

# Campus Life

## They think therefore they are: The Penn State Harrisburg Philosophy Club

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Just because Penn State Harrisburg doesn't offer philosophy as a major does not mean a student can not engage in the love and pursuit of wisdom. The philosophy club is a place

where students can discuss various topics relevant to life in an open and considerate environment.

"We try not to shy away from controversial topics such as ethics, politics, and religion," said Phillip Nelson, president of philosophy club.

Some of the past discussions include Phenomenology, Technology, Religion, Quantum Physics, Embodiment, Patriotism, Freedom, and a paper presentation and discussion on Nature. The philosophy club also holds a movie night followed by discussions on the movie.

Club meetings consist of a weekly topic. Members are emailed the topic prior to the meeting. During meetings, everyone sits in a circle, introductions are made if new people are attending, and then the open discussion begins.

The club is open and considerate of diverse viewpoints. The discussion format is not a debate-type of atmosphere. It is a place for free thought and creative collaborative discussion, according to Sarabeth Orłowski, philosophy club vice-president.

"We try to get as far away from the classroom format as possible unless there is someone presenting a paper or a particular individual has done the research for our topic," said Nelson.

The club positively impacts students by giving them an open environment to speak their mind. Orłowski has been impacted deeply by the club. To have a place to go every

week where she is accepted is life affirming for her.

"Through the mutual honoring and valuing of viewpoints and insights of others, the club has helped shape me as a person more willing to share what I have to say and ask questions – to put myself out there as someone with insights that may be of value to someone else as well as myself in the process of learning from each other. Most of all, it has fostered connections with others and opened the door to a web of connection between members in a way that is hard to describe in words," she said.

Adviser to the club from the start, Professor Craig Haas has seen the impact on students. He has seen how the club has helped sharpen students and the moments of "aha" when the student truly understands a particular concept.

The Philosophy Club formed in January 2005. In 2007 the club went inactive but reformed in spring of 2008 according to Haas.

"Why join the philosophy club? People should join because, if they allow it, philosophy will enhance their everyday life in a spectacular way," said Nelson.

"Philosophy Club does not have an official goal, but if there were a kind of situated achievement for every individual who attends, it would be to help them think about aspects of their day-to-day experience in a more meaningful way," said Nelson.

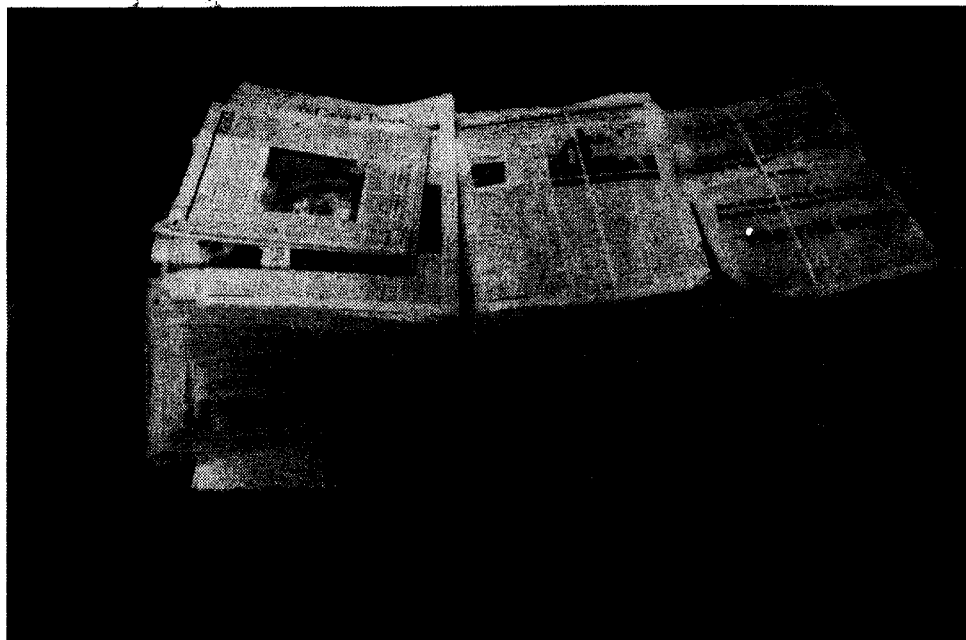
Meetings are held in room 258E and times alternate every week on Thursdays at 12:15 - 1:45 and 4:45 - 6:15. For more information on the philosophy club visit <http://www.clubs.psu.edu/cl/philosophy/> or email club president Phillip Nelson at [pjn5037@psu.edu](mailto:pjn5037@psu.edu) or vice-president Sarabeth Orłowski at [swo5006@psu.edu](mailto:swo5006@psu.edu).



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