

Philosophers in Jesuit Education

Annual Newsletter



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Philosophers in Jesuit Education is a network of philosophers teaching in Jesuit-sponsored institutions of higher education in the United States, together with philosophers in other institutions or elsewhere who are interested in Jesuit education.

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President's Welcome

Pax et bonum from the City of Saint Francis and its Jesuit University of San Francisco! In this issue, we feature an interview with Greta Turnbull, Assistant Professor of Philosophy at Gonzaga University and Ph.D. alumna of Boston College. For our edification and encouragement, Graham McAleer from Loyola University Maryland reflects on teaching in the wake of the events in Ukraine and in a time of radical global uncertainty.

This is an active and exciting era for Philosophers in Jesuit Education. Under the able leadership of my immediate predecessor David McPherson of Creighton University, PJE hosted John Cottingham via zoom for his illuminating lecture, “The Religious Dimensions of Descartes’ Thought” in May 2021. This lecture is the first in a now annual tradition of summer zoom lectures. PJE also inaugurated The Joseph Koterski, S.J. Lecture at the November 2021 meeting of the American Catholic Philosophical Association in Saint Louis, MO. Professor Eleonore Stump of Saint Louis University spoke to a sizeable audience on, “The Image of God: The Problem of Evil and the Problem of Mourning” with Fr. Godehard Brüntrup, S.J. (Hochschule für Philosophie München) responding.

On Wednesday, June 15th at 1 pm (Eastern) Professor Benjamin J. B. Lipscomb of Houghton College will speak via zoom about his recent book entitled, *The Women Are Up to Something: How Anscombe, Foot, Midgley, and Murdoch Revolutionized Ethics* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2021). As Thomas Nagel notes in the London Review of Books, “[Lipscomb] has produced a superior work of personal and intellectual history, sensitive and finely written.” You will want to tune in; mark your calendars! (For more information and a zoom link, see p. 2) Finally, we invite you to join us for the next annual gathering of PJE to be held as a satellite session of the November 17-20 American Catholic Philosophical Association’s meeting, hosted by Loyola University, New Orleans. We hope to see you there! Blessings on your good work of carrying out the Jesuit mission!

T. A. Cavanaugh
President of Philosophers in Jesuit Education
Professor of Philosophy
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AMDG

Philosophers in Jesuit Education

Annual Lecture

Benjamin J. B. Lipscomb (Houghton College) will deliver the Philosophers in Jesuit Education Annual Lecture on June 15th, 2022, at 1pm Eastern/12pm Central/11am Mountain/10am Pacific.

The lecture will be titled, "The Women Are Up to Something: How Anscombe, Foot, Midgley, and Murdoch Revolutionized Ethics." All are welcome! Join us over Zoom at:

<https://creighton.zoom.us/j/94333486052>

Member Spotlight

Greta Turnbull, Gonzaga University
Interview by Naomi Fisher

Greta Turnbull is Assistant Professor of Philosophy at Gonzaga University. She works on traditional and social epistemology and the philosophy of science. She has published many papers on topics such as religious disagreement and underdetermination in science.

NF: What is one guiding idea behind your current projects?

GT: The guiding concern of my research is to help us to navigate a world of uncertainty, where our evidence is messy and our allegiances to people and powers pull us in opposing directions. Right now, I'm thinking about public allegations of abuse and working out new ways we can center victims in our beliefs about victims and about the accused.

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Teaching with Hope in an Uncertain World

by **Graham McAleer, Loyola University Maryland**

Teaching a Global Studies business ethics course last semester, I asked for a show of hands whether we lived in a globalized world. Every student put up a hand. And yet the war in Ukraine has shattered the conceit of a unified global order. India, China, Mexico, Brazil, South Africa, and the rest of the Global South have not joined sanctions against Russia. The idea that we are all global citizens who have reached a consensus on the role of markets, diversity, rule of law, and the dominance of the U.S. dollar was never true. Now the fractures and fault lines are obvious to all.

There has been so much written on Ukraine as the end of the road for the End of History thesis. The End of History and the Last Man by Francis Fukuyama is a seminal work of political theory which dominated U.S. and European strategic thinking after the fall of the Berlin Wall. The book argued that the West had hit upon the most rational form of government and that liberal democracy backed by scientific rationality would be appealing globally. Our long search for the best form of government was over. In this sense, history had closed. However, it is frequently forgotten that Fukuyama's famous 1992 book also predicted that history would kick-start again when the highly spirited tired of bourgeois life. Putin has made history, and so has John Mearsheimer.

The prominent Chicago strategist always thought Fukuyama wrong. His 2015 university lecture on the West's provocation of Russia has 23 million views on YouTube now. It is surely an historical first for an academic lecture to garner such an enormous audience. The most striking thing about strategic studies is the philosophical assumptions. Mearsheimer's lecture reminds us of both the profound mission we have as teachers and that philosophy is inescapable. Perhaps this is a consolation amidst the desolation: none of us should ever doubt the impact our classes have in leavening the culture.

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Teaching with Hope in an Uncertain World, by Graham McAleer, continued

The Jesuit pope, Francis, was thoroughly alert to the fault lines in world opinion in 2020. His encyclical *Fratelli Tutti* includes a potent image. Lamenting a world closing in upon itself, he observes:

Paradoxically, we have certain ancestral fears that technological development has not succeeded in eliminating; indeed, those fears have been able to hide and spread behind new technologies. Today, too, outside the ancient town wall lies the abyss, the territory of the unknown, the wilderness. Whatever comes from there cannot be trusted, for it is unknown, unfamiliar, not part of the village (Paragraph 27).

Our task is to demythologize the ancient town walls: to probe unexamined narratives and beliefs, and to take our students on a tour of complexity, at times difficult and contrarian. Philosophy in the Jesuit orientation is no stranger to the abyss, but fear is not our guide, rather is hope. Trusting there is no wilderness light does not know, we teach and research in hope of finding common patterns and shared destiny, replacing fortifications with a solidarity through which we and our students might be better integrated into the saving clarity of the Word.

Graham McAleer is Professor of Philosophy at Loyola Maryland University, and the author of several books, including Tolkein and The Lord of the Rings: A Philosophy of War.



Member Spotlight: Greta Turnbull, continued

NF: What do you believe is distinctive about a Jesuit education?

GT: I was once told by a mentor (long before coming to Gonzaga!) that it was weird of me to say that I love my students. At Jesuit institutions, sacrificial love for your students is our calling. I get to spend my career growing in my capacity for that kind of love alongside other faculty who are committed to that level of care for our students.

NF: How do you see yourself implementing the Jesuit mission of your institution in your teaching?

GT: I run months-long, intensive role-playing simulations in my courses that require students to take on the perspective of historical persons at crucial intellectual turning points in history, through the nationally recognized Reacting to the Past curriculum. Students often leave my courses saying that they've gained new eyes and hearts for people whose beliefs differ from their own because of the way they encountered new perspectives by embodying them in the simulations. My hope is that the experiences they have in my classes move them to exist in solidarity with the marginalized in deep and genuine ways.

NF: What is your favorite thing so far about working at Gonzaga?

GT: I love all of the obvious things about working at GU: the faculty, the students who are as committed to the mission as the faculty, the staff colleagues whom I've learned so much from, the roar of the student section during a basketball game. Before COVID, faculty used to camp out in the gym together to wait for basketball tickets, and I loved grabbing my sleeping bag and playing cards from 11PM-6 AM on a Sunday night with other faculty in line for tickets. Post COVID, I'll die on the hill that we have the best on campus food of all the Jesuit schools.

To join PJE or learn more, visit <https://pje.blog.fordham.edu> or contact: jesuitphilosophers@gmail.com

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