

# In Memoriam: Dr. Steven Burns

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Posted by **Department of Philosophy** on September 27, 2024 in [In Memoriam](#)

Steven Burns died at home on September 19th at the age of 83.

His doctoral research at the University of London was on self-deceit under Peter Winch; he tried not to practice it the rest of his life, but without complete success. Appointed to the Department of Philosophy at Dalhousie University in 1969, he taught courses on the Philosophy of Art, Marxist Theory, Plato, and various thinkers whose last names - he liked to joke - begin with the letter "W": Wagner, Weil, Weininger, Winch, and Wittgenstein.

He served his department as graduate co-ordinator for 13 years and as chair from 1987-92. He chaired the Dalhousie committee that proposed the structure eventually adopted for King's Honours Programmes (that they be combined Honours programmes with Dalhousie's Arts Faculty). Cross-appointed to the Contemporary Studies Programme at the University of King's College in 1993, he served as director of that programme from 2001-03. He was a founding co-organizer of the Atlantic Region Philosophers Association, which has just started its second half-century, and served on the executive and board of the Canadian Philosophical Association. He chaired the program committee for the CPA national conference in 1997 and 1998.

Steven was Visiting Professor at the University of Vienna in 2006. He was also known for teaching some philosophy of music to his thousands of Philosophy of Art students at Dalhousie, and also offering an interdisciplinary class on Wagner's *Ring* cycle at King's.

He was the author of nearly 90 professional articles and reviews. He retired from teaching at Dalhousie in 2006, but taught part-time at King's until 2013. He continued to publish until 2024.

There will be a memorial concert featuring some of Steven's favourite music, performed by the Blue Engine String Quartet, on October 20, 3:30pm at St. George's Round Church.

Steven's spouse, Janet would also like to remind everyone that they can honour Steven's memory by making a donation to the Steven Burns Undergraduate Essay Prize in the History of Philosophy.