



Spring 3-7-2003

Illinois Wesleyan Philosophy Professor Selected for International Seminars

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Recommended Citation

Hanna, Jeff, "Illinois Wesleyan Philosophy Professor Selected for International Seminars" (2003). *News and Events*. 5493.

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March 7, 2003

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Illinois Wesleyan Philosophy Professor Selected for International Seminars

BLOOMINGTON, Ill. — Carl Gillett, associate professor of philosophy at Illinois Wesleyan University, is one of 35 scholars from throughout the world selected to participate in the John Templeton Oxford Seminars on Science and Christianity.

Funded by the John Templeton Foundation, the three-year program of seminars is organized and hosted at Wycliffe Hall, Oxford. The seminars particularly encourage young faculty members to engage in scholarly research in the field of science and religion.

The participants come from Australia, New Zealand, Germany, the United Kingdom, Russia, India, Africa, Japan, Canada, and the United States. They were selected based on interdisciplinary skills as well as proven activity, competence, and leadership in the field of science and religion.

In addition to daily seminars, workshops, discussion groups, and research counseling, participants in the Templeton Oxford Seminars will work with mentors who are recognized scholars in science and religion.

"I am quite delighted to have been chosen to participate in the seminars," said Gillett. "This offers a marvelous opportunity to explore the ongoing debates in the area of science and religion."

A member of the Illinois Wesleyan faculty since 1996, Gillett teaches courses in the philosophy of the mind, metaphysics, and the philosophy of science. His particular research has focused on "physicalism," the position that everything is composed by the entities of fundamental physics, i.e., quarks, gluons, fundamental physical forces, etc.

"Physicalism has received powerful scientific support in this century as a vast array of phenomena from chemical molecules to genes and manic depression has been shown to be wholly physically composed," Gillett explained in his application for the Templeton Oxford Seminars. "As a result, physicalism is now the dominant position in both philosophy and the sciences."

Through his participation in the seminars, Gillett proposes to write a series of papers that applies recent philosophical work on the metaphysics of physicalism to the position of several philosophers who are at the center of debates about science and religion.

A 1989 graduate of Cambridge University, Gillett received his Ph.D. from Rutgers University. He is co-editor of the 2001 volume, *Physicalism and its Discontents*, published by Cambridge University Press and has published articles in such journals as *Analysis*, *Philosophy and Phenomenological Research*, *Faith and Philosophy* and the *Canadian Journal of Philosophy*.