

Faculty Search for the Kingfisher College Chair in the Philosophy of Religion and Ethics

**Department of Philosophy
University of Oklahoma**

The Kingfisher College Chair

The Kingfisher College Chair was most recently held by [Linda Zagzebski](#). The Chair is intended for an outstanding researcher in philosophy of religion or ethics, and former holders have been integral to all aspects of the department's research and teaching mission.

To see the job description and apply, click [here](#).

Who are we looking for?

Most basically, we seek a colleague who has an outstanding, and ongoing, record of research in philosophy of religion or ethics (both fields broadly construed). We also seek someone skilled in teaching and mentoring, who is committed to practicing philosophy in a cooperative mode and is interested in conversing across academic disciplines, philosophical traditions and sub-disciplines. We expect this appointment to be made at the rank of full professor. While candidates needn't currently hold that rank to apply, they should have a record such that appointment at the rank of full professor is feasible.

Our principal purpose is to find a colleague who excels in the ways described above, but of course there are many additional ways someone might contribute. Let us know how you envision your role in our community.

What is it like to be a philosopher at OU?

We recognize that investigating a department and even interviewing in person might not yield answers to the sorts of things you'd really like to know. Here are some of the things about us that might not be obvious or that you might not have the opportunity to ask directly.

The department is committed to being pluralistic about intellectual traditions, methods, and philosophical work. Our faculty do generally each have the usual defined areas of research – some are doing philosophy of language, some are doing history, some are doing ethics, and so on. Most of us do work in the analytic tradition. Yet despite our many and varied specialties, faculty are not off in silos, each working away individually. We don't always understand each other's specialties, but we are open-minded and ready for enlivening philosophical conversation across our different interests and specialties. We have regular and

special events – from visiting speaker colloquia to pedagogy sessions to reading groups – designed around the joint goals of learning new things together and inviting department members to share their work or interests with each other. We don't treat conversation as combat; we do treat active and lively curiosity as our steady aspiration.

Our more formal department structures and working ethos reflect our commitment to making our corner of the profession as welcoming and inclusive as possible. We strive for shared and equitable departmental governance and service. Our formal policies – e.g., evaluation of faculty, hiring, and graduate admissions – are self-consciously designed to minimize bias and promote fairness. Several faculty in the department have additionally taken on roles in the department, university, or profession that work toward the goal of greater diversity and improved inclusive practices.

We are committed to making our workplace work well for those in it, whatever their life circumstances. For example, we make efforts to schedule events, meetings, and colloquia in sensitivity to those responsible for children, whether that means scheduling early so faculty with children in school or care can fully participate or welcoming families and children to our informal events. Faculty children have even attended faculty meetings, though very few have enjoyed them. The chair is responsible for course scheduling and makes concerted efforts to attend to individual faculty member's needs wherever possible. We are especially conscious of the needs of junior, pre-tenure faculty. The department strives to protect our pre-tenure faculty from excessive service and sees their successful passage to tenure as one of our goals.

Faculty generally teach courses at three distinct levels: introductory, advanced undergraduate, and graduate. A typical year for a faculty member would likely include one graduate level course (either an advanced undergraduate/graduate survey or a graduate seminar), with the rest of the load a combination of introductory and advanced undergraduate courses. Undergraduate course enrollment caps tend to vary but when solo teaching, without a teaching assistant, faculty can reliably expect no more than 40 students in a single course, and often may have fewer. Owing to budgetary matters, our department occasionally may employ an adjunct faculty member, but we as a department seek to minimize our use of contingent, insecure adjunct labor. The vast majority of teaching is handled by tenured and tenure-stream faculty and graduate students employed with assistantships to teach as part of their training. As noted above, this position is expected to include a 2/1 load, a reduction from the typical 2/2.

Our department has many of the constraints – financial, staffing, and in our physical spaces – that you might expect of a large state university. But the department makes it a point to work within our constraints to assist faculty in excelling in their work. For example, funds for travel are distributed equitably to all faculty and the department makes every effort to utilize whatever extra-departmental funding we

can to ensure that faculty can pursue their intellectual goals. Our faculty likewise have a record of substantial success in seeking special funding through general university channels – e.g., junior faculty summer support grants, Humanities research grants, presidential and named professorships, and teaching awards – as well as a commitment to aiding faculty seeking external grants and funding. The Kingfisher College Chair comes with substantial research funds.

The staff people who support our department are core to our well-functioning and are prized by the faculty. Even as they fulfill demanding duties for the department and university, they are invaluable supports to faculty working in a large state university, filled with the kinds of byzantine bureaucracy at which such institutions excel. Faculty can find in them a resource for questions no one else in the department can answer.

Our department's graduate student population is made up of both M.A. and Ph.D. students, almost all of whom are on funded assistantships. We aim to provide our students with a firm grounding in the diverse areas of philosophy in which our faculty work and that represent the discipline of philosophy. Students at the Ph.D. level are writing dissertations focused on ethics, philosophy of religion, epistemology, Chinese philosophy, aesthetics, Greek philosophy, and several other areas. We seek to mentor our graduate students in the variety of professional activities the modern academy includes, from research to teaching to service. Our graduate students are quite active in their own training. Many of our reading groups are initiated by them. They plan ambitious events, such as a biannual graduate student conference, and regularly host events that mentor others – e.g., a "Write Night" designed to help undergraduates tackle their philosophy class papers and a "Writing Sample Workshop" aimed to aid those applying to graduate programs. We have an active departmental Graduate Student Association and MAP chapter.

Undergraduate teaching of philosophy at OU is difficult to summarize neatly. OU undergraduates are a diverse mix of abilities and backgrounds. Some are strong students who run with anything they are offered, some struggle with the demands of college or with efforts to balance employment, family, and schooling all at once. As a state flagship university, we have undergraduates from all over the world, the US, and the state of Oklahoma and neighboring regions. Teaching undergraduates at OU largely entails developing abilities to meet them where they are and help them recognize and develop their own potential. We are strongly committed to realizing the value of philosophical engagement for all of our students.

Our Hiring Process

The department will begin reviewing application as they arrive. Our search committee includes the dean of the College of Arts and Sciences, three members of

the department faculty, a faculty member appointed outside the discipline of philosophy, an M.A. graduate who is part of the local community, and one of our Ph.D. students. This committee will be initially reviewing applications, but the entire faculty of the Philosophy Department will be involved in both vetting candidates and selecting our successful candidate.

Applicants may be invited to provide additional materials as our process proceeds, and some of the listed references will be contacted for letters. Once we have conducted an initial review of all applications, the search committee, in consultation with the full Philosophy Department, will identify a “long short list” for closer consideration and review by all. From this list, we expect to identify 3-4 candidates we will invite for flyouts.

The flyout visit to OU will include some stable and fixed elements: a research talk (typically a one-hour talk with a one-hour Q &A), a meeting with our departmental governance committee, and an interview with the search committee (with the interview questions provided to candidates in advance of their visit), as well as meetings with graduate students and OU administrators. We also seek to ensure that candidates can meet with any other faculty or units on campus that may be relevant to their particular research interests. Candidates who are selected for flyouts will be contacted ahead of their visit by a member of our department’s Diversity and Recruiting Committee in order to facilitate our meeting any special needs a candidate may have. We understand that applicants may have needs that can impact how best to arrange their visit (e.g., mobility issues, dietary requirements, or issues related to nursing or pregnancy) and our Diversity and Recruiting faculty member is charged with making recommendations in confidence about how we can provide a well-organized visit that allows each candidate to perform at their best.

Our target is to conduct campus flyouts beginning in February. Still, owing to the inherently complex nature of hiring processes, it is difficult to establish any firm timeline for our process. We are regrettably constrained by university policies from notifying candidates about their status in our search until the search is concluded and a hire made. Those not contacted for initial flyouts will remain in the applicant pool until the process concludes.

Information on OU and Norman, Oklahoma

The University of Oklahoma is located in central Oklahoma, about 15 miles south of Oklahoma City. Our campus is regularly listed as one of the most beautiful in the nation and Norman offers a host of interesting options for leisure activities, recreation, and community involvement. For more about Norman, please visit: <http://www.ou.edu/content/dam/provost/documents/facultyflipbook.pdf>
<https://www.normanchamber.com/index.php?about-norman>

Do you have questions for us?

To apply for this position, please go to: <http://apply.interfolio.com/115445>
If you have any questions about any aspect of the application process, please don't hesitate to contact the chair of the department, Rusty Jones (rustyjones@ou.edu).

OU Department of Philosophy Mission Statement

In accordance with the mission of the University of Oklahoma, the OU Philosophy Department aims for excellence in teaching, research, and service. In the pursuit of this mission, we aim to create and maintain a thriving community of scholars and teachers. We are committed to maintaining a supportive and open-minded environment in which faculty and students are not just free, but encouraged, to follow their curiosity and their intellectual passions. Mutual respect, an appreciation of the value of diversity, and a commitment to inclusion are hallmarks of the department. We believe that these commitments

- lead to excellent scholarship, collaboration, and collegiality.
- lead to engaged and enthusiastic teaching.
- create opportunities for, and spark interest in, service to the profession and to society at large.
- model for our students the highest values of inquiry and education.

We are committed to providing our students with a philosophically rich, formative and useful education. We believe that a philosophical education should

- provide students with the interpretive, critical, analytic, and communicative skills necessary to personal, intellectual, and civic development, cultural literacy, and lifelong learning.
- provide an integrative learning experience, allowing students to draw connections amongst the diverse theories and traditions they are exposed to.
- contribute to the experiences necessary for our students to ultimately develop some understanding of the world and their place in it.
- inspire and sustain both curiosity and wonder.

We are committed to justice in our own policies and practices as well as to contributing to progress in our university and in our profession. To further this goal, we engage in evidence-based, on-going self-evaluation. We believe this commitment

- creates a dynamic, responsive, and forward-looking atmosphere in the department.
- creates a departmental environment of transparency and shared vision.

We take this to be a guiding principle for all departmental decisions.