

NOMINATION COVER SHEET
 2008 Virginia Outstanding Faculty Awards

1. <u>NAME</u> Full (Legal): Duncan John Richter Preferred First Name: Duncan	
2. <u>INSTITUTIONAL INFORMATION</u> Institution: Virginia Military Institute Rank/Position Title: Professor Year Rank/Title Attained: 2005 Years at Institution: 12 Campus Email Address: richterdj@vmi.edu Campus Phone: (549) 464 7735 Campus Mailing Address: Department of Psychology and Philosophy Virginia Military Institute Lexington, VA 24450	3. <u>PROFESSIONAL INFORMATION</u> Academic Discipline: Philosophy Specialization/Field: Ethics, the philosophy of Ludwig Wittgenstein Type of Terminal Degree: Ph.D. Year Awarded: 1995 Awarding Institution: University of Virginia
	4. <u>PERSONAL INFORMATION</u> Home Phone: (540) 463 2421 Home Mailing Address: 620 Stonewall Street Lexington, VA 24450

Please check only ONE box:

RESEARCH/DOCTORAL INSTITUTION NOMINEE:

MASTERS/COMPREHENSIVE/BACCALAUREATE INSTITUTION NOMINEE:

TWO-YEAR INSTITUTION NOMINEE:

RISING STAR NOMINEE:

TEACHING WITH TECHNOLOGY NOMINEE:

Table of Contents

Cover Sheet	1
Mission Statement	2
Summary of Accomplishments	3
Personal Statement	9
Abbreviated Curriculum Vitae	11
Letters of Support (Excerpted).....	13
Additional Documentation	16

President or Chief Academic Officer

Signature: _____

Charles F. Brower IV, Dean of Faculty

VMI Mission Statement

The Virginia Military Institute believes that the measure of a college lies in the quality and performance of its graduates and their contributions to society.

Therefore, *it is the mission of the Virginia Military Institute* to produce educated, honorable men and women, prepared for the varied work of civil life, imbued with love of learning, confident in the functions and attitudes of leadership, possessing a high sense of public service, advocates of the American Democracy and free enterprise system, and ready as citizen-soldiers to defend their country in time of national peril.

To accomplish this result, the Virginia Military Institute shall provide to qualified young men and women undergraduate education of highest quality -- embracing engineering, science, and the arts -- conducted in, and facilitated by, the unique VMI system of military discipline.

Summary of Accomplishments

TEACHING

Professor Richter is undoubtedly one of the very best teachers at the Virginia Military Institute, a school that prides itself on its dedicated teachers. **In 1998 he was awarded the Thomas Jefferson Teaching Award**, which is given at most once each year to “a junior member of the VMI faculty whose character and teaching reflect those qualities which are essential to the positive advancement of mankind.” **In 2007 his continued excellence in teaching earned him the Distinguished Teaching Award** for teaching courses that students find to be “rigorous, demanding, challenging, and inspiring.”

Semester after semester his objective scores on student evaluations are well above those of his department (whose senior members have all won teaching awards) and VMI generally. From Fall 2005 to Spring 2007 his average score out of 5 for the question “How would you rate the overall effectiveness of this instructor?” was 4.87 per semester.

This excellence is reflected also in student comments on evaluation forms and in unsolicited messages of thanks and congratulations. Some examples from evaluation forms:

“Great, interesting, explained well.”

“Everything was done well, very good at explaining.”

“No other teacher has lectured as well.”

“Richter was an exceptionally engaging and interesting instructor. He took what could have been a very dry course and made it come alive with humor and wit. I regret that this was my only opportunity to take a class from such an excellent professor.”

“This is a very good course. He challenges your mind and your normal outlooks in discussion and I recommend it to everyone.”

“I believe that his style of teaching is one of the best. It is the best, arguably, because it seems to me that he cares more that the student understands the material than he does about the grade.”

“Dr. Richter is one of the most profound and objective thinkers I have ever met. Very knowledgeable. I learned a lot.”

“He does an incredible job of teaching what normally is a confusing subject.”

“Explains everything to the ‘T.’ Clear and comprehensible.”

“Studying philosophy has given me the gift of thoughtful questions and responses. ... Philosophy is the cornerstone of my education and is worth much more than the tuition I’m paying.”

“Great use of outside sources to liven up lectures.”

“Helped me learn logic even though I didn’t think I was capable.”

“Great discussions. Instructor proved extremely knowledgeable and willing to answer questions.”

“Richter is the best teacher on [campus].”

“Excellent class involvement.”

“He is extremely fair in grading and is genuinely concerned with his students. He has further encouraged me by his teaching style to pursue philosophy next semester and in years to come.”

“Best class I have taken at VMI to date.”

“Great teacher, fun class. Can’t wait to take more philosophy.”

“He is an awesome professor and his patience is unbelievable.”

“[A specific example of something the instructor did well is] willingly offers to help cadets.”

“Richter works hard to return papers and lets his students rewrite them; I felt his continuous writing process allowed for a better understanding.”

“Explained material well, and related it to real life situations as best he could for our better understanding of the material.”

“Excellent lecture, complete and understandable notes, great classroom environment. Great class.”

“The instructor is always ready and willing to help in any way he can in order to further your understanding of his course. Great teacher.”

“Good job keeping the class attentive.”

“He allowed the students to continuously work on their essays to build a better understanding of the reading.”

“Colonel Richter is the funniest smart guy I’ve ever known. How he can relate abstract philosophy to octopuses and samurai I don’t know. But it works, and he’s brought me to a deep love of philosophy—seen through a humorous delivery.”

“I would have to say for me, that this class is perhaps one of, if not, the best class I have ever taken. I say this because it has allowed me to look at how others thought about life, God, etc. before me. It has allowed me to look at how I live my life, whether here at VMI or at my house and evaluate whether or not this is the best life for me. To be able to look at how our government which we live by today was formed by the thoughts of such philosophers as Locke and Hobbes and being able to see how the thoughts on God differed from Descartes, Hume and Nietzsche, gave me a new insight on how important it is for people to examine themselves and how they live their lives.”

It is evident that Professor Richter is a first-class teacher, but there is additional information to consider that makes these accomplishments even more impressive. Like most professors at VMI, he teaches 12 hours a week, but he also regularly supervises undergraduate research projects in addition to this load (even when he was on sabbatical). He will do anything to help students in philosophy succeed, twice taking on the teaching of logic when the usual instructor was unable to offer it so that cadets pursuing a minor in philosophy could meet their requirements before graduating. He is also heavily involved in the VMI Institute Honors program. As a result of this commitment to teaching, in the spring semester of 2007 Professor Richter taught his usual 12 hours plus a 3-hour course in logic and a 1-hour Institute Honors seminar, and supervised two undergraduate research projects.

Professor Richter is a tireless innovator. He has taught twelve different courses in his time at VMI and uses the full range of instructional technology, from traditional chalkboards to interactive web-based exercises in the classroom. His ever-expanding website (http://academics.vmi.edu/PSY_dr/), providing notes for his own and others' students, has been praised by students and instructors around the world. His involvement with VMI's writing across the curriculum program has also led him to work in close collaboration with the Writing Center, and to use learning by writing and re-writing as a key component in all of his courses. The results have been exceptional.

His teaching is not limited to his classroom. Professor Richter's teaching mission extends to the wider community. For example, he has given numerous talks at area colleges and universities, visited a local elementary school to talk to students there about Socrates (their thank you letters decorate his office) and has shown the value of critical, philosophical thinking in a series of letters to the editor of the local newspaper. In 2002 the American Philosophical Association celebrated its centennial by offering a prize for the philosopher who could best display the value of philosophy in this way. One of Professor Richter's letters won first prize in this national competition.

DISCOVERY

For a dedicated teacher with a heavy teaching load, Professor Richter's scholarly achievements are truly phenomenal. **Since 1995 he has published four books, eleven papers in refereed journals, eighteen chapters in books, book reviews, and other short articles, and has given twenty-six conference presentations and invited talks.**

This scholarship focuses on two areas: ethics and the work of the philosopher Ludwig Wittgenstein. Wittgenstein cared deeply about ethical questions but did not think that philosophers could usefully study ethics as if it were an area of inquiry distinct from everything else. He saw every question from an ethical point of view. Professor Richter's scholarly work has a similar motivation, and ranges from painstaking efforts to understand every detail of Wittgenstein's most obscure writings (see, for instance, his online work-in-progress <http://www.tractatusblog.blogspot.com/>) to work designed to make accessible to a broad audience ideas of concrete practical importance.

These concerns are evident in his first book, *Ethics After Anscombe: Post "Modern Moral Philosophy"* (Kluwer, 2000). Elizabeth Anscombe was a student of Wittgenstein's and a famous opponent of the modern values that sanctioned what she regarded as war crimes, such as the use of atomic weapons against Hiroshima and Nagasaki. Her paper "Modern Moral Philosophy" condemned all distinctively modern theories of ethics as either unethical or incoherent. One of its results has been the enormous increase in recent decades in the study of virtue and

character. Professor Richter's analysis of this much-discussed paper is regarded as one of the most careful and reliable to have been published. It led to his being invited to teach a graduate course at Åbo Akademi in Turku, Finland on Anscombe's ethics, and forms the basis of this book. The rest of the book looks at how we might think about controversial issues such as abortion and suicide without using the modern concepts that Anscombe rejects. In unsolicited emails it has been praised as "a fine book" by James Rachels, author of *The Elements of Moral Philosophy* (the best-selling ethics textbook in the world), and Rosalind Hursthouse, author of the highly-regarded *On Virtue Ethics*, wrote that she was inspired by Professor Richter's book to want to use it as the basis for a course on the same topic.

Professor Richter's next two books focused on Wittgenstein. His *Historical Dictionary of Wittgenstein's Philosophy* (Scarecrow, 2004) has been widely and highly praised. His book *Wittgenstein at his Word* (Continuum, 2004) is aimed at a narrower audience, but has also been praised highly. Reviews of these books are quoted in the additional documentation.

INTEGRATION OF KNOWLEDGE

Professor Richter not only integrates his scholarly research with his teaching, he also works to bring the discipline of philosophy together with others, such as literature. He has presented work at the American Comparative Literature Association, written on the relation between philosophy and poetry, and reviewed fiction for the journal *Metapsychology*.

He seeks constantly to bring his philosophical training and expertise to bear on issues of wider interest. Hence, for example, his participation in a three-week interdisciplinary seminar on ethnicity and genocide at the National Humanities Center in North Carolina, resulting in a paper entitled "Understanding Genocide: Wittgenstein and the Holocaust," which was published in *The Review Journal of Philosophy and Social Science* in 2000. Another example is Professor Richter's appearance on the National Public Radio program *With Good Reason* to talk about Thomas Hardy's poem "In Time of 'The Breaking of Nations'" in relation to the attacks of 9/11. He discussed 9/11 also at two panel discussions at VMI, one about the right response to the attacks and the other on the implications for constitutional rights and freedoms. He has made fine contributions also to the popular philosophy magazine *Philosophy Now*, on the ethics of mutually assured destruction and on the life and works of Elizabeth Anscombe.

Professor Richter's most recent book, *Why Be Good?: A Historical Introduction to Ethics* (Oxford University Press, 2007) perfectly combines his scholarship with his experience of teaching ethics and the history of philosophy. It is a fine illustration of how the meaning and wider implications of specialist research in philosophy can be made clear to the non-specialist. The success of this project is evident from numerous reviews commissioned by the press. A few examples:

"Richter has constructed one of the most accessible introductory ethics texts that I have seen. He assiduously avoids jargon as well as logical equations, one of the pitfalls of many introductory books. The writing is personable and I think his style will put undergraduates who are nervous about taking philosophy courses at ease. Richter maintains interest by moving between personal moral development and theoretical understanding in a manner that will maintain interest while pushing intellectual understanding. He appears to have an excellent understanding of his audience."

Professor Richter's "writing style is clear and engaging. In my opinion, the manuscript is written at a high level of sophistication compared to many textbooks aimed at this same level of course and student. That is not to say that Richter has done anything wrong. I think too many authors "dumb down" the material far too much. Richter does a good job of keeping the level high while explaining things in a way that undergraduates can understand."

"This is an excellent manuscript. The quality of the book, the writing, and its organization are outstanding. [...] In summary, this is one of the finest historical introductions to ethics I have encountered."

"I rate the quality of Professor Richter's book very highly. [...] **If the goal of a liberal arts education is to provide tools for living then Professor Richter should receive high marks** as one who contributes effectively to this endeavor while avoiding the pitfalls of formulaic menus that encourage readers to grab at appealing solutions without regard to the consequences of their choices."

"One of the things that really sets this book apart from its competitors is its treatment of 20th century figures who are rarely mentioned, let alone discussed at length, in this sort of introductory text, thinkers like Wittgenstein, Heidegger, Derrida, Anscombe, and Foot. The inclusion of this material makes the book unique and will probably be attractive to a good many instructors who are interested in these figures."

"Richter's book provides the reader with excellent general summaries of the philosophical thought of some of the most influential philosophers of all time. The views of some rather difficult and obscure philosophers (e.g. Kant) are explained with sufficient detail and exceptional clarity."

"The author's writing style is clear, engaging and witty. Views and arguments are explained well."

"I enjoyed Richter's writing style. It is important, in my opinion, to tailor writing to its intended audience, and Richter does this well. His style is indeed "engaging and clear," and it is the kind of style that should hold the attention of students. I particularly like the lack of unnecessarily difficult language. The level of the book is thus quite appropriate for undergraduate courses in ethics, and seems well-suited for students who have not been introduced to these concepts. The content is also appropriate, however, for higher-level undergraduates."

"[T]his is **a wonderful little book**. It is clearly written, focused on the writers and issues I regard as most important, is pedagogically superb. [...] [T]he book is **a little tour de force**."

SERVICE

Professor Richter's service to his department, the VMI community, the philosophical community, and the community of Lexington, Virginia, has been truly outstanding.

In 2006-2007 Professor Richter worked on no fewer than six college-wide committees, and he has served on many others in his time at VMI. During the same academic year he served as head of a sub-committee entrusted with assessing undergraduate research proposals and approving the allocation of funding for necessary equipment, helped conduct practice interviews for undergraduates applying for Rhodes and Marshall scholarships, and participated in a

question and answer panel on Constitution Day on the struggle to balance liberty and security. In 2007-2008 he organized and moderated a similar Constitution Day event on the relation between church and state. He was also chosen this year to become the VMI representative to the Virginia Program in Oxford, encouraging cadets to study at Oxford University, Professor Richter's alma mater.

Professor Richter is a dedicated member of his department, engaging fully in departmental events, academic advising, and retreats. He has taken the place of his department head on several occasions, has been a key figure in drafting his department's statement on faculty expectations, and is a valued mentor to junior members of his growing department. Not least of his achievements was the successful championing of the introduction of a minor in philosophy in 1997. This is now one of the most popular minors at VMI. Professor Richter also began and continues to run the VMI Philosophy Club, one of the most popular academic clubs on campus. His service to the VMI cadets in the Philosophy Club and the Pre-Law Society has been recognized officially by the Superintendent. The Philosophy Club is now one of the largest clubs at VMI, and the Philosophy Minor one of the most popular minors, attracting more cadets each year. During his tenure as Pre-Law Adviser, Professor Richter saw the number of VMI cadets and alumni admitted to law schools rise from about 3 or 4 each year to 19 in his last year in the position. He has served also as academic adviser to the Officer of the Guard Association (1999-2000) and the VMI Water Polo team (1995-1996). As a member of a small department with a popular major (Psychology), Professor Richter gives personal academic advice to 31 advisees, meeting with each of them several times a semester, and twice a month during their first year at VMI.

The philosophical community also benefits greatly from Professor Richter's selfless service. He has worked as secretary and vice president of the Virginia Philosophical Association (VPA), and this year is its President, organizing the annual conference and creating a web page for the innovative online presentation of papers to be discussed at the meeting. In 2004 he helped bring the VPA's annual conference to VMI, to the mutual benefit of the association and the Institute. He has also reviewed papers for *The Journal of Moral Philosophy*, *Philosophical Papers*, *The Journal of Ethics*, the *Journal of Philosophical Research*, and *Inquiry*, and a book-length manuscript for the State University of New York Press. In 2007 he was one of the founding members of a group of Wittgenstein scholars from around the mid-Atlantic region that intends to meet annually to discuss Wittgenstein's work and help each other's work in progress. During his time at VMI he has been a member of the American Philosophical Association, the Society for Applied Philosophy, the Southern Society for Philosophy and Psychology, the Society for Philosophy and Public Affairs, and the American Comparative Literature Association.

Last, but of course not least, he serves the community of Lexington, Virginia, where he lives with his wife and two children. Professor Richter has taught elementary school children about Socrates, is working on an after school course in philosophy for elementary school students, has served on the board of the local Montessori school, was for years a member of a philosophy reading group at Washington and Lee University (until the group became inactive), and is a member of a local book club and the English-Speaking Union, which raises money for scholarships for local students and teachers working on English literature and history. He and his wife host an annual Burns Night party for local poets and regularly give feedback to their several writer friends on poems, plays, and screenplays in progress. He is genuinely an outstanding member of the VMI faculty.

PERSONAL STATEMENT

I am the only full-time philosopher at a fairly conservative school run on tough military lines. My job is to teach critical thinking and a tendency to question things. My students are young men and women, most of whom intend to spend their lives serving their country, many of them in the military. They do not want to have their values questioned, and they much prefer practice to theory. Leaders certainly need ethics (my area of specialization within philosophy) and critical thinking skills. But, both outside and inside VMI, some people still wonder why I am here. Let me try to answer that question.

I love learning. I love the process and the outcome of learning. I love thinking. As a teacher and a scholar, I see my job as doing what I love and spreading that love to those around me. For this I have left my native country, England, and moved to Virginia, first as a graduate student and now as a professor of philosophy. I love Virginia, and my home is now here, but it was the opportunity to school and to be schooled that persuaded me to put my roots down here.

I see teaching, at least teaching the subject of philosophy, as a matter of initiating and conducting a constructive dialogue. That is to say, I do not think of the students (we call them cadets) in my classes as empty vessels waiting to be filled with facts, nor do I think of teaching as being all about them and not at all about the world outside. Instead it is a matter of bringing the two together. In practice this means that my teaching is mostly a matter of getting cadets to really think about what philosophers have said so that they become not just knowledgeable about philosophy but genuinely informed in their thinking by the insights and logic of those philosophers. My goal is to produce cadets who know about the ideas that have shaped, and continue to shape, our culture; who are in the habit of thinking critically about ideas and arguments that are presented to them; whose thinking (and ability to think) has been improved by being exposed to new insights and, above all, by wrestling with a variety of challenging arguments.

Let me give you some examples of the results that I am most proud of. I think of the cadet who volunteered to help keep the peace in the former Yugoslavia after taking my course on military ethics. I think of the cadet who walked all the way across the parade ground to tell me that the critical thinking skills I had helped him to develop were helping him in a high level chemistry course. I remember the cadet who told me after he graduated that he now takes Epicurus' manual of stoic ethics with him wherever he goes, and the three outstanding VMI graduates who named me to *Who's Who Among America's Teachers* as the single most influential teacher in their lives. I know that I have made a difference in a student's life when he emails me from Iraq, as one did, asking me to read over his philosophy of life, which he carried with him to be read at his funeral in the event of his death. More happily, I know that I have spread my love of learning when VMI graduates contact me years after I have taught them to tell me that they want to apply to graduate school, especially when what they want to study is philosophy, or else just to ask me questions they have about philosophical issues. I have several ongoing dialogues like this now, and the number is rising.

Critical thinking can be threatening and unpredictable. It was two of my students who (on their own initiative) contacted the ACLU about VMI's then policy of having evening prayer with dinner. They successfully filed a lawsuit that overturned this policy. Although I thought they had little chance of success, I advised them to do what they believed to be right, and I am proud that they did so. One has since gone on to serve in the Peace Corps and is now enrolled in a PhD program in philosophy while working for a libertarian think tank. The other is in business after four years in the Air Force. They are no subversives, but they had the strength to think for

themselves and stand up for their principles. We should be proud of cadets like this, whether we share their views or not.

I do not try to tell my cadets what views they ought to have. Instead, the emphasis throughout each of my courses is on intellectual engagement with models of good philosophical reasoning. I try to ensure that such engagement takes place in class discussions, in papers and essays written in and out of class, and in the cadets' own thoughts throughout (and, I hope, after) the semester, which I judge especially by the quality of their final exams.

I firmly believe that teaching should not be confined to regularly scheduled classroom hours. My office door is always open, cadets have my home phone number (and use it), and I started and run the VMI Philosophy Club precisely for cadets who want to learn and engage more in philosophy. The club has had a reading group, debates, movie-and-discussion meetings, and hosted visiting speakers. It started in 1998 and is going stronger than ever. At the cadets' request we are now moving from monthly to bi-weekly meetings as of Fall 2007.

I am actively involved in the Undergraduate Research Initiative and the Writing Across the Curriculum committee. I have served on that committee for several years and taught popular writing-intensive courses myself, such as "The Philosophy of Human Nature" and "Existentialism and After." All my courses involve a lot of writing, whether they are officially designated "writing-intensive" or not. My final exams consist entirely of essay questions.

Through my website my teaching also extends beyond VMI. The notes I have online for my various courses have been praised by friends and strangers who have come across them. My notes on political philosophy, for instance, are widely linked to by other sites. A search for "Ludwig Wittgenstein" on Yahoo or AltaVista brings up my entry on him for the Internet Encyclopedia of Philosophy first, and I know that some professors at other colleges have assigned this to their students.

Philosophy is not a body of knowledge but an activity, the activity of logical analysis and argument. I cannot teach cadets how to argue without getting them to argue, so my classes involve a lot of discussion. On the other hand, they argue more thoughtfully and carefully on paper than in class, so I do most of the talking in class (which is true to the original Socratic method), making sure that they argue from an informed position. The right balance of lecture and discussion, and of different kinds of assignments, is something that I have gained a sense of over the years. I do make a point of varying my teaching techniques and assignments, though, since I believe that different cadets have different learning styles. So the teaching approach I have described here is always open to revision and peppered in practice with interactive online exercises, short films, cadet presentations in class, and so on.

How do I know that this works? Mostly by the quality of the papers cadets eventually produce in my classes (I apply the process theory and encourage re-writing) and by the quality of their answers on the final exams. I also get good student evaluations of my teaching. I try to stretch cadets without demanding *too* much of them. I also work to instill in them a lasting enthusiasm for philosophy and a habit of careful and imaginative thinking. It is always gratifying when they take the trouble to come back and tell me that my courses have inspired and helped them.

I believe that I am spreading to my students a lifelong love of learning. They doubtless benefit from the military discipline that VMI provides, but the military feature is not primary in the Institute's scheme of education. Education requires thinking, thinking that is open-minded, critical, and creative. That is why I am here.

ABBREVIATED CURRICULUM VITAE DUNCAN JOHN RICHTER

EDUCATION

University of Virginia, Charlottesville, VA 1995 Ph.D. Dissertation: "Ethics After Anscombe" -
Supervisor: Cora Diamond

University of Wales, Swansea 1989 M.Phil. Thesis: "Wittgenstein: Language, Meaning and
Methodology" – Supervisor: D.Z. Phillips

University of Oxford, England 1988 B.A. Honours in Philosophy, Politics and Economics

TEACHING EXPERIENCE: courses taught

Virginia Military Institute: Assistant Professor

Applied Ethics; Ethics; Ethics II; Ethics and the Military; Existentialism; Greek and Medieval
Philosophy; History of Modern Philosophy; Logic; Minds and Machines; Philosophy of Law;
Philosophy of Human Nature; Philosophy of Religion

Åbo Akademi: Visiting Professor

A one-week intensive course for graduate students on G. E. M. Anscombe's "Modern Moral
Philosophy" (Spring 2007)

University of Richmond: Replacement Instructor

The Therapy of Desire: Aristotelian and post-Aristotelian Ethics (Spring 1995)

University of Virginia: Instructor

Existentialism; The Meaning of Life; Philosophy of Law; Wisdom: a multicultural introduction to
philosophy

PUBLICATIONS: Books

- *Why Be Good?: A Historical Introduction to Ethics*, Oxford University Press, 2007.
- *Wittgenstein at His Word*, Thoemmes Continuum, Bristol, England, 2004.
- *Historical Dictionary of Wittgenstein's Philosophy*, Scarecrow Press, Lanham, Maryland, 2004.
- *Ethics After Anscombe: Post "Modern Moral Philosophy"*, Kluwer Academic Publishers, Dordrecht, Netherlands and Boston, Mass., 2000.

SELECTED PUBLICATIONS

- "Did Wittgenstein Disagree With Heidegger?" *Review of Contemporary Philosophy*, Vol. 6, 2007.
- "Onko Luonto Konservatiivinen? Wittgenstein Ja Heidegger Arkkitehtuurista Ja Runoudesta," (a Finnish translation by T. P. Uschanov of "Is Nature Conservative? Wittgenstein and Heidegger On Architecture And Poetry," in *niin & näin*, No. 38, 2003.
- "The Fear of Playing God," in *Ethical Issues in the New Genetics: Are Genes Us?* edited by Brenda Almond and Michael Parker, Ashgate Publishing Ltd., Aldershot, 2003.
- "Whose Ethics? Which Wittgenstein?" *Philosophical Papers*, Vol. 31. No. 3, November 2002.
- "Mutually Assured Destruction" forum with Dylan Suzanne and Robert Martin in *Philosophy Now*, issue 37, August/September 2002.
- "Wittgensteinian Foundationalism," *Erkenntnis*, Volume 55, Number 3, December 2001.
- "Missing the Entire Point: Wittgenstein and Religion," *Religious Studies* Volume 37, Number 2, June 2001.

- "Social Integrity and Private 'Immorality': the Hart-Devlin Debate Reconsidered," *Essays in Philosophy* Vol. 2 No. 2, June 2001 (<http://www.humboldt.edu/~essays/richter.html>).
- "Understanding Genocide: Wittgenstein and the Holocaust," *The Review Journal of Philosophy and Social Science*, Vol. XXV, 2000.
- "Virtue Without Theory," *The Journal of Value Inquiry*, Vol. 33, Number 3, September 1999.
- "Is Abortion Vicious?," *The Journal of Value Inquiry*, Vol. 32, Number 3, September 1998.
- "Nothing To Be Said: Wittgenstein and Wittgensteinian Ethics," *The Southern Journal of Philosophy* Vol. XXXIV, Number 2, Summer 1996.
- "Ludwig Wittgenstein (1889-1951)," *The Internet Encyclopedia of Philosophy*, (<http://www.utm.edu/research/iep/w/wittgens.htm>), posted October 29, 1996.
- "The Incoherence of the Moral 'Ought'," *Philosophy* 70, January 1995.

HONORS, AWARDS, AND ACHIEVEMENTS at VMI

Distinguished Teaching Award 2007
 Winner of the Matthew Fontaine Maury Research Award 2005
 Winner of the Best Letter to the Editor APA Centennial Prize 2002
 Phi Kappa Phi Honor Society member since April 2000
 Who's Who Among America's Teachers, 2000, 2004, and 2005
 Thomas Jefferson Teaching Award 1998
 Introduced a Minor degree in philosophy 1997
 Started and ran the VMI Philosophy Club and speaker series 1998-present

COMMITTEE SERVICE at VMI

Chair of the Philosophy and Religion paper selection committee for NCUR 2004
 Member National Editorial Board NCUR 2005 Proceedings
 Graduate Education Committee (Pre-Law Advisor) 1999-2005
 Debate Club Committee (head) 1999-2000
 Writing Across the Curriculum Committee 1996-present
 Library Committee 1996-2007
 Search Committee for the Stanley Chair in Ethics and Integrity 1997-1998
 Student System Committee 1998-2000
 Pregnancy Committee 1998-1999
 Steering Committee for the "Flight of Future Days" symposium 1999-2000
 Faculty Education on Sexual Harassment Committee 1999-2007
 Undergraduate Research Committee (Associate Director of Undergraduate Research Symposium, Head of the Travel Funds Sub-Committee, Head of the Wetmore Fund Sub-Committee) 2001-present
 Institute Awards Committee 2001-2007
 Faculty Development Committee 2003-2004
 International Study Committee 2004-present
 Institute Honors Committee 2006-present
 Grievance Hearing Panel 2007-present
 Virginia Program at Oxford representative 2007-present

PROFESSIONAL AFFILIATIONS

American Philosophical Association
 Southern Society for Philosophy and Psychology
 Virginia Philosophical Association
 Society for Philosophy and Public Affairs

LETTERS OF SUPPORT (EXCERPTED)

To read Professor Duncan Richter's personal statement is to understand better the values that inspired the Institute's faculty as they developed our "Statement on Faculty Expectations," as in so many ways he is representative of the ideal to which we aspire. We all remember the professor or teacher that stretched us to our best work, the one we as students did not want to disappoint. Duncan is that kind of a professor. Cadets are drawn magnetically to him, attracted by his brilliance, accessibility, and uncanny ability to stretch them to their full potential. Ralph Waldo Emerson reminds us that a faculty's role is to bring our students not to us, but to themselves. Duncan Richter magnificently models that vital philosophy and role at the Institute—and we are a far better college because of him. – **Charles F. Brower IV**, Ph.D., Dean of Faculty, VMI

Many of us at VMI wish that every cadet would take a course in philosophy before graduation. We are gratified to see that a great many of them do, even though it is not required—and that is due to the talents of Duncan Richter, VMI's sole full-time professor of philosophy. Duncan is known as a provocative, stimulating, challenging, and yet completely accessible teacher, and I know many cadets who declare that they would take *any* course he offered. His grades suggest great rigor, yet his courses typically fill to capacity during pre-registration, with long waiting lists. Remarkably, he appeals to the average student and exceptional student alike; from what I read in his course evaluations, they are drawn to him chiefly for his ability to empower them for self-examination. He teaches them to ponder terms like "evil" and "good," "right" and "wrong"—to articulate and examine what grounds their beliefs. That is no small accomplishment at any college today, but particularly important at an institution that aims to develop "citizen-soldiers" for service to the nation and the Commonwealth. – **Robert L. McDonald**, Ph.D., Associate Dean for Academic Affairs, VMI

In addition to Dr. Richter's tremendous contributions as a teacher and scholar, he has been a major contributor to the governance of the VMI, serving key roles on such major committees as including the Undergraduate Research, Institute Honors, International Study, Writing Across the Curriculum Liaison, and Faculty Development Committees. He has been a leader in drafting his department's assessment plan and statement of faculty expectations. He has also been extraordinarily active in service to professional organizations, highlighted by his election as the current President of the Virginia Philosophical Association. The breadth of his service is remarkable and he continues to be an invaluable contributor to the life of VMI. – **William J. Stockwell**, Ph.D., Associate Dean for Administration and Planning, VMI

Duncan Richter has been my colleague at VMI since 1995; for the last three years, I have been his department head. I thus have the advantage of forming my impressions of Duncan from various perspectives. I can say, without a doubt, that Duncan is the complete package—an outstanding teacher and mentor who is a great scholar, professionally active, and a wonderful colleague. He is highly regarded by his students for showing enthusiasm, rigor and consideration. He somehow manages to appeal to students who are at the top of the class and those in the "middle of the pack" and has been described by some students as the most profound and objective thinker they have ever met. In the scholarly realm, he is most admired by even the most critical of scholars and is viewed as potentially becoming the leading authority on Wittgenstein in the near future. In addition to founding a popular Philosophy Club, he developed VMI's philosophy minor, which seems to increase in popularity every year. Last year, 17 cadets graduated with the minor, a phenomenal feat considering the restrictions of graduation requirements of the cadets' majors and VMI's demanding extracurricular engagements. Duncan is an erudite scholar who epitomizes the integration of excellent teaching

with outstanding scholarship. It is both a pleasure and an honor to have him as a colleague. – **James Gire**, Ph.D., Head, Department of Psychology and Philosophy, VMI

Duncan has what many philosophers lack, namely the capacity to keep philosophical discussion in touch with the realities of life. This is especially important in moral philosophy, where it is quite rare. Duncan's live awareness of the realities of human life, of what it is like to have to think through a genuine problem, contributes greatly to the distinctiveness and value of his philosophical approach. All of his writings have behind them great thoughtfulness, as well as a sense of the human importance of the issues. – **Cora Diamond**, Ph.D., Kenan Professor of Philosophy, Professor of Law, and University Professor (emerita), University of Virginia

Duncan Richter is a quiet, fine-tempered teacher of philosophy who is also brilliant: he is VMI's Oxford don: a devoted teacher, an ironical and articulate power of the kinds of questions military men and women need to consider, and an Englishman who teaches as much by who he is as by what he professes. He is among the half dozen best college teachers I have known. – **Lieutenant General Josiah Bunting III**, President, the Harry Frank Guggenheim Foundation; Superintendent Emeritus, VMI

I have known Duncan for 8 years because of his involvement in conferences in the area. After having him chair a session of a Wittgenstein conference that I sponsored in 1999, I asked him to present a paper at the Wittgenstein conference I held this year. While his paper was excellent, the best thing was his participation in discussion Duncan is very sharp and committed to sharing his thoughts constructively with his colleagues. . . . Duncan has worked his way through the ranks and is now president of the Virginia Philosophical Association. This is the paradigm of a thankless task. But it is, again, an expression of his commitment to interaction among colleagues. Duncan is a real asset to philosophy in the Commonwealth of Virginia. – **James C. Klagge**, Ph.D., Head, Philosophy, Virginia Tech

I have known Duncan Richter for well over a decade. I have the highest regard for him as a philosopher. Duncan's philosophical research has been important. Several of his articles have changed significantly my view, on matters such as 'virtue theory' (of which I have become more constructively critical, since reading Duncan) and on Diamond (whose student of course he was, and who I now believe to be the greatest Wittgensteinian alive). Duncan Richter IS an outstanding Wittgensteinian philosopher. – **Rupert Read**, Ph.D., Reader in Philosophy, University of East Anglia

Among philosophers, Duncan Richter is chiefly known for his incisive and yet sympathetic analysis of Wittgenstein's ethics and the ethical thinking of the (post-) Wittgensteinian philosophers. In the discussion within that tradition, Richter's work cannot be ignored today. It should also be noted that his work addresses issues of general significance in ethics regardless of philosophical tradition, such as the notion of a moral imperative, the virtues, and the possible role of moral philosophy. . . . Prof. Richter recently gave a postgraduate course at the department where I am the Head. Several students told me informally that his course was the best that was offered during that academic year (2006/2007). I sat at some of the seminars, where I had the privilege of seeing how carefully, respectfully, and yet enthusiastically he responded to the questions brought up in discussion. I congratulate you on having such an outstanding philosopher in your staff. – **Olli Lagröspetz**, Ph.D. Head Dept. of Philosophy, Åbo Akademi University, Finland

I have known Duncan Richter for several years---as guest speaker at my university and conference participant, as well as through his writings and our frequent e-mails. Based on this

experience, I describe him as outstandingly collegial, hard-working, and bright. I find his work in my own specialty, Wittgenstein studies, particularly impressive and stimulating. He can be expected to become a premier Wittgenstein scholar. – **William H. Brenner**, Ph.D., Professor of Philosophy and Religious Studies Old Dominion University

Duncan Richter first came to my attention in the 1990s when I read an insightful paper of his on Elizabeth Anscombe's classic 'Modern Moral Philosophy'. Duncan's paper stood well above the common ruck of commentary on Anscombe, and I have since included his essay in reading lists for courses I have taught. Then in 2002 I published an article of Duncan's in a special edition of the journal *Philosophical Papers* ('Ethics in the Light of Wittgenstein') which I had the privilege to edit. His paper was a subtly nuanced account of Wittgenstein's unusual ethical sensibility, and the relation this had to his conception of philosophy. I was struck not only by Duncan's knowledge of Wittgenstein, but also by his readiness to wrestle seriously with the more dramatic and discomfiting of Wittgenstein's *dicta*, resisting the urge to tidy them up in a neat theory. Virginia Military Institute is lucky indeed to have Duncan Richter on faculty. – **Andrew Gleeson**, Ph.D., Lecturer in Philosophy, University of Adelaide, Australia

As a teacher, Dr. Richter demonstrated a true enjoyment and command of philosophical ideas making them immediately accessible and established a respectful, open environment of idea exchange. As a role model, he inspired me to serve as a volunteer with the AmeriCorps, to continue learning at the graduate level, and most importantly, to conduct myself in a way which elevates others. Duncan Richter is a valuable asset to VMI and embodies the 'fully developed' individual the school strives to create." – **Benjamin Murray**, VMI Class of 2000; graduate student, University College London

Dr. Richter presents the study of philosophy as a life-long process of inquiry that seeks to frame timeless questions of ethics, knowledge, and reality. In doing so he challenges his students to (re)consider assumptions and perspectives on an enormous range of classic and contemporary issues. Outside of the classroom, his open-door policy and his commitment to serve as a mentor complement the deliberate and engaging style of his classes. Well-past graduation, he continues to serve as a professional guide and counselor to his former students, encouraging them to integrate the lofty aims of philosophic inquiry into their personal and professional pursuits. – **Neil Mellen**, VMI Class of 2002, Research Director, South Carolina Policy Council

As a philosophy minor at VMI, I took three courses with Dr. Richter, beginning in the fall semester of 1999. Since then we have kept in touch by e-mail and have had an ongoing discussion on a wide range of philosophical questions. His responses are enormously helpful and I am grateful of his willingness to trade as many as two or three e-mails a day with me. Dr. Richter is not only a skilled philosopher – his paper on the value of education is both accessible and sophisticated – but he is, more importantly, a thoughtful and caring teacher. I know from experience how personally he is invested in his students' search for knowledge. – **Brent Pasko**, VMI Class of 2002, Ph.D. student, University of Maryland

Dr. Richter and his courses have had a profound impact upon my life. Before I became a student of Philosophy at VMI I was stuck figuring out who I was and what I believed. His courses have taught me the advantages of logic and reason no matter what you believe and why it is important to not just believe in something but understand and be able to explain the foundation for what you believe. . . . I think Dr. Richter is an excellent choice for this award and will always be at the top of my list for most phenomenal professors. – **Cadet Bronzie Fain**, VMI Class of 2008

Additional Documentation

The following praise for Professor Richter has all been unsolicited and has come in letters and emails from grateful students:

“Your class has challenged me in an intellectual way that I can’t begin to explain; it has opened up my mind to my own religion and has already helped me gain a better understanding of it.” [Cadet Tanner H. Sewell, ‘10]

“Your class was certainly a challenge, but even more it reinforced a lesson that the Army always tries to teach its new leaders: elevate the standards and your soldiers will rise to meet the new standards. Your enthusiasm and knowledge made every person in that class want to attend every day, which was evident on everyone's faces. You can already see your legacy, as there are waiting lists to get into your classes, despite the fact that they are hard. (Certainly your constituents will tell you that cadets will do whatever it takes to avoid doing unnecessary work.) I believe that it was your genuine willingness to help us succeed and your down to earth style that influenced all of us. I have yet to hear a negative word on your behalf, which is a statement I doubt that I could render about the rest of the faculty at VMI.” [Cadet Francis T. Palaia, ‘03]

“I want to thank you for this past year. I very much enjoyed the course work I took under you, and really liked getting to know you. Since July 26th, I’ve fielded a lot of questions concerning the Supreme Court decision [requiring VMI to become coeducational]. Most every time I find myself trying to explain what makes VMI different, and why does it work, how is it that VMI does such a good job. Trying to explain these things to a complete outsider feels a lot like trying to nail jell-o to a tree! I almost always am left with three or four images in my head. VMI worked so well for me because people like Duncan Richter teach there.” [Cadet Andrew R. Haney, ‘96]

Professor Richter’s scholarly publications have also received glowing praise.

John Preston of the University of Reading, in *The European Legacy*, calls his *Historical Dictionary of Wittgenstein’s Philosophy* "impressively even-handed."

Béla Szabados of the University of Regina, Canada, writing for *Philosophy in Review*, says that the book is: "...a useful reference work for students of Wittgenstein's philosophy, interested scholars from other disciplines, as well as for curious general readers....Richter's dictionary nicely balances philosophical and biographical materials, and importantly brings in history....It is a valuable resource and a useful aid in engendering a better understanding of the works of one of the seminal thinkers of the twentieth century."

Reference Reviews says: "Overall, the book accomplishes exactly what the author intended: an excellent starting point for the beginner, a rich resource for the novice, and a comprehensive reference for the expert. This small, concise, and well-written dictionary is indispensable for anyone interested in investigating the enigmatic Wittgenstein."

Reference Book of the Day says: "The writing is admirably clear, and unlike most philosophical writing, doesn't require much background knowledge in philosophy. In the preface the author acknowledges what a challenge it is to produce a reference book on Wittgenstein, since the meaning of his work is so controversial among philosophers. Some philosophers would probably take issue with the author's approach to some issues, but given the challenge and the

need for simplicity, I think he's done an excellent job. This would be a very handy book for philosophy students first encountering Wittgenstein."

J. M. Fritzman of Lewis and Clark College, writing for CHOICE (a magazine of reviews for academic libraries), says: "Richter's helpful orientation to Wittgenstein's philosophy will be a valuable resource for upper-division undergraduates and graduate students, and a useful reference for scholars."

Joseph P. Hester, PhD, in ARBA (American Reference Books Annual), says: "The idea for a historical overview of the life of Wittgenstein and his ... problematical views, coupled with an A-Z dictionary covering concepts, people, and movements that either influenced or were influenced by him, is both a creative success and resourceful project." He goes on to say that, "For the seasoned philosopher or the interested student of philosophy, this volume is a rich resource," and that the bibliography "will prove a valuable foundation to the student when writing a paper, thesis, or dissertation."

Professor's Richter's other book on Wittgenstein is more scholarly, but it too has found critical acclaim. Cora Diamond, William R. Kenan Jr. Professor of Philosophy and Professor of Law at the University of Virginia, has written that "Richter has an original and very stimulating approach to Wittgenstein, and his new book will be of interest to specialists and non-specialists alike. It challenges received views, and will certainly be controversial. The title is particularly well chosen. Can we, by taking Wittgenstein (the philosopher) at his word, reach a genuinely satisfying account of his overall philosophy and of his treatment of such central topics as the relation between meaning and use? Can we understand how the clarity Wittgenstein sought can be found in thinking about religion and ethics? With great care and thoughtfulness, Richter works through a new approach to those questions (and others equally significant), and that is the value of the book."

Professor Daniel D. Hutto, writing in the *Journal of the International Society for the Study of European Ideas* says: "There is much to admire about this book. It has an easy style and without doubt it addresses issues that anyone embarking on a study of Wittgenstein's work ought to get to grips with. Moreover, it discusses – in a very useful way – how we might begin to understand and put into perspective Wittgenstein's views on ethics and religion... this book is a very useful supplement."

Frederick Stoutland in *Notre Dame Philosophical Reviews* writes that: "Richter's book is smoothly written, draws usefully on a wide variety of secondary sources, and offers an interesting and novel account of the structure of Wittgenstein's writing [...]. A virtue of the book is its placing Wittgenstein's work in the setting of his personal views about culture and value. Another is the range of issues it articulates. What is the point of Wittgenstein's therapeutic method? Does his work on language presuppose the kind of theory he rejects? Does his insistence on description make him an ordinary-language philosopher? Is he a foundationalist in some sense? What is the significance of his claim that a genuine thesis in philosophy would be a truism? These are good questions that merit explicit discussion, and Richter's reflections on them draw attention to relevant considerations and helpful quotations. Those relatively new to Wittgenstein may find the book useful as an orientation to his work, and others may be stimulated by the questions it raises and its exploration of Wittgenstein's remarks on ethics and religion."

THE UNIVERSITY OF VIRGINIA

CORCORAN DEPARTMENT OF PHILOSOPHY
120 COCKE HALL
UNIVERSITY OF VIRGINIA
CHARLOTTESVILLE, VA 22904

September 28, 2007

To Whom It May Concern:

Duncan Richter has an original and highly challenging approach to the study of Wittgenstein, which enables us to see the ethical point of view that penetrates Wittgenstein's writings. Richter's book on Wittgenstein's ethics is a major contribution to our understanding of Wittgenstein's significance. But Duncan is outstanding as a philosopher in a further way as well: he is profoundly committed to the importance of discussion to philosophy. Here I think we can see how his understanding of the aims of education carries over into his life as a scholar. The reviews that Duncan has written for the online site 'Metapsychology' are an excellent example of what I have in mind. The site reaches people with very various interests and very different backgrounds; and Duncan's reviews make available for this audience a range of thinking that they might otherwise be unaware of. Duncan is extremely good at making plain what is interesting and controversial in the books that he is reviewing. He writes with a clear sense of how his audience might be able to pick up on what they themselves will find stimulating, what will connect with their concerns. You can really see the combination of teacher and scholar in the approach that he takes in these reviews. The reviews have an impressive depth of thought and directness of connection to the concerns of his readership. I want to add here that I heard in April from a philosopher in Finland how much the students there enjoyed the graduate course which he taught there. I believe that the invitation that he received to give that course reflects recognition of how he combines scholarly distinction with an openness to what students are saying, what questions they have. I would like to include here a paragraph that I wrote about him, when he was a candidate for an NEH summer seminar some years ago:

Duncan has what many philosophers lack, namely the capacity to keep philosophical discussion in touch with the realities of life. This is especially important in moral philosophy, where it is quite rare. Duncan's live awareness of the realities of human life, of what it is like to have to think through a genuine problem, contributes greatly to the distinctiveness and value of his philosophical approach. All of his writings have behind them great thoughtfulness, as well as a sense of the human importance of the issues.

I mentioned at that time also that he has great natural courtesy and is an excellent listener, and that those traits make his contributions to discussion finely responsive to the points of view of others in the group. These traits all hang together: his philosophical perceptiveness and his attempt to take in and respond to the concerns of other people make him a genuinely outstanding teacher-philosopher.

Cora Diamond
Kenan Professor of Philosophy, Professor of Law, and University Professor (emerita)