

SOUTHERN ILLINOIS UNIVERSITY EDWARDSVILLE



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Budzban Interviews New Philosophy Department Chair

Chris Pearson is the incoming chair of Department of Philosophy.

Pearson graduated from University of Wisconsin, Madison. He followed strong interests in science and expected to go into healthcare until Philosophy enticed him sophomore year. He ultimately pursued a double major in Philosophy

and Zoology.

Dr. Pearson continues to do work that honors both philosophy and science.

With all of the professional medical programs now emphasizing bioethics, it is both necessary and useful to study the relationships between healthcare provision and ethical judgements.

Ethics training helps provide a baseline that makes healthcare providers more aware of decisions in grey areas that have the potential to be malpractice. Ethical understandings provides a foundation for effective decision-making.

Every year the Philosophy Department participates in the national Ethics Bowl, where philosophical cases are "wrestled with". The goal is not an artificial "competition", but an attempt to arrive at a synthesis of "best practice" ideas.

The Department's Graduate Assistants are the primary administrators of the Ethics Bowl. The Department's undergraduate students separately manage and administer an annual Philosophy Conference, with the opportunity for students to have their papers read and evaluated.

Philosophy is also an excellent preparation for legal careers. Law is about being a good reader, good writer, and good thinker. Philosophy is a good beginning point for developing and evaluating the merits of opposing arguments.

Dr. Pearson is particularly interested in the interactions between biology and philosophy. Ethics is not the main concern of biologists pursuing a philosophy of biology, the larger issue is the nature of explanations and the logic of looking at a living being at the optimal level of “organization”. Some things apply at the cellular level, or at the level of DNA, but others only apply in terms of “organ systems”, or at the level of the actual organism’s “being”.

Pain control is an example of something that may have both a low level biological cause and manifestation, but also have an element of perception which is individual in nature.

To hear the entire conversation, tune in to Segue this Sunday, July 14, on WSIE 88.7 FM The Sound and siue.edu/wsie.