

On Writing Better

The Dean's Musings

About two years ago, CLAS began a major effort to improve the writing skills of students at UF. With the assistance of a \$1 million gift from IBM and an equal resource commitment from UF, the IBM Writing Project was established. Now in its second year, several thousand students have gained new writing experiences through the networked writing environment.

The next step in the plan involved the formation of a Center to be responsible for the overall effort in composition, working in close cooperation with the Department of English, but also drawing on other departments to address overall writing needs of the College. The Center began operation this past fall, and in this first semester of activity, it has developed the beginnings of a Writing in the Disciplines program to complement and supplement the standard freshman composition offerings.

In the midst of our efforts to enhance writing in the curriculum, the Board of Regents made a counter move by reducing the General Education requirements, resulting in what is effectively a one semester writing obligation. It is a challenge to learn almost anything well in one semester. To suggest that something as important as writing can be absorbed in only one course strains credibility. We believe students should write more, not less. Our alumni tell us, beg us, reproach us, to emphasize writing. Few things, they say, can be more important to UF graduates, no matter what the major. We agree.

The problem we face in adding more writing to our academic majors is that the disciplinary requirements, in many cases, already

American Indian Philosophy a Stark Contrast to Traditional Thought

The American Indians can teach us a lot if we're willing to study their criminal justice system, their respect for the environment and their unique form of government, said Marilyn Holly, associate professor of philosophy.

Holly, who has been interested in American Indian spirituality since she was a child, has studied this form of philosophy for about 25 years and has had many essays on this topic published. Her most recent essay is on the American Indian criminal justice system and will appear in an anthology of related subjects.

"They have this fantastically interesting criminal justice system," she said. "In the Navaho nation a criminal is not bad but they're sick, according to their version of health and illness."

The entire community then takes an active role in the rehabilitation of the criminal.

"Criminals are given a healing and justice ceremony," she said. "It's so interesting because the criminal isn't rejected but is helped by family and friends to regain a helpful interaction with the community."

Although most Indian nations place a priority on reforming criminals and integrating them back into the community, Holly emphasizes that dangerous criminals are treated very differently.

"Anybody who is really dangerous, like a murderer, would be isolated from the community," she said. "But this is only in cases where the person is considered harmful to others."

Through her research, Holly has also discovered that most Indian nations

share an unusually strong sense of responsibility to the community and the environment.

"There tends to be a fairly widespread sense of respect for everything in the world," she said. "For example,



In addition to her interest in American Indian philosophy, Marilyn Holly also conducts research in the philosophies of science and social science.

if I killed a deer to eat, I would not kill any more than my family needed and I would pray to the deer to forgive me."

The Indians' respect for their community involves an ethical responsibility to reciprocate for what they take.

"There tends not to be a sense of sin against some deity but instead a sense of obligation to give back to the community," she said. "If I just take

This month's focus: Department of Philosophy

DEPARTMENTS

ENGLISH

Jim Haskins was a featured speaker at the *Discovery Conference* sponsored by the Center for Multicultural Children's Books at HarperCollins in New York on Oct. 20.

MATHEMATICS

James Brooks presented a lecture at the *International Conference on Analysis* at the Mathematics Institute in Perugia, Italy, Sept. 30-Oct. 4.

Gang Bao was an invited speaker at the *1996 Conference on Computational Physics and Applied Mathematics* in Beijing in June.

Paul Ehrlich lectured at three South Korean universities in June and participated in the *Second World Congress on Nonlinear Analysts* in Athens, Greece in July.

Andrew Vince was an invited speaker at the *Mathematical Science Research Institute* in Berkeley in October.

PHILOSOPHY

Kirk Ludwig and *Greg Ray* each presented invited papers at the *Fifth Karlovy Vary Symposium* held in the Cech Republic. They also presented a jointly authored paper to the *European Congress for Analytic Philosophy* in Leeds, England.

Ofelia Schutte gave an invited paper at the *Third International Congress on Latin American Philosophy* in San Jose, Costa Rica.



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CLAS Alumni Return to Campus to See How Things Have Changed



On November 15, seven CLAS alumni returned to the University of Florida for the annual Grand Guard Reunion. This event honors those alumni who graduated from UF 50+ years ago. CLAS held a special luncheon for its alumni in the O. Ruth McQuown Room during which Gareth Schmeling, professor of classics, gave an interesting talk on the influence of Greek and Latin in today's society. Those CLAS alumni in attendance are (some not pictured): Clark Dowdell '43, Harold Henderly '37, Herbert Kay '40, Charles Lasley '43, Marion Lasley '44, William Rion '45 and '50 and Julian Williams '40. Dean Harrison (l.) and Professor Gareth Schmeling (r.).

HONORS AND AWARDS

The College of Liberal Arts and Sciences would like to congratulate the following faculty members for their achievements and recognition.

- Ⓜ *Michael Gannon* (History) received the *Tampa Historical Society's D.B. McKay Award*.
- Ⓜ *Robert Kennedy* (Chemistry) received the *Presidential Early Career Award for Scientists and Engineers*. It is the highest honor bestowed by the U.S. government on outstanding scientists and engineers beginning their independent careers.
- Ⓜ *Andres Avellaneda* (Romance Lang. & Lit.) was elected to the Executive Board of the *Instituto Internacional de Literatura Iberoamericana* and was appointed to the Editorial Board of *Mora. Revista de la Asociacion Interdisciplinaria de Estudios de la Mujer*.
- Ⓜ *Cesar Caviedes* (Geography) received the *1995 Preston E. James Eminent Latin Americanist Career Award*.
- Ⓜ *Jay Gubrium* (Sociology) has been appointed to a three-year term on the editorial board of the *American Sociological Review*.

CLAS Faculty Make Headline News

CLAS faculty are recognized as experts in their fields of research in academia and the private sector. Following is a list of UF researchers whose comments and research have recently appeared in the media.

Many Butterflies Near Extinction

Audubon magazine quoted zoology Professor **Tom Emmel** on the fragility of butterfly populations and his work to keep the Schaus swallowtail from extinction.

John Steinbeck's Literature Still Studied

The *New York Times* quoted Graduate Research Professor of English **John Seelye** on John Steinbeck's literature.

Prof. Reflects on Rwanda/Zaire Turmoil

Michael Chege, director of the Center for African Studies, was interviewed by *Boston's National Public Radio* station on the unfolding tragedy on the Rwanda/Zaire border. *Christian Science Monitor Radio*, International Division, also interviewed Chege.

Monarch Butterflies Have Unique Migration

Zoologist **Lincoln Brower** was quoted in *Cooking Light* magazine in an article on Monarch butterfly migration through the United States and into Mexico.

Discrimination Isn't Healthy

The *New York Times* quoted sociology Professor **Joe Feagin**, who said that discrimination can lead to physical health problems.

James Hoffa's Legacy Lives On

Robert Zieger, professor of history, appeared on *BBC Overnight* to discuss the election between Ron Carey and James Hoffa, Jr. for presidency of the Teamsters Union.

\$500,000 Opportunity Fund and \$1,000,000 Special Board Allocations Fund Give CLAS Faculty Additional Opportunities

(an excerpt from a memo written by James Dufty, Associate Dean for Research)

In a recent memo to the faculty, Vice President Holbrook described the creation of a College Incentive Fund. This Fund provides resources to the Colleges for sponsorship of research offered previously at ORTGE through the DSR-B, DSR-C, DSR-D, and RDA programs, and the Research Contingency Fund. These programs have been discontinued so that requests to ORTGE for support in the corresponding categories is no longer appropriate. However, some of the resources from these programs have been retained at ORTGE to create an Opportunity Fund (\$500,000) in addition to the Special Board Allocations Fund (\$1,000,000).

To make the most effective use of these limited resources it is recognized that some responsibilities

should be delegated to the Departments where differences associated with our diversity of needs can be accommodated. Other responsibilities properly rest at the College level for consistency with priorities transcending the Departments. In both cases it is understood that the funds must be distributed in a targeted rather than diffuse manner, based on identified highest priorities.

In this transition year, and as an experiment, the responsibilities for support of Travel, Graduate Assistantships, Summer Fellowships, and miscellaneous support previously obtained from the Research Contingency Fund has been transferred to the Departments. The amount returned to each Department is a prorated amount based on previous awards from the DSR programs over the past three years. It is understood that these categories are at each Department's discretion. Each

Department will be responsible for setting guidelines for faculty to apply for these resources.

The remaining funds will be distributed at the College level through the Research Initiation Program. The format is intended to have the flexibility to allow proposals to be tailored to the differing needs of the CLAS Divisions, while identifying why the proposed research should be considered of high priority. The maximum allowed budget is \$20,000. Since only \$350,000 is available this will be an unusually competitive program. The proposals will be peer-reviewed within the Divisions, and to account for Departmental priorities a Chair's ranking will be requested. **Deadline for submission by Department: 4:00 PM January 24, 1997.**

UF Professor: Financial Ethics Can Be Just as Important to Our Health as Medical Ethics

Questions of financial ethics aren't easy to answer, as Robert Baum, professor of philosophy, is finding out.

A pioneer in the field of applied ethics, Baum encouraged scholarly research in engineering ethics in the '70s when no such work had been done previously. He was the first to publish a journal on business ethics in the early '80s so scholars had an avenue for getting their research published. And now he's initiating research and discussion in the field of financial ethics.

"Even though the field of business ethics is really booming, one of the main areas in business has received relatively little attention, namely financial ethics," he said. "This includes areas such as banking, securities, stocks and bonds, insurance and real estate."

Baum's interest in financial ethics is fueled by his belief that decisions and actions made in this area have a greater impact on an individual's life than many people realize.

"My argument is that financial issues are at least as important for the general well-being of people as anything in the area of medicine,

"My argument is that financial issues are at least as important for the general well-being of people as anything in the area of medicine, which is the most developed field of applied ethics."

Robert Baum
Professor of philosophy

which is the most developed field of applied ethics," he said. "What's needed is to stimulate more research."

One example of how corporate financial decisions can directly affect individuals is the following. If a person invests in a life insurance policy or an IRA for his/her retirement, and the financial company does not fulfill its responsibilities, the investor can lose money. Without these funds, a retired person may be unable to afford adequate medical care or a good diet. Consequently, his/her health could suffer as a result of irresponsible behavior by the company managing his/her investment.

"On the other hand, good financial management could be very beneficial," Baum said. "If the financial management is handled in an ethically responsible way, this produces great benefit just like good health care."

While most people hear only about the professionals who do not act ethically, Baum is quick to explain that when discussing ethics, it's not just about the negative side. While it's important for professions to identify what actions aren't considered ethical, it's just as important to identify what actions are ethical.

"When we're approaching this from a responsible academic point of view, we have to be careful not to convey a misrepresentation that the whole industry is corrupt and that anyone who is in the financial business is ethically irresponsible," he said. "Instead, we have to ask what are the good things that can be done by a person who has certain expertise, professional training and ability?"

Although it may seem that in recent years increased attention has been paid to ethics in business and the professions, Baum believes that it's not because people are less ethical than they once were but because new situations have arisen and modern problems are more complex than those of 20 to 30 years ago.



*Robert Baum is editor of the **Business & Professional Ethics** journal and **Professional Ethics: A Multi-Disciplinary Journal**.*

"I've never seen any evidence that things are getting worse," he said. "I think that there are two kinds of situations: new situations which continually evolve and traditional problems which are just very complex and require extensive study in order to understand."

In fact, it was the appearance of new situations that led to the development of the field of medical ethics in the '60s, Baum said. New breakthroughs such as organ transplants forced the medical community to update and revise its ethical standards, since there weren't any rules for such procedures.

"The other reason for the increased awareness in ethics is that many of the problems discussed in the areas of business and medicine are just very complex," he said. "Nobody adequately understands these incredibly complex circumstances, and we need to increase our understanding in order to deal with these problems in an ethically responsible way." 📝

1997 CLAS Dissertation Fellowship Winners

Each year the Graduate School and the Graduate Committee of the College of Liberal Arts and Sciences award CLAS dissertation fellowships to students pursuing the Ph.D. Students receive \$3,150 in addition to a tuition waiver for \$1,031 for the Summer A term. Listed below are the Fellowship winners for 1997.

Anthropology

**Zobeida Bonilla
Thersa Schober
Marieka Heemskerk**

Communication Processes & Disorders

Xinyan Huang

English

**Susan-Marie Birkenstock
David Lashmet
Angela Bacsik
Tracy Cox
Dina Smith
Ron Broglio**

Geography

**Michael Harrison
Avrum Shriar**

History

**Jan Shetler
Frankie White**

Linguistics

**Michelle Schaefer
Timothy Ajani
Gea DeJong
Lucy Pickering**

Political Science

**Peter Rogers
Nigel Austin**

Psychology

Alysia Reid

Romance Languages & Literatures

**Joe Johnson
Lynn Scott**

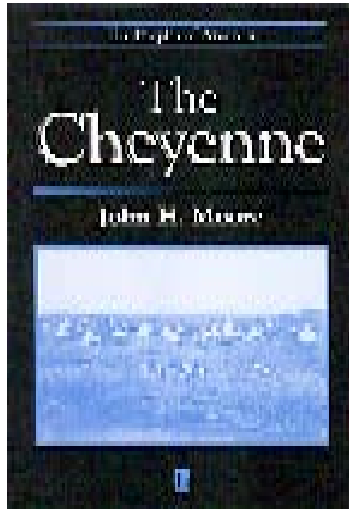
Sociology

**Janis Weber
Sylvia Ansay**

Economics

Michael Blake

Book Beat

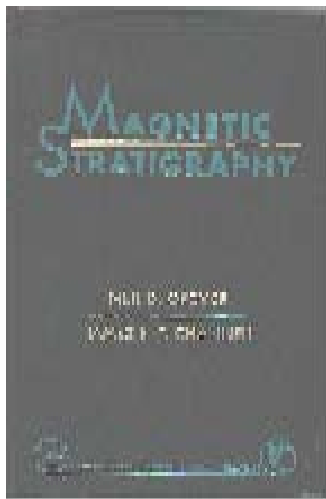


The Cheyenne (Blackwell Publishers) by John H. Moore (Anthropology). (review taken from book jacket)

This book provides history and ethnography of the Cheyenne people from their prehistoric origins north of the Great Lakes to their present life on their reservations in Oklahoma and Montana. The author provides a detailed account of reservation life and shows how the dance ceremonies and oral traditions have largely survived

the Cheyenne's enforced removal from their long-held homelands. He concludes with a critical examination of contemporary Cheyenne life and of the mixed results of the often inept intrusions of State and Federal bureaucracies.

(Excerpt) Those Native American tribes who arrived earliest on the plains naturally took for themselves the most desirable territories. The Middle Missouri was a prime location, and when the Cheyennes arrived there in the middle 18th century the area had been continuously occupied by Indian farmers for over a thousand years. The advantage of the location was the opportunity to engage in horticulture on the fertile natural terraces of the Missouri, with vast supplies of timber nearby for firewood.



Magnetic Stratigraphy (Academic Press) by Neil D. Opdyke (Geology) and James E. T. Channell (Geology). (review taken from book preface)

Magnetic polarity stratigraphy, the stratigraphic record of polarity reversals in rocks and sediments, is now thoroughly integrated into biostratigraphy and chemostratigraphy. The application of magnetic stratigraphy in geologic investigations is now commonplace; however, the use of magnetic stratigraphy as

a correlation tool in sediments and lava flows has developed only in the past 35 years. This book is aimed at this

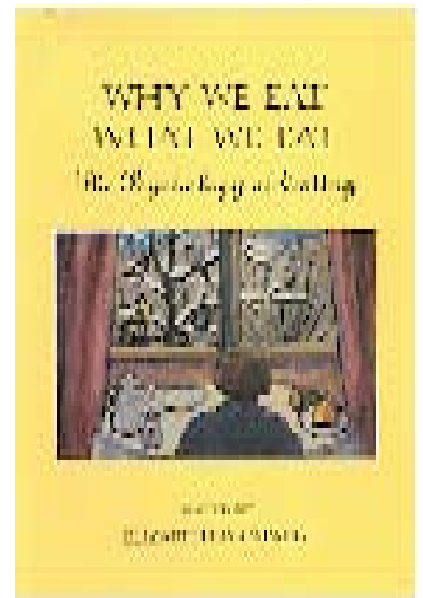
expanding practitioner base, providing information about the principles of magnetostratigraphy and the present state of our knowledge concerning correlations among the various (biostratigraphic, chemostratigraphic, magnetostratigraphic and numerical) facets of geologic time.

(Excerpt) The magnetic field of the Earth has fascinated human beings for well over 2 millenia. The Chinese invented the magnetic compass in the second century B.C. (Needham, 1962) and knowledge of the magnetic compass reached Western Europe over a thousand years later in the twelfth century A.D. The first truly scientific paper on geomagnetism was written in 1262 by Petrus Peregrinus and entitled "Epistola de Magnete" (Smith, 1970).

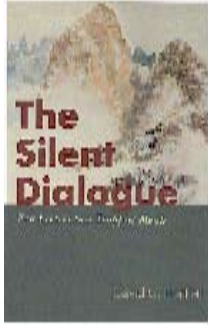
Why We Eat What We Eat: The Psychology of Eating (American Psychological Association) edited by Elizabeth Capaldi (Psychology). (review taken from book jacket)

Eating is arguably the most fundamental of human activities. In Western societies in particular, there is great interest in diet, health, and food preferences. This volume explores the shift in eating research from the search for bodily signals that trigger

hunger to a focus on eating patterns emerging from a learning process that is based on life experience. This new book offers hope that healthful eating patterns can be learned.



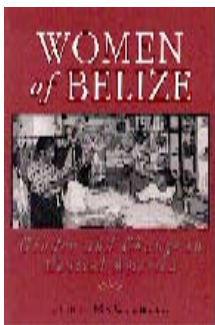
(Excerpt) Studies on animal models of obesity demonstrated that obesity is the outcome of an interaction between a genetic predisposition and exposure to environmental factors such as diet. The most promising strategy for the study of the behavioral phenotype in human obesity might be to focus on dietary behaviors that are most likely to carry a heritable component; however, it is unclear what those behaviors are. Past investigators have variously examined attitudes and beliefs as well as sweet taste preferences, food choices, and eating styles; such studies have almost invariably failed to establish any consistent differences between obese patients and control groups of lean persons.



The Silent Dialogue: Zen Letters to a Trappist Monk (The Continuum Publishing Company) by *David Hackett* (Religion). (review taken from book jacket)

In August 1974, following conversion to the Catholic faith while living in a Trappist monastery, David Hackett set out on a two-year journey to Japan and Southeast Asia. Hackett became a Catholic through Zen meditation and an understanding of Catholicism acquired by the patient guidance of a Trappist monk. Yet baptism marked the beginning of a new inquiry. What was the relationship between Buddhism and Catholicism? And how could Zen meditation best be employed to deepen Christian faith? Asking these questions, Hackett began a journey which led to meetings and meditations with Catho-

(Excerpt) *I am at Father Lassalle's Zen retreat house awaiting the arrival of twenty-five sesshin fans. We will have an even number of men and women and nearly half will be members of religious orders. The sesshin will last seven days with more than eight hours of meditation each day. I will be burrowing into the slow repetition of "Lord Have Mercy," if my legs do not give out. I fell like I'm about to run the marathon and must pace myself. I have to somehow keep focused upon my prayer and not allow the sitting to deteriorate into a leg pain endurance contest.*

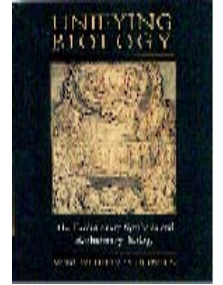


Women of Belize: Gender and Change in Central America (Rutgers University Press) by *Irma McClaurin* (Anthropology) (review taken from book cover)

This ethnography is set in the remote district of Toledo, Belize, Central America, where three women weave personal stories about the events in their lives. Each describes her experiences of motherhood, marriage, family illness, emigration, separation, work, or domestic violence that led her to recognize gender inequality and then to do something about it. All three challenge the culture of gender at home and in the larger community.

(Excerpt) *Women sometimes become involved in interpersonal relationships that are more economically based than romantic, as I discussed in chapter 7. Although Evelyn's relationship with her husband does not exactly fit the model I described, it is a variation on a theme. Alan has access to resources (land, credit and some prestige by virtue of his family's name and status in the community), and Evelyn is willing to remain in their relationship if he can provide her with the needed resources (even if sporadic) she needs to maintain herself and her family. In exchange, she ignores his infidelities and erratic work behavior.*

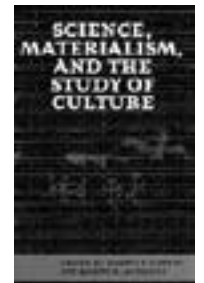
Unifying Biology: The Evolutionary Synthesis and Evolutionary Biology (Princeton University Press) by *Vassiliki Betty Smocovitis* (History). (review taken from book jacket)



Unifying Biology offers a historical reconstruction of one of the most important yet elusive episodes in the history of modern science: the evolutionary synthesis of the 1930s and the 1940s. For more than seventy years after Darwin proposed his theory of evolution, it was hotly debated by biological scientists. It was not until the 1930s that opposing theories were finally refuted and a unified Darwinian evolutionary theory came to be widely accepted by biologists. Using methods gleaned from a variety of disciplines, Vassiliki Betty Smocovitis argues that the evolutionary synthesis was part of the larger process of unifying

(Excerpt) *If science is narrative constituted, philosophers of science will want to know how one can discriminate between stories or whether all stories will hold true (another way of phrasing the problem of relativism). The response here is to state that while science may be narrative-based activity, this does not necessarily mean that all narratives will do. The key question is how narratives are reworked within sets of validating or evidentiary constraints.*

Science, Materialism, and the Study of Culture (University Press of Florida) edited by *Martin E. Murphy* and *Maxine L. Margolis* (Anthropology). (review taken from book cover)



The social sciences, especially cultural anthropology, are mired in contentious arguments about the desirability — even the applicability — of scientific and causal principles in the study of culture and society. The authors of these essays come down clearly on the side of the significance of these principles, claiming that a cultural materialist approach is the most productive way of explaining cultural differences and similarities and of understanding many “unexplain-

(Excerpt) *Political decisions taken at the national level after 1970 brought changes that affected low-income families substantially. Public assistance and social service budgets were cut at the same time that eligibility criteria were tightened. Federal accounting rules introduced by the Nixon administration penalized the states for overpayments to public assistance recipients, while at the same time ignoring underpayments and payment denials to many people who were legally eligible. As the states responded with stricter verification requirements for opening and maintaining cases, many needy families simply did not enroll.*

First-Hand Experience with Poverty Gives UF Researcher Unique Insight into Welfare

—Karen Meisenheimer, writer for UF News and Public Affairs

Cheryl Amey was a 30-year-old single mother of four living in poverty when she realized the only chance for a better life was to go back to school and get a college degree.

Today, six years later, the mother who depended on welfare and financial aid for support is a doctoral candidate in the University of Florida's department of sociology, bringing a personal perspective to her research on poverty and minority issues that most in the academic world can only imagine. But, Amey is quick to point out her story should not be promoted as an example of how people on welfare can pull themselves out of poverty with just

"A program similar to Project Independence was supportive to the point that when my junky old car broke down, they could help fix it. If it weren't for the resources available to me back then, I'd still be on welfare today."

Cheryl Amey
Doctoral candidate in sociology

a little hard work and education.

"I had tons of resources to help me get started and stay in college," Amey said. "Those resources just aren't available to women today."

Amey said welfare reform has, for the most part, eliminated the opportunities that contributed to her academic success. That success includes graduating from the University of North Carolina-Wilmington in 1992 with honors, earning her master's degree in sociology from UF in 1994, again with honors, and a host of published academic articles. Amey's most recent honor comes from the university's Association of Academic Women, which awarded her the first Madelyn Lockhart Fellowship. To recognize the outstanding achievement and promise she has shown in her chosen field, Amey will receive \$1,000 to assist in the dissertation phase of her doctoral degree.

As someone who studies the plight of women in poverty, Amey is concerned for those who will be forced to take jobs that don't provide much dignity.

"Women on welfare don't have access to education anymore," Amey said. "Instead, they have to take jobs that require minimal skills and provide little opportunity."

New welfare policies limit the number of women who can count full-time school as their work requirement to receive cash assistance and child care. In Florida, the limit is 20 percent of female welfare recipients, and that includes teen mothers still in high school.

Programs such as Project Independence, which was the boost Amey needed to pull herself out of poverty, have been replaced with Work and Gain Economic Self-sufficiency (WAGES).

Amey said there is no equal trade off.

"A program similar to Project Independence was supportive to the point that when my junky old car broke down, they could help fix it," Amey said. "If it weren't for the resources available to me back then, I'd still be on welfare today."

Don Winstead, Florida's welfare

reform administrator, said Amey wouldn't be able to stay on welfare long under today's stricter limitations. The state's reform, which went into effect Oct. 1, cuts people off welfare after two years. Winstead said while fewer women can choose college over a low paying job, WAGES includes programs that help those seeking to further their education once they are off welfare.

However, Amey said the education must be job-related. The new policies mandate that a woman going to school is required to work in addition to raising her children.

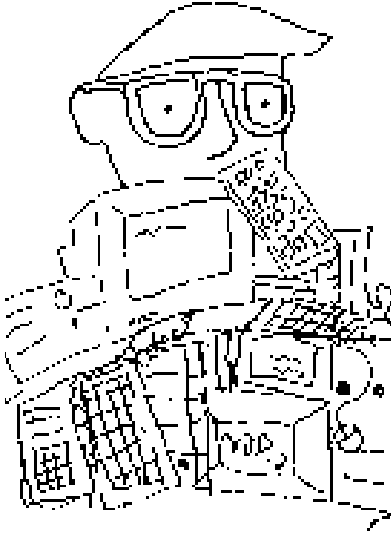
"What if she is flipping burgers?" Amey said. "Then what kind of school will these new programs allow her to attend?"

Amey's research over the last four years has focused on issues of poverty, inequalities in welfare policy and minority health. She said obstacles within the structure of welfare prevent people from helping themselves.

Amey admits there have been many difficult and tiring days for her as a student. She recalls staying up until 3 a.m. to study so she could spend evenings with her kids. She also remembers having no electricity in the house when there wasn't any money to pay the bill. She depended on friends, the school and the state to help her make it through the tough spells.

Today, she is remarried, her children are now teenagers and the oldest plans to attend Florida State University next year. Amey's career goal is to help develop support programs that assist women with child care issues, building self esteem and continuing education. ☺

Pros and Cons of Multimedia Software



Perhaps you have seen one of those new-fangled presentations given with “multimedia” presentation software. The presenter uses a computer rather than overheads and presses keys to advance to the next “slide.” The computer dutifully displays full-color bulleted lists of text, pictures or even audio or video clips. A sub-industry has been created around such presentations. Presentation software such as Microsoft’s Powerpoint is being used by our faculty. Training courses are available.

I’ve tried the current crop of presentation software and given several presentations using it. I’ve used the software to produce color overheads for presentations where using a computer was not feasible. I’m not impressed.

The software is not hard to use. Powerpoint’s “slide editor” organizes material in an outline and then fill in the outline with slide after slide of deady dull lecture material. Only now it’s in color. You can add sound effects (amateurish) and transitions (weird

ways for one slide to dissolve into another - you’ve seen these effects in very bad movies).

One good feature—the current version of Powerpoint has an “Export HTML” feature so that your slides can be transformed into web pages with the touch of a button. This works reasonably well. So at least you are not trapped in Microsoft’s proprietary slide file format.

Using a computer introduces a host of problems, risks and technical barriers for the instructor. The instructor must have a current generation desktop computer with presentation software with which to create the slide show. Learning how to use the software is actually not a problem. Then comes finding and scheduling a room with a projection system and a computer connection. About a million dollars has been spent at UF recently to upgrade the major lecture halls for just this capability (see the *Multimedia Support Project on-line at <http://www.circa.ufl.edu/msp>*). All the equipment has to work and the faculty member often needs a bit of hand-holding (I know I did) in mastering whatever switches and settings must be correct for the computer to display. And of course the lights must be lowered (but not too far - students will be taking notes). Even after a million dollars, the number of places you can use this technology is limited.

The last thing I need in classrooms is a new way to lecture. Lecturing is not a very effective method for teaching. Turning down the lights and showing colored slides of text makes it much worse. I use presentation software strictly for short “sales” talks. I don’t use it in class. But then, I don’t often need to show photographs. I can produce graphic displays of data quite nicely in black and white and I use overheads for this purpose. Black and white graphics are still the “state of the

art” in the statistical and medical journals.

Is there a use for such tools? Most of the faculty who have explored multimedia software are now using web-based solutions for the intended purpose - display of information and student access for custom course material. The web is a much better medium for this — students can access the material anytime from any Internet connected device.

Presentation tools are good at photographs. You can get photographs into presentations (of course you’ll need access to a scanner) and they can then be called up quickly during a lecture. If showing photographs during class is useful, presentation software is a way to go. Animation can also be produced and shown using presentation software. This is another good use. May of the key concepts in my own discipline of statistics are easily illustrated with animations. It’s certainly not trivial to produce them, but once produced they can easily be reused. A good animation can create insight and understanding of concepts that are much more difficult to explain with words, symbols or static graphics.

But should your photographs and animations be stored using your presentation software and accessible to students only during your lecture? Perhaps a better approach is to use presentation software to create presentations and then use HTML to store them on the web for student access. All this takes a bit of extra work the first time around, but then forms a basic set of materials that can be improved each time the course is taught. ☺

Professor Works to Develop Theory Which Will Explain How We're Able to Use Language

Following is an interview with Kirk Ludwig, associate professor of philosophy.



Kirk Ludwig conducts research in the areas of philosophy of language, the philosophy of mind and the theory of knowledge.

What areas of philosophy are you interested in?

I work primarily in the philosophy of language, the philosophy of mind, and the theory of knowledge. Rather than try to discuss my interests in all these areas, let me concentrate on the philosophy of language. The question that best characterizes my long term interests in the philosophy of language is, "What is it for words to mean what they do?" That is, how are we to understand what it is for the sounds we make when speaking, or the inscriptions we leave on paper, to mean something, that is, to mean anything at all, and to mean the particular things they do?

One of your primary research proj-

ects, then, is to develop a general theory of meaning for natural languages. Can you explain how this theory will work?

The project I just mentioned is too big to tackle all at once. It breaks down naturally into two parts, the task of giving what is called a compositional meaning theory for a natural language, and the task of explaining what it is for primitive expressions in a language to have the meanings they do. In the end, it turns out these are not completely independent. But for the moment I am mainly working on the first of these.

Can you say more about what a compositional meaning theory is?

One of the most remarkable facts about us is that although we're finite beings and have only a finite capacity for learning things, the languages we speak and understand have an infinite number of nonsynonymous sentences in them. Most of the sentences we hear other people utter we hear for the first time—we seldom hear the same sentence twice—and we understand these completely novel sentences effortlessly. There are an infinite number of these sentences. We clearly haven't—and couldn't have—learned them one by one.

So a central problem in the philosophy of language is to understand how finite beings like us—with finite capacities for understanding things—could master a language with infinite expressive resources. This capacity enables us to understand novel sentences when we hear them, and is what separates our symbol manipulating capacities from those of the other higher primates. How is this possible? Well, we know it is possible and the question is, can we come up with a theoretical representa-

tion of this practical ability we have? The job of a compositional meaning theory is to provide a theoretical representation of this practical ability.

Will this kind of research have practical implications?

Philosophical research is basic research for the most part. I'm primarily interested in understanding things. I want to know what the relation is between our thoughts and language and the world they are both about, and the answers to similar foundational questions. Much of the value of the pursuit of these questions lies in the greater understanding it promises to give us of the kind of beings we are and where we fit into the natural order. But most basic research has practical implications also, though sometimes you don't discover them for a long, long time. The more basic the research, the longer the time. For example, research in philosophical logic beginning over two thousand years ago laid the foundations for the modern development of computer science.

Research on compositional meaning theories is important for figuring out how to model linguistic competence computationally. Without a theory that can generate meaning assignments to every sentence in the language, we're not in a position to think about modeling linguistic competence. But it is hard to predict the uses of basic research. Understanding things better at a basic level opens up possibilities which could not have been anticipated beforehand. That's one reason why the Philistine insistence that all research should be directed at practical ends is so wrong-headed. The mother of invention is not necessity but understanding. ☺

Grant Awards through Division of Sponsored Research

November 1996 Total \$1,628,509

<i>Investigator</i>	<i>Dept.</i>	<i>Agency</i>	<i>Award</i>	<i>Title</i>
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Corporate...\$252,132

Schanze, K. & Ifju, P.	CHE	Ford Motor	117,776	Strain sensitive paints for experimental stress analysis.
Katritzky, A.	CHE	Multiple Co.	91,560	Miles Compound Contract.
Reynolds, J.	CHE	Texas Inst.	40,026	Polymer films for reversible conductivity switching.
Haynes, R.	PHI	AHV Inc.	2,770	Publication of <i>Agricultural and Human Values Journal</i> .

Federal...\$1,059,308

Gustafson, B.	ANT	NASA	52,570	Optical properties of irregular dust particles: experiment and theory.
Benner, S.	CHE	NIH	139,729	Protein sequence analysis and structure prediction.
Angerhofer, A & Powell, D.	CHE	NSF	540,167	Upgrade of EPR/ENDOR/ODMR instrumentation.
Talham, D.	CHE	NSF	95,000	Inorganic monolayers formed at organic templates.
Weltner, W.	CHE	NSF	29,500	Magnetic molecules, ions, and clusters.
Micha, D.	CHE	US Navy	9,484	Molecular spectra and dynamics at interfaces.
Ohrn, Y. & Micha, D.	CHE	US Navy	13,097	Molecular spectra and dynamic at interfaces.
Hyden, G.	CAS	DOE	17,877	Fulbright-Hays Doctoral Dissertation Research Abroad Prog.
Hager, W. & Mair, B.	MAT	NSF	7,500	Conference on optimal control.
Obukhov, S.	PHY	NSF	34,471	Simulation, modelling and visualization.
Tanner, D.	PHY	NSF	29,913	Engineered particulates.
Stewart, G.	PHY	DOE	90,000	Studies of correlated electron materials: Superconductivity.

Other...\$148,546

Hollinger, R.	PHY	Multi Sourc	2,000	Security research project.
Hollinger, R.	PHY	Multi Sourc	28,023	Security research project.
Conlon, M.	STA	Cen DFL	118,523	Evaluation of residential treatment of postpartum women.

State...\$145,323

Jones, D. & Gordon, D.	BOT	DOT	125,323	Roadside management of native plants.
Randazzo, A.	GLY	WMD	20,000	Assessment of lakes and ground-water levels in St. Johns River.

Awards through University of Florida Research Foundation or Other Universities...\$23,200

Holling, C.	ZOO	UF	23,200	UF Foundation account for R. C. S. Holling.
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comprise a very busy program for the students. However, in discussing this dilemma with faculty and chairs, I have been pleased to find that most of them are enthusiastic about giving their students the opportunity to improve their writing skills. The importance of writing is not lost in the disciplines, particularly if we can develop courses that address specific writing situations in the discipline itself.

Dr. Jane Douglas, who heads up the Center's writing initiative, would like to see our students write more during their time at UF. A tentative model might call for two writing courses in the lower division, taught by English and Center faculty, followed by two Writing in the Discipline courses at the upper division taught as disciplinary offerings, either by interested departmental faculty or coordinated with Center faculty. The first two of these courses, in Sociology and in Psychology, are already underway, with more planned according to department interests. A graduate writing course will also be taught this fall in Chemistry. We are interested in talking with faculty and departments who wish to add a writing component to their curricula, undergraduate or graduate.

Ideally, our students would take one writing course each of their four years. Studies have shown that students who write only once in the freshman year have poorer writing skills when they graduate than at the end of that single course. Writing is not like riding a bicycle; once learned, forever secure. Perhaps it's more like a foreign language that benefits from practice, practice, practice. What our Center hopes to show students is that writing more is not only important, it can also be enjoyable. The encouragement and involvement of the departments are essential in this regard.

We believe that state policies of rushing students through a minimalist curriculum are wrong-headed. We owe our students more, not less education. And writing is simply too important to be left to students to pick up on their own. I ask those of you who may believe likewise to help us develop this initiative across the College of Liberal Arts and Sciences.

Will Harrison,
Dean

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from nature and from other human beings and I don't give anything back, I'm weakening the strength of my community. I need them and they need me."

Likewise, because of the belief that everything in the environment belongs to Mother Earth, Holly said, the concept of owning private property and/or land is unfathomable.

"Some Indian writers have said this (private land ownership) is evil, that you can't own pieces of your "mother"," she said. "Even the tribe doesn't really own the land it lives on, but is allowed to live there if they treat the land and the animals the right way. This is a quite different philosophy from the English tradition which actually elects a government to protect property owners."

Another difference between American Indian and Western philosophy is the role government plays in society. For instance, although many people

assume the chief is the leader of the tribe, he or she is usually instead a spokesperson.

"There was a real misunderstanding when the settlers came over because they thought an Indian chief was like a king but that, in fact, was not true," she said. "In many North American tribes the chief is there to execute the will of the people. The idea of a head of state that independently has power was quite foreign to many Indians."

Women were also active in Indian government, a fact most people don't realize, Holly said.

"In many tribes, women held more active political roles than was, or even is, the case in Western traditions," she said. "In some tribes, women could be chiefs and there were instances of women on the tribal council. This was a different sense of government which allowed greater participation by women."✍

From the Chair....

John Biro, chairman of the Department of Philosophy

The role of a department of philosophy in a major university is a multi-faceted one. It must contribute to the liberal education of as many undergraduates as possible. It must offer a competitive graduate program. And it must be an intellectual resource other disciplines can draw on in both their teaching and research. All three of these, of course, require a faculty familiar with, and active in, up-to-date research in the field.

Our department offers an undergraduate major (in which student numbers have quadrupled in the last four years, to over a hundred). We also provide a wide variety of courses to satisfy university- and college-wide requirements, the special needs of several other disciplines, and the variety of electives our large and diverse student body deserves. Our graduate program admits a small number of applicants — with among the highest GRE scores in the university — and tries to give them the

training to make them competitive in today's difficult academic job market. In recent years, we have strengthened and broadened our curriculum at every level to match those of our peer departments and to take account of recent developments in the discipline. This has meant introducing new courses in the core areas of the subject, such as logic, metaphysics, and epistemology, in important special fields such as the philosophy of science, the philosophy of language, and the philosophy of mind, and in developing areas such as applied ethics and non-western philosophy.

In addition, most of our faculty maintain intellectual contact, and sometimes collaborate in research, with colleagues in the College and beyond, particularly in disciplines such as mathematics, physics, psychology, history, classic, languages, as well as in programs such as Latin American Studies and Women's Studies.