

**Chair: ›Philosophy in a Global World/Intercultural Philosophy,‹
University of Vienna, Austria**

The Department of Philosophy at the University of Vienna, Austria launched a new chair in 2011 called ›Philosophy in a Global World/Intercultural Philosophy.‹

This chair seeks to contribute to a philosophical understanding of global stature by building up on previous research in the fields of intercultural philosophy and philosophies originally located outside the Anglo-European tradition (especially East Asian, Latin-American, Arabic, and African philosophies). Phenomenological, hermeneutic, ontological, and epistemological approaches are implemented to tackle methodological, systematic, and historical questions pertaining to comparative thought.

In close cooperation with various departments and faculties from all across the University of Vienna, the chair concentrates on unpacking the global dimension of the following research fields: human rights and democracy; diversity; concepts of experiencing the other, of difference and plurality, of ›aisthesis‹ and ethics.

All students specializing in philosophy can further hone their skills in intercultural philosophy and global thought by choosing courses especially designed for this purpose. Till date, the chair has conducted a wide range of lectures, seminars, and reading courses. Some of them in the BA program were: Intercultural Philosophy – Methods and Conceptions; Philosophical Hermeneutics – Intercultural Hermeneutics; History of Philosophy – Perceiving Aristotle in Baghdad; History of Philosophy – Metaphysics and Ontology in Avicenna and Thomas Aquinas; History of Philosophy – Epistemological Problems in the Philosophy of the Middle Ages: Ibn Rushd and the Latin Averroism; Origins of Thought – Pre-Socraticism and Philosophical Daoism; Philosophy in Africa – An Overview from Ancient Egypt to the Present; Classical Chinese Philosophy – Confucianism and Daoism; Ways of Thought in Indian Philosophy – The Path of Samadhi; Ibn Sina’s Paradigm Change in the Analysis of Existence; ›Selbstaffektion‹ – From Kant to Sankara; Heidegger and East Asian Thought; Nietzsche’s ›Der gute Europäer‹ and the Plurality of Cultural Forms of Thinking; African ›Womanism‹ – Feministic Concepts in Dialogue; Kwasi Wiredu’s Conceptual Decolonization; Poverty and Philosophy – Is Poverty a Philosophical Problem?; The Forgotten Phi-

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Philosophical Body – Philosophy on Stage; An Intercultural Philosophical Anthropology.

The MA program included courses on: ›Europe‹ and Philosophy – Openings and Limits; Philosophy in a Global World; Experience and Transcendence; Phenomenology of Intersubjectivity and Culture; The Intercultural Discourse on Human Rights and ›Menschenrechte des anderen Menschen‹ (Levinas); Theory of Art and Its Practice in an Intercultural Context; Texts on Postcolonial Theory; Indian Paths – The Path of Yoga: Patañjali, Aurobindo, Rig-Veda; Time and Infinity in Indian Thought; Do We Know What the Body Can Do? Religion of the Body.

Moreover, the chair regularly hosts courses for its doctoral students hailing from Europe, Asia, and the Americas.

–Georg Stenger, University of Vienna, Austria

Philosophy and Religious Studies Program, University of Macau, China (SAR)

The Philosophy and Religious Studies Program at the University of Macau is a newly emerging center for research and teaching in Comparative Philosophy and Religion. The English-speaking University of Macau has just been relocated to a newly built expanded campus and is aspiring to develop into a leading academic institution in the South-East Asian region. The University is expanding ambitiously in all areas including the humanities, and is particularly interested in promoting intercultural studies in the fields of religion and philosophy.

Created in 2012–2013 by internal transfer of faculty and by hiring of renowned senior scholars from outside the University, the Philosophy and Religious Studies Program is home to a mid-size faculty specializing in Chinese, Western, and Comparative Studies. Staff expertise ranges from Medieval and Classical European traditions to socio-political and historical studies of religion, with a focus on the Daoist and Buddhist traditions, to contemporary Western Philosophy (including Critical and Social Theory, Phenomenology, Analytic Philosophy, Philosophy of Religion, and Philosophy and Literature).

The Program is keen to promote comparative studies and to attract an increasing number of undergraduate and postgraduate students and researchers from both East and West in order to sustain its continuing growth into a dynamic and vibrant intellectual and cultural forum. In recent years, the Program has been host to a number of international conferences including ›Rethinking Resistance,‹ ›Critical Theory and the Way: A Symposium on Kantian Paradigms and Prospects in East Asia,‹ ›Force of the Imagination,‹ ›Natural Cognition,‹ ›Religion, Cognition, and Science,‹ ›Women and Gender in Chinese Religions,‹ ›Nature, Time, Responsibility,‹ ›Buddhist Studies.‹ Information on these and on upcoming events can be obtained at: http://www.umac.mo/fah/philosophy_and_religious/event.html

The Program continues to hire faculty with expertise in methodologies of comparative philosophy and inter- and transcultural philosophy to direct research and offer courses fostering a new generation of Ph.D.s with sensitivity to the cultural underpinnings of contemporary philosophical thinking and the geopolitical stakes of

speculative ideas in today's world and in our institutions, both educational and governmental.

*–Hans-Georg Moeller and William Franke,
Philosophy and Religious Studies Program,
University of Macau, China (SAR)*

New Specialization in Political Thought at Central European University, Budapest, Hungary

Beginning with the academic year of 2015/2016, Central European University (CEU) in Budapest will launch an interdisciplinary, graduate program entitled ›Specialization in Political Thought.‹

The background: In recent years, academic programs in political thought suffered many cutbacks. In many cases faculty positions have been cut entirely or rededicated to positions in democratic theory or empirical theory. Additionally, the Bologna process, which seeks to ensure comparability and transparency between higher education systems across forty-six countries, and the uniformization of degree programs led to a reduction and limitation of the field. These developments imply the danger that the social sciences generally, and the study of political thought specifically, are increasingly losing their foundations in history and philosophy. The initiators of the Specialization in Political Thought at CEU wish to reverse this trend by creating a program committed to the comparative study of political thought. The initiative was also based on the consideration that political thinkers played an active role in establishing CEU in 1991, after the fall of communism. Ever since then, political thought has played a central role in many of CEU's educational programs. In order to support the new specialization, the university has made additional funding available, which allows for creating a new post-doc position in classical political thought and various schemes for visiting scholars from all areas of political thought.

The program: The Specialization in Political Thought engages in the comparative study of political thought from a variety of perspectives, both within and outside the Western canon. Special attention will be given to the historicity of diverse political traditions and also to recurring themes and questions. Learning to recognize political thought, both past and present, as being time- and place-specific will equip students, regardless of their major field of study, with additional analytical and methodological skills grounded in the appreciation of the contextual and intertextual aspects of diverse intellectual traditions. Beyond contextualization the students will learn to apply comparative methods to address topics of political thought from intercultural and diachronic perspectives.

Further, the program aims to provide a specific professional fra-

mework for the participating students and faculty, by linking up with transnational networks, generating faculty interaction, research, and co-teaching. The program will offer a core course ›Introduction to Political Thought‹ every fall, in which members of different CEU departments will introduce their various perspectives on political thought.

Students participating in this specialization will receive a Certificate in Political Thought, in addition to their MA degrees in one of the participating disciplines: Gender Studies, History, International Relations and European Studies, Medieval Studies, Philosophy, Political Science.

According to their specific interests and career plans, interested students apply to one of the participating departments listed above. The departments normally offer a choice between a one-year and a two-year MA program. In their applications prospective students should indicate their interest in the specialization. All applications are accepted through the online system (<http://www.ceu.hu/admissions/apply/>)

The university: Central European University is a graduate-level ›crossroads‹ university where faculty and students come from more about hundred countries. All instruction is in English; however CEU's Source Language Teaching Group facilitates students' research and educational experience. Also, it prepares them for working and living in an increasingly globalized academic and professional world.

In order to attract outstanding individuals irrespective of their financial situation, CEU offers a range of financial aid packages supporting the majority of students during their studies.

–Mónika Nagy, Coordinator, CEU, Budapest, Hungary

BA World Philosophies, SOAS, University of London, UK

The *School of Oriental and African Studies* (SOAS, University of London) has taken the courageous decision to launch in 2016–2017 a BA World Philosophies, exactly one hundred years after it was founded – in 1916, in the midst of World War 1 – as the *School of Oriental Studies*.

Recent centenary commemorations of the First World War have sparked many critical reflections within philosophical circles. We might assume that, in line with efforts made by other countries in Europe to secure a stronghold over colonised territories, Great Britain was also intent on providing an extra tool – knowledge – with which to increase its chance of gaining supremacy. The ›territorial war‹ in Europe had extended to new regions, which required the use of different tactics in order to assure successful management. The ›British Empire‹ needed efficient administrators and colonial officials able to organize its growing infrastructure. SOAS's original mission was very clear on this, while also providing the University of London with a rival to the renowned Oriental schools of Berlin, Petrograd, and Paris. Following the logics of European territorial expansion, in 1938, ›Africa‹ was added to the School's name, thus becoming the *School of Oriental and African Studies*. During the Second World War, the role of SOAS as a part of the state apparatus to provide specialised personnel was further reinforced.

One hundred years later, with continued exposure to other languages and cultures, SOAS has achieved a transformation in its present thinking and future commitments. It now welcomes the clearer presence of other systems of thought and philosophies as a decisive contribution to the School's endeavours. The teaching of world languages at SOAS will undoubtedly provide an extra incentive to the ›learning to philosophize in local languages‹ (Kirloskar-Steinbach et al. 2014: 26)¹ for prospective students of the new BA World Philosophies. This commitment to cultivate in young enthusiastic minds the ›seed‹ of Comparative Philosophy is certainly a hopeful sign for all those philosophers who have made this a priority in their academic

¹ M. Kirloskar-Steinbach/Geeta Ramana/J. Maffie, ›Introducing Confluence: A Thematic Essay‹, *Confluence: Online Journal of World Philosophies*, Vol. 1, 2014, pp. 7–63.

activities. Although we sustain Comparative Philosophy as a pertinent concept, the use of this label could prove problematic in our context owing to the fact that in 1992 a clear choice was made to designate the host Department for this programme as the ›Study of Religions‹, as opposed to ›Religious Studies‹ or ›Comparative Religions‹. The then Head of Department, John Hinnells, was all too aware of the implications of adopting a meaning-laden term such as ›comparative‹ when applied to Religions. We would have stumbled on the same dilemma had we adopted ›Comparative Philosophy‹. Undoubtedly, this as well as other theoretical and methodological issues, will be taken into consideration by those involved in teaching this BA Programme and motivate them to research its conceptual foundations in collaboration with philosophers elsewhere. Indeed, it is our firm intention to rely on the expertise of those colleagues who are, like us, determined to make a significant contribution to the discipline by enhancing the study of World Philosophies. The BA programme itself, in addition to courses covering general training in standard philosophical themes (logic, epistemology, ontology, ethics, aesthetics, political philosophy etc.) approached within a World Philosophies perspective, will offer courses on specific philosophical traditions (African, Islamic, Jewish, Hindu, Buddhist, Chinese, Japanese, South Asian, etc.). A language unit will be highly recommended in each year of the programme in order to ensure that our students are able to engage meaningfully with the philosophical traditions in which they wish to specialise.

–Cosimo Zene, SOAS, University of London, UK

›Non-Western/Comparative Philosophy‹ Program at Bucknell University, Pennsylvania, USA

The Philosophy department at Bucknell University has seven full-time faculty, one of whom is responsible for covering the designated ›Non-Western/Comparative Philosophy‹ line (initially created 1993).

Since that time, courses in a variety of world philosophies have been taught on a regular basis. In recent years we have offered Life, Death, Freedom (PHIL 100: a comparative introduction to classical Greek, Indian, and Chinese philosophy), Medieval Philosophy (PHIL 206: a comparative study of Christian, Islamic, and Jewish philosophical traditions), Chinese Philosophy (PHIL 266), Islamic Philosophy (PHIL 267), Indian Philosophy (PHIL 269), and Jewish Philosophy (PHIL 270). Until recently, however, these courses (excepting PHIL 100) have counted towards the fulfillment of our major only as electives.

This changed in 2012, when the department voted to revise its curriculum extensively. One of the numerous changes we implemented was to introduce a new ›Movements and Traditions‹ area requirement into the curriculum (every major will now have to take at least one class from this category). The rationale for this was a conviction that the usual dual categorization of philosophy in terms of historical periods (ancient, medieval, modern, nineteenth century, and twentieth century or contemporary philosophy) and topical fields/subjects (ethics, aesthetics, metaphysics, epistemology, etc., as well as more specific topics such as philosophy of religion, science, mind, art, law, etc.) is no longer adequate.

This is due to various factors. One is the emergence and tenacity of the split between ›analytic‹ and ›continental‹ philosophy. This bifurcation in contemporary Western philosophy has made it increasingly clear that there is no one neutral, monolithic or homogeneous activity that can legitimately claim to represent the discipline of philosophy wholly and exclusively (we accordingly conceive of the ›analytic‹ and ›continental‹ approaches as constituting different traditions or lineages, i. e., established and widespread – albeit historically situated and evolving – ways of doing philosophy). Another factor is the emergence of particular movements in the nineteenth and twentieth centuries (e. g., feminism, German idealism, Marxism, existentialism, phenomenology, logical positivism, ordinary language philosophy,

the Frankfurt school, poststructuralism, etc.), which have given rise to a variety of important figures and topics. It is difficult to study and do justice to these figures/topics without examining them within the context of the larger movements they identified with. Such figures and their concerns often get disfigured, diminished or passed over altogether because they don't easily fit into either the standard historical or topical categories. Finally, and most importantly, the last few decades have seen a growing awareness of the existence and significance of a number of broader and more long-standing traditions of philosophy, variously conceived in geographical, cultural, linguistic or religious terms.

The most striking aspect of this has been the emergence of serious attention to ›non-Western‹ philosophical traditions (e.g., Chinese, Indian, Buddhist, Islamic/Arabic/Persian, African, etc.).¹ Their long-standing exclusion from the standard philosophical curriculum in Western universities betrays an increasingly obvious and indefensible provincialism. It is becoming clearer that the study of philosophical traditions other than the standard Eurocentric trajectory (from ancient Greece to medieval Christendom to modern Europe and its intellectual progeny) is an important aspect of a serious contemporary philosophical education. In addition to studying these diverse, resourceful, and sophisticated traditions in their own right, comparative examination (establishing cross-cultural dialogues between them) is a crucial step in doing philosophy in a global context, and arguably a necessity in this new century.

—Peter S. Groff, Bucknell University, Pennsylvania, USA

¹ Here it should be noted as well that there are enormously important and influential philosophical traditions that have been hastily or uncritically categorized as nominally ›Western,‹ but which consistently fall through the cracks of curricula centered exclusively on the standard historical-topical template: e.g., the tradition of Jewish philosophy, ranging from Philo of Alexandria to contemporary figures like Emmanuel Levinas.

Notes on Contributors

Roger T. Ames is Professor of Philosophy and editor of *Philosophy East & West*. His recent publications include translations of Chinese classics: *Sun-tzu: The Art of Warfare* (1993); *Sun Pin: The Art of Warfare* (1996) and *Tracing Dao to its Source* (1997) (both with D. C. Lau); the *Confucian Analects* (1998) and the *Classic of Family Reverence: A Philosophical Translation of the Xiaojing* (2009) (both with H. Rosemont), *Focusing the Familiar: A Translation and Philosophical Interpretation of the Zhongyong*, and *A Philosophical Translation of the Daodejing: Making This Life Significant* (with D. L. Hall; 2001). He has also authored many interpretative studies of Chinese philosophy and culture: *Thinking Through Confucius* (1987), *Anticipating China: Thinking Through the Narratives of Chinese and Western Culture* (1995), and *Thinking From the Han: Self, Truth, and Transcendence in Chinese and Western Culture* (1997) (all with D. L. Hall). Recently Ames has undertaken several projects that entail the intersection of contemporary issues and cultural understanding. His *Democracy of the Dead: Dewey, Confucius, and the Hope for Democracy in China* (with D. L. Hall; 1999) is a product of this effort. Almost all of his publications are now available in Chinese translation, including his philosophical translations of Chinese canonical texts. *Confucian Role Ethics: A Vocabulary* (2011), his most recent monograph that evolved from the endowed Ch'ien Mu lectures at the Chinese University of Hong Kong, is an argument that this tradition has a *sui generis* vision of the moral life. He has most recently been engaged in compiling the new *Blackwell Sourcebook of Chinese Philosophy*, and in writing articles promoting a conversation between American pragmatism and Confucianism.

After a B.Sc. in Physics from the University of Delhi (India), **Ankur Barua** read Theology and Religious Studies at the Faculty of Divinity, Cambridge (UK), completing a Ph.D. on a study of the symbolism of