on Jan. 5, 2024.

Dr. Claudine Davidshofer

- Continues to teach Ethics and the Good Life, Existentialism, and Ancient Philosophy.
- In Fall 2023, Dr. Davidshofer, along with Dr. Nathan Hedman and Dr. Matt Carlson, debuted a new co-taught Honors Humanistic Inquiry Course: The Meaning of Childhood.
- Submitted an article detailing Kierkegaard's critique of Hegel's famous dialectical method.
- Served on an "author meets critics" panel at the American Philosophical Association conference in New Orleans in February.

Dr. Carl Helsing

- Will travel with HPU students to Taiwan with Prof. Daliang Wang for the Global Education course "Exploring Taiwan: Language, Culture, and People in a Globalized World."
- Published a book chapter, "Obscuring the Natural Way: A philosophical and religious response to acquisition and growth in Enlightenment thought," in *Religion, Education, Science and Technology towards a More Inclusive and Sustainable Future*, edited by Malia Raheim. New York: Routledge, 2024.
- Presented "Let the Heart-Mind Wander: A Trio of Therapeutic Dialogues for Personal Transformation and the Flourishing of All-Under-Heaven," for CCCT in Boone, NC, Saturday, April 6, 2024.
- Presented "Emptiness by Design: Daoist Visions of Ecological Sustainability," for SEC/AAS in Winston-Salem, NC (hosted by Wake Forest University), Saturday, January 27, 2024.
- Presented "Zhuangzi's Moral Psychology of Humor." for the 23rd Annual Conference for the International Society for Chinese Philosophy, University of California at Riverside, June 20, 2023.
- Presented "Dao and Data: Algorithmic Limitations and the Limits of the Mechanical Heart-Mind," for the 55th Annual Meeting of the Society for Asian and Comparative Philosophy (hosted by the University of San Francisco), Friday, November 10, 2023.

Dr. Beth Hupfer

- Presented: "From Bednets to Rocket Ships: Efficiency in the Long-Term and Neglect for the Present" at the "Moral Theory and the Challenge of Future People Workshop" by the Value Theory and the Philosophy of Public Policy, McGill University, Montreal, Canada (2023)
- Published: "Inefficient Charity" *Social Theory and Practice* 50:1 (January 2024): 105-125.
- President of the North Carolina Philosophical Society

Dr. Matthew Mitchell

- Published "Opening the Curtains on Popular Religious Practice: Kaicho in the Meiji and Taisho Periods," in the *Japanese Journal of Religious Studies* 50:1 (pp. 79-104)
- Edited a collection of reviews of recent books on Race and Buddhism and wrote the editor's introduction for the collection for *Religious Studies Review* 50:1 (pp. 113-114)
- Wrote a review of Ian Reader and John Shultz *Pilgrims Until We Die: Unending Pilgrimage in Shikoku for Reading Religion*.
- Participated in "Teaching Japanese Religions: Innovative Methods for Engaging Learners" roundtable, Association for Asian Studies 2024 Annual Conference in Seattle, WA, March 14-17.
- Presented "Robes Wrapping the Heart: Resistance and Remembrance in the Life Stories of Abbess Seien of Zenkōji Daihongan." At the 2024 Asia Scholar Network conference at UNC Chapel Hill, Saturday, April 20, 2024.
- Mahayana/East Asian editor for *Religious Studies Review*
- Steering Committee Member of the American Academy of Religion's Space, Place, and Religion Unit.
- After three years of service, Matt is stepping down from his role as secretary/treasurer for the Society for the Study of Japanese Religions in spring 2024.

Dr. Caroline Mobley

Continues to expand her teaching repertoire:

- Started teaching an honors course on Death Fall 2024.
- Started teaching Contemporary Moral Problems at HPU Spring 2024.
- Looks forward to teaching Philosophy of Disability, a course she developed, for the first time this coming Fall (2024).

Dr. Robert Moses

- Published "Mark's Jesus on Wealth and Poverty: A Response to C. Clifton Black and Margaret M. Mitchell," *Currents in Theology and Mission* 50 (2023): 14-18.
- Presented "Made of Money: Currency in Matthew's Gospel and the Community's Socio-Economic Status." Paper Presented to the Society of New Testament Studies Conference, Vienna, Austria, July 27, 2023.
- Moderated the review panel of *Paul and Time* by Ann Jervis at the Society of Biblical Literature Conference, San Antonio, TX, November 20, 2023.

Dr. Kelsey Spinnato

- Ran a budgeting workshop for graduate students at the Society of Biblical Literature annual meeting, San Antonio, TX, November 19, 2023
- Proposed a new integrative course with JW Turner in the Music Department on Psalms and Music
- Completed a yearlong workshop on accessibility and the biblical studies classroom through the Society of Biblical Literature
- Will travel with HPU students and Dr. Amanda Allen for the Maymester course in London focused on the Tudors

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