

What Students Can Learn from an Activist/Scholar

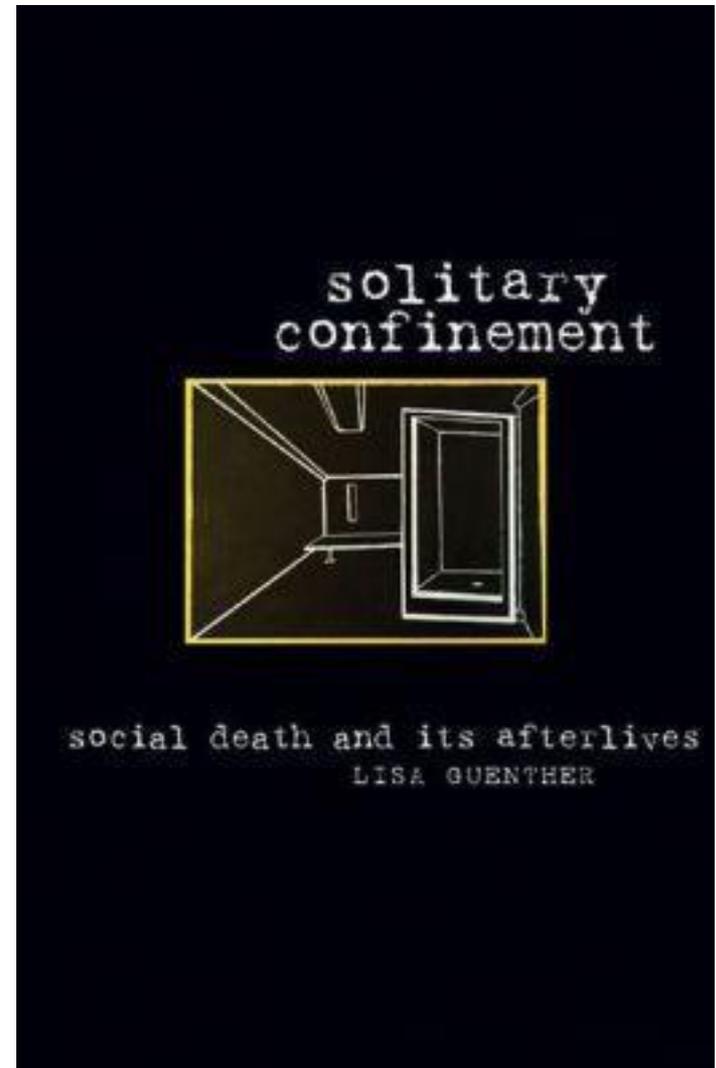
UTC Philosophy Club/Talia Welsh

- Students (majors/minors and other interested students)
- Community members
- Activities
 - Open meetings to discuss events
 - Bringing speakers
 - Workshops
 - Community Events (Philosophy On Tap)

Philosophy Club

- Associate Professor of Philosophy Vanderbilt
- Numerous Publications
- Recent book: Solitary Confinement: Social Death and Its Afterlives (Uni. Minnesota Press)
- Recent work
 - Organizing politically locally and nationally for prison reform
 - Proposing legislation
 - Protests
 - Writing to raise consciousness in popular/non-academic presses (*Newsweek*, *The New York Times*)

Lisa Guenther



- **Pre-Quiz**
- **“Phenomenology of Lethal Injection” (Sample Questions)**
- 1. Does Tennessee have a death penalty?
- _____YES
-
- _____NO
- 2. Do you agree with a death penalty as a possible punishment in some cases?
- _____YES
-
- _____NO
-
- _____NOT SURE
-
- 3. Does it matter if a prisoner suffers in prison?
-
- _____YES
-
- _____NO
-
- _____NOT SURE

Part one of grant: Public Lecture “(Towards) A Critical Phenomenology of Lethal Injection”

- 36 pre-quiz responses/34 post-quiz responses
- Biggest changes
 - 7 people didn't know there was a death penalty in Tennessee and they all moved to understand post the lecture there was
 - 14 people thought the death penalty was wrong in the pre-quiz, 16 thought so after, with 7 people still unsure, and 10 still for it
 - Question 3 “Does it matter if a prisoner suffers in prison?” moved more toward “yes.”
 - Pre-quiz: 23 yes, 4 no, 9 not sure
 - Post-quiz: 30 yes, 2 no, 2 not sure

Results of Pre-Quiz/Post-Quiz

Questions:

- 1. Do you think there is a strong connection between philosophy and activism?
- 2. What did you learn from meeting with Dr. Guenther?
- 3. What would you envision a philosophical life looked like?
- 4. What are your thoughts on US prisons?

Part two: Meeting and discussion with Dr. Guenther

- **Do you think there is a strong connection between philosophy and activism?**
 - “Depending on how one defines ‘philosophy’”
 - “Given that being an activist requires a dedication to an ideal; they seem to go well together.”
 - “I sometimes wonder if certain atrocities in history would not have occurred in more citizens questioned their basic beliefs.”

Interesting Feedback

- **What did you learn from meeting with Dr. Guenther?**
 - “The problems and experiences of prisoners and the psychological, social, and even legal problems involved with the death penalty both in TN and the US.”
 - I learned that there is an apparent flaw in the efficiency of our judicial systems, particularly in relation to death penalty.”
 - “That there are various structural, ethical, and ontological barriers between American’s current systems and any reform ideal.”

Feedback

- Handout on Death Penalty in Tennessee
- Find UTC philosophy club on Facebook
- Thank you!

Putting Theory into Action
