

Kansas Philosophy

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Newsletter of the KU Department of Philosophy

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2017-2018 Faculty

Ben Caplan Brad Cokelet Dale Dorsey Ben Eggleston Erin Frykholm Scott Jenkins Corey Maley Eileen Nutting Sarah Robins Armin Schulz Irina Symons John Symons Tom Tuozzo

Emeritus Faculty

John Bricke Richard De George Don Marquis Rex Martin James Woelfel

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Greetings from the Chair

This is my first message to you all as chair, and I'm still settling into my new office (to which the disheveled pile of boxes covering every inch of it will attest). But it gives me great pleasure to take over the reins from John Symons, who was not only a truly extraordinary chair, but is a terrific philosopher and a warm, generous, and thoughtful human being. He

has left the department much better than he found it, and all of us at KU Philosophy owe him a great debt of gratitude.

As many of you may know, these are challenging times for the humanities, and philosophy specifically, nationally. We seem unable to shake common misconceptions about our discipline, and we seem to be forgotten in the rapid (and, to my mind, ill considered) push to shunt every young mind into engineering or computer science. But the facts remain that an



education in Philosophy is not only the key to a rewarding intellectual life, but a rewarding career as well: our graduates overall do better on entrance exams for graduate education (whatever form this graduate education is to take) than virtually any other discipline, and the mid-career salaries of philosophy majors are quite high, indeed. We hope that you'll spread the word about your own experience with an education in Philosophy, and how it has come to enrich your life. Indeed, we would love to hear it---please do stop by or get in touch.

Back at home the developments in our department are quite exciting. This year we welcomed two permanent members of the faculty, Ben Caplan and Brad Cokelet. Ben comes to us from Ohio State. His research in metaphysics (along with other topics) is cutting-edge and always thought-provoking. We're positively thrilled to have Ben here. Brad specializes in ethics and normative theory, and joins us from the University of Miami. His work on the nature and content of the virtues has attracted attention not only from other scholars, but also from major funding agencies as well! We're very excited to see what's in store for our new faculty.

Despite the budgetary challenges faced by the University at large, our department continues to be able to support a broad range of events, including conferences, visiting speakers, and graduate and undergraduate scholarships. Furthermore, this year we inaugurate our annual DeGeorge lecture series, and I would like to personally thank those who have contributed to this series. Our ability to put on such events is due to the very kind support of our alumni and friends of the department.

On this note, I'd like now to mention something big. As many of you know, four of our long-time faculty (John Bricke, Don Marquis, Jim Woelfel, and Richard DeGeorge) retired recently. Their loss is keenly felt. We would like to honor them and their contributions to philosophy with one or more endowed chairships in our department. We are one of the few Ph.D.-granting departments with no endowed chairships, and can think of no better way to correct this than to recognize the legacy of the people who made this department what it is today. If you would like to contribute to this effort, please contact us.

More generally, if you would like to make a contribution to philosophical education at the University of Kansas, please do not hesitate to get in touch.

Dale Dorsey Chair

Thank you

We wish to thank and acknowledge those who have contributed to the Philosophy Department Endowment funds. These important resources allow the department to support graduate student travel, bring guest lecturers to broaden both faculty and student learning, acknowledge outstanding students in the pursuit of

> Gregory and Mary Busby Albert Cinelli Frederick and Carol Lollman Dunn David Duquette Robert Godbout Garvey Kansas Foundation Jeffrey T. Hammons Donald and Paula Hatcher Kelley Hayden Betty Long Gwen Jones-Lurvey Clancey Maloney and Jack Horner Bruce and Freda McKeithan Larry Poague II David and Rita Schmidt Gary and Janet Skinner Alan and Maria Stearns James and Lauren Swindler Christopher Tankersley William and Karen Tankersley Sarah Trulove and James Woelfel

We would love to hear from you. Please send your news to the department via email at philos@ku.edu.

Faculty



Ben Caplan is super happy to have joined the department in August 2017. He has two coauthored papers forthcoming: one on fictional characters, in *Grazer Philosophische Studien*, with David Sanson (Illinois State University) and Cathleen

Muller (Marist College); the other on essence and grounding, in Inquiry, with Chris Tillman (University of Manitoba) and Eileen Nutting. Eileen and Ben presented the second paper at a workshop at the University of Oslo in June 2017. They are working on another paper with Chris Tillman, this one on propositions, for The Routledge Handbook on Propositions. Ben is on the programme committee for the 2018 meeting of the Canadian Philosophical Association in Montréal (his home town), and he is the chair of the program committee for the 2019 meeting of the Central Division of the American Philosophical Association in Denver (not his home town). In his first year at KU he will be teaching courses in logic, metaphysics, and the history of analytic philosophy.

Brad Cokelet continues to thank his lucky stars that he ended up in Lawrence and in the KU de-

partment. Last year he finished designing and running experiments on fairness and kindness with empirical psychologists at the University of Delaware and the University of Miami. He helped present the results at a



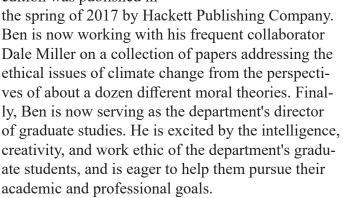
conference on Moral Psychology at the University of Oklahoma and co-wrote a paper on the new model that he has helped develop for further interdisciplinary research. Brad is now applying for grant that would allow him to set up a Public Philosophy Project at KU and he continues to write papers on ethical theory and east-west ethics. Richard De George published a paper "Rethinking Global Business Ethics: The North-South Paradigm," in Business and Society Review, 122:1 (2017), 5-25, and has three more papers in press. He attended a meeting of AMINTAPIL (American Section of the International Society for Legal and Political Philosophy) at Wake Forest, Oct. 13-15,2016 and presented a paper on "Privacy, Public Space and Personal Information." Rex Martin and Ann Cudd also gave papers at the meeting. On the local scene at the U.S.Partners in Business Ethics Conference, University of Kansas, on Sept. 30, 2016, he presented a paper. "Beginnings of the Field of Business Ethics," in celebration of the 40th anniversary of the first conference on business ethics (which was held at KU) in the U.S., which helped kick off a new field of study. On Oct. 2, 2016 he presented a paper on

"Serendipity" to the KU Discussion Club, a local interdisciplinary faculty group, of which Jack Bricke, Ben Eggleston and John Symons are also members. His next big adventure travel trip is to Antarctica in January.



Ben Eggleston's work on the moral thought of John

Stuart Mill led him to develop a new edition of Mill's *Utilitarianism* in which the text of Mill's essay is supplemented with 58 related remarks selected from Mill's other writings, ranging from his treatise on logic to his personal correpondence. This edition was published in



IOHN STUART MILL

Erin Frykholm continues to research Joseph Butler's influence on Hume's moral philosophy, with a paper forthcoming from Archiv für Geschicte



der Philosophie on their views of self-interest and benevolence, and a presentation at the Hume Society Conference on their derivation of moral obligations from social roles. Her contribution to the volume Hume, Moral Philosophy and Contemporary Psychology entitled "Spontaneity, Intuition and Humean Virtue" is in press (Routledge). She continues to serve as Director of Undergraduate Studies and has enjoyed working with undergraduates in this and other venues this year, joining a faculty panel for the Honors program on the topic of whether voting matters, and contributing to a KJHK podcast on free will and responsibility. She is looking forward to (finally!) offering a graduate seminar on Hume in the spring, covering major topics in Hume's philosophical legacy.

In the last year, Scott Jenkins traveled exten-



sively to present portions of his book manuscript on Nietzsche and pessimism. Stops included Birkbeck College at the University of London, Dartmouth College, Reed College, and specialist conferences in Providence, Chicago, and New York. As of summer

2017, Scott is also the associate editor of the *Journal of Nietzsche Studies*. His contribution to the *Oxford Handbook of Hegel*, "Self-Consciousness in the *Phenomenology*", also appeared in print in 2017. Scott is happy to report that this article finally presents in print an idea that came

This year, **Corey Maley** completed a chapter for the forthcoming *Routledge Handbook of Consciousness* on the evolution of consciousness, and an article in the journal *Minds and Machines* on analog computation in the brain. He's revising an article



on the implications of analog computation for the use of information theory in neuroscience. Corey and his colleague Brad

Cokelet have submitted a proposal for a volume on the moral psychology of guilt which, if successful, will be part of a series on the moral psychology of the emotions.

In August, Corey submitted a proposal for a grant from the National Science Foundation to work on a book manuscript about analog computation in the brain. While the official budget for the NSF is still awaiting congressional approval,

General Douglas MacArthur famously proclaimed, "Old soldiers never die; they just fade away". **Don Marquis** is not dead yet. But he is fading. (In his own words!)

However, he did present a paper "Why Physician-Assisted Suicide Should Not Be Legalized" at the April 1, 2017 meeting of the Kansas Philosophical Society. This paper seems sound, but needs a bit of expansion. He also presented a paper concerning the origin of each of us at a Romanell Philosophy Forum at The University at Buffalo, July 29, 2017. He is working on a much improved version that he will present at the Eastern Division Meeting of the American Philosophical Association in January, 2018.

His notorious abortion essay has now been reprinted 105 times.

Rex Martin presented the following paper, "The Welfare Rights in the UN's Declaration: Are They Universal Human Rights," as two invited public lectures at the University of Kansas and Colorado State University and also at the NASSP meeting at Carleton University (in Ottawa, Canada). He will also be serving as the 'opponent' (the public interlocutor and critic) at an oral Ph.D. defense in October 2017 at Åbo University in Finland.

Assistant Professor **Eileen Nutting** is happy to be back at KU after a year away. Over the summer, she presented papers in Oslo, Norway, and Dubrovnik, Croatia. She has two forthcoming journal



articles: a solo-authored piece in *Synthese* called "Ontological Realism and Sentential Form," and, together with co-authors Ben Caplan and Chris Tillman, a piece in *Inquiry* called "Constitutive Essence and Partial Grounding." (She is thoroughly delighted that Ben has joined the faculty at KU.) Over the fall, Eileen is teaching a large introduction to philosophy and a smaller logic course. And in addition to other research projects, she is scrambling to finish a short book on the epistemology of mathematics. It is under contract with Cambridge and due rather sooner than she would like.

Sarah Robins continues to focus her research on memory. This year she has published a paper in *Synthese* and contributed a chapter on memory traces to

the Routledge Handbook of Philosophy of Memory. She also has commentaries forthcoming in Behavioral and Brain Sciences and the Australasian Philosophical Review. Over the summer, Sarah traveled to Cologne, Germany to participate in the first Issues in Philosophy of Memory conference. This



conference is now established as the biennial meeting for the Philosophy of Memory Organization (<u>www.</u> <u>phomo.org</u>), and Sarah is a member of its Steering Comittee. While not traveling, she used a small grant from KU's General Research Fund to work on a paper exploring how the development of optogenetics has brought about methodological and theoretical advances in the neurobiological study of memory. Looking forward, Sarah is excited to be working on a book manuscript about memory traces and starting a new research project about mnemonics. And, after a year away from teaching, Sarah is happy to be back in the classroom teaching Phil. 150: Philosophical Communication and Phil. 654: Philosophy of Mind this fall. Armin Schulz has been putting the finishing touches



on his forthcoming book (with MIT Press), "Efficient Cognition—The Evolution of Representational Decision Making." He also published a paper in the journal *Biology and Philosophy* on the best way of modeling helping behavior and a comment on the evolution of human moral

cognition in the journal *Brain and Behavioral Sciences*. Apart from that, he gave several talks at institutions and conferences in North America (the University of Missouri-Columbia, the Southern Society for Philosophy and Psychology, the Central APA); and Europe (in Oxford, UK and Frankfurt, Germany). He has also been teaching Phil. 150 (Philosophical Communication), Phil. 620 (Philosophy of the Natural Sciences), Phil. 622 (Philosophy of the Social Sciences) and Phil. 800 (the Proseminar).

This summer, **John Symons** finished his five year term as Chair. He's very grateful for the opportunity to lead this awesome group of faculty and students and is confident that under Dale's leadership as chair that his wisdom and good judgment will help us reach new heights of excellence and recognition.

John has been giving lots of talks and publishing at a decent rate over the course of the year. This summer, his newest book *Formal Reasoning: A Guide to Critical Thinking* finally appeared in print. That book took many years, growing into a 400 page monster before finally deciding that it had drained enough life force from its creator.

One of his favorite parts of the job is collaborative work with his friend Jack Horner and his graduate student Ramón Alvarado. Jack and John recently published "Software Error as a Limit to Inquiry for Finite Agents: Challenges for the Posthuman Scientist" a chapter in a book on the way that computational methods in science and elsewhere introduce new philosophical problems. On the same general theme, Ramón and John published "Can We Trust Big Data? Applying Philosophy of Science to Software" in *Big Data and Society*. In addition to that work, John alone can be blamed for the following three papers that came out recently:

- "Metaphysical and scientific accounts of emergence: Varieties of fundamentality and theoretical completeness"
- In Saurabh Mittal, Saikou Diallo, and Andreas Tolk (eds.) *Emergent Behavior in Complex Systems Engineering: A Modeling and Simulation Approach*. Malden: Wiley
- "Brute Facts About Emergence." In Elly Vintiadis (ed.) *Brute Facts*. Oxford: Oxford University Press
- "Teleosemantics and Natural Information." In Luciano Floridi (ed.) *Routledge Companion to Philosophy of Information* pp. 263-277.

Finally, this fall, John is teaching (together with Allan Hanson) the Hall Center Faculty Seminar on the theme of The Posthuman. This has been wonderfully productive and useful. It has been especially good to work with faculty from other departments in the humanities and social sciences.

Thomas Tuozzo continues to work on his main project on the development of ancient theories of causation. As a spinoff from this project Tom gave a paper at the Eastern APA on Aristotle's theory of what causes the physical elements to move, defending the claim (that some people find astounding) that Aristotle's universe is shot through with events that don't have any *per se* cause. Another spinoff was a paper on Plato's Phaedo that he delivered several times, most recently at the Kansas Philosophical Society meeting hosted here at KU in April. The paper will be coming out in a volume of selected papers from an International Plato Society conference (Symposium Platonicum XI) in Brazil. Another paper on the Phaedo, analyzing Plato's argument for Forms in that dialogue, will be coming out in the next Oxford Studies in Ancient Philosophy. Lastly, a paper picking up one of his older interests, Aristotle's moral psychology, will be coming out in a volume stemming from a conference in Finland. Tom looks forward to getting lots of work done on his causation project during his sabbatical in spring 2018!

James Woelfel's long review of Sarah Bakewell's *At the Existentialist Café: Freedom, Being, and Apricot Cocktails* will appear in the *Journal of Camus Studies* in 2018. He is still waiting for the appearance of two of his



papers, "The Socratic Journey: Liberal Education as Demythologizing" and "Cosmopolitan Conscience of the World: The Universal Declaration of Human Rights," that were accepted for edited volumes.

In September of 2017 Jim gave a presentation to the Faculty of the Late Sixties group at its fall dinner gathering. His topic was "The Sophisticated Retiree's Guide to Existentialism."

Jim continues reading and taking notes on projects for papers. One of the key figures in his long-term discussion of issues between the humanities and the sciences is William James. His current research has two foci developed from interest in James: (1) exploring the implications of James's indeterminism, in which he rejects the notion of "free will" in favor of the idea of an emergent worldprocess characterized by novelty and possibility; and (2) suggesting that a perhaps surprising but fruitful angle on his thought is to see him as developing an ontology that is a kind of pluralist or personalist philosophical idealism, as we see particularly in his discussion of Gustav Fechner in A *Pluralistic Universe*.

Dissertation and Thesis Titles

Rebecca Fensholt, *Against the Linguistic Strategy for the Ontic Conception of Scientific Explanation*, M.A. 2017, Advisor: Sarah Robins

Nicholas Schroeder, *The Harmony Thesis and the Problem of Continence in Contemporary Virtue Ethics*, Ph.D., 2016, Advisor: Erin Frykholm.

Current Student Activities

Polo Camacho's paper "Is The Central Dogma Practical?" was accepted at the ISHPSSB (International Society for the History Philosophy and Social Studies of Biology) annual conference, which was held in Brazil. He also co-authored two encyclopedia entries for the Encyclopedia of Evolutionary Psychological Science on Richard Dawkins book *The Extended Phenotype* and George C. Williams criteria for evolutionary adaptations. Finally, his graduate research fellowship at the Spencer Museum of Art was extended another year. He will be applying his research in the philosophy of biology to help organize an exhibition and symposium that addresses the relationship between human beings and plants.

Vasfi Özen presented a paper titled "Noble Compassion and Beyond" at a conference organzed by *The South Carolina Society for Philosophy* at the Coastal Carolina University in February 2017. His papers "In Defense of the Will as Thing-In-Itself" and "Schopenhauer and Compassionate Willing" have been accepted for the *Long Island Philosophical Society* (hosted by Saint John's University, New York City, April 2017) and *Pittsburg Area Philosophy Colloquium* (September 2017) respectively. He has also been invited to comment on "Anger: Scary Good" by Samuel Reis-Dennis of the University of North Carolina, Chapel Hill at the *Eastern Division Meeting of the American Philosophical Association* in January 2018.

Kamuran Osmanoglu took part in the Red Hot Graduate Research event on March 3, 2017. This event was intended to bring together graduate students from all disciplines across the various areas in the University to have the opportunity for crossdisciplinary discourse.

Lecture Series

The Department has scheduled a full line up of speakers this year.

Sept. 8, 2017:	Cody Gilmore, UC-Davis
Sept. 29, 2017:	Susan Sterrett, Wichita State
Nov. 3, 2017:	Marcy Lascano, Cal State, Long Beach
Nov. 4, 2017:	Jason Raibley, Cal State, Long Beach
Nov. 10, 2017:	Peter Hanks, University of Minnesota
Jan. 25, 2018:	Scott Brown, Ohio State
Jan. 26, 2018:	David Sanson, Illinois State
Feb. 9, 2018:	Gregory Antill, Claremont McKenna
Mar. 30, 2018:	Gualtiero Piccinini, Un of Missouri,
	St. Louis
Apr. 6, 2018:	Nick Stang, Un of Toronto
Apr. 19, 2018:	Lindley Lecture: Roger Crisp,
	St. Anne's College, Oxford

Please check the Philosophy website for updates and

In Memory

Mike Ducey of Lawrence, Kansas passed away

on June 27, 2017, after a long battle with cancer. Mike received an M.A. with Honorsin Religion and an M.A. and M.Phil, in Philosophy. He served as Assistant Director and Instructor in the



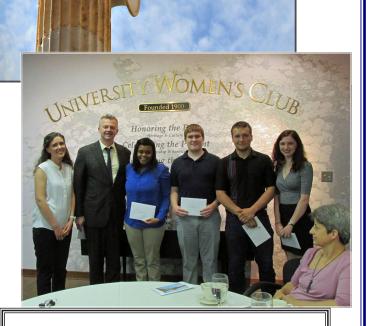
Western Civilization program at K.U., and taught courses in the PhilosophyDepartment. Mike's wife, **Connie** was a secretary for the Department of Philosophy where she was highly thought of and a valued member of the department. Our condolences to the family.

We also received word of the passing of **Vicki Asbury** on October 15, 2017. She received her MA in Philosophy in 1976 and then continued to earn a MS degree in Chemical Engineering and MBA from KU. She taught in both Philosophy and Western Civilization and worked in the Advising Support Center while pursuing her MBA.



Bachelor's Degree Recipients

Lane Blessum Terra Brockman Killian Brown Courtney Coda Jacob Dozier Amr El-Afifi Alex Green Shaher Ibrahimi Kylie Jones Michael Kennedy Derek Martin DaCarla McDowell Connor Noteboom Haleigh Peterson Frank Seurer Trey Vanahill Alex Van Lerberg



Undergraduate Award Winners

Emma Eason, *Mike Young Award*

Elizabeth Waldberg, Arthur Skidmore Award

Derek Martin, Warner Morse Prize in History of Philosophy

> Ian Kennedy, Warner Morse Prize in Metaphysics and Epistemology

Eleazar Rundus, *Warner Morse Prize in Ethics*

Phoenix Mandala, Warner Morse Scholarship



















Ph.D. Recipients

Nicholas Schroeder

M.A. Recipients

Ramon Alvarado Marco Camacho Rebecca Fensholt Vasfi Özen









Award Winners

Dong Yong Choi Robinson Essay Contest

Anastasia Pine Departmental GTA Award

Marco Polo Camacho Anthony C. Genova Scholarship

Marco Camaco, Andrew Marsh, Kamuran Osmanoglu, Michael Otteson Vasfi Özen *Templin Awards*







Alumni News

Eric Berg (PhD, 2005) has been promoted from Associate Professor to Professor at MacMurray College in Jacksonville, Illinois. He continues to serve as the Study Abroad Coordinator for the college. He also serves as Book Review Editor for the *Journal of Camus Studies*.

Thomas Nemeth (M.A., 1975) has continued his research and has recently published the following: *Kant in Imperial Russia*, Springer, 2017, *The Early Solov'ev and His Quest for Metaphysics*, Springer, 2014 and a critical translation of Vladimir Solov'ev's *Justification of the Moral Good*, Springer, 2015. He has also contributed to an anothology that should be shortly appearing "Positivism in 19th Century Russia," in *The Worlds of Positivism: A Global Intellectual History*. New York: Palgrave, 2017.

In 2017 Jack Horner (M.A. 1976) wrote a paper (with John Symons) that uses a Löwenheim-Skolem argument to characterize some limits of software verification by finite agents. He wrote papers describing automated model-theoretic derivations of the consistency of several Tarski-style dimension-free geometries; rebutting a proposal to revise the received view of the most fundamental divisions in dinosaur taxonomy; and demonstrating that the evolution of form, modeled as a random Barabási-Albert graph distribution, converges to a power-law-structured taxonomic tree. He refined his automated deduction system, spinozas ethics, to produce a derivation of Spinoza's claim that substance is unique. He prototyped an automated Late West Saxon reader/speech-synthesizer software system, Hrothgar. He wrote three arrangements of Bach's Prelude and Fugue in *D-major* (BWV 850). He completed his ninth year as a member of the advisory board of the Kansas University Biodiversity Institute, serves on the editorial boards of two bioinformatics journals, is an occasional referee for a supercomputing journal, and writes a monthly practical science column that appears in a few newspapers.

Tim George (Ph.D. 1983 – dissertation on Davidson's theory of action). After nearly 30 years in the world of information technology, I am now happily retired, living in Kansas City. After finishing grad school, I taught philosophy for several years in the Kansas City area and then returned to school at UMKC, receiving a bachelor's degree in Computer Science. Out of school, I went to work as a programmer/analyst at Black & Veatch, an international engineering company based in Overland Park. Eventually, I worked as a software engineer for EDS (Electronic Data systems -- Ross Perot's old company) and then for Hewlett Packard, from which I recently retired. Throughout that time, I designed and wrote many business-related computer applications (if it means anything to anyone, the technologies included the Unix operating system and all the languages originally associated with it (C, Perl etc.), LISP, multiple database management systems, and, ultimately, the object-oriented world of Microsoft's .NET platform and its central language, (C#). Certainly the obsessive attention to detail required in doing "analytic" philosophy was helpful in making the transition to the rigors of computer programming. I have the fondest memories of the halcyon days of my years in graduate school at KU in the 1970's. The department, KU and Lawrence were a deeply pleasing mix, with countless colorful characters coming and going, making for a rich experience. The punishing pace of technological advancement in IT would prevent any professional who had been away from that field for many years from catching up very easily. Happily, philosophy's pace is slower and more humane. I have actually started to read some philosophy again (the works of E.J. Lowe are totally engaging to me). I may even try to find a class or two to teach at the local schools. I still keep in touch with my dissertation advisor, Rex Martin, who lives here in Overland Park and would also be happy to hear from anyone from that ancient era.

Huei-Rong Li (PhD, 2014) has a full-time tenuretrack position as an Assistant Professor at Tunghai University in Taiwan.



2017 Fall Department Picnic

To avoid any further physical injuries to department members, this fall, the annual picnic to meet new students and faculty ended with a friendly game of which team had brains filled with the most trivia.





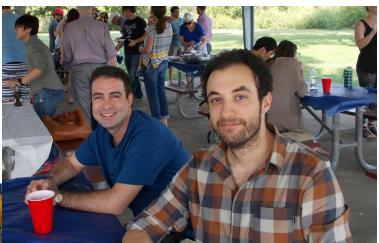




In case you want to test your trivia knowledge, here are some of the questions. Answers on following page.

- 1. What famed ship did Christopher Jones captain?
- 2. What bird is the offspring of a cob and a pen?
- 3. How many golf balls are there on the moon?
- 4. How many calendars are needed for a perpetual calendar?
- 5. What's a group of bears called?









Trivia Answers

- Mayflower
 Swan
- 3. Three
- 4. Fourteen
- 5. A Sleuth





Winning team

John and Irina Symons, Zoe and Brendan Symons, Ben Eggleston, Scott Jenkins, Bada Kim and Taylor Hunt The University of Kansas Department of Philosophy 1445 Jayhawk Blvd. 3090 Wescoe Hall Lawrence, KS 66045

Some Philosophical Tweets Contributed by Faculty and Students --just for fun!



Should this life sometime deceive you, Don't be sad or mad at it! On a gloomy day, submit: Trust--fair day will come, why grieve you? Heart lives in the future, so What if gloom pervade the present? All is fleeting, all will go What is gone will then be pleasant.

Alexander Pushkin

There is nothing so absurd that it has not been said by some philosopher.

Cicero, On Divination