

## **Guidelines for Scholarship in Philosophy at Whitman College**

### **October, 2010**

The following clarification of scholarly guidelines is meant to be a helpful guide for both philosophy faculty discerning ideal areas to submit scholarly work and the Personnel Committee in assessing scholarly work in philosophy. Philosophy, perhaps more than other disciplines, has a very wide variety of different sub-fields with different standards. In discerning the quality of faculty scholarship, the Personnel Committee is strongly encouraged to consult with the candidate and department chair and to take particularly seriously outside letters. The following recommendations are tied to the alphabetical list of items that the Faculty Handbook uses to elucidate what counts as Excellence in Professional Activity.

#### ***a. Research and writing that appear in peer-reviewed publications, etc....***

Within the discipline of philosophy, standards for scholarly excellence vary significantly by subfield and style of philosophical research, and Whitman's philosophy department includes members who practice nearly the full range of these philosophical styles. There is thus no single set of scholarly expectations appropriate for all members of the department. That said, there are a few characteristics of publishing in philosophy that are more-or-less general, and a few specific points that can be made about the specific approaches to philosophy practiced in our department.

Standards of "peer review" are ambiguous and vary significantly in quality. The highest standard is double-blind review (where neither author nor reviewers know the identity of the other), except in the case of book manuscripts, where reviewers typically know the identity of the author (but not vice versa). Lower standards are typically present in submissions to invited collections (which are often "peer reviewed" but not "blind reviewed") and invited (and not really "reviewed") submissions. That said, double-blind-reviewed submissions to poor quality journals will not receive as high a standard of peer review as invited submissions to top notch books or journals. Still, while invited and peer (but not blind) reviewed publications can often be of the highest quality, philosophers are encouraged to submit work to venues that engage in double-blind review. This is particularly important at the stage of tenure, and less so for promotion to Full Professor (where invited submissions are often more an indicator of scholarly reputation than of avoiding rigorous peer review).

Within philosophy, there is no universal preference for books over articles. Generally speaking, within "Continental" philosophy, books are still the most highly respected forms of publication. Within the history of philosophy, books have a slight edge over articles, but only a slight edge, and within mainstream contemporary "analytic" philosophy, books are often considered a second-best form of publishing; articles are far and away the standard. In that context, for the purposes of tenure, we would generally consider either a scholarly monograph published with a well-respected press or 2-6 articles in top journals (depending upon the quality of the journal) as sufficient to satisfy the criteria for excellence in professional activity for the purposes of tenure (see more below). Translations and critical editions, while important contributions to the profession, are generally treated as "Peer-reviewed publication in related areas" rather than scholarly work in philosophy per se, but some subfields see translations as philosophical scholarship, and the Personnel Committee is encouraged to confer with the department and look carefully at outside letters when evaluating the scholarly importance of translations.

In philosophy, submitted articles are typically sorted into four categories after review: accept for publication, accept for publication after revisions, revise and resubmit, and reject. The vast majority of papers (93-99%) are outright rejected at all of the top tier journals and even at many second and third tier journals. Getting a "revise and resubmit" should thus be considered a

significant scholarly accomplishment, especially at a top journal. While journals vary, most (but not all) journals eventually accept most (but not all) of the articles they initially rate as “revise and resubmit.” Articles currently “under revision” after receiving such a rating from a top journal should be weighted heavily in a candidate’s favor at times of tenure and promotion. (Roughly speaking, a “revise and resubmit” from a top tier journal should be considered equivalent to, if not better than, a publication in a second tier journal.) Moreover, given the importance of comments from reviewers for the scholarly development of faculty, revise and resubmits from top journals are an important part of Whitman faculty’s professional development.

Philosophy articles can take a very long time to be published. Often there is a delay of between 6 months and 2 years between the initial submission of an article and its review, and the result of this is usually a request for revision, after the submission of which there can be further delay. When an article is finally accepted, it can often literally be several *years* before that article appears in print. Five years is a quite typical delay from initial submission of an article to its final publication. Accepted articles that are still forthcoming should be considered published for the purposes of review, articles “under revision” should be viewed favorably, and candidates who have forthcoming books should clarify precisely what stage the book is at (in particular, has the full manuscript been accepted for publication, or a manuscript “with revisions,” or merely the book *proposal*; the first is equivalent to publication, the second slightly less, and the last is far from being a done deal.)

Any list of “top tier” journals is bound to be dated and incomplete, but the following journals should be considered “top-tier” journals in philosophy (some publish general philosophical articles, others are more specialized; all have acceptance rates in the 2-7% range). Whitman professors who publish in these journals meet the highest standards for scholarly excellence (friends at Northwestern say that 5 “top journal” articles is sufficient for tenure there, and faculty have been tenured at the absolute top university departments in philosophy with only 2 or 3 such journals). Publishing even two or three articles in these venues should be considered sufficient (but not necessary) in order to meet the standards of scholarly excellence for tenure and/or promotion at Whitman. Top journals include: *The Philosophical Review*, *The Journal of Philosophy*, *Ethics*, *Mind*, *Nous*, *Philosophy and Phenomenological Research*, *Philosopher’s Imprint*, *The Journal of the History of Philosophy*, and arguably *Continental Philosophy Review*.<sup>1</sup>

The following are also very good, though not quite “top tier.” Faculty publishing in these as similar venues more than adequately meet the standards for scholarly success at Whitman, but the number of publications should be more than for genuinely top tier journals: *Philosophical Quarterly*, *Philosophical Forum*, *Pacific Philosophical Quarterly*, *History of Philosophy Quarterly*, *Philosophical Studies*, and *Continental Philosophy Review*.

For “Continental” philosophy, books are more important than journals, but among the best journals are *Continental Philosophy Review*, *Research in Phenomenology*, *European Journal of Philosophy*, *Graduate Faculty Philosophy Journal*, *European Journal of Philosophy*, *Heidegger Studies*, and *the Journal for the British Society of Phenomenology*. Of these, the first is generally considered the top journal within this subfield, though some continental philosophers see *Research in Phenomenology* as a more important journal. Within history of philosophy, there are several top notch specialty journals, including *Oxford Studies in Ancient Philosophy* (the top journal in ancient philosophy), *Ancient Philosophy*, *Phronesis*, *Hume Studies*, *Kant-Studien*, and *Kantian Review*.

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<sup>1</sup> With an acceptance rate of about 7%, *Continental Philosophy Review* would merit being in this or the next category, except that books are much more important markers of scholarly excellence in continental philosophy.

Contemporary “analytic” philosophy (including epistemology, philosophy of mind, etc) does not have as many “niche” journals as other areas in philosophy, and the closest one finds to niche journals in these areas (such as the journal *Mind*) are extremely difficult to publish in. This should be taken into account in assessing scholarly activity in contemporary analytic philosophy.

There are also many other journals that are mixed in quality, good for other narrow niches in philosophy, or the sorts of “second tier” journals that are often adequate for tenure and promotion at Whitman. Publishing 5 or 6 articles in solid, mid-tier journals should be considered sufficient for tenure at Whitman. Since the variety of journals in philosophy is so broad, the personnel committee is encouraged to consult with the members of the philosophy department and to refer to external letters for specific guidance about the quality of specific publications.

Most university presses are respectable places to publish in philosophy. Among the best presses for publishing books in philosophy are many that the Personnel Committee will likely recognize as highly reputable: Cambridge University Press, Oxford University Press, Harvard University Press, Princeton University Press, Stanford University Press and the University of Chicago Press. For Continental Philosophy, there are also some presses that might not be immediately recognizable as prestigious, but which are even *more* prestigious within this subfield than Cambridge, Oxford, or Harvard. The best university presses for continental philosophy include Stanford University Press, Indiana University Press, SUNY Press, Penn State Press, and Fordham University Press (all of these should be considered top presses for publications in continental philosophy). In addition to University presses, Routledge, Continuum, Blackwell, and Humanities Press publish top notch work in philosophy. A good indicator of the respectability of particular presses (and of particular books) is *Notre Dame Philosophical Reviews*, which reviews virtually all of the most important books in philosophy and gives a good sense for where these books are being published. (That is, a press the books from which are often reviewed on *NDPR* is likely a well respected press.)

Co-authored work is relatively rare within philosophy, and there is not yet a standard format for listing authors of co-authored work. Sometimes the order of authors reflects the relative weight of the author's contribution to the project, but very often it does not. Candidates submitting co-authored work should clarify their role in the project and provide contact information for their co-author(s).

#### ***b. Peer-reviewed publication in related areas, etc....***

The most salient “related areas” for our department in the near future are likely to be Classics, German Studies, and Environmental Studies. For standards of good research in Classics and German Studies, consult the research excellence guidelines for those departments.

Environmental Philosophy does not have top tier niche journals, but *Environmental Ethics*; *Environmental Values*; and *Ethics, Place, and the Environment* are all decent second tier niche journals. The best work in environmental philosophy should be published in the top tier journals (e.g. *Ethics*) above. For philosophy pedagogy, there are a few venues for publishing, including the *APA Newsletter* and *Teaching Philosophy*. Scholarly standards for both journals are very low, so publications there should be treated accordingly, but both sometimes publish high quality work on philosophical pedagogy. As noted above, scholarly translations and critical editions should generally (but not universally) be treated as “Peer-reviewed publication in related areas” rather than scholarly work in philosophy per se.

#### ***c. Non-peer reviewed publications, etc...***

See discussion under a. above. Typically, non-peer reviewed publications, etc. in philosophy are invited, and while these are signs of scholarly success for more mature scholars, they can also be

cheap back-doors to publishing in collections edited by friends. Untenured faculty are encouraged to exercise care about publishing in non-peer-reviewed contexts.

***d/e. Involvement in professional organizations and Participation in professional meetings***

The largest professional philosophers' associations/meetings are the American Philosophical Association (APA) and the Society for Phenomenology and Existential Philosophy (SPEP). The former has no single "national" meeting but rather three regional meetings (Eastern, Central, and Pacific), of which the "Eastern APA" is the closest parallel to a national meeting of other professional societies. Philosophy also has many smaller meetings and workshops focusing on particular subfields, such as the "Ancient Philosophy Workshop," regional "Seminars in Early Modern Philosophy," the "Heidegger Circle," or the "Collegium Phaenomenologicum." Papers presented at the majority of these professional meetings are competitively and double-blindly reviewed.

***f. The writing and submission of proposals for external grants.***

National Endowment for the Humanities Fellowships (especially the Research Fellowship but also the Summer Stipend) and American Council of Learned Societies (especially the Ryskamp Fellowship) are the top non-residential research fellowships for philosophy faculty. There are also many prestigious residential fellowships (including, for example, Princeton's Center for Human Values). Grants and fellowships, especially residential ones (for sabbaticals) provide enriching contexts for philosophical work, but unlike some other disciplines, grants in philosophy, even when highly competitive (NEH Fellowships have about a 5% acceptance rate), are considered promissory notes rather than real indicators of success in the discipline. In philosophy, publications either accepted or under revision (after a revise and resubmit) are better indicators of scholarly excellence than prestigious fellowships.