

Adam Swenson feels your pain, philosophically speaking of course. In fact, as a philosopher, Swenson is deeply interested in pain. And while he may not have imagined this path for himself, he has found a niche he is passionate about. “If anything is intrinsically bad, pain is,” says Swenson, “If I can find a way to help physicians in how they treat their patients for pain, then I’ll feel I’m doing something through my work that is of value.”

In 2004, Swenson launched *Pain for Philosophers* (<http://dolor.blogspot.com>), a blog dedicated to the exploration of pain. “I created this blog to collect excerpts of articles relevant to philosophy of mind, philosophical psychology, cognitive science, value-theory, and applied ethics. I’m particularly keen on studies concerning the relationships between gender and pain; the role of depression, anxiety, and other affective disorders in pain; and the ways caregivers’ attitudes influence their patients’ pain and recovery.”

Swenson isn’t all about pain, of course. He graduated Summa cum Laude in 1999 from the University of California, Los Angeles with a BA in Philosophy as well as a BA in Japanese, and received his PhD in Philosophy from Rutgers University in 2006. He has a wide range of interests and specialties that range from ethics and axiology to metaphysics and epistemology. “Presently I’m working on reshaping the Philosophy and Public Affairs class to be more relevant to students interested in journalism and political science, and while I’m not proposing any new courses for consideration yet I do have some plans in the public policy and medical ethics areas down the line.”

He is finding his first “real” teaching position to be especially fruitful. “My fall class was amazing. We had terrific discussions. I find that CSUN students are great – on average they are better than the students I have taught in the past. They are extremely motivated to learn. Also, my department is excellent, and there are lots of people around to talk shop, which I enjoy. I was happy to discover that it’s a truly collegial department – even when we’re arguing, we’re respectful.”

But his greatest surprise has been the extent to which he is regarded by his students as a mentor. “I guess I’ve really been surprised about how much I’ve been able to serve my students as a councilor and, in several ways, as a role-model. I have had many students come to me for advice or just to talk about their problems. I feel extremely honored that I’ve had the opportunity to help them. Though it’s also quite terrifying. But it’s extremely rewarding and something that I hadn’t really expected to do so much of.”

Swenson’s most recent paper, *Pain’s Evils*, will be published in the journal *Utilitas* (date tbd).

—Miki Shelton