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Kathryn Albritton

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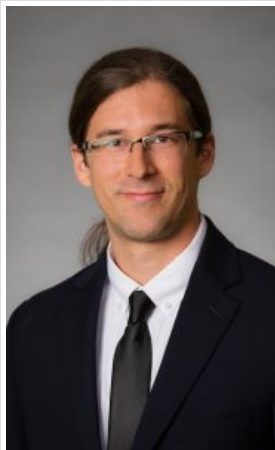
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## A Philosophical Approach to Politics

Visiting UM professor brings new insights to public policy leadership classes

OCTOBER 23, 2020 BY KATHRYN ALBRITTON

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Zachary Vereb

OXFORD, Miss. – For Zachary Vereb, visiting assistant professor of public policy leadership at the **University of Mississippi**, the teaching of philosophy is rooted in the here and now.

“I think all students benefit from studying philosophy,” he said. “I went into philosophy because I wanted to bring positive change to the world. No matter what field they go into, students can become professionals who can enact change.”

Vereb joined the university’s interdisciplinary PPL program in August as a visiting assistant professor. He received his doctorate from the University of Southern Florida and worked there as a visiting instructor in both the philosophy department and the honors college before coming to UM.

Through hands-on instruction, such as debates and presentations, Vereb challenges students to consider the possible conundrums they will undoubtedly face in their working, personal and civic lives, both now and after graduation. He said he feels that philosophy is an essential tool in framing current societal issues and discussing them thoughtfully.

For example, he encourages students to think analytically about how politicians make their arguments. Vereb’s mission is for students to come out of his class able to defend their beliefs, whatever they might be, while also being able to think analytically about opposing views.

“Aristotle wrote that it is important to be able to argue two sides of any issue,” Vereb said. “This is exactly the approach we need to navigate disagreements constructively in an age when people are very polarized.”

It’s important to communicate complex ideas in “digestible” bites, he said, so that anyone can understand them and engage in the important issues of the day.

“It’s especially essential for PPL students to have this ability,” he continued. “Many want to go into the public sphere, and they need to be good communicators.”

Vereb is researching 18th century German philosopher Immanuel Kant, who was instrumental in developing the concept of universal human rights into Western thought. Vereb approaches his work from a “future-oriented perspective,” exploring whether or not it is possible to reinterpret Kant’s influence for critical issues facing the world, such as climate change and the COVID-19 pandemic.

“The PPL courses that Dr. Vereb teaches emphasize the ethical imperatives of leadership, critical thinking and communication skill, which are critical to PPL curriculum and to the preparation of PPL students for positions of leadership in an increasingly complex world, said Weixing “Mark” Chen, professor and chair of the **Department of Public Policy Leadership**.

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OXFORD, Miss. – The University of Mississippi is asking the community to help spread a little joy this holiday season by donating to the 25th annual Books and Bears program. Donations such as toys, books, dolls, bicycles and other children’s play items are being accepted through Dec. 14. All donations will be collected and sorted

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### Mississippi Excellence in Coaching Fellowship Aims to Build Leaders

OXFORD, Miss. – Twenty-five inaugural recipients of the Mississippi Excellence in Coaching Fellowship – a program hosted by the University of Mississippi School of Education in partnership with the Mississippi Association of Coaches and the Mississippi High School Activities Association – are expected to increase their impact on student-athletes and their communities. The coaching fellowship

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### Clarion-Ledger: New Essay Collection Tells the Story of Meredith’s Enrollment

Essays celebrate 60th anniversary of James Meredith’s enrollment at University of Mississippi By Lauren Rhoades Oct. 1 marks the 60th anniversary of James Meredith’s 1962 enrollment at the University of Mississippi as the school’s first African-American student.

“James Meredith: Breaking the Barrier,” a collection of essays edited by UM professor of journalism Kathleen Wickham, honors this historic milestone with

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