

# Sophia

## Dr. Suck Choi, New Faculty Member

The department's newest faculty member, Suck Choi, specializes in Eastern philosophy, ethics and aesthetics. He earned a Ph.D. in philosophy at University at Buffalo, The State University of New York, with a dissertation on "Human Nature, Mind, and Virtue in Chu Hsi's Neo-Confucianism." He also holds M.A. and B.A. degrees in philosophy (aesthetics) from Seoul National University.

He has been studying both the Western (Analytic and Continental) and East Asian philosophical traditions under Jiyuan Yu, Kah-Kyung Cho and James Lawler. With these

pluralistic backgrounds his main interest focuses on bridging some gaps between the philosophical level and the sinological level, and he aims at incorporating the Eastern tradition into contemporary debates on philosophical issues.

Choi has enjoyed traditional brush-calligraphy and painting for more than 20 years. He will be teaching Asian philosophy, logic, ethics and aesthetics.



## Spring 2006 Graduating Class

In Spring 2006, nine philosophy majors, three philosophy minors and two religious studies majors graduated from Towson. Many of these students are planning to go on to graduate study in philosophy or other areas. Our graduates included: Pat Chenoweth (PHIL minor), Scott Daughaday (PHIL major), Katherine Filbert (PHIL major), Stephen Frank (PHIL major), Roderick Hamilton (PHIL minor), Dana Koteen (PHIL major), Bradley Martin (PHIL major), Brendan McElroy (PHIL major), Tracy McFarland (PHIL major), Matthew Mickel (RLST major), Randy Payne (RLST major), Matthew Reavey (PHIL major), James Watters (PHIL minor) and Alesha West (PHIL major). We send our thanks and congratulations to our entire spring graduating class, and we hope that all of our graduates will remember their time at Towson fondly and that they will make the effort to keep in touch with their former professors and classmates.

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# A Note from the Philosophy Forum

*Nicholas C. Sokolow, past president*

Every Thursday afternoon the Philosophy Forum meets in Linthicum Hall to discuss different philosophical issues. The forum presents speakers, holds an undergraduate conference in the spring, hosts a film series and will publish a journal of student papers. Towson's Philosophy Forum is student-run and elects its own officers.

Our university's Philosophy and Religious Studies program offers an undergraduate experience rich with ideas, rigorous in readings and an involved and devoted faculty. The Philosophy Forum is an integral part of the program and fosters community both among students and between students and faculty. This year the program has grown to over 70 majors and is now larger than ever. The Philosophy Forum invites anyone with an interest in philosophy, especially incoming freshman, to become involved with the organization.

On behalf of the group, I would like to congratulate this year's graduates. Many of these students are moving on to some of the nation's top graduate programs and others are going into an array of rewarding careers. I think all of our graduates would agree that the Philosophy Forum has enriched their undergraduate career and would encourage students to participate.

The forum provides a very open and informal setting to discuss ideas. I will reiterate that it meets on Thursday afternoons in Linthicum Hall. If you would like to get involved or have questions or suggestions, then please contact us. You can do this by dropping a note in our mailbox in Linthicum 219F, calling the Department of Philosophy and Religious Studies at 410-704-2755, or joining our online discussion group at <http://groups.yahoo.com/group/towsonphilosophy/>.

## **Note:**

The new Philosophy Forum officers for the 2006-07 academic year are:

Justin Schwemmer, *President*

John Weeks, *Treasurer*

Patrick O'Neil, *Vice President*

Katie Blake, *Community Service Coordinator*

*Congratulations to these individuals for their successful elections.*

## Eckart Förster Delivers 2005 Wing-Chun Wong Memorial Lecture

Due to the generosity of Wing-Chun Wong's family members, the Department of Philosophy and Religious Studies has also been able to establish a lecture series in his honor. The series is intended to highlight speakers with a strong interest in one or more of the philosophical areas to which he was devoted: Kant, the philosophy of science, Eastern philosophy, or the philosophy of music. The first of these annual lectures, "Kant's Philosophy of Natural Science" was delivered by Michael Friedman in Fall 2004; the second, "Kant on the Limits of Knowledge" was delivered by Eckart Förster in fall 2005. Förster is professor of phi-

losophy, with joint appointments in German and the Humanities Center at Johns Hopkins University. He is also honorary professor of philosophy at the Humboldt University in Berlin. He received his B.Phil. and D.Phil. from Oxford, where he was a Rhodes Scholar. He previously taught at Harvard, Stanford and the University of Munich, and held visiting appointments at Princeton, Porto Alegre (Brazil) and at Ohio State University. He has published widely on Kant and German idealism, especially on Kant's opus postumum, and is the author, most recently, of *Kant's Final Synthesis* (Harvard UP, 2000).



*Dr. Eckart Förster*

Förster's insightful lecture was very well received and led to a very interesting and thoughtful discussion period. Look for further information about the 2006 lecture on the departmental homepage.

## In Memoriam: Alumnus Ron Chartrand

Ronald “Ron” Chartrand Jr., former student and longtime friend of the Towson University philosophy department, passed away on April 19, 2006. He was 39 years old. President of the Philosophy Forum in the late 1980s, his dedication and energy to that position contributed greatly to the department’s success during those years. He was truly passionate about philosophy, especially Continental philosophy.

He is remembered by many for the deep friendships he maintained, as well as for his generosity, as exemplified by the many hours he spent as a local nursing home volunteer. More recently, he had volunteered his time to begin an organization of philosophy alumni for the department. He is survived by wife Joann (nee Santora), mother Martha, father Ronald Sr. and sister Christina Chartrand. His spirited and intellectual presence will be missed by all who knew him.

*Thanks to philosophy alumnus Paul Primrose who wrote most of this article; faculty members also contributed to it.*

## Alumni Reports, *continued*

Lately I have become very interested in ethics, phenomenology (particularly how the ideas of Merleau-Ponty and Lingis can contribute to an understanding of subjectivity and “disabled bodies” that moves beyond the very duality that has contributed to conventional, repressive understandings of disability) and critical theory. When I complete the MS Ed. program at Queens College (May '07) I am interested in studying these areas in more depth at a school here. To all fellow grads and friends, I miss you. To all current Towson philosophy students, I envy you. To all the professors in the philosophy department, I thank you—a whole world was opened up and laid out before me in your classrooms, and I will be forever grateful for the time, understanding and energy you shared with me.

### **Jesse Iliff (2004)**

Last summer I through-hiked the Appalachian Trail, hiking 2,000 miles over a period of six months and three weeks. I managed during this time to get picked up by a friend and taken on my annual pilgrimage to Bonnaroo Music Festival in Tennessee, which I have attended every year since its inception, and am currently getting excited about, as it happens again in eight days. As far as the boring stuff goes, I’m working as a substitute teacher for Anne Arundel County, and this summer I’m interning at a law firm called Brown Goldstein and Levy in Baltimore. They are a litigation firm with areas of concentration in civil rights, property, and liability/malpractice law. I’m doing this because I’m going to go to law school in 2007. However, I want to stress to any current students that I have not let my love of concert-going and hiking in the mountains abate.

### **Kimberly Bolton (2004)**

I am a Spanish teacher in Baltimore City (William H. Lemmel Middle School) working on my MAT at Johns Hopkins University (one year down, two to go!). I’m still very interested in philosophy and hope to still do some writing someday, although I am not sure that my academic pursuits will include further studies to that end any longer (though I miss it desperately). I still feel that majoring in philosophy was one of the best and most enriching things I’ve ever done and would recommend it to anyone hoping to see the world in a more open-minded way.

### **Paul LaBarbera (2004)**

I am currently working for Johns Hopkins Center for Talented Youth and about to start the second year of my M.A. in cultural studies at Kansas State University.

## Alumni Reports, *continued*

**“To the TU Department of Philosophy I owe a debt that can never be repaid. The fact that I share this sentiment with so many other alumni speaks volumes. To those that have given so much I offer only these words that will undoubtedly fail: Thank you.”**

Jonathan Conley '03

I married in 2003 and we are expecting our first child in December. I graduated from Towson University (again) with my Master of Arts in Teaching degree in 2006 and will be teaching social studies at Pikesville High School beginning in August, 2006.”

### **Megan Van Sickle (2001)**

Actually my name is Megan DeHaas now. I became a married woman last year, I have a 14-month-old son, Leif, and I'm working in a bookstore. I moved to Portland, Ore., for a year, and then back to Ithaca, N.Y., where I am from, and have been living here since. I am still very much interested in philosophy and miss the wonderful classes I took with everyone there. In the future I plan to do many things, including try to write at least one book and travel with my family. For now I am busy being a mom, and that's about it!

### **John Bova (2002)**

After earning his Master's Degree from St. John's University, he is now enrolled in the Ph.D. program in philosophy at Villanova University in Philadelphia. He writes, “I've moved out of the dreadful Philadelphia Main Line (string of rich, boring suburbs that passes through Bryn Mawr, etc.) and into University City—where you can get punched in the nose for walking down the street and talking about Plato. Just as it should be.”

### **Jonathan Conley (2003)**

I'm a graduate student in the Department of Philosophy at Boston College and work as a graduate technology consultant at school. In August I presented a paper, “Beyond the Expressivity in Painting: The Phenomenology of Kuspit's Forgotten Gaze,” at the University of Edinburgh, Scotland. I hope to continue my studies in phenomenology and pursue a teaching career in the field of philosophy.

To the TU Department of Philosophy I owe a debt that can never be repaid. The fact that I share this sentiment with so many other alumni speaks volumes. To those that have given so much I offer only these words that will undoubtedly fail: Thank you.

### **David Kaye (2003)**

I'm a Ph.D. student in philosophy at The New School for Social Research in New York City. I received my master's degree in philosophy from there this past year, and now am in the midst of my Ph.D. studies. In addition, I'm an adjunct professor of philosophy at St. Johns University in New York City teaching Intro. to Philosophy. My AOS are 19th and 20th century continental philosophy (mainly those German guys: Nietzsche, Heidegger, Arendt), and my AOC are early modern philosophy and German idealism. I'm engaged to my longtime girlfriend, Amanda, and things are going pretty well generally.

### **Sam McElroy (2004)**

I am doing well, living in Long Beach, N.Y., and was married August 19, 2006, to a Towson alum. After graduating I was accepted to a program called the New York City Teaching Fellowship and began teaching biology to students with disabilities in September 2005. (The program is part of a teacher recruitment initiative designed to bring people from diverse backgrounds into the N.Y.C. school system to serve students in high need areas.) My experiences have excited my philosophical interests related to the work I am doing and the people I work with.

## Phillip Mitsis Delivers Ian Moore Memorial Lecture



*Dr. Phillip Mitsis*

On March 16, 2006, Phillip Mitsis delivered this year's Ian Moore Memorial Lecture. Mitsis is professor of philosophy, director of the Hellenic Studies Center and A.S. Onassis Professor of Classics at New York University. He earned his Ph.D. in classics and philosophy from Cornell University in 1982. He has published extensively in the areas of classical philosophy and Greek

tragedy. Mitsis' lecture, "Epicureans and Stoics on Death and the Good Life," was very well received by all and stimulated a great deal of thoughtful discussion. As always, it was very gratifying to see so many alumni of the TU philosophy program attending the Ian Moore Memorial Lecture.

## Wing-Chun Wong Essay Prize

The Department of Philosophy and Religious Studies awarded the 2006 Professor Wing-Chun Wong Essay Prize to Stephen Frank. The first (2005) award was given to Nathan Briggs. The prize is awarded annually in honor of Wong, who taught in the department until his untimely death. The determination of the recipient of the award is based on a scholarly paper submitted by students and evaluated by a committee of faculty members in the Department of Philosophy and Religious Studies. The winning student is selected in the fall term. The winner presents his or her paper in a special Philosophy Forum during the spring term.

## A Note from a Former Towson Professor

Steve Coutinho, who moved from Towson University to Muhlenberg College in Allentown, Pa., in 2005, reports that he is doing well. Although his students at Muhlenberg are excellent, he says that he sometimes misses the enthusiasm and inventiveness of his former Towson students. Coutinho writes that the move to a new town was difficult, but that the administration at Muhlenberg has made him feel welcomed and appreciated. He writes that "Muhlenberg has a system of shared governance, not just in name but also in fact: Faculty do not just make noises that are dismissed as naïve annoyances by administrators, but actually make decisions to which administrators are bound ... Although I do miss my friends at Towson, I do not regret my decision to leave." Coutinho now has a new car and promises to visit his friends and students in Towson soon.

# Alumni Reports

The following comments were sent in by alumni of the Department of Philosophy and Religious Studies. Please send any comments you would like to pass on to former classmates or future students to [sscales@towson.edu](mailto:sscales@towson.edu) and they will be included in the next issue of *Sophia*.

## Alex Hooke (1974)

I graduated from Towson State in 1974, and earned my M.A. in philosophy at West Chester State (Pa.) and my Ph.D. in philosophy at University of Missouri. I have taught adjunct courses at numerous places, including Towson. I've been working full-time at Villa Julie since 1985. My current title is professor of philosophy. I've published two books: an ethics text, *Virtuous Persons, Vicious Deeds*, and *Encounters With Alphonso Lingis*. (The latter was co-edited with Walt Fuchs.) I live in Baltimore.

## Larry Klacik (1997)

I will hopefully be attending Towson again in the fall term in the M.A. in Humanities Program. In the 10 years since I graduated I have still maintained an interest in philosophy and intend to continue that interest at Towson.

## Calvin Ball (1997)

Howard County Councilman Calvin Ball was unanimously appointed by the Democratic Central Committee to represent the second district in 2006. He was unanimously elected to serve as Chairman of the Howard County Liquor Board.

He served as a Howard County firefighter and emergency medical technician. He also served three terms on the Oakland Mills Village Board, on the Howard County Chamber of Commerce's Educator of the Year Committee as well as the Chamber's Workforce Readiness Committee. He also volunteered in the Howard County Public School System Leadership Task Force and Student Performance Review Committee.

He has over seven years of experience in the field of higher education, including his current position as a faculty member for the University of Phoenix where, over the last five years, he has facilitated classes in subjects such as critical thinking, ethics, and political science. In addition to his instruction he assesses, trains and mentors new faculty members.

In addition to his B.A. in philosophy and religion from Towson State University, he holds an M.A. in legal and ethical studies from the University of Baltimore (1999), where he was nominated for the Spirit of Excellence Award. He is pursuing doctoral studies at Morgan State University and expects to complete those studies May 2008.

He is married to Shani D. Ball, R.N., B.S.N., a nurse at Howard County General. They are parents to 3-year-old Alexis and expected another child in August 2006.

## Rodney Summo (1999)

I'm still living in the Towson area, currently working as an associate producer for a local video game company. I try to travel as much as I can, and am still very much interested in philosophy. Traveling has made me especially interested in the ethics of globalization. My advice to graduates is this: Take all the knowledge you've gained on how to live cheaply as a college student and maintain the low-budget lifestyle for a year or so after you graduate, even if you are earning a lot of money. Then take that money and live life freely for a time, no job, no agenda—do and see all the things that most people only dream about but can't because their lifestyle doesn't permit it. Your career and the trappings of regular life are always going to be there for you, but being truly unencumbered is a rare experience that very few people are able to have. Take the time to get to know the world and yourself outside of what's comfortable.

## Alumni Reports, *continued*

### Anne Marie d'Epagnier-Knopf (1999)

After graduation, I went into the Master of Arts in Teaching Program at Towson. Upon completion a year later, I taught in the public school system for two years in Baltimore and Montgomery counties. Then I felt compelled to chase warmer climates and moved to Miami. When I arrived, I found employment with an educational company, Kaplan K12 Learning Services, where I trained and implemented assessment programs in schools. Now I work for *The Princeton Review* as an educational consultant. Within a year I plan to pursue a doctoral degree in pedagogy. I hope to become a professor of educational methodology ... and write some books too.

I still crave philosophy. I read as much as I can and attend lectures at local colleges/synagogues/community centers about once a month. In general, it is very difficult to find people who are willing to engage in deep conversations, explore the “meaning of life,” etc ... especially in your 20s.

Concluding thought: If you are passionate about philosophy (or any other subject for that matter), pursue it no matter what ... even if your parents say, “What kind of job can you get with a philosophy degree?”

### Andrew McCleod (1999)

I am an attorney working in a large Baltimore law firm. I like my job and my chosen profession, but the most defining and enjoyable time in my life was the time I spent at Towson studying philosophy. I was a bit wary of my law school studies in my first semester, but my Towson education prepared me well. I was able to absorb the applicable case law without succumbing to its commonly sophistic structure (I found myself equipped to perform a nearly effortless “jurisprudential epoche”). I don’t think I could have endured my legal studies while sustaining my intellectual rigor if not for my Towson professors: the incredibly inspirational insight of my professor, adviser and mentor Dr. Fuchs; the nearly pathological ethical and rational influence of Dr. Scales; the wonderful orientation/complete confusion I gleaned from Dr. Murungi’s intellectual challenges; the writing support and emotional support I received from Dr. Christian; and all of the challenges I received from all of my other philosophy professors. I owe everything to my Towson philosophy professors, for the five years I spent learning how to think—I can’t overstate what it meant to me. Thank you for everything.

### Michael Barberesi (2001)

I have remained in the Baltimore area. In 2001, a few friends and I began Syndrome Industries, a promotions group that organized several music, poetry and artistic events with an emphasis on electronic music and hip hop. We began the Internet radio show “Expansion Broadcast” ([www.expansionbroadcast.com](http://www.expansionbroadcast.com)) which still airs weekly on Fridays from 7-11 p.m. EST. I also worked as the manager of a photolab until this year.

**“I’ve been working full-time at Villa Julie since 1985. My current title is professor of philosophy. I’ve published two books: an ethics text, *Virtuous Persons, Vicious Deeds, and Encounters With Alphonso Lingis*.”**

Alex Hooke '74

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## Alumni Questionnaire

Would you like to receive a directory of our alumni?  Yes  No

Would you like a copy of our undergraduate journal, *Philosophical Ideas*?  Yes  No

Do you want to be added to the e-mail list of the Philosophy Forum?  Yes  No

Do you have suggestions for a Philosophy Colloquium topic? (Write them in "comments" area below.)

Would you like to present a paper at the Philosophy Forum or Colloquium?  Yes  No

Were you aware of the Ian Moore Lecture before reading about it in this issue of *Sophia*?  Yes  No

Would you like to be sent information on the Moore lecture and the Colloquium?  Yes  No

Do you have any ideas for developing alumni relations in the department, or for projects that you are interested in pursuing with us?  Yes  No

If so, please attach comments and inform us of them.

Comments? \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

Please return to: *Sophia*

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