

Dean's Weekly
20 April 2011
English and Philosophy

Past Events

1. On 13 April, Dr. Emily Bryan, a noted Shakespearean expert and former member of the Department of English and Philosophy, spoke to some fifty cadets in Jefferson Hall's Haig Room as part of the department's "Lit Unplugged" series. Dr. Bryan's subject was Shakespeare's original and exciting use of seemingly ordinary words. The Department of English and Philosophy hosts four "Lit Unplugged" events a year in which cadets listen to and share dinner with scholars who speak about the importance of books in their lives. Organizers of the event include MAJ Maurice Wilson, Professor Rebecca Wisor, MAJ Damon Durall, Professor Karin Roffman, and MAJ Crystal Hills.



Dr. Emily Bryan spoke to cadets in Jefferson Hall's Haig Room.

2. On 15 April, the Department of English and Philosophy hosted a PY201 (Philosophy) course-wide lecture by Professor Christopher Coker of the London School of Economics. Professor Coker's topic, "Character and Risk in Modern War," articulated his belief in the continued importance of character in the modern era of warfare.



Prof. Chris Coker spoke to cadets at the PY201 course-wide lecture.



Prof. Chris Coker enjoying lunch with cadets in Washington Hall.

3. EN101 (Composition) course director LTC Pete Molin and course executive officer MAJ Sean Morrow visited the Department of English at the United States Military Academy Preparatory School, Fort Monmouth, New Jersey on Friday, 15 April. The purpose of the visit was to discuss matters related to USMAPS graduates' performance in EN101 and issues related to the move of USMAPS to West Point in the summer of 2011.
4. On 15 April, the Superintendent of the United States Military Academy, LTG David H. Huntoon, Jr., gave a talk in Robinson Auditorium to selected members of the EN102 (Literature) course about the importance of books and reading to lifelong learning and the professional development of successful military leaders, addressing in particular the role of books and reading in shaping his own life and career. LTG Huntoon's speech also addressed the centrality of words, contemplation, and reflection in a Soldier's life. His speech built on the recent "Literary Biography of U.S. Grant" library exhibit and thus helped prepare the cadets in attendance to prepare their own "literary autobiography" (the literary, cinematic, and musical artifacts that have influenced their intellectual, emotional, and professional development). The event was videotaped by DPTMS and is available on the USMA Academic Playback.
5. On Monday, 18 April, the Philosophy faculty of the Department of English and Philosophy met in the Old West Point Train Station with members of The Hastings Center to discuss the ethical issues of battlefield euthanasia—whether mercy killings should be allowed on the battlefield. The Hastings Center is the oldest bioethics research institute in the country and was instrumental in instituting ethics instruction at USMA; the two groups have been meeting annually for more than twenty years. Attendees included Dr. Daniel Callahan, co-founder of The Hastings Center and a recognized expert on the ethics of euthanasia; and Dr. David L. Perry, formerly of the Army War College and now Director of the Vann Center for Ethics at Davidson College.