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July 17, 2008

Selinger: A true 'renaissance' philosopher

Professor Evan Selinger rejects the notion of the philosopher as a solitary intellectual; this outdated stereotype does not appeal to him at all. Selinger thrives, instead, on conversation and collaboration with students and colleagues. He views philosophy as a fundamentally communal activity.

"Philosophy has a reputation of being too insular," says Selinger, assistant professor in RIT's Department of Philosophy. "I prefer to bring inter- and intradisciplinary insights into my research and teaching. Augmenting the perspectives involved in a common project often enhances the quality of inquiry."

Selinger has found collaboration to be the key to his intellectual growth. He has co-edited and co-authored several volumes pertaining to the philosophy of technology. He has also worked closely with renowned sociologist Harry Collins on issues of expertise and with an independent research group that explores the use of technology, especially computer simulation, to solve philosophical problems.

Selinger's scholarship led last year to visiting professorship at the Twente University in Holland and to an invitation to present the keynote speech to the Danish Philosophical Society in Copenhagen. He will travel this summer to Cardiff University in Wales to talk about democracy and technological decision-making.

Development ethics, a field of philosophy that examines issues of global justice as they pertain to developing countries, is another area of study that interests Selinger. He recently wrote an essay for *Philosophy and Public Policy Quarterly* about the ethics of poverty tourism known as "poorism" after reading an article in *Newsweek*. Integrating theory and practice, his current Philosophy of Peace class is participating in service-learning exercises that emphasize social justice.

"I think that philosophers should be more involved with issues that are gripping the public and which the public should be more focused on," Selinger says.

Ideas about technology and community, on a global or personal scale, resonate with his students even after they graduate. Selinger recently heard from alumnus Tom Starkweather who credits Selinger's Philosophy of Technology class with providing the inspiration for his recent article in *The New York Times* about pay phones, "Shrinking Portals to the Past."

"I get these 'philosophy continues to impact my life' updates all the time," Selinger says. "They are powerful and interesting moments that make the practice of philosophy worthwhile."

Susan Gawlowicz

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