

Faculty Development Plan  
Name  
Summer 2016

## **I. Self-Assessment**

Having just finished a paper on the rampant and perhaps inevitable ways in which we are self-deceived (or at least self-ignorant), I don't have complete confidence in my own self-assessment. So I'm going to start with something that my dad repeatedly told me when I asked how he would describe me (I guess my insecurity of self-knowledge has a long past). He would always say that I was inquisitive, and I think this is right. My interests have always been broad. This has had its advantages and its drawbacks. For the good, it has allowed me over the years to find many classes and topics interesting. And it has allowed me to relatively naturally draw from relatively diverse sources in my research. At the same time, however, it made choosing a major and an area in which to pursue a PhD difficult. That a potential virtue can simultaneously be a vice is probably not unique to inquisitiveness.

I think most qualities help us in some ways while making other things more difficult. For example, I also tend to care deeply about things and people. I think this helps me as a teacher and a writer. It helps me connect with my students and, as a rule, they seem to sense that they matter to me. But it also makes it hard when something about my teaching, my course, or me doesn't work for a student. Even though I know on some level that you cannot please everyone, it still makes it hard. I think I am good at leading discussions and at being open to working through problems with a class, which I think leads to a good learning environment. But the way I do this also makes the class slightly less (or at least, differently) structured than some students would like.

I think I am usually a fairly clear writer, maybe sometimes even an engaging writer when compared to a lot of academic philosophy. But I am not always as bold in my theses or in my arguments. That's something I'm working on.

Overall, I am interested in what it means to live a rich, human life. My recent research focuses on 19<sup>th</sup>- and 20<sup>th</sup>-century European philosophy and on philosophy of agency. But I am also interested in philosophy of art, literature, and some topics in religion. I see most of these interests as overlapping, sometimes in unexpected ways. My goal is to become a philosopher/writer/thinker who is able to write clearly and engagingly for both professional philosophers but also for a broader audience. This is closely related to the reasons I enjoy teaching both introductory and advanced classes. It seems that if philosophy, of all disciplines, is not able to speak to deep human interests, then we've done something wrong. But at the same time, I'm under no illusion that all philosophy will be accessible to the majority. However, I would like to teach and write in such a way that my friends and family who are not professional philosophers (or academics) could find something of interest, while also being rigorous when it comes to my thinking and scholarship.

## **II. Professional Goals and Plan to Accomplish Goals**

### **A. Citizenship**

Current Responsibilities and Goals:

- Coordinating department scholarships: I will continue to coordinate awarding the “Excellence in Philosophy Scholarship” and work with LDS Philanthropies to start awarding the David Paulsen scholarship soon.
- Advising potential graduate students: I want to help BYU students interested in graduate school—particularly in philosophy—be better prepared for the application process. This has three parts: (1) help students understand the process and (2) become strong applicants, while also helping faculty write better letters of recommendation.
- New Student Orientation and Major Fair: I plan to continue doing what we have been doing here.
- Major Advising: This is an assignment that could expand if I let it. At the least, I want to make sure that all majors are assigned a faculty advisor and encourage faculty to make contact with their assigned students.
- E-portfolio: I need to find out what is involved in this project and if this is a responsibility I will continue to have.

## **B. Teaching**

### **Big Picture:**

I hope to help BYU students—both majors and not—better understand philosophy while also being anchored in the gospel. That doesn’t mean that I will always explicitly make connections to the gospel. But I will work to help them not be wary of the tools or the content of philosophy. By learning how to think carefully about topics and to see the strengths and weakness of arguments—whether clearly gospel-related or not—I think students will be better able to work through life and can better determine what is central to the gospel.

### **Specific Course Plans:**

Continue to refine Philosophy 110, 213, and 350 (Agency) classes.

- 110: I would like to develop (at least) two versions of Philosophy 110. My first goal is to continue to improve and modify the version of 110 I have taught thus far. I’d like to better incorporate some film and literature into the syllabus, because I think this helps students better understand and engage with primary philosophical texts.
- 213: My first goal in this class is to improve my presentation of Aristotle’s *Nicomachean Ethics*. I plan to retain the historical dimension of the class, but I may want to introduce a couple of new topics. As it stands, my 213 course is a historically-driven survey of three questions: (1) What reason do we have to be moral? (2) What makes something right or wrong? (3) What makes a life meaningful?
- 350 (Agency): Last semester was my first time teaching this course and, given that, I think it went very well. The next time I teach it, I want to do a better job explaining what the course is (and isn’t). I also have a better feel for the overall arc of the material and have a better sense of how I will organize the assignments. I will probably require 5 short papers and one long paper (one of which can be a paper proposal).

I will also prepare a Phil 416 (Philosophy of Law) class for Fall 2016. This time, the focus of the class will be two-fold: legal interpretation and moral responsibility, legal responsibility, and punishment. Depending on departmental needs, this is a course I could teach periodically. But it is not my main area. I will be teaching Philosophy 340 (Nietzsche) for the Winter 2017. I am very

much looking forward to this course. I plan to read primarily Nietzsche himself. But one of my professors (Maudemarie Clark) is in the process of writing the Routledge book on Nietzsche and I may contact her to see if we could use her book or manuscript in our class. This would allow students to engage with a prominent contemporary Nietzsche scholar and would give them a sense for some of the ways Nietzsche is being read.

Over time, I want to be able to teach Phil 110, 202, 213, a variety of 340 courses (Kant, 19<sup>th</sup> century survey, Kierkegaard, Nietzsche, and Freud), and a variety of 350 courses (Heidegger, Sartre, Merleau-Ponty, and then contemporary courses in analytic philosophy—various topics in agency related areas). I could also teach philosophy 413 and certain topics in philosophy of mind.

To accomplish this, I plan to prepare (roughly) one new course per semester, while continuing to revise the syllabi and assignments from previous courses. I am also participating in the Writing Matters seminar (with the Writing Across the Curriculum) this summer. I anticipate this will help me improve my instruction and assessment of writing.

### **C. Scholarship**

In the long-term, I hope to become a good scholar who is engaged in conversations in both “analytic” and “continental” philosophy. Because of my training, this cross-pollination comes quite naturally. But my goal is to work to publish this hybrid work in well-respected, mainstream journals. In terms of figures, plan to work primarily on Kierkegaard, Nietzsche, Heidegger, Merleau-Ponty, and maybe Sartre, but I also have a robust secondary interest in the German Romantic tradition.

Typically, my recent scholarly work has two key focuses. One of my primary areas of research is agency—specifically, what it means to live a rich human life and what it means to be a responsible agent. My work in this area draws from both the analytic and continental philosophy traditions, but it also draws from literature and psychoanalysis. My other primary area has been art—specifically, I am interested in what it means for an artwork to be great and whether (or what kind of) great art is possible in our day. When it comes to art, I am primarily interested in these questions as they are explored by the German aesthetic tradition. In particular, I draw from work by Kant, Hegel, Nietzsche, and Heidegger to explore what it means for something to be great art and whether great art is possible in our day. Hegel, for example, thinks that art, in its highest vocation, is a thing of the past; Heidegger, on the other hand, thinks it is unclear whether Hegel is right.

People like Jonathan Lear and Charles Taylor have been important for my thinking in both of these areas. In *Radical Hope*, for example, Lear examines how the significance of an act can change as the world changes—with clear implications for religious practice; similarly, in work like *Sources of the Self* and *A Secular Age*, Taylor has examined the ways that our conception of the self (of the individual agent) and things like religious faith are influenced by modernity. In *A Secular Age*, for example, Taylor examines the shift from a world in which religious belief was the default to one in which it is only one option among many, and often not the most desirable one. He thinks this leads to a kind of dual perspective for the believer, making it difficult to fully immerse oneself in the world of faith.

Although art and agency seem to be fairly different topics, I see them as deeply related. For Kant and many post-Kantian thinkers—Hegel, Schiller, Holderlin, Nietzsche, Heidegger—art offered the promise of harmony between reason and sensibility (or, put differently, between one’s body and one’s mind). Art, then, involved much more than aesthetic pleasure. It was thought to hold the key to the good life. For this reason, modernity poses similar challenges to both agency and art. With the

advance of modernity, we find ourselves in a much more pluralistic world. Many think there are great benefits to this pluralism, but many (often the same thinkers) think this pluralism also makes agential integrity difficult (if not impossible) and it can make world-unifying great art a thing of the past.

Plan:

- I will schedule consistent writing time. When I am teaching 3 courses, it will probably be 1-2 hours per day; when I am teaching 2 courses, it will probably be at least 2 hours per day. I plan to write more on Tuesdays and Thursdays, so it will be an average.
- I want to be better at sending drafts to colleagues for feedback. I have colleagues—from graduate school and from conferences—who have offered to read my work, and I want to be more active in seeking out feedback.
- I will send drafts to the Faculty Editing Service before sending them to journals.
- I am organizing a writing support group with Sara Phenix of the French department to encourage consistent writing practices.

Work in Progress and Work Planned

- “Practical Identity and Self-Conception” to be published in the Routledge collection on Phenomenology and Pragmatism (This will be published later this year.)
- Entries for “Zusammenhang,” “Ganze” (1000 words each), and “Nihilismus” (2000 words) for Cambridge UP’s *Heidegger Lexicon*. (I have drafts for the first two entries and am currently working on the third). These are due to the editor this summer.
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- “Why Did the Butler Do It?” I have presented versions of this paper at various conferences, including the Central APA. I actually think there are two papers in the paper. So I’m working to divide them out. One paper will look at autonomy and authenticity and the ways these can come into conflict in a life. The other will examine regret and what it reveals about agency and what we care about. I have various people who have offered to read drafts of the paper and to help develop it—John Martin Fischer, Suzy Killmister, Agnieszka Jaworska—and I will send them drafts as it develops.
- Regret Project: I am currently quite interested in regret. Specifically, I want to think about different kinds of regret. Sometimes we regret doing things that were out of character. Other times, however, we regret being the people we are. I’m interested in what these differences and the structure of regret reveals about the structure of agency. I’m thinking about applying for an NEH summer stipend to get extra support to work on this project. The project would engage with recent work by R. Jay Wallace and with other work in the Agency literature and, perhaps, with work in emotions. I think this project would easily yield one or two articles, maybe a book, but it could also lead to a sort of edited collection.
- “Autonomy and Practical Identities.” This is a version of my first dissertation chapter and I would like to more carefully work out the notion of practical identity and the role that it should (and should not) play in agency theory. My Routledge chapter does some of this. But

I would like to work through questions of autonomy and practical identity in more depth than I do there.

- “Authenticity.” I want to write an article on authenticity. My dissertation discusses authenticity in Kierkegaard and Heidegger. I’m quite interested in developing some of the ideas there but probably with more emphasis on Heidegger.

### **III. Relationship Between Individual Goals and Department and University Aspirations and Needs**

Teaching: Teaching has always mattered to me. I hope to be a teacher who helps students push themselves and become familiar with the best scholarship out there. Because of the size of the department, I will teach an array of classes, not all of which will align with my research or teaching expertise. But it seems I will also be able to teach a number of classes in my primary areas that are also helpful to the department. So far, my classes have had good enrollment, and this should help the department and the university.

Scholarship: My goal is to be an excellent scholar. By doing this, I help the university gain recognition but I also remain freshly interested in philosophy. I think being passionate about the material also improves teaching. In time, I would like to be able to successfully apply for external grants and fellowships, which would also help bring funds to the department and university.

### **IV. Resources Needed**

I have been actively seeking out research funds to help with the research—by doing the General Education workshop, participating in the Writing Matters seminar, and by participating in the Wheatley Institute Seminar (all Summer 2016). But consistent support to travel to conferences and, potentially, to bring recognized scholars to campus would be very helpful. I may need to do this through working with the Humanities Center and the College of Humanities. For my work, though, one of the biggest resources is time. So I will work to use summers wisely, in addition to continuing to research, write, revise, submit during the fall and winter semesters. Some universities offer sabbaticals in the year leading up to tenure. The philosophy department (and perhaps BYU generally) seems to offer the leave after continuing-faculty status, and I can also see how that would be helpful.

## Course Development Project Grant Proposal

Name

Philosophy 110

I am working to improve my design for Philosophy 110, the introductory philosophy class at BYU. It is a tricky class to teach and I'm working to improve how it engages a variety of students. The class enrollment ranges from first-semester students (typically with some interest in philosophy) to last-semester students (who often have little interest in philosophy but need to satisfy a GE requirement). It is not required for philosophy majors. In fact, it doesn't satisfy any major requirements. But in my experience, students can find an interest in philosophy through the class and decide to change their major to philosophy (or to add a philosophy major).

To engage this range of students, I've found it effective to use film, literature, and other media to explore key concepts. I am requesting a grant to help build a better film and literature collection for future 110 courses. In the long run, I would like to develop at least a couple different 110 courses, and it would be helpful to have a variety of materials to use with the different courses.

Citizenship Project Proposal  
Faculty Development Seminar  
Summer 2016  
Name

In order to improve my citizenship, I plan to do two things.

First, I want to form an Agraphia writing group (or, more kindly, a writing support group) that will help encourage me and others to write consistently. I want to start small, probably with Sara Phenix and Chris Flood and maybe Katie Paxman. But in time and as it is helpful, we could expand—either in the size of our group or by offering support for this sort of thing across campus.

This kind of group will help us all be more productive as scholars and will also help build relationships with other departments in the college (and, perhaps in time, in the university).

Second, I want to go to lunch more regularly with colleagues—both in and out of the department. This is something that will be a bit of a stretch for me. I like people but I just am not in the habit of certain kinds of getting together. But going to lunch and the relationships that are built this way seem to be crucial for building collegiality, both among faculty at BYU and with colleagues at other universities.

Scholarship Strategies Project Proposal  
Faculty Development Seminar  
Summer 2016  
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### Beyond February 2017

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## Concrete Plans

### Writing

- I plan to write every weekday. On teaching days, I will probably write less; on non-teaching days, I plan to write at least 2 hours. During the spring and summer, I will write at least 2 hours a day.
- I will keep track of writing in my “Writing Log.” This helps me keep track of my progress and it can work as motivation to keep the streak alive.
- I will form a writing support group with Sara Phenix (and Chris Flood). It could expand from there, but that’s where we’ll start. The goal there is primarily for positive peer encouragement and pressure.
- I will share drafts of work early and often—friends and colleagues at other universities.
  - I will work to use the faculty editing service at least every quarter.
- I will use my library office for writing on Tuesday and Thursday and will stay in my office with the door closed (and light off) during writing times, regardless of day. Put a note on the door, if necessary.
- Starting by the end of this summer, I want to have at least one article under review at a time. If I can get more than that out, so much the better.

### Reading

- I will read at least one article a week.
- I will work on my reading list.

### Presentations/Grant Proposals

- I will continue to apply for grants, fellowships, and prestigious conferences/workshops.
- Attend and seek feedback from the FHSS grant writing bootcamp people and from others with experience (Matt Wickman?, Mark Wrathall, Samantha Matherne, Coleen Macnamara).