# The GRUE

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DEAR FRIENDS OF
MICHIGAN PHILOSOPHY,

I write to you having finished my fourth and penultimate year as Chair of Michigan Philosophy. I continue to feel very fortunate to be part of this talented, inclusive, and vibrant philosophical community.

As it has in the past, this newsletter will include reports on various facets of our research and our graduate and undergraduate programs, activities, and awards. This newsletter also includes the traditional research report (from **Janum Sethi**), and course report (from **Dan Lowe**). There also are reports on our undergraduate program (from **Jim Joyce**), our graduate program (from **Ishani Maitra**), our participation in the Ann Arbor Ethics Bowl (from graduate student **Josh Petersen**), our recent graduate student alumni conference (from graduate student **Julian Rome**), and the activities of the Foundations of Modern Physics group (FOMP) (from graduate student **Francisco Calderón**). And much more besides, including information on published articles from two of our graduate students (viz., **Calum McNamara and Glenn Zhou**) and a report on a new anthology on the work of Richard B. Brandt Distinguished University Professor Emeritus **Allan Gibbard**. In short (with apologies to the New York Times), all the news that's fit to print!

**IN MEMORIAM**
This past year we have sadly lost three people associated with Michigan Philosophy:

**David Dick (1979-2022)**, a Michigan Philosophy Ph.D. graduate (2009), was Professor of Philosophy at the University of Calgary as well as a Fellow in the Canadian Centre for Advanced Leadership in Business at the Haskayne School of Business.

**Donald Munro (1931-2023)** was a longtime member of the Michigan Departments of Philosophy and Asian Languages and Cultures.

**John Granrose (1939-2022)**, a Michigan Philosophy Ph.D. graduate (1966), taught for 27 years at the University of Georgia until his retirement in 1993.

Please see page 86 for their full obituaries.

Regarding news and events in the Department during this past year, there are several items to report:

**FACULTY NEWS**
The UM Regents recently approved the promotions of **Janum Sethi** to Associate Professor and **Dave Baker** to Full Professor, beginning fall 2023. Janum is an historian of modern philosophy who specializes in the theoretical and aesthetic philosophy of Immanuel Kant (1724-1804), and who also has interests in aesthetics and the philosophy of perception. Dave specializes in the philosophy of physics and related issues in metaphysics and the philosophy of science and is currently working on the metaphysics of symmetry. We are thrilled to have them as part of our senior faculty!

**Liz Anderson** has, along with the eminent sociologist Alondra Nelson, been selected for the 2023 Sage-CASBS Award, which "recognizes outstanding achievement in the behavioral and social sciences that advances our understanding of pressing social issues." In a statement accompanying the award, the leaders of Sage and CASBS write: "We are proud to recognize [Anderson and Nelson] for their extraordinary efforts to generate new understandings of how we as a society treat one another, and then translate those understandings into practice for the common good."

**Sarah Buss** has been selected for Rackham's 2023 John H. D'Arms Faculty Award for Distinguished Graduate Mentoring in the Humanities, which "recognizes tenured faculty who are outstanding mentors of doctoral students in the humanities, who support their intellectual, creative, scholarly, and professional growth, and foster a culture of intellectual engagement in which they thrive."

**Kristie Dotson** has been awarded the 2023 Dr. Martin R. Lebowitz and Eve Lewellis Prize for philosophical achievement and contribution together with Susanna Diegal (Harvard). The prize, which is awarded by the Phi Beta Kappa Society in conjunction with the American Philosophical Association (APA), "is presented to a pair of philosophers who hold contrasting (not necessarily opposing) views of an important philosophical question that is of current interest both to the field and to an educated public audience." The topic for the 2023 prize is "Norms of Attention."

**Sarah Moss** received the Fall 2022 APA Article Prize for her article, "Pragmatic Encroachment and Legal Proof" (*Philosophical Issues*, 2021). In this article, she argues that the issue of pragmatic encroachment, or the degree to which one's belief constitutes knowledge given the consequences of acting on that belief, raises a fundamental problem regarding American trial procedure.

**Chandra Sripada**, who has a joint appointment in Philosophy and Psychiatry, has recently been appointed Director of the Weinberg Institute for Cognitive Science. This well-deserved appointment serves to further strengthen the already robust ties between Philosophy and the Weinberg Institute. Chandra's prominence in philosophy of cognitive science is indicated by the fact that he was recently mentioned in the New York Times article "This Is What Neuroscientists and Philosophers Understand about Addiction."

**Kyle Whyte**, the George Willis Pack Professor in the School for the Environment and Sustainability and an affiliated member of Michigan Philosophy, has been selected by the U.S. Department of State to be one of seven U.S. Science Envoys for the country. He is the first UM faculty member to receive the honor, according to the State Department.

*CONGRATULATIONS TO ALL!*

**Will Thomas**, Assistant Professor of Business Law in the Stephen M. Ross School of Business, recently became an affiliated member of Philosophy. Will joins an outstanding group of affiliated members from Michigan Law that includes **Nicolas Cornell** (Professor), **Daniel Fryer** (Assistant Professor), **Scott Hershowitz** (Professor), **Gabe Mendlow** (Professor), **Donald Regan** (William W. Bishop Jr. Collegiate Professor, Professor Emeritus), **and Ekow Yankah** (Thomas M. Cooley Professor). *Welcome to the club, Will!*

**Events and Speakers**

We have had a variety of special events and speakers over the past year:

The speaker for the 2022 Ferrando Family Lecture was **Juliana Bidadanure** (then Stanford, now NYU), who visited us in September and presented on the topic *Understanding Demonization*, and in particular the shaming of those at the bottom of the income hierarchy. We held our annual Tanner Lecture on Human Values during March 2023. Our lecturer was **Sally Haslanger** (MIT), who spoke on the topic *Systematic Injustice and the Challenge of Intersectionality*. A symposium on the lecture included contributions from Nora Berenstain (University of Tenessee-Knoxville), Robin Dembroff (Yale), and Nancy Sherman (New School for Social Research). You can view this fascinating lecture on YouTube. We are on schedule to hold our 2023-24 Tanner Lecture on April 16-17, 2024. Our upcoming Tanner Lecturer, Hélène Landemore (Yale), will speak on the topic *The People Know Best: Toward a Democratic Political Epistemology*.

In keeping with tradition, the Department sponsored a range of events during 2022-23. Our regular colloquium series featured talks by Christopher Hom (Texas Tech), Jacob Klein (Colgate), Klaus Corcillius (Tübingen), and Elliot Paul (Queen's University). In October 2022, the Department sponsored an Indigenous People's Day Symposium that featured a talk by UM's Matthew Fletcher (Harry Burns Hutchins Collegiate Professor of Law and Professor of American Culture), and in January 2023, it sponsored the MAP (Minorities and Philosophy) Martin Luther King Jr. Symposium that featured a talk by UM's SaraEllen Strongman (Assistant Professor, Department of Afro-American and African Studies). During March 2023, our graduate students organized a Spring Colloquium on the topic *Salience and Its Consequences*. Speakers included Susanna Siegel (Harvard), Jessie Munton (Cambridge), Christopher Mole (Oxford), and Eugene Chislenko (Temple). Our graduate students also hosted the annual Michigan-MIT Social Philosophy workshop, which featured Sahar Heydari Fard (Ohio State University), and organized the Ancient Philosophy Workshop, which featured Christian Wildberg (University of Pittsburgh).

The Department sponsored speakers for its various reading groups. In particular, MMP (Mind and Moral Psychology) invited Cliff Workman (University of Pennsylvania) and organized a workshop with Charlie Kurth (Western Michigan University). FOMP (Foundations of Modern Physics) organized a workshop on Naturalness, Renormalization, and Fundamentality that featured Marian Gilton (Pittsburgh), Michael Miller (Toronto), and James Wells (UM, Physics). Our own **Kristie Dotson** presented for a workshop organized by RGFP (Race, Gender, and Feminist Philosophy).

**Continuing Appreciation**

As in the past, the Department has continued to benefit from the extraordinary generosity of its alumni and friends. Donors have helped us recruit, train and support outstanding faculty, through such funds as the Malcolm M. Denise Endowment, in honor of Theodore Denise (which funds research), the Nathaniel Marrs Fund (for faculty retention), the Weinberg Professorship (held by **Brian Weatherson**), the Max Mendel Shaye Professorship of Public Philosophy, Politics, and Economics (held by **Liz Anderson**), and the Wilhartz Professorship (held by **Sarah Moss**). Interdisciplinary initiatives have been supported by the Weinberg Fund for Philosophy and the Cognitive Sciences, the Hough Fellowship in Psychology and Ethics, and the PPE Strategic Fund, the latter of which supports our thriving interdisciplinary undergraduate program in Philosophy, Politics, and Economics (PPE). Last, but certainly not least, donors have helped us to sustain and improve our undergraduate and graduate programs, through support from the Weinberg Endowment for Philosophy (which funds our Frankena and Stevenson graduate student prizes and graduate summer support, among many other things), and the Ilene Goldman Block Memorial Fund (which funds internships for our undergraduate Philosophy and PPE majors, among many other things).

At the end of this newsletter, we acknowledge those who have donated to the Department in 2022-23. There is a description of our several endowments on our website at https://lsa.umich.edu/philosophy/alumni-friends/endowments.html. The Department also has an Annual Fund that provides essential support for various undergraduate and graduate activities and programs. If you would like to donate to the Fund, you can find information on how to do so at https://lsa.umich.edu/philosophy/alumni-friends/annual-fund-giving.html. We are grateful to all our contributors, past, present, and future: Thanks for your support of a truly outstanding Department.

I wish you and yours all the best in the coming year. And as always, Go Blue! (or as we like to say in Michigan Philosophy, Go Grue!*).

Sincerely,

*Tad*

Tad M. Schmaltz
Professor of Philosophy
James B. and Grace J. Nelson Fellow
Philosophy Chair

*: 'grue': a predicate introduced by the Harvard philosopher Nelson Goodman (1906-1998) in his *Fact, Fiction, and Forecast* (1st edition, 1954). A grue object is green before some future time *t* and blue thereafter. Goodman uses the predicate to introduce "the new riddle of induction," which is illustrated by the fact that past evidence that an emerald, for instance, is green seems equally to confirm that it is grue. This new riddle is a supplement to the old riddle of induction introduced by the Scottish philosopher David Hume (1711-1776), according to which there is no adequate argument from reason that can support the claim that past causal regularities will continue to hold in the future.

# PHILOSOPHY ADMINISTRATIVE TEAM
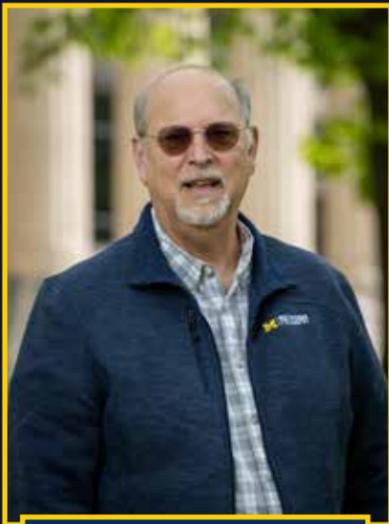


**Tad Schmaltz**
Chair

**Ishani Maitra**
Grad Studies Chair

**Kelly Campbell**
Chief Administrator

**Dave Baker**
Undergrad Studies

**Shelley Anzalone**
Executive Assistant

**Judith Beck**
Undergraduate Coordinator

**Mia Arnold**
Events & Publicity
Coordinator

**Carson Maynard**
Graduate Coordinator

# Philosophy Undergraduate News

## by Professor James Joyce, Undergrad Chair

**Dear Michigan Philosophy Community,**

2022/23 was a marvelous year for our undergraduate program in philosophy. Enrollments hit some of their highest points in recent years. We saw 33 students graduate with majors, while another 55 earned minors.

This year three seniors defended honors theses:

#### HONORS STUDENTS

| Student | Thesis Title | Advisors |
|---|---|---|
| Joshua Harrington | "Race as a Disciplinary Power Structure" | Mika LaVaque-Manty & Eric Lormand |
| Alex Pinheiro | "Some Applications of Two-Dimensional Semantics" | Jim Joyce & David Manley |
| Leo Ratte | "Magnetized Media" | John Cheney-Lippold & Sarah Buss |

The Department only lets its most accomplished and motivated students undertake honors theses. All three of these works were judged excellent by our faculty. The writers should be very proud of their accomplishments.

As is our custom, the Department presents **end-of-year awards** to students who accomplish especially noteworthy things during their time at Michigan.

The **Wiliam K. Frankena Prize**, which is funded by a generous gift from Marshall Weinberg, is awarded to graduating seniors whose performance in the major was especially impressive. Normally we award this prize to a single student, but this year we had two candidates who were each so exceptional that we could not imagine choosing one over the other. Both recipients, **Alex Pinheiro** and **Ethan Muse**, performed spectacularly by doing A or A+ work across a wide range of upper-level courses. Each represents the best Michigan Philosophy has to offer. We congratulate both. Alex, an expert poker player, is currently running a business that teaches people how to play the game. He is thinking about pursuing graduate school in philosophy next year. Ethan is a Ph.D. student in philosophy at Rutgers, a top department in philosophy.


Honors Students (L-R) Alex Pinheiro, Joshua Harrington, and Leo Ratte with Prof. James Joyce

The **Haller Prizes for Excellence in Philosophy** are given out each semester to students who perform especially well in upper-level courses. Our 2022-2023 Haller winners were: **Karthik Pasupula**, for his performance in PPE 400 taught by Liz Anderson; **Melissa Lewis**, for her performance in PHIL 443 (Rational Choice Theory) taught by Jim Joyce; **Ben Fiering**, for his performance in PHIL 458 (Kant) taught by Janum Sethi; **Jiyang Liu**, for his performance in Phil 460 (Medieval Philosophy) taught by Victor Caston. Congratulations to all four students!

The **Faculty Prizes** are given for extraordinary contributions to the intellectual and cultural life of the Department. This year our faculty felt that it was important to recognize six students for their contributions: **Preetam Vupputuri, Mrinalini Gupta, Rafael Pierry, Evan Ferry, Joshua Harrington and Megan Glassner**. All these students produced work of the highest scholarly quality and each also made major contributions to class discussions, to the *Meteorite* (our undergraduate run and edited journal), as well as other facets of departmental life. Each has fond memories of their time at Michigan, and each is poised to do great things in life.

• Preetam loved how collaborative the major was. "It wasn't me versus a behemoth of a text, like *The Critique of Pure Reason*, but rather a class effort. I learned how certain questions are integral to what it means to be human. UMich helped me cultivate a deep love for Philosophy that I will carry throughout my life." He especially enjoyed his classes with Professor Janum Sethi. "The enthusiasm she put forth was infectious. It was amazing how Kant's arguments came alive in the room." Preetam is currently teaching English in Valencia, Spain and will attend medical school after that.

• Mrinalini writes, "I'm so glad I majored in philosophy. I really enjoyed how I was able to build a community of like-minded people, especially through *Meteorite*." Mrinalini was on the staff of the *Meteorite* for three years, Managing Editor for two. She is now pursuing a Master's of public health in environmental health sciences at the University of Michigan.

• Rafael "enjoyed the department's commitment to exploring a breadth of philosophical traditions. We had the opportunity to take courses on the history of philosophy, theory of mind and language, ethics, decision theory, and formal logic." He is spending the year coaching the debate team at the University of Michigan and will apply to law school next year.

• Joshua Harrington worked at the University's *Kritik Lab*, which teaches students to analyze, understand, and deploy arguments from a diverse and challenging array of scholarly subject areas.

• Megan Glassner, who also majored in design, is living in Los Angeles and working in the design field. Her professors foound her to be a vibrant and positive force in class discussions.

The **Philosophy Club** continued its post-covid resurgence under the leadership of **Yuan Fang**. She writes that "to study social and philosophy in Michigan Philosophy is one of the most life-changing experiences in my undergraduate career. I am immensely grateful for the support that inspired me to [lead] the Philosophy club." Yuan is completing a degree in Classics this year, and is applying to graduate school in philosophy to begin next fall.

With the generous support of the **Ilene Goldman Block Memorial Fund in Philosophy**, we were able to send **senior Yuan Fang** and **junior Carrie Ciecierski** to the **Colorado Summer Seminar in Philosophy**. Both found it a rewarding experience. Carrie writes that "if you love philosophy, the Colorado Summer Seminar is the best place to spend your summer.

Whether you're entirely decided or entirely undecided about your grad school plans, you will learn valuable things about philosophy as a profession and a discipline." We thank Mr. Block for his support. It is wonderful that we are able to foster our students' intellectual growth in this way.

### Yuan Fang

In June, 2023, Yuan Fang attended the 3-week Colorado Summer Seminar in Philosophy at the University of Colorado Boulder. "Each weekday I attended a 3-hour graduate seminar with a philosophy faculty on CU Boulder. In the morning, I analyzed and discussed epistemic injustice, political philosophy, and moral philosophy, etc. In the afternoon, I listened to talks presented by faculty and graduate students on how to navigate life in graduate school and life in professional philosophy. Along with my fellow workshop attendees, I also had the opportunity to go hiking while exchanging philosophical views with each other. "



**The Colorado Summer Seminar in Philosophy group including Carrie and Yuan.**

### Carrie Ciecierski

In June 2023, Carolyn Ciecierski attended the 3-week Colorado Summer Seminar in Philosophy at the University of Colorado Boulder, and in July attended the 2-week Summer Immersion Program in Philosophy (SIPP) at Brown University. "At the Colorado Seminar my weekdays included a 3-hour lecture each morning and a presentation or Q&A session each afternoon. The lectures were on a variety of topics like population ethics, early modern philosophy, and epistemology, and were given by professors at the university (with only a few professors teaching twice). On weekends we would go on group hikes, play Mario Kart, and explore the campus by bike. At Brown's SIPP my weekdays mainly consisted of two 2-hour classes. In the morning was 'Justice, Work, and the Family' and after lunch was 'Socrates & Self-Knowledge: Plato's Alcibiades and Charmides'. Each afternoon we also had a graduate mentorship session where we learned about things like teaching/TA-ing classes and applying to grad school. We also attended the SIPP@Brown Conference and heard 5 talks, to include 'The Psychology of Ignorance' and 'Photographic Wrongs'. Through both programs I gained a greater understanding of what philosophy is like as a profession, read and discussed lots of great material, and made some amazing friends. I would highly recommend these programs to any undergraduate who is considering applying to philosophy grad school. I'd like to send a big thank you to the Michigan philosophy department for helping me attend these programs! They were life-changing!"

As has long been the case, our undergraduate majors cooperate to publish a philosophy journal called *Meteorite**. This year's version (Spring 2023) is especially interesting. Check it out at https://meteorite.philosophy.lsa.umich.edu/. We are especially grateful to **Leo Ratte (the-editor in-chief), Mrinalini Gupta (Managing Editor) and the whole editorial staff: Jameson Kanary, Kun Liu, Abigail Peacock, Abigail Najar, Eissa Haydar, Xiaofeng Li, Joshua Harrington, Shaira Marquez, Ammar Ahmad, Cadigan Smith, Erin Abell, Betsy Shi, Jiyang Lyu, James Stevenson, Nicholas Bloom, (along with faculty advisor Professor David Baker).** In addition to putting out the journal, this year's *Meteorite* staff sponsored an undergraduate conference. It featured these stimulating lectures, all of which appear in the *Meteorite*:

- Sam Delaney (U of Queensland): "The Limits of Speculation: Knowledge of the Absolute in Kant, Hegel, and P.T. Raju"
- William Bosco (George Washington U): "White Consumer Consciousness and the Commodification of Racial Identity"
- Trystan S. Richards (U of Utah): "Aesthetics, Attention, & Agency: On the Novel Theraputic Value of Psychedelic Experience"
- Joshua Cotlar (American U): "The Problem of the Political: Aristotle and the Rule of the Virtuous Man"

* *Meteorite* is a student-run publication at the University of Michigan dedicated to recognizing valuable contributions in philosophy by undergraduates all over the world. The journal was founded by students at the University of Michigan in 1998, however, publication of the journal has been spotty and punctuated by large periods of inactivity. In 2018, the journal was revived (for the fourth time!) and a new editorial staff was formed. Since then, Meteorite has been accepting submissions annually.



*All in all, Michigan Philosophy had a banner year. With some sadness, but mostly pride, we bid farewell to the class of 2023. We wish all our majors and minors the best of luck in their future endeavors.*

## Congratulations Class of 2023!

Jesse Mason Candel, Hyoung Min Cho, Azul Cibils Blaquier, Lucy Benson Clarke,
Evan Croft, Charles Trevor Cross, Jameson van Dokkumburg, Evan Ferry,
Megan Elizabeth Glassner, Mrinalini Gupta, Kayla Brianna Haley, Tanya Hammoud,
Joshua Meyer Harrington, Ashley Elizabeth Jellison, Ella Marin Kethledge, Nathaniel Kim,
Tommy Lee, Jack Levy, Christopher Dewar Heard MacKethan, Annalee Rene Miklosek,
Davis Scott Moyer, Ethan Alexander Muse, Abigail Anne Najar, Rafael Thomas Serra Pierry,
Alex Tobias Pinheiro, Leo Christopher Ratte, James Michael Reilly, Gabriel Lynn Rosenfeld,
Maxwell Gurian Rosenfeld, Jackson Roth, Felicia Jordan Rucker, Dante Antonio Rugiero,
Kieun Grace Seok, Sukhman Sidhu, Lucien Tenax Stairs, Preetam Reddy Vupputuri,
Danielle Elizabeth Wachter, Yuefei Wang, London Yancey, Paul Thomas Young



PHILOSOPHY GO GRUE
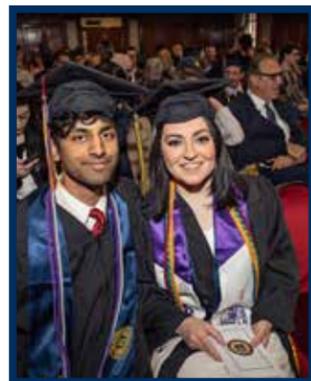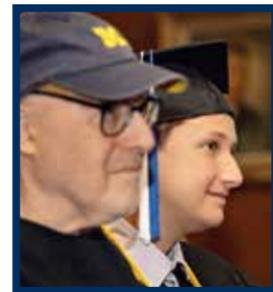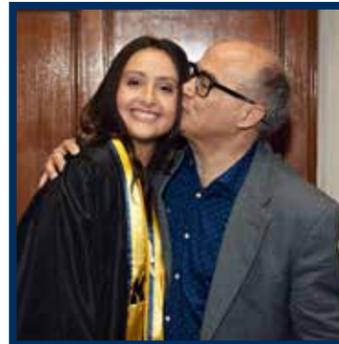


Graduates Jesse Mason Candel, Evan Croft, Jameson van Dokkumburg, Evan Ferry and Megan Elizabeth Glassner

Graduates Mrinalini Gupta, Kayla Brianna Haley, Tanya Hammoud, Joshua Meyer Harrington, and Ella Marin Kethledge

Graduates Jack Levy, Christopher MacKethan, Abigail Anne Najar, Rafael Thomas Serra Pierry, and Alex Tobias Pinheiro

Graduates Leo Christopher Ratte, Gabriel Lynn Rosenfeld, Maxwell Gurian Rosenfeld, and Preetam Reddy Vupputuri

**Philosophy Graduation Ceremony - Friday, April 28, 2023**
**Michigan League, Hussey Room**

**Report on** **"Designing Tech for Social Cohesion" 2023 Conference
of the Council on Technology and Social Cohesion**
By Leo Ratte (BA '23)

The conference – Designing Tech for Social Cohesion – was organized by a partnership between the Center for Humane Technology, the Toda Peace Institute, Search for Common Ground, and a few other peacebuilding organizations. From what I gathered, attendees came from tech companies, human rights organizations, academia, and other corners of the non-profit sector. I met just one other undergraduate there.

The conference began with a keynote address from Tristan Harris, a former designer at Google who left the industry to co-found the Center for Humane Technology. Right off the bat, I got a look at how insiders think about problems posed by the current state of the tech industry. Harris conceives of tech-mediated polarization as "a societal problem that underpins and exacerbates pre-existing societal problems". This is generally my feeling, articulated in a clear and concise way.

So, it's not that contemporary technologies – and the functions they enable through social media and the like – create fundamentally new societal problems (although they might). Rather, they exacerbate existing problems like misinformation, political polarization, etc. I think the crucial insight here is that the threats technology poses to social cohesion are not a monolith that can be treated in a vacuum. These are far-reaching, complex problems that bleed into every aspect of society. Along the same lines, confronting *any* societal issue successfully will necessarily involve reckoning the role played by technology in creating/exacerbating that issue.

Following Harris, Colin Megill – the founder of Pol.is – discussed what his organization does. In short, Pol.is surveys polarized groups, and uses machine learning to find common ground between these groups. I see this work as an attempt to scale up the intuition that two people who seem to disagree entirely will find common ground if they actually talk to each other, face to face. Megill's talk was followed by a panel discussion between representatives from tech, non-profits, and academia. There was then an hour or so of informal discussion between attendees. I made valuable connections here to members of organizations like All Tech is Human, among others.

The next morning, the conference kicked off in earnest. It went from 8 am to 6:30 pm, featuring the following panel discussions:

- *Phoenix: Digital Conflict Analysis on Polarization*
- *Using Tech for Intergroup Dialogue*
- *How can Bridge-Building and Peacebuilding Experts Inform Tech Designs?*
- *Tech Supporting Cohesion*
- *Metrics for Polarization and Social Cohesion*
- *Lessons on Tech-Civil Society Partnerships*
- *Incubating and funding PeaceTech*
- *Insight, Inspirations, Ideas*

I attended most of these sessions, although I missed two near the end because I was chatting with other attendees in the hallway. Still, I gained some valuable insights for my project

Here are a few:
- **There is a growing number of organizations leveraging the information-collecting capacities of technologies (I call it DT perception in my thesis) for peacebuilding.**
When we think of DT perception, we think of the engagement-based business model. All that means is that for social media companies, the more time users spend on their apps the better. So, they leverage the data they collect from users to individualize the content users see (and the advertisements they see!) Until this conference, I wasn't aware of organizations who were leveraging DT perception for anything other than corporate profit. Is this the best outcome? I'm unsure. It might be that these capacities are simply too powerful, and our devices just shouldn't have access to the wealth of information that they collect. So, I think of these orgs as working within the received framework of the industry, rather than attempting to upend that framework. I had a fascinating discussion with a nonprofit leader who argues that our collective data ought to be controlled by a public utilities corporation, like energy and water corporations. This would certainly be better than our current set-up, where our data is nearly-unregulated and accessible to anyone with the requisite technical skills and resources.
- **The engagement-based business model as it stands today is incompatible with social cohesion.**
To put it more strongly: the engagement-based model is incompatible with the level of social cohesion required for a well-functioning democracy. I don't think this would be a consensus opinion among the attendees, but it would certainly be a popular one. There were alternatives proposed – the most memorable of which was the bridging-based model. On this model, content would be promoted based on *its appeal to groups across received – political, social, economic – divides*. On the engagement model, a tweet is promoted on the basis of how much engagement it generates. If it's really funny, great! If it's really provocative, even better! This leads to high-visibility content that can range from sensationalist to downright dangerous. On the bridging model, the most visible content would be content that appealed to groups with divergent political/social opinions. In short, we'd see what we all agreed upon, instead of what is most likely to divide us.

From the Council's website:
The Council on Technology and Social Cohesion's Designing Tech for Social Cohesion Conference provides a unique space for tech innovators, Trust & Safety staff, and practitioners with community bridge-building and global peacebuilding experience to gather. It explores a new generation of tech products that offer design features and algorithms optimized for prosocial content. A growing tide of polarizing digital content, the heated public debate on free speech and content moderation, and the recent tech layoffs in and cuts to Trust & Safety programs create new challenges. The time is ripe to meet these challenges with bold solutions.

# PPE UNDERGRADUATE NEWS
## by Professor James Joyce, PPE Chair

**The Philosophy, Politics and Economics (PPE) program is thriving!**

PPE is an interdisciplinary major that asks students to take a wide range of classes across its three component disciplines. Because it requires the mastery of difficult technical material from all three areas as well as strong argumentative and writing skills, PPE provides students with effective preparation for many walks of life.

**We had 42 PPE majors receive diplomas in May 2023, and there are currently more than eighty majors in the pipeline.**

We had only one student write a PPE honors thesis this year (down from seven last year). Jacqueline Hillman's thesis "Agency in the Carceral State: Evaluation of the Influence of the Prison Litigation Reform Act on Disabled Litigants," advised by Brian Min and Ann Heffernan.



**SENIOR HONORS THESIS**
Jacqueline Hillman, "Agency in the Carceral State: Evaluation of the Influence of the Prison Litigation Reform Act on Disabled Litigants", (advised by Brian Min and Ann Heffernan). Jacqueline is currently a JD candidate at the University of Chicago Law School.

The highlight of the year was our **annual PPE Lecture**, which is made possible by a generous endowment from **Jonathan (AB '88 Economics) and Kathryn Ferrando**. The Lecture brings distinguished thinkers and practitioners to speak at the University and engage with PPE students. Lecturers have included both academics and practitioners in business and public policy. In addition to hearing the lecture, students get the opportunity to have a lunch or dinner with the speaker. This year's speaker was **Juliana Bidadanure** of Stanford University (see related story, *The Grue*, Fall 2022). Professor Bidadanure's talk, "Understanding Demonization," focused on the ways in which poor and minority individuals come to be demonized within the broader society. She argued that recipients of welfare benefits, and other forms of social assistance, "undergo sustained attacks on their moral character, and are viewed as deliberately choosing idleness over hard work." This leads to "the trope of the lazy free rider." Such tropes diminish the moral standing of their targets and prevent us seeing them as equals. The lecture, which was well attended, was followed by a lively question and answer session in which people from a range of academic disciplines were able to engage with Professor Bidadanure. Overall, it was a wonderful event.

This year the PPE program was able to award its **first Ian Fishback Fellowship to Eloir Waskow** (see related story on page 92). The Fellowship was established by a generous gift from **Robert J. Donia and Jane Ritter**, who also endowed the University's Donia Center on Human Rights. The Fellowship honors the memory of Major Ian Fishback (MA Philosophy '12, PhD Philosophy '20). Fishback, who grew up in Michigan's Upper Peninsula, served in the US Army in Iraq. He was a tireless defender of human rights and respect for the law of war. A model public servant, Major Fishback helped expose abuses of detainees in Iraq by U.S. armed forces, leading to important legislation to prevent such abuses.

Eloir Waskow was able to use money from the Fishback Fellowship to visit to the Indiana Supreme Court to see arguments on the question of whether the State's constitution implicitly contained an inalienable right to abortion. He writes, "I want to thank the Fishback Fellowship for enabling me to visit the court. I am especially grateful that I was able to observe arguments that will impact so many lives."

We closed the year with a lovely graduation ceremony. We were fortunate to have **Jenna Bednar** as our graduation speaker. Professor Bednar is a faculty member in our Political Science department as well as at the Ford School of Public Policy. She gave a lively talk on federalism and constitutional design.

PPE is still going strong at Michigan. *Last year we had nearly 150 students apply to the program!* Most of their credentials were magnificent. However, since we are only able to accept 40 new majors each year, we had to turn away *many* highly qualified students. We wish we had the resources to accept more students than we now can. Still, the students we get are fantastic. It is a joy to teach them! We will miss them, and wish them good luck in all their future endeavors!

**Did you know????**
**Philosophy, Politics, and Economics is LSA's major in political economy.** Political economy is the study of institutional choice and design for the solution of problems that require cooperation or coordination of many actors. First developed at Oxford University in 1920 for students interested in careers in politics and public service, PPE programs have spread to the U.S. in the last 25 years, and have become popular at about two dozen leading colleges and universities. The University of Michigan, as one of the leading places for interdisciplinary research, is proud to be able to offer a truly interdisciplinary experience to undergraduates through its PPE program. The Philosophy Department administers the PPE Program with the support of the Political Science and Economics Departments. PPE is one of the few selective majors in LSA, requiring a formal application and admissions process, to ensure that students can handle the challenges of a program that demands high levels of quantitative as well as humanistic skills. PPE majors go on to highly varied careers upon graduation, including business, technology, politics, law, medicine, journalism, public health, and academia.
*This is the twelfth class of graduates from the PPE program at UM!*



**Elior Waskow**,
Undergrad Student,
PPE major

# Congratulations Class of 2023!

Michelle Ascrizzi, Yasine Mohamed Baccouche, Kyto Batt, Elle Boyden, Corey David Brown Schneck, Arushi Sana Chandrakapure, Nicholas Paul Colucci, Evan James Delorenzo, Ryan Hunter Distell, Jared Lee Felker, Gabriel Francis Fioramonti-Gorchow, Drew Isaac Grossman, Joshua Meyer Harrington, Jacqueline Anne Hillman, Richard Mcquade Hurley, Jared Scott Hurwitz, Cole Huster, Megha Jain, Samantha Leigh Jalazo, Satkaran Khanuja, Sofia Olivia Kwon, Ross Ladis, Matthew Jacob Leav, Bingzhi Li, Rena Kaur McRoy, Karthik Pasupula, Nicholas Bennett Platt, Caroline Plotner, Benjamin Chase Rifkin, Abigail Katherine Sanders, Ethan Jerrard Scholl, William Russell Sharps, Elyse Morgan Sherr, William Peter Simqu, Evan Ryan Stern, Pulak Taneja, Xinyi Yao


Samantha Leigh Jalazo


Ross Ladis


Matthew Jacob Leav with family


Bingzhi Li and Xinyi Yao


Kyto Batt with family


Elle Boyden with family


Corey David Brown Schneck and Rena Kaur McRoy
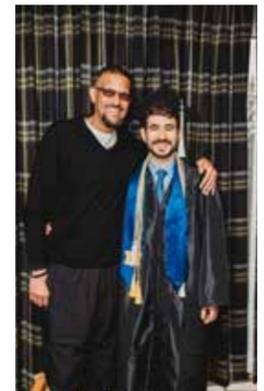

Nicholas Paul Colucci


Karthik Pasupula with family


Nicholas Bennett Platt with family


Abigail Katherine Sanders


Ethan Jerrard Scholl with family


Evan James Delorenzo with family


Ryan Hunter Distell


Gabriel Francis Fioramonti-Gorchow with family


Elyse Morgan Sherr with family


William Peter Simqu with family


Evan Ryan Stern


Pulak Taneja with family


Jared Scott Hurwitz with family


Richard Mcquade Hurley with family


Jacqueline Anne Hillman



**2023 PPE Commencement Speaker**

**Jenna Bednar** is a professor of public policy and political science at the University of Michigan and a member of the external faculty at the Santa Fe Institute. Professor Bednar's research is on the analysis of institutions, focusing on the theoretical underpinnings of the stability of federal states. Her most recent book, *The Robust Federation: Principles of Design*, demonstrates how complementary institutions maintain and adjust the distribution of authority between national and state governments. This book makes two theoretical contributions to the study of federalism's design. First, it shows that distributions suggested by a constitution mean nothing if the governments have no incentive to abide by them, and intergovernmental retaliation tends to be inefficient. The book's second contribution is that while no institutional safeguard is sufficient to improve the union's prosperity, institutions work together to improve compliance with the distribution of authority, thereby boosting the union's performance.

# PHILOSOPHY GRADUATE NEWS

### By Professor Ishani Maitra, Director of Graduate Studies and Carson Maynard, Graduate Studies Coordinator

**Over the past year, the Philosophy department has begun to feel vibrantly inhabited again; perhaps not yet back to pre-pandemic levels of activity, but the hallways and commons room now bustle with faculty and grad students shuttling between classes, debating the finer points of philosophy, and enjoying one another's company in person. Faculty office doors are wide open again to invite students in for a chat, and the department offered a robust schedule of events, particularly in the fall 2023 term, many of which were spearheaded or otherwise organized by our graduate students.**

We welcomed a cohort of 7 students – completely in-person, from Admissions Fair and orientation onward – for the first time since 2019! As convenient, in some ways, as our virtual studies were, it's hard to overestimate the difference it's made to have such an energetic group of entering grad students, eager to learn and infusing the department with enthusiasm and fresh ideas. The buzz of excitement in the department this fall has truly been profound! Our entering cohort also brings with them a keen awareness of, and commitment to, diversity in higher education. As noted in the report that follow, they've helped to round out both our professional and social offerings in feminist philosophy, queer philosophy, and trans philosophy; and to combat elitism by bolstering our departmental support for graduate students from low-income backgrounds and smaller liberal arts undergraduate colleges.

Our students had an especially busy 2023, both within the department and outside it. They organized numerous colloquia, along with workshops and reading groups which were often headlined by invited speakers. They presented at dozens of conferences in the USA and worldwide, largely in person again, but on occasion virtually, as well.

In the last year, their publications have included:
• **Mitch Barrington**, "Superiority Discounting Implies the Preposterous Conclusion," *Utilitas* 34 (4): 493–501, (2022). DOI: https://doi.org/10.1017/s095382082200022x.
• —, "Where Tracking Loses Traction," *Episteme* 20 (1): 1–14, (2023). DOI: https://doi.org/10.1017/epi.2020.41.
• **Sean Costello**, "Anne Conway on memory," *British Journal for the History of Philosophy* 31 (5): 912–931, (2023). DOI: https://doi.org/10.1080/09608788.2023.2164920.
• **Aaron Glasser**, "The Catch-22 Of Forgetfulness: Responsibility for Mental Mistakes," co-authored with Zachary C Irving, Samuel Murray, and Kristina Krasich, *Australasian Journal of Philosophy* (2023, online). DOI: https://doi.org/10.1080/00048402.2022.2157031.
• **Alice Kelley**, "Higher-order desires, risk attitudes and respect for autonomy," *Journal of Medical Ethics* (2023, online). DOI: https://doi.org/10.1136/jme-2023-109349.
• **Calum McNamara**, "Causal decision theory, context, and determinism," *Philosophy and Phenomenological Research* (2023), https://doi.org/10.1111/phpr.13021. "(See page 38 for a sneak peak of Calum's article)."
• **Mica Rapstine**, "Political Rage and the Value of Valuing," *Philosophy* (2023, online).
• **Lianghua (Glenn) Zhou**, "Descartes on the Source of Error: The Fourth Meditation and the Correspondence with Elisabeth," *British Journal for the History of Philosophy* 30 (6): 992-1012, (2022). DOI: https://doi.org/10.1080/09608788.2022.2132908. "(See page 42 for a sneak peak of Glenn's article)."

And the **papers accepted for publication include**:
• **Sean Costello**, "Nocturnal Vision in Plato's Timaeus," *Ancient Philosophy* (forthcoming).
• **Malte Hendrickx**, "Agentially Controlled Action: Causal, not Counterfactual," *Philosophical Studies* (forthcoming).
• —, "Why were there no Human Challenge Trials for Covid-19 Vaccines?" in *Public Choice and Public Policy* (eds) (forthcoming).
• **Ariana Peruzzi**, "Equality in Limbo," *Radical Philosophy Review* (forthcoming).

Our students have continued to **present their work at conferences nationally and internationally**:
• **Abdul Ansari**, "Why Taste Doesn't Matter," presented at the Meeting of the American Philosophical Association (APA) Eastern Division, Montréal QC, Canada, January 2023.
• —, "Morality, Arbitrariness, and Contingency in al-Ghazali's Legal Theory," presented at Early Career Workshop on Islamic Thought and Anglophone Philosophy, Princeton University, Princeton NJ, May 2023.
• —, "Doxa and Pathos: What's in an Analogy?" Epistemology Works-in-Progress Group, University of Michigan, Ann Arbor MI, May 2023.
• —, "The Fragility of Love," Emotion and Society Lab, University of California – Riverside, Riverside CA, July 2023.
• **Elizabeth Beckman**, "Examining Moral Responsibility for Empathic Failures: The Role of Automatic Processing," King's College London, London, England, UK, January 2023 (virtual).
• —, "Moral Responsibility for Empathic Failures," presented at the 4th International Conference on Philosophy of Mind, Catholic University of Portugal, Braga, Portugal, March 2023 (virtual); and at the European Society for Philosophy and Psychology, Prague, Czech Republic, August 2023.
• **Jason Byas**, "Retributive Failure," Philosophy, Politics, and Economics (PPE) Society Sixth Annual Meeting, New Orleans LA, November 2022.
• —, "Mixed Theories of Punishment Are Not Safe from the Angry Mob," Meeting of the American Philosophical Association (APA) Eastern Division, Montréal QC, Canada, January 2023.
• —, "Aiming at a New Theory of Well-Being," Meeting of the American Philosophical Association (APA) Central Division, Denver CO, February 2023.
• —, "An Argument Against Deserved Suffering and Flourishing," Meeting of the American Philosophical



Ishani Maitra, Director of Graduate Studies and Carson Maynard, Graduate Studies Coordinator

Association (APA) Pacific Division, San Francisco CA, April 2023.
• —, "Retribution: An Abolitionist Translation," Meeting of the American Philosophical Association (APA) Pacific Division, San Francisco CA, April 2023.
• —, "The Vocabulary of Society," Institute for Humane Studies Junior Fellows Program Workshop, Raleigh NC, May 2023 and August 2023.
• **Francisco Calderón Ossa**, "The Causal Axioms of Algebraic Quantum Field Theory: A Diagnostic," Philosophy of Science Association Biennial Meeting, Pittsburgh PA, November 2022.
• —, "But is it altruism?" (co-presented with Ariana Peruzzi), Michigan-MIT Social Philosophy Workshop, Ann Arbor MI, April 2023; and at the Philosophy, Politics, and Economics (PPE) Society Sixth Annual Meeting, New Orleans LA, November 2022.
• **Paul de Font-Reaulx**, "Why Do We Spontaneously Cooperate?" Philosophy, Politics, and Economics (PPE) Society Sixth Annual Meeting, New Orleans LA, November 2022.
• —, "Alignment as a Dynamic Process," NeurIPS ML Safety Workshop, December 2022 (virtual).
• —, "Penelope and the Drinks," Meeting of the American Philosophical Association (APA) Central Division, Denver CO, February 2023.

Welcome **Mitch Barrington** (he/him): My main research interests are in decision-theoretic ethics and epistemology. Before starting at Michigan, I was a research fellow at the Center for AI Safety, where I worked on societal-scale risks from advanced AI systems. Before that, I completed one semester of the PhD at the University of Southern California. I did my master's at the Dianoia Institute of Philosophy at the Australian Catholic University and my undergraduate and honours at The University of Western Australia. **Note: Mitch is also a Weinberg Grad Student Fellowship recipient!

• **Alice Kelley**, "Grief, Health, and Medicalization," Graduate Student Philosophy Conference, Boston University, Boston MA, April 2023.

• —, "Grief, Imaginative Health, and the Quest to Value what is Lost," The Value of Human Life Workshop, Center for Moral and Political Philosophy, Hebrew University of Jerusalem, Jerusalem, Israel, June 2023.

• **Gabrielle Kerbel**, "Fundamental Laws and the Methodology of Science," Society for the Metaphysics of Science conference, Halifax NS, Canada, August 2023.

• —, "A New Approach to Scoring on the Educated Guessing Framework," presented as a colloquium at the Meeting of the American Philosophical Association (APA) Pacific Division, San Francisco CA, April 2023; at the National University of Singapore, May 2023; and at the Formal Epistemology Workshop, Northeastern University, Boston MA, June 2023

• **AG McGee**, "Deterministic, Doxastic Wrongings," Rutgers-Bochum Philosophy of Cognitive Science Workshop, Ruhr-Universität Bochum, Bochum, Germany, June 2023.

• **Calum McNamara**, "Counterfactuals in the image of chance," Meeting of the American Philosophical Association (APA) Eastern Division, Montréal QC, Canada, January 2023.

• **Josh Petersen**, "How Race Makes Place: Why Market-Based Solutions Will Not Solve Housing Displacement," presented at the Markets and Morality Graduate Conference, University of Toronto, Toronto ON, Canada, November 2022; and at the Graduate Conference in Ethics and Public Affairs, Carleton University, Ottawa ON, Canada, November 2022.

• —, "Neurodivergence and Normative Signals," Epistemological Considerations for a Diverse Society, Boston University, Boston MA, March 2023.

Welcome **Paulina Ezquerra**: I earned my MA in Philosophy in May '23 from Univ Houston, and I received both my BAs (Poly Sci and Philosophy) also from Houston. My research interests lie at the intersection of ethics, feminist philosophy, and moral psychology, with an eye toward incorporating insights from under-theorized Latin American thinkers into discussions of value and rational action within analytic philosophy. I also have interests in Mexican philosophy, social and political philosophy, and theories of human agency. I wanted to come to U-M for its strengths in these areas, as well as the department's openness to interdisciplinary, creative, and forward-looking research. Outside of philosophy, I enjoy making jewelry and pottery.

(Conference presentations continued)

• **Paul de Font-Reaulx**, Reinforcement Learning as a Model of Human Evaluative Cognition," Southern Society for Philosophy and Psychology, Louisville KY, March 2023.

• **Aaron Glasser**, "Steering Salience," International Congress on Logic, Methodology, and Philosophy of Science and Technology, Buenos Aires, Argentina, July 2023.

• **Emma Hardy**, "Becoming, and Remaining, Food," Social Ontology & Collective Intentionality Conference, University of Vienna, Vienna, Austria, August 2022.

• —, "Bringing More Food into the World," Food, Consumption, and Climate Change Graduate Conference, University of North Texas, Denton TX, October 2022.

• —, "We Need Food, Food Needs Us," scheduled for the Annual Graduate Student Philosophy Conference, Western Michigan University, Kalamazoo MI, January 2023.

• —, "Desiderata for a Social Ontology of Food: Working Towards a Helpful and Livable Metaphysics of Food," 44th Annual Graduate Student Philosophy Conference, University of Illinois Urbana-Champaign, Champaign IL, April 2023.

• —, "Working Towards a Fruitful Metaphysics of Food," in the New Trends in the Philosophy of Food: Food Ontologies and the Materialities of Eating panel session with Megan Dean and Nicola Piras, Association for the Study of Food and Society Conference, Metropolitan College, Boston University, Newton MA, June 2023.

• —, "Desiderata for a Social Ontology of Food," Social Ontology Conference, Stockholm University, Stockholm, Sweden, August 2023.

• **Malte Hendrickx**, "Difficulty and Demandingness," presented at Gesellschaft für Utilitarismusstudien, Karlsruhe Institute of Technology, Karlsruhe, Germany, February 2023; at Institute for Humane Studies Graduate Student Conference, May 2023 (virtual); and at Philosophie des Geistes Forschungskolloquium, Tübingen, Germany, May 2023.

• —, "Difficulty," Early Career Researchers Workshop in Philosophy of Mind and Cognitive Science, Ruhr-Universität Bochum, Bochum, Germany, July 2023.

• —, "Effort," presented at the Philosophy of Neuroscience Forum, Tübingen, Germany, July 2023; and at the European Society for Philosophy and Psychology, Prague, Czech Republic, August 2023.

Welcome **Nina Brown**: Hello! I'm Nina Brown. As an undergrad I double majored in Philosophy and Government (and as a bonus, minored in English). Accordingly, I have a broad interest in ethics, metaethics, political philosophy, philosophy of law, moral psychology, philosophy of mind, etc. I hope to narrow this list down a bit at U-M! In terms of areas of research, right now I'm curious about the nature of guilt/shame, duties/obligations, and moral responsibility as a whole. U-M seems to be a great place to dig deeper into these questions, and I'm excited to begin my studies!

• **Mica Rapstine**, "Political rage and the value of valuing," Northern Graduate Philosophy Conference, Northern Illinois University, DeKalb IL, October 2022.

• —, "Putting insight into action," scheduled for the Meeting of the American Philosophical Association (APA) Central Division, Denver CO, February 2023; and presented at the Graduate Philosophy Conference, Texas Tech University, Lubbock TX, April 2023.

• **Julian Rome**, "Why God(s), Why? Virtue and Divine Dispensation in the Meno," co-authored with Dan Larkin (Georgia Southern University), Philosophical Collaborations Conference, Southern Illinois University, Carbondale IL, March 2023.

• —, "Degrees of Dys/Utopia in Plato's *Republic* and Margaret Atwood's *Handmaid's Tale*," Meeting of the American Philosophical Association (APA) Pacific Division, San Francisco CA, April 2023.

• —, "Writing as Resistance in Butler's Parables and Atwood's MaddAddam" at the Science Fiction and Philosophy Society Panel, Meeting of the American Philosophical Association (APA) Pacific Division, San Francisco CA, April 2023.

• **Alvaro Sottil de Aguinaga**, "Linguistic Rights as Epistemic Reparations," Epistemic Blame and Epistemic Reparations workshop, Winnipeg MB, Canada, September 2023.

• **Sarah Valdman**, "The Chinese Room as a Reductio of Analytic Philosophy," co-presented with Mikhail Valdman at the Summer Colloquium Series, Virginia Commonwealth University, Richmond VA, June 2023.

• **Adam Waggoner**, "An Aristotelian Model of Self-Control," 46th Annual Ancient Philosophy Workshop, University of Texas, Austin TX, March 2023.

Welcome **Lila Graham** (she/her): I graduated from St. Olaf College in '22, and I've spent the last year in Portland, OR! To be (shamefully) honest, my philosophical interests are all over the place. I describe myself as a Spinozist, but find my Spinozism taking me into Trans Philosophy, Decision Theory, and Philosophy of Disability as often as it brings me to Metaphysics and Ethics. While I come to terms with needing to specialize, I spend lots of time reading and writing poetry and prose fiction, organizing, and trying to win board games with the power of spreadsheets and Decision Theory!

(Conference presentations continued)

• **Margot Witte**, "Murky Wants, a Problem for Consent-Based Theories of Sexual Ethics," presented at the Society for the Philosophy of Sex and Love, November 2022 (virtual); at the MIT-Michigan Social Philosophy Workshop, University of Michigan, Ann Arbor MI, April 2023; at the Early Career Ethics Workshop, Yale University, New Haven CT, April 2023; and at the Canadian Philosophical Association, Toronto ON, Canada, May 2023.

• —, "Theoretical Virtues in Tension: Towards a Non-Unified Gender Phenomena?" presented at the Manchester Center for Political Theory (MANCEPT) Workshop, University of Manchester, Manchester, England, UK, September 2022; and at the International Social Ontology Society Conference, Stockholm, Sweden, August 2023.

• —, "Concept-Use and Hermeneutic Justice," presented at the SOPhiA Conference for Young Analytic Philosophy, University of Salzburg, Salzburg, Austria, September 2022.

• **Katie Wong**, "Actions, Slurs, and Ideology," Meeting of the American Philosophical Association (APA) Pacific Division, San Francisco CA, April 2023.

• **Yixuan Wu**, "'Yellow Fever' and Vicarious Desire," Phenomenological Workshop on Love and Sexuality, University of Copenhagen, Copenhagen, Denmark, November 2023.

• **Sophia Wushanley**, "Privacy as Protection from Domination," Meeting of the American Philosophical Association (APA) Pacific Division, San Francisco CA, April 2023.

• —, "Unequal Enforcement," MIT-Michigan Social Philosophy Workshop, University of Michigan, Ann Arbor MI, April 2023.

• **Glenn Zhou**, "Aristotle on Asymmetric Boundaries," Meeting of the American Philosophical Association (APA) Central Division, Denver CO, February 2023.

• —, "The Equanimity Approach to Sagehood in the Zhuangzi," Meeting of the American Philosophical Association (APA) Pacific Division, San Francisco CA, April 2023.

• —, "Aristotle's *De Motu* 702a23-704b4" (co-presented with Reier Helle), Ancient Philosophy Workshop on *De Motu*, Yale University, New Haven CT, June 2023.

Welcome **Lorenzo Manuali** (he/him/his): I am a New York native who has also spent some time on the west coast. I have strong interests in philosophy of psychiatry/psychology (particularly addiction), political philosophy, and ethics (especially of technology and philanthropy). At the intersection of these areas, I have a special interest in addictive structural features of technology and their implications for democratic theory. I am very excited to come to U-M Philosophy because I believe my interests overlap well with those of my peers and the faculty. In my free time, I enjoy cooking Italian food, hosting dinner parties, playing video games, hiking, and making fun of New Jersey/Staten Island. I have a goal of hiking in all 63 national parks, and I've visited 16 so far!! I also speak Italian at home, so feel free to chat me up in Italian!

Welcome **AG McGee** (they/them): I am originally from Kentucky and graduated from Princeton in '22. I am happy to be at U-M after transferring from Rutgers in order to work with so many faculty who do feminist philosophy and because Grue is much more my color! I love feminist political philosophy, feminist ethics, and trans philosophy. Outside of philosophy, I do poetry (another totally reasonable career choice), play Stardew Valley, and love finding ways to be active in my community!

Several students have **presented commentaries** over the past year, and also chaired conference sessions.

• **Alice Kelley** commented on Alexandra Romanyshyn's "Ethics of Care and Ethical Partiality," Meeting of the American Philosophical Association (APA) Central Division, Denver CO, February 2023.

• **Gabrielle Kerbel** commented on two papers at the Meeting of the American Philosophical Association (APA) Eastern Division, Montréal QC, Canada, January 2023: Calum McNamara's "Counterfactuals in the Image of Chance," and David Builes and Michele Odisseas Impagnatiello's "An Empirical Argument for Presentism".

• — chaired the Underrepresented Philosophy of Science Scholars (UPSS) session, Philosophy of Science Association 28th Biennial Meeting, Pittsburgh PA, November 2022.

• **Julian Rome** commented on Freya Möbus' "What makes speeches so delicious? Socrates on rhetoric in the Gorgias," Meeting of the American Philosophical Association (APA) Central Division, Denver CO, February 2023.

• — commented on Van Tu's "Reasons of Love in Plato's *Phaedrus*," 4th Biannual Michigan Philosophy Alumni Conference, Ann Arbor MI, July 2023.

• **Alvaro Sottil de Aguinaga** commented on two papers at the American Association of Mexican Philosophers (AAMP) conference, New York NY, May 2023: Leonel Alvarez Ceja's "Whose Future? An Indigenous and Social Constructionist Critique on the Exclusionary Nature of Longtermism's Future" and Mario Iván Juárez García's "Relocating: An Environmental Case for Open Borders".

• **Glenn Zhou** commented on Chris Bobonich's "Protreptic Strategies and Conditional Goods," Ancient Metaphysics and Value Conference, Stanford University, Palo Alto CA, February 2023.

• — commented on Cristobal Zarzar's "What Does the Academic 'Indistinguishability Argument' Tell us about Stoic Rational Sense-Impressions?" at the 4th Rackham Interdisciplinary Workshop in Ancient Philosophy, University of Michigan, Ann Arbor MI, May 2023.

• — commented on Emily Perry's "Aristotle on the Difference Between Powers and Natures," Ancient Philosophy Workshop, Stanford University, Palo Alto CA, June 2023.

• — commented on Stephen Angle's "Mind the Gap: Methodological Pluralism in Comparative Philosophy," 4th Biannual Michigan Philosophy Alumni Conference, Ann Arbor MI, July 2023.

Welcome **Brett Thompson** (he/him): I work mostly on topics in ancient Greek philosophy but am interested in basically everything. I have a past life as a jazz and improvising musician in Australia, where I grew up. I left that sunny life for the grey skies of Germany, and most of my philosophical training until now was done there at the Humboldt University in Berlin. I'm excited to start this next chapter in Ann Arbor and become a part of the great philosophical community at UM.
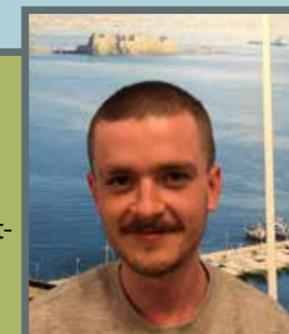
In addition to attending lots of interesting conferences, **several of our students attended summer institutes in the US and internationally**:

• **Elizabeth Beckman** attended the Spring School in Philosophical Methods (this year's topic was Experimental Philosophy and Learning Theory, with Shaun Nichols) at the University of Sheffield, Sheffield, England, UK, in May 2023; the Lisbon Feminist Philosophy of Mind Workshop in Lisbon, Portugal, in June 2023; and the Diverse Intelligences Summer Institute (DISI) in St. Andrew's, Scotland, UK, in June/July 2023.

• **Paul de Font-Reaulx** attended the Ethics of Consciousness Summer School at the Paris Center of Rice University, Paris, France, in May 2023.

• **Paulina Ezquerra** attended the Northeast Workshop to Learn About Multicultural Philosophy (NEWLAMP) at Rutgers University, New Brunswick NJ, in July 2023.

• **Aaron Glasser** attended the International Congress on Logic, Methodology, and Philosophy of Science and Technology (CLMPST), Buenos Aires, Argentina, in July 2023.

• **Gillian Gray** attended the Central European University summer school, Budapest, Hungary, in July 2023. This year's theme was Contemporary Issues in Ontology and Social Ontology.

• **Alice Kelley** was a visiting graduate student research fellow for the annual summer PhD workshop of the Center for Moral and Political Philosophy, Hebrew University of Jerusalem, Jerusalem, Israel, from May–July 2023. This year's topic was The Value of Human Life.

• **Gabrielle Kerbel** attended a two-day summer school as part of the Society for the Metaphysics of Science conference, Dalhousie University, Halifax NS, Canada, in August 2023. She was also an official discussant at the Presidential Conference on Formal Epistemology, National University of Singapore, Singapore.

• **Margot Witte** attended the International Social Ontology Society conference in Stockholm, Sweden, in August 2023. They report that it "was a blast! A city official gave us a private tour of City Hall, and then we had a wonderful dinner in the Golden Hall, which is where the Nobel Prize Dinner is held."

• **Katie Wong** attended the 20th Annual Madison Metaethics Workshop, University of Wisconsin – Madison, Madison WI, in September 2023.

• **Sophia Wushanley** attended the Summer Training Program to Expand the AI and Data Ethics Research Community, Northeastern University, Boston MA, in June–August 2023.

• In addition, **Julian Rome** was a Graduate Teaching Fellow at PIKSI-Boston, at Massachusetts Institute of Technology, in summer 2023, which involved teaching a seminar for the undergraduate fellows titled "Indigenous Philosophy through Speculative Fiction" and serving as a mentor to five of the undergraduate fellows.

**FELLOWSHIP AWARD 2023 and AWARD RECIPIENT**



**Ariana Peruzzi Sancio** has been awarded with a **Charlotte W. Newcombe Doctoral Dissertation Fellowship** for 2023 from the Institute for Citizens & Scholars. The Newcombe Fellowship is highly competitive — only 4.2% of all applicants are selected as Fellows. Her project, *Theorizing Displacement: On Involuntary Migration, Refugeehood, and the Right to Remain*, takes up questions in political philosophy from a Latin American perspective. Ariana is also a **2023 Weinberg Award Recipient** and she is also pursuing a graduate certificate in Latin American studies and is interested in issues of movement and displacement from a Latin American lens. She almost pursued graduate study in music history instead of philosophy, and previously worked in multiple positions in the field of ethnomusicology, studying Latin American music and social change. *Congratulations, Ariana!*

**2023 WEINBERG AWARD RECIPIENT**



**Lindy Ortiz is a 2023 Weinberg Award Recipient!** Her areas of areas of interest include but are not limited to feminist/social/political epistemology, Sexual Ethics, Black Feminist Philosophy, Political Philosophy, and Philosophy of Race. She is currently involved in coordinating and coaching the Ann Arbor Ethics Bowl. She is a Coordinator for COMPASS. She has a bachelor's degree in Philosophy and Political Science with an emphasis in Law and public policy. She is also passionate about social justice, community services, and pre-college philosophy. Through her research and teaching, she hopes to help others think through important issues and understand their unique experiences. *Congratulations, Lindy!*

This year's **reading and working groups** included the Epistemology Work-In-Progress (E-WIP) group, organized by **Josh Petersen** and **Alison Weinberger**; and the Non-Western Philosophy reading group, organized by **Lianghua (Glenn) Zhou**, to which Michael Nylan (UC Berkeley) and Tao Jiang (Rutgers) were invited to discuss their most recent books on ancient Chinese philosophy. **Lianghua (Glenn) Zhou** also co-organized the Michigan Graduate Student Working Group, **Sophia Wushanley** founded a new Writing Accountability Group, and **Francisco Calderón Ossa** organized an online summer reading group on Latin American Philosophy, attended by graduate students from the University of Michigan, Cornell, Harvard, and CUNY. Jorge Sanchez-Perez (University of Alberta) joined one of the meetings to discuss a paper he had just published.

**Rackham Interdisciplinary Workshops (RIWs)** are graduate student oriented groups that meet regularly throughout the year to discuss readings on a particular interdisciplinary topic, workshop one another's papers, and sponsor a public lecture or facilitate a workshop with an outside speaker. The RIWs for 2022-23 were:

• **Ancient Philosophy (APWG)** – organized by **Sean Costello** and MA students Andrew Mayo and Sara Panteri – organized the 4th Annual Rackham Interdisciplinary Workshop in Ancient Philosophy.

• **Foundations of Modern Physics (FOMP)** – organized by **Francisco Calderón Ossa**, who revived FOMP after a period of inactivity since 2020 – hosted a panel on "Naturalness, Renormalization, and Fundamentality" in May 2023, featuring both external (Marian Gilton from Pittsburgh and Michael Miller from Toronto) and internal (James Wells from Physics) panelists. Francisco reports, "It went really well for FOMP's first in-person event since before I even applied to grad school and for the first event I ever organized. Kelly and Mia's help was invaluable, as was Jude's when Kelly broke her ankle."

• **Knowledge, Information, and Society (KIS)** – organized by **Cameron McCulloch, Josh Petersen, and Sophia Wushanley** – hosted a biweekly working group which brought together students from across philosophy, law, and information science. This culminated in a participant workshop at the end of the year to showcase work in progress.

• **Race, Gender, and Feminist Philosophy (RGFP)** – organized by **Valerie Trudel and Margot Witte** – hosted two workshops, one about a chapter from BR George's (CMU) and Ray Briggs' (Stanford) forthcoming book *What Even Is Gender?*, and another on a chapter from **Kristie Dotson's** forthcoming book *Love Politic*. In addition, RGFP hosted a "flashtalk" session, which included four 10-minute talks by both faculty and grad students.

• **Mind and Moral Psychology (MMP)** – organized by **Elizabeth Beckman, Aaron Glasser, and Adam Waggoner** – hosted a graduate conference featuring two in-person invited speakers — Cliff Workman (Penn) on February 24 and Charlie Kurth (Helsinki) on April 21 — along with a Zoom workshop on a project by Zachary C. Irving (Virginia).

Our students won a number of prizes, both here at UM and elsewhere.

• **Mitch Barrington** was awarded a Center for AI Safety (CAIS) Philosophy Fellowship for 2023 (along with Dmitri Gallow, PhD '14).

• **Paul de Font-Reaulx** was awarded one of 7 final prizes (out of 118 submissions) for the AI Alignment Awards, in the category of "goal misgeneralization". Paul was also awarded the AI Risk Analysis Award at the NeurIPS ML Safety Workshop in December 2022, and was again chosen (for two years running) as a 2023 Global Priorities Fellow with the Forethought Foundation. In addition, Paul was a 2023-2024 recipient of the Adam Smith Fellowship, awarded by the Mercatus Foundation.

• **Guus Duindam ('22)** received an honorable mention for the ProQuest Distinguished Dissertation Awards.

• **Emma Hardy** won the award for Best Paper Submission for her paper "Desiderata for a Social Ontology of Food: Working Towards a Helpful and Livable Metaphysics of Food," at the 44th Annual Graduate Student Philosophy Conference at the University of Illinois Urbana-Champaign.

• **Malte Hendrickx** was a 2023-2024 recipient of the Adam Smith Fellowship, awarded by the Mercatus Foundation.

• **Alice Kelley** was awarded a Rackham Doctoral Intern Fellowship (covered by the Andrew W. Mellon Foundation fund) for Fall 2023. Her internship is with the Center for Bioethics and Social Sciences in Medicine (CBSSM) at Michigan Medicine. She also won the Philosophy department 2023 Faculty Prize for Excellence in Teaching.

• **Gabrielle Kerbel** was awarded one of three Philosophy department 2023 Special Prizes for Leadership in Cocurricular Enrichment (SPLICE), which recognizes graduate students who have made outstanding contributions to cocurricular efforts that benefit our department, our institution, our community, and our discipline.

• **Cameron McCulloch** won the Philosophy department 2023 John Dewey Prize for his outstanding teaching.

• **Calum McNamara** was awarded the Philosophy department 2023 Cornwell Fellowship Prize in recognition of his excellent (original and creative) philosophical work.

• **Lindy Ortiz was** awarded a Philosophy department Weinberg Summer Fellowship, which honors students who have shown distinction during their second year of study.

• **Ariana Peruzzi** won the 2023-24 Newcombe Doctoral Dissertation Fellowship for her project *Theorizing Displacement: On Involuntary Migration, Refugeehood, and the Right to Remain*, and was awarded the summer 2023 Donia Human Rights Graduate Student Fellowship. In addition, Ariana won a prestigious Rackham Pre-Doctoral Fellowship. Within Philosophy, she was awarded two departmental prizes: the 2023 Cornwell Fellowship Prize in recognition of her excellent (original and creative) philosophical work, and a Weinberg Dissertation Fellowship, which honors students who have shown distinction during their first five years of study.

• **Josh Petersen** was awarded one of three Philosophy department 2023 Special Prizes for Leadership in Cocurricular Enrichment (SPLICE), which recognizes graduate students who have made outstanding contributions to cocurricular efforts that benefit our department, our institution, our community, and our discipline.

• **Mica Rapstine** was the runner-up for the Royal Institute of Philosophy 2022 Essay Prize for his paper "Political Rage and the Value of Valuing".

• **Julian Rome** was awarded a Graduate Teaching Fellowship from the Sweetland Center for Writing. This fellowship involves participation in Sweetland's Winter 2024 Fellows Program, where Julian will develop a first-year writing course, then teach that course as an instructor of record in Fall 2024. Within Philosophy, he was awarded one of three Philosophy department 2023 Special Prizes for Leadership in Cocurricular Enrichment (SPLICE), which recognizes graduate students who have made outstanding contributions to cocurricular efforts that benefit our department, our institution, our community, and our discipline.

• **Adam Waggoner** won the Philosophy department 2023 Charles L. Stevenson Prize (for excellence in a dissertation dossier).

• **Margot Witte** was awarded a Philosophy department Weinberg Summer Fellowship, which honors students who have shown distinction during their second year of study.

• **Lianghua (Glenn) Zhou** was awarded two Philosophy department prizes: the 2023 Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion (DEI) Prize, along with a Weinberg Dissertation Fellowship, which honors students who have shown distinction during their first five years of study.

**Margot Witte is a 2023 Weinberg Award Recipient.** They work on topics in social philosophy, including questions about epistemic justice, interpersonal ethics, and social ontology. They received their BA magna cum laude from Brown University in 2019, and joined the University of Michigan in 2021, after two years working as a bread baker. They are also a MAP (Minorities and Philosophy) Coordinator and Spring Colloquium Coordinator. ***Congratulations, Margot!***

Our students **organized four conferences here at Michigan:**

• In **March 2023, the University of Michigan Spring Colloquium**, titled "Salience and its Consequences", was co-organized by **Aaron Glasser, Josh Petersen, Margot Witte, and Yixuan Wu**. This year's invited speakers were Eugene Chislenko (Temple), Christopher Mole (Oxford), Jessie Munton (Cambridge), and Susanna Siegel (Harvard).

• In **April 2023, the Michigan-MIT Social Philosophy Workshop** was co-organized, on the UM side, by **Jason Byas, Ariana Peruzzi, and Yixuan Wu**, with a keynote lecture by Sahar Heydari Fard (Ohio State University).

• In **May 2023, the 4th Annual Rackham Interdisciplinary Workshop in Ancient Philosophy** was organized by **Sean Costello** and MA students Andrew Mayo and Sara Panteri, with a keynote lecture by Christian Wildberg (University of Pittsburgh).

• In J**uly 2023, the 4th Biannual Alumni Conference** was co-organized by **Julian Rome, Adam Waggoner, and Lianghua (Glenn) Zhou**. Five of our alumni returned to give talks: Stephen Angle (PhD 1994, Wesleyan) presented "Mind the Gap: Methodological Pluralism in Comparative Philosophy"; Zoë Johnson King (PhD 2018, Harvard) presented "The Slow Clap Phenomenon"; Hanna Kim (PhD 2006, Washington & Jefferson College) presented "Reconsidering Commonsense Consent"; Ian McCready-Flora (PhD 2011, Virginia): presented "Precision and Firmness in Aristotle"; Van Tu (PhD 2020, California State University, San Bernardino) presented "The Reasons of Love in Plato's *Phaedrus*".

**Lianghua (Glenn) Zhou** was this year's recipient of the departmental **Diversity, Equity & Inclusion (DEI) Prize**. He is also a **2023 Weinberg Award Recipient**. He is a fifth-year PhD candidate, working broadly in history of philosophy, including ancient Greek, ancient Chinese, and early modern philosophy. He is currently writing a dissertation on Aristotle's theory of boundaries of processes and its application to his physics and psychology. Building on his dissertation, he is developing a neo-Aristotelian theory of telic boundaries, which covers boundaries in both natural and social realms. In addition to the dissertation, he also has some other projects on Descartes, the Stoics, and Zhuangzi. ***Congratulations, Glenn!***
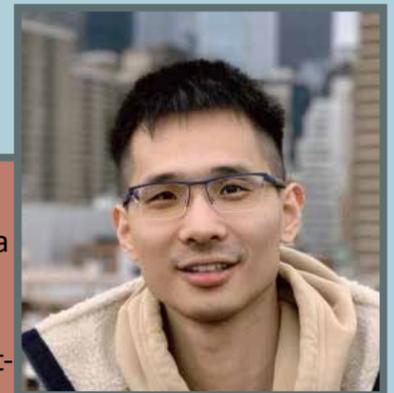
**Alice Kelley** was awarded this year's **Faculty Prize for Excellence in Teaching** for her outstanding teaching of PHIL 361 (Ethics). As some of her students noted, "Alice goes out of her way to help students", "Alice was a phenomenal instructor", and "She was great at facilitating to make sure everyone's voice was heard." *Congratulations, Alice!*

**Special Prize for Leadership in Cocurricular Enrichment (SPLICE)** was awarded to **Gabrielle Kerbel, Josh Petersen and Julian Rome** for their outstanding contributions to cocurricular efforts! *Congratulations, Gabrielle, Josh & Julian!*

**Cameron McCulloch** was awarded this year's **John Dewey Prize** for his outstanding teaching of PHIL 340 (Mind & Machine). With comments such as "very high quality discussions", "quality of this course was amazing", and "one of the most organized I've had at U-M", it is no wonder Cameron was chosen. *Congratulations, Cameron!*

As in past years, our students continue their efforts to **bring philosophy to non-academic audiences**, both here in Ann Arbor and elsewhere. **Margot Witte** co-wrote a post for the APA blog about collaborative philosophy. **Malte Hendrickx** organized a local fundraiser for Philosophers Against Malaria (part of the Against Malaria Foundation) which raised over $3,000, equivalent to 1,274 insecticide-treated nets.

Our students have played a crucial role in making the discipline of philosophy more inclusive. Sophia Wushanley continued as Co-Director of Minorities and Philosophy (MAP) International, and **Josh Petersen** joined MAP International as an Organizer. **Gabrielle Kerbel, Margot Witte, and Lianghua (Glenn) Zhou** co-organized the Michigan Minorities and Philosophy (MAP) chapter, with events including an Indigenous Peoples' Day Symposium (October 2022) featuring a lecture by Matthew Fletcher (Michigan, Law and American Culture) titled "The Rise and Fall of the Ogemakaan," about the legal and political philosophy of modern Anishinaabe tribes, which was featured in the *Michigan Daily*; a lecture by Ásta (Duke) titled "Critical Social Ontology" as part of the Minorities and Philosophy Speaker Series; and the Martin Luther King Jr. Symposium (January 2023) with a talk by SaraEllen Strongman (Michigan, Afro-American and African Studies) titled " 'I accuse you': Black feminism, solidarity, conflict, and intersectionality".

As we reported last year, our **seventh annual Michigan COMPASS workshop in October 2022**, for students from underrepresented groups considering graduate school in Philosophy, was co-organized and facilitated by **Julian Rome, Gabrielle Kerbel, Lindy Ortiz, and Valerie Trude**l, with 14 of our grad students serving as mentors. **Kristie Dotson** gave opening remarks, while **Anna Edmonds** and **Janum Sethi** joined a Q&A panel on applying to grad school. Flash talks were given by **Josh Petersen, Ariana Peruzzi, and Julian Rome**; and a panel on life as a graduate student in philosophy was crewed by **Gillian Gray, Caroline Perry, Ariana Peruzzi and Adam Waggoner. This year's eighth annual Michigan COMPASS workshop**, co-organized again by **Julian Rome, Gabrielle Kerbel, Lindy Ortiz, and Valerie Trudel**, was held September 28 - October 1, 2023 (see the full report on page 39).

In February 2023, **Lindy Ortiz, Josh Petersen, and Adam Waggoner** organized our **tenth annual Michigan High School Ethics Bowl**. This year, our coaches included **Abdul Ansari, Francisco Calderón Ossa, Brendan Mooney, Lindy Ortiz, Julian Rome, and Sarah Valdman. Kevin Craven ('23), Josh Petersen and Rebecca Harrison ('23)** all served as judges for preliminary rounds. The winner of this year's competition advanced to the National Bowl at the University of North Carolina and won! It was the first time a Michigan team had done so (see the full report on page 38).

*We all share the pride and feeling of accomplishment when our graduate students' excellent work is recognized with such prestigious accolades. And our sense – from the philosophical strengths that our graduate students are cultivating, the collaborative projects that are getting off the ground, and the many ways that our students' work is being rewarded even beyond the department – is that the upcoming year is going to be a vibrant and productive one as we continue to make Michigan a wonderful place to do philosophy!*

**Calum McNamara** was awarded this year's departmental **Cornwell Prize** which consists of an essay contest in recognition of excellent (original and creative) philosophical work. *Congratulations, Calum!*
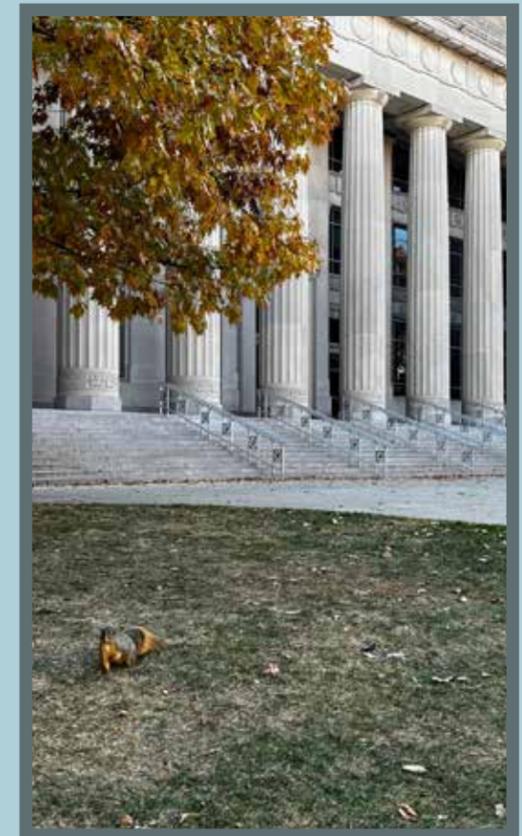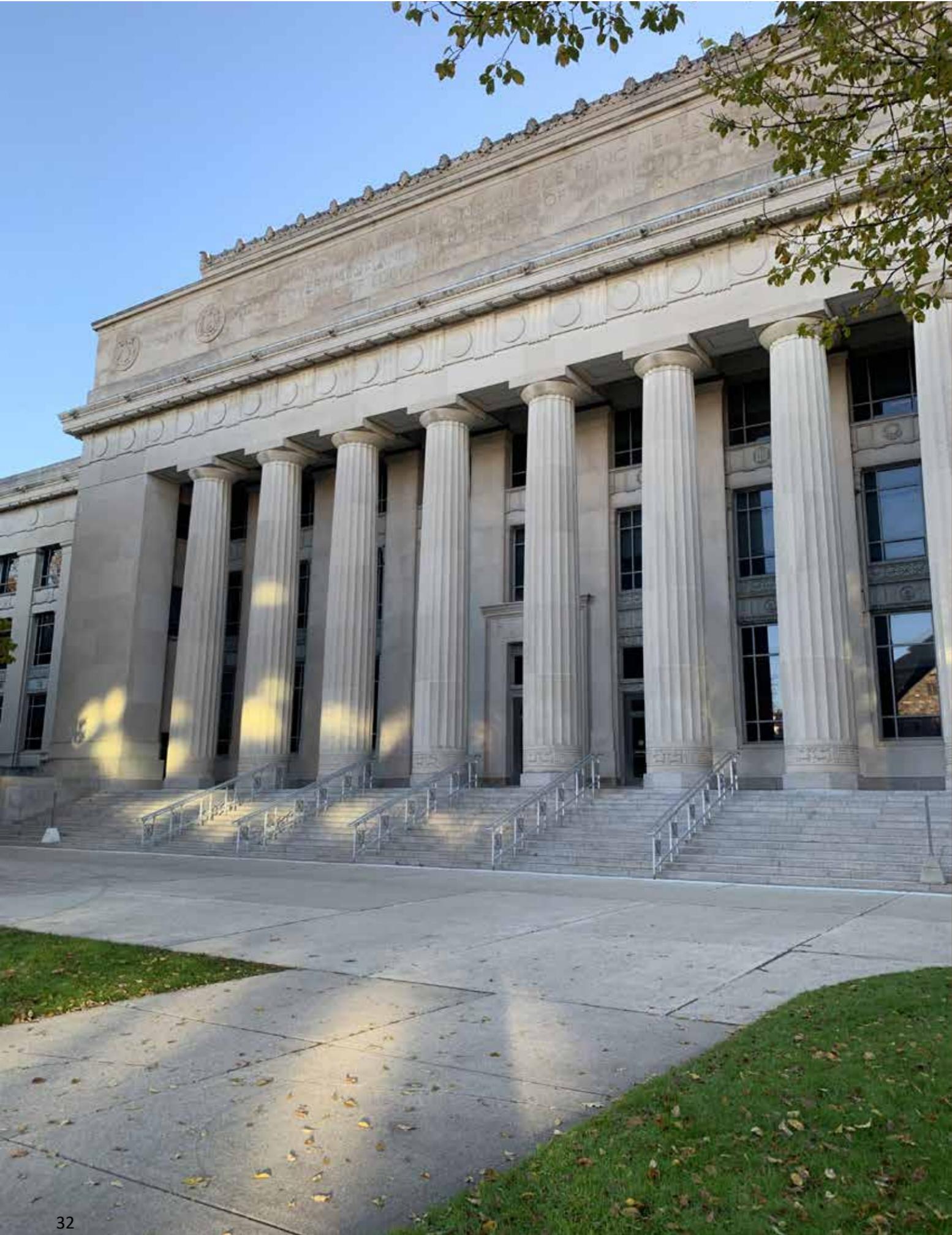
**Adam Waggoner** was awarded this year's **Charles L. Stevenson Prize** for excellence in a dossier. *Congratulations, Adam!*

# 2022 Cohort update

**Alison Weinberger:** "I used to think that graduate school must come with some catch. If you could *really* get paid to keep learning— that thing that you were just paying for a year or two ago— then I didn't understand why *everyone* wouldn't want to go to graduate school. It turns out that there is no catch! In fact, the opposite— *it's even better than I possibly could have imagined!*

This past year, I spent my days surrounded by fascinating discussions, reading interesting philosophical work, challenged by insightful peers, and supported by the amazing resources and community in a truly outstanding department. I feel incredibly lucky and grateful to be here and can't wait to start my second year this fall."

## welcome to Visiting Grad Students for 23/24

**Kaihao Bian** (Shandong University) will be visiting for AY 23/24. He will be working with Professor Victor Caston on a project entitled *Self-motion, Character and Responsibility in Aristotle* on Aristotle's ethics, especially his theory of moral responsibility. Kaihao is also interested in value theory.

**Ina Jäntgen** (Cambridge University) will be visiting during Winter 2024. Supervised by Jim Joyce, Ina will be working on her project *Causal Properties and Rational Choices*: "Many people base their decisions on scientific knowledge about causal relationships, e.g., they aim to choose a medical treatment that causes an improvement in their health. Not all causal relationships have the same properties though, e.g., some have particularly large effect sizes. To ensure that their work is practically relevant, scientists often strive to measure causal properties and thereby inform decision-makers. But which causal properties indeed matter for making rational choices, and how should scientists best measure them? This project seeks to find answers to these questions, exposing vital shortcomings in current scientific practice and paving the path for more useful scientific knowledge in a causally complex world."
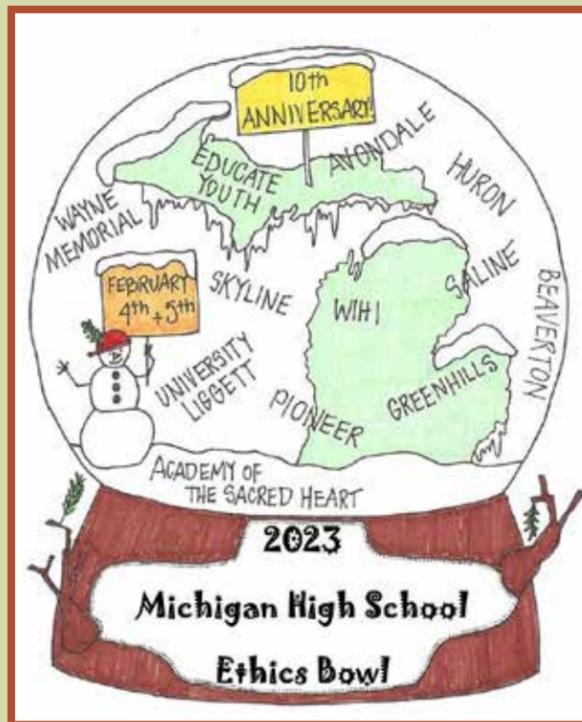
**Gabe Tugendstein** (Florida State University) will be visiting during Spring/Summer 2024, supervised by Sarah Buss. For his project, *Ethics Without Certainty*, Gabe "will perform research, participate in seminars, and develop projects interrogating the ways in which people can ethically and meaningfully relate to one another in the absence of certain, objective standards of goodness. Namely, this will involve analyzing the merits and drawbacks of various Existentialist programs, evaluating the role of narrative art in self-improvement, and locating life experiences that prevailing accounts of ethics fail to accommodate. In keeping with this, I will develop ongoing work on the role of coherence in self-narratives and alienation in intimate relationships."

**André Cardoso** (Federal University of Santa Catarina, Brazil) will be visiting during Spring/Summer 2024, working with Peter Railton. André's project, *The Ethical Justification of Medically-Assisted Death: Principles and Values*, "addresses the ethical justifications of medically-assisted death, specially on US legislations about the topic. The main objective of the project is to analyze the ethical principles and values that support US legislations on medically-assisted death, such as Oregon's Death with Dignity Act."

# A2 ETHICS BOWL RECAP

**by Josh Petersen**

This year, A2Ethics was excited to run the **10th Annual High School Ethics Bowl**, for which U-M Philosophy is a proud partner! The Bowl was coordinated by graduate students Lindy Ortiz, Josh Petersen, and Adam Waggoner as well as Jeanine DeLay of A2Ethics and other A2Ethics staff and volunteers. We were well-represented at the bowl, too, with faculty and graduate students serving as judges, coaches, and volunteers.

Our graduate student coaches meet with high schoolers throughout the year to help them learn about ethics and refine their analytical argumentation skills. This year, our coaches included Abdul Ansari, Francisco Calderón, Brendan Mooney, Lindy Ortiz, Julian Rome, and Sarah Valdman. U-M affiliated judges included graduate students such as Kevin Craven and Josh Petersen, and faculty including Elizabeth Anderson, Sarah Buss, Ishani Maitra, Peter Railton, and Tad Schmaltz.

Teams advance through the bowl by providing ethical insights on a number of imaginary cases. This year, our young philosophers debated the morality of urban development, the ethical implications of AI consciousness, and the relationship between corporate social responsibility and free speech rights. Judges assess the teams based on their ability to identify the key ethical points of these cases, the clarity and thoroughness of their arguments, and the team's ability to participate respectfully and constructively in their dialogues between each other.

The Bowl took place on February 4th and 5th at the Greenhills School in Ann Arbor. We were proud of all of our teams, each of whom competed thoughtfully and respectfully throughout the competition.

Ultimately, Skyline High School won this year's bowl! The Michigan Ethics Bowl was particularly meaningful this year as Skyline went on to win the National Ethics Bowl, hosted by the Parr Center for Ethics at the University of North Carolina. This was the first time a Michigan team has won the national competition!

*Thanks to the many coaches, judges, and other volunteers who made this year's bowl possible!*



# COMPASS at Michigan 2023

**COMPASS at Michigan** brings together students from a diversity of backgrounds for a weekend of philosophical discussion, networking, and mentoring. Each year, the workshop takes place here in Ann Arbor (on Central Campus), and is organized and run by our Philosophy graduate students. This year included the help and support of Professors Elizabeth Anderson, Kristie Dotson, Maegan Fairchild, Ishani Maitra and Laura Ruetsche. Advanced undergraduates and M.A. students (first and second year), including recent graduates, are eligible to apply ["COMPASS" was the name chosen as it was designed to help students find their way].

This year's discussions included:
- Amia Srinivasan's "Genealogy, Epistemology, and Worldmaking", facilitated by Francisco Calderón;
- Judith Jarvis Thompson's "The Trolley Problem", facilitated by Nina Brown and Gabrielle Kerbel; and
- María Lugones's "Playfulness, 'World'-Travelling, and Loving Perception", facilitated by Yixuan Wu.

Information sessions included those on graduate school applications/process along with several grad students' research presentation "flash talks" from Abdul Ansari and Sophia Wushanley. Our "What's It Like Being a Grad Student in Philosophy?" panel discussion included grad student panelists Abdul Ansari, Mitch Barrington, Sophia Wushanley, and Lianghua (Glenn) Zhou, moderated by Valerie Trudel.

The two-day event was capped off with a celebratory dinner at Cottage Inn. This year's organizing committee members included Lindy Ortiz, Julian Rome, and Valerie Trudel.

# 2022/2023 - Event Updates/News

The **2nd Annual Mind and Moral Psychology (MMP)** Graduate Student Conference was held in November 2022, organized by **Elizabeth Beckman, Aaron Glasser, and Adam Waggoner**. Guests included Gabriel Vasquez-Peterson (Pittsburgh), Daniel Grasso (MO-St Louis), Jocelyn Wang (MIT), Gus Turyn (Cornell), Yanjie Ding (Simon Fraser) and keynote speaker Victor Kumar (Boston). The MMP is a Rackham Graduate School sponsored interdisciplinary workshop coordinated by UM Philosophy graduate students. The group meets throughout the AY to discuss philosophy of the mind, moral psychology, and the cognitive sciences.

**Ancient Philosophy Workshop** - In May 2023, the 4th Annual Rackham Interdisciplinary Workshop in Ancient Philosophy was organized by **Sean Costello** and Classics MA students Andrew Mayo and Sara Panteri, with a keynote lecture by Christian Wildberg (University of Pittsburgh).
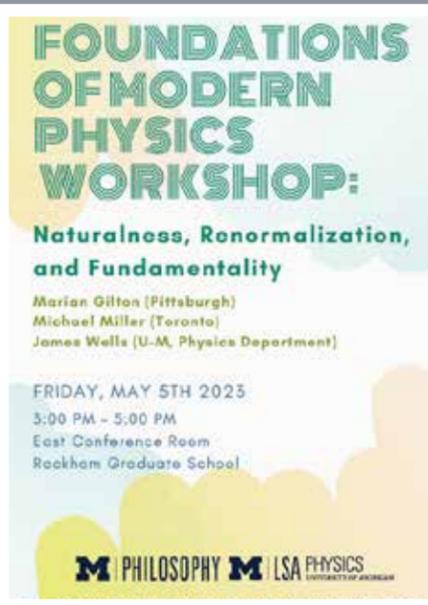
**Spring Colloquium** - In March 2023, the University of Michigan Spring Colloquium, titled "Salience and its Consequences", was co-organized by **Aaron Glasser, Josh Petersen, Margot Witte, and Yixuan Wu**. This year's invited speakers were Eugene Chislenko (Temple), Christopher Mole (UBC), Jessie Munton (Cambridge), and Susanna Siegel (Harvard). Speakers presented their cutting-edge research addressing attention, salience, and their normative impact. The event was very highly attended, both by philosophers and other members of the UM community.

The **Foundations of Modern Physics (FOMP)** Rackham Interdisciplinary Workshop had its first in-person public event since 2019 on May 5, organized by **Francisco Calderón Ossa**, who revived FOMP after a period of inactivity since 2020.

The event was a panel discussion preceded by introductory remarks from Marian Gilton (Pittsburgh), Michael Miller (Toronto), and James Wells (UM Physics). The panelists discussed the cluster of topics that oriented FOMP's readings in 2022-2023: naturalness, renormalization, and fundamentality. With more than 20 people in attendance between physics and philosophy graduate students and faculty as well as from other departments, the format made for a livelier, more interactive event (especially during Q&A), as some panelists and audience members reported.

# Causal Decision Theory, Context, and Determinism

## Calum McNamara

## ABSTRACT

The classic formulation of causal decision theory (CDT) appeals to counterfactuals. It says that you should aim to choose an option that *would* have a good outcome, *were* you to choose it. However, this version of CDT faces trouble if the laws of nature are deterministic. After all, the standard theory of counterfactuals says that, if the laws are deterministic, then if anything—including the choice you make—were different in the present, either the laws would be violated or the distant past would be changed. And as several authors have shown, it's easy to transform this upshot of the standard theory of counterfactuals into full-blown counterexamples to CDT. In response to these counterexamples, I argue here that the problem lies, not so much with CDT's guiding idea—that it's the expected causal consequences of your actions that matter for rational decision-making—but with the fact that the classic formulation of CDT doesn't pay sufficient attention to the context-sensitivity of counterfactuals. I develop a contextualist version of CDT which better accounts for this context-sensitivity. And I show that my theory avoids the problems faced by the classic formulation of CDT in determinsitic worlds.

## 1 Introduction

Here is a bet—take it or leave it. You win \$1 if a proposition $P$ is true, but you lose \$1 if $P$ is false. Before you choose whether to accept or decline this bet, I'll tell you what $P$ is. It's the proposition that the past state of the world, together with the laws of nature, determines that you accept.

Suppose you're certain of determinism. That is, suppose you're certain that the past state of the world, together with the laws of nature, determines whatever it is that you actually do (although in the present case, you're uncertain precisely *what* these things determine you'll do). Then, should you accept my bet? Or should you decline it? It seems perfectly clear that you should accept. After all, by your lights the proposition $P$ is true only if you accept the bet. And it's false only if you decline. So, by accepting, it seems like you're sure to be a dollar better off than you'd otherwise be. Taking the bet is like accepting free money.

Cases similar to this one have come up quite often in the recent philosophical literature. And like the case just described, they're usually cases in which the best course of action is intuitively clear. Surprisingly, however, *causal decision theory* (CDT)—a theory that many regard as our best theory of rational decisionmaking—gets these cases wrong. It recommends courses of action that almost everyone can agree are irrational.

According to CDT, you should make choices by considering the expected *causal* consequences of your actions. Different versions of the theory attempt to make this idea precise in different ways. My preferred version—namely, the version of Stalnaker (1981b), refined by Gibbard and Harper (1978)—appeals to the close connection between causation, on the one hand, and *counterfactuals*, on the other. Roughly, it says that you should choose an option that you think *would* have a good outcome, *were* you to choose it.

But the standard theory of counterfactuals—to which this version of CDT usually appeals—has a surprising upshot, if the laws of nature are deterministic. Specifically, it says that if anything, including the choice you make, were different in the present, then either the laws would be violated or the distant past would be changed. It's this surprising upshot of the standard theory of counterfactuals that leads my preferred version of CDT to give the absurd recommendations in the cases that I mentioned. Other versions of CDT face similar difficulties, for closely related reasons.[1]

My aim here is to slightly refine the Stalnaker-Gibbard-Harper formulation of CDT, so that it avoids the problems raised by the "deterministic cases" I've been talking about. In my view, what these cases show isn't so much that there's a fault with CDT's guiding idea—that it's the expected causal consequences of your actions that matter for rational decision-making—but instead that Stalnaker-Gibbard-Harper CDT, at least as it's usually spelled out, doesn't pay sufficient attention to the *context-sensitivity* of counterfactuals.

In response, I develop a "contextualist" version of Stalnaker-Gibbard-Harper CDT, which better accounts for this context-sensitivity. And I show that my theory avoids the problems faced by the classic formulation of CDT in determinsitic worlds.[2]

In §2 below, I introduce the Stalnaker-Gibbard-Harper version of CDT, as well as the standard theory of counterfactuals. Then, in §3 I show that this theory gives the wrong recommendation in two well-known deterministic cases, both of which are due to Arif Ahmed (2013, 2014a, 2014b). In §§4–5 I introduce my theory: §4 starts with some background, as well as a general overview of the theory; and §5 gives some important further details. §6 then concludes the paper by returning to Ahmed's cases, and showing that my theory gets the right answer in them, as well as in related cases.

Before we get started, let me make two comments.

First, since nearly all of the cases I'm interested in here appeal to deterministic laws of nature, I'll assume determinism in what follows. More precisely, I'll assume that all the worlds under consideration obey deterministic laws. And I'll assume that this is something about which you—the agent facing the decision problems we discuss below—are certain. For present purposes, we can understand a system of laws to be deterministic just in case the following holds: any two worlds that obey those laws are either always exactly alike or never exactly alike, with respect to particular matters of fact (cf. Lewis, 1979, p. 460). I'll leave it as a task for future work to see how well my theory generalizes to cases involving indeterministic laws. But for what it's worth, I think there's reason to be optimistic about its prospects.[3]

Secondly, some authors have recently argued that deterministic cases are not genuine decision problems. For, apparently, no agent who faces one can see herself as free.[4] This is something I disagree with. But for now I'll set my disagreement aside. Going forward, I'll assume that any agent facing a deterministic case can see herself as free, in some non-trivial sense. That my approach gets us the right answers in these cases, while also allowing us to make this assumption, is, I think, one of its main draws for those of us with both causalist and compatibilist commitments.

## 2 CDT and Counterfactuals

Whenever you face a choice, you'll have some *options* available to you, $A_1, ..., A_n$. Here, I'll take your options to be propositions, which—for now—I'll take to be sets of worlds. I'll also assume that your options form a *partition* of the space of worlds, in the sense that each world $w$ is a member of exactly one $A_i$. Intuitively, we can think of your options as the finest-grained propositions you believe you can *make* true by deciding (cf. Jeffrey, 1983, p. 84).

You'll also have *outcomes* that can result from your choice, $O_1, ..., O_m$. I'll take these, too, to be propositions that form a partition. And I'll assume they're propositions whose truth would settle everything that you care about.

Now, let $cr$ be your credence function (subjective probability function). Let $v$ be your subjective value function. And let $>$ be an operator, which takes a pair of propositions, $P$, $Q$, and returns the counterfactual $P > Q$. Then, CDT—at least in the Stalnaker-Gibbard-Harper formulation—says that you should choose an option, $A$, that maximizes *utility, U*, defined as follows:

$$U(A) = \sum_i cr(A > O_i) \cdot v(O_i).$$

As I said before, the idea here is that you should choose an option that you think *would* have a good outcome, *were* you to choose it.

I haven't yet mentioned causation. However, earlier I said that, according to CDT, it's the expected *causal* consequences of your actions that matter for rational decision-making. So, we still need to say how the *counterfactual* rule above reflects this guiding idea. And to do that, we need to make some additional assumptions about the counterfactuals A > Oi.

For starters, let's assume that they have the following standard semantics, due to Stalnaker (1968).[5] Let $f$ be a *selection function*: a function that takes a proposition $P$ and a world $w$ as arguments, and returns a world $f(P,w)$, thought of, intuitively, as the "most similar" $P$-world to $w$. Then, Stalnaker's semantics says that a counterfactual $P > Q$ is true at $w$ just in case $Q$ is true at this most similar $P$-world, $f(P,w)$.[6]

Let's also make an assumption about the meaning of 'most similar $P$-world'. After all, not just any relation of similarity will do for present purposes. To see why, consider an example from Jackson (1977). Imagine that Fred is on the roof of a tall building, teetering on the edge. A moment later, he steps down. So I turn to you and say: "Thank goodness!

(1) If Fred had jumped, he would've died."

Puzzled, you respond to me: "That's not true; Fred's not suicidal. He would've jumped only if there had been a net below him. So,

(2) if Fred had jumped, he would've lived."

Here, it doesn't seem like either of us has said anything false. But then again, it's clear that the two counterfactuals we've uttered can't be true at the same time. The most plausible explanation of what's going on invokes *context-sensitivity*. When I uttered my counterfactual, we were in a context at which the most similar antecedent-world was one where there's no net below Fred at the time of his jump. When you uttered your counterfactual, we were in a context at which the most similar antecedent-world was one in which a specific causal precursor for Fred's jumping is salient—namely, there being a net below him. The function of your preamble—"That's not true; Fred's not suicidal..."—was to set up this latter context. Thus, my counterfactual is true in the first context, and your counterfactual is true in the second.[7]

Lewis (1979) calls counterfactuals like mine "standard counterfactuals", and counterfactuals like yours "backtracking counterfactuals". Very roughly, we can think of the former as counterfactuals for which the most similar antecedent-world is one that's like the world of evaluation with respect to matters of fact in the past. And we can think of the latter as counterfactuals for which the past varies. (I'll revisit the former gloss later on.) Lewis also argues—convincingly, in my view—that it's only the first kind of counterfactual that can tell us about the *causal* effects of the antecedent on the consequent. And that, in a nutshell, is what we're after here. So, going forward, let's set backtracking counterfactuals aside, and assume that any counterfactual under discussion has a "standard" interpretation.[8]

To pin down the notion of a standard counterfactual more precisely, let's again follow Lewis—at least for now—in saying that, when *P* is about a nomically possible, dated event, the most similar *P*-world to *w* is one that's like *w* with respect to the following conditions:

(i) it matches *w* in all particular matters of fact at times before *P*, and
(ii) it obeys *w*'s laws.

These criteria are plausible, not least because they deliver the right verdict in cases like Jackson's. To see this, just notice that, because there was no net below Fred when he was up on the roof, it follows by (i) that the most similar world at which he jumps is also a world where there's no net below him. Then, by (ii), it follows that Fred dies after jumping off the roof, since the most similar world at which he jumps is a world where gravity works the same as we're used to.

Notice also, however, that if *w* is a world with deterministic laws of nature, and *P* is a proposition that's false at *w*, then the most similar *P*-world to *w* can't be a world that satisfies (i) and (ii) perfectly.[9] After all, if the laws are deterministic, then the intrinsic state of the world at any time, together with the laws, determines its state at all times. Thus, if the most similar *P*-world to *w* matched *w* perfectly with respect to both (i) and (ii), it would have to be a world at which ¬*P* is true. But by assumption, it's a world at which *P* is true. So at this world, a contradiction is true. And this makes *P* counterfactually impossible.

Since we're interested in spelling out CDT using counterfactuals, this isn't a consequence we can live with. So we need to reject the claim that the most similar *P*-world to *w* is one that satisfies (i) and (ii) *perfectly*. Instead, we need to say something like: the most similar *P*-world to *w* is a world that provides the best *trade-off* between (i) and (ii).

The most influential account of this trade-off is, again, given by Lewis (1979). According to him, the best trade-off-world is one that matches *w* with respect to all matters of particular fact up until a time shortly before *P*, but which does not obey *w*'s laws. Instead, it obeys a system of laws similar to those that obtain at *w*, but which permit a "local divergence miracle"—a small violation of *w*'s laws, sufficient to bring *P* about.[10]

There are other ways we could go with respect to this trade-off, if we wished. For instance, Dorr (2016) gives a different account of similarity, according to which the best trade-off world is one that obeys *w*'s laws perfectly throughout all time, and which is also like *w* with respect to "macro-history", but not with respect to "micro-history".[11] However, since causal decision theorists almost always work with Lewis's account by default;[12] and since none of my conclusions would change if we adopted Dorr's account instead;[13] I'll take the former as my foil in what follows. From here on out, I'll call it the *miracles account*.

As an example of how CDT works when combined with the miracles account of similarity, consider the following decision problem (Nozick, 1969):

*Newcomb.* In front of you are two boxes, A and B. Box A is opaque, and contains $1,000, 000 ($1*m*) or nothing, but you don't know which. Box B is transparent, and contains a $1, 000 bill ($1*k*). You have two options: either take just the opaque box (*One-box*); or take both boxes (*Two-box*). The catch is that, yesterday, a highly reliable predictor predicted which of these things you'd do. If she predicted that you'd take just the opaque box, then she put the million dollars inside that box. If she predicted that you'd take both boxes, then she left the opaque box empty. What is your choice?

Here's a table, representing your decision problem. (Note that here and throughout, I assume you value dollars linearly, so that $v(\$i) = i$, for any *i*.)

|  | Million | No million |
|---|---|---|
| One-box | $1m | $0 |
| Two-box | $1m + 1k | $1k |

Table 1: *Newcomb*

Causal decision theorists all agree that you should take both boxes in *Newcomb*. After all, while there's a strong correlation between your choice and the predictor's prediction, that prediction is in the past and there's nothing you can do to change it. So, taking both boxes *causes* you to be better off, no matter what the predictor predicted.

To see that the version of CDT I sketched above delivers this verdict, notice that, no matter what you choose to do, the contents of the opaque box *would* be unchanged at the most similar world at which you chose differently, by the miracles account of similarity. Thus, taking both boxes gets you a thousand dollars more than taking one box *would*, no matter what the predictor put in the opaque box.

I won't go through the formal details of this argument, because the case is well known, and also because I'll be returning to it in §6 anyway. But the nice thing about mentioning the *Newcomb* problem now is that it illustrates a principle that's at the heart of CDT—the so-called *causal dominance principle*. According to this principle, if you're sure that one option will *cause*

you to be better off than another, no matter what the world turns out to be like, then you shouldn't choose the latter option. This principle seems compelling. And it's ultimately what leads CDT to give (what I and many others think is) the right answer in *Newcomb*.

Endnotes (footnotes in original)
[1]See Skyrms (1980, 1982, 1984), Lewis (1981), Sobel (1994), or Joyce (1999) for other versions of CDT. Then, see Ahmed (2013, 2014a, 2014b), Solomon (2021), Elga (2022), and Hedden (2023) for discussions of the problems raised by "deterministic cases" for these other theories.
[2]The approach I advocate for here is briefly suggested by Elga (2022, pp. 211-12) as an approach worth exploring. Also, while this paper was under review, I learned that Robert Stalnaker has recently sketched a response to a deterministic case that's broadly similar to mine (see §6.4, and his MS for details). There are a few important differences between Stalnaker's approach and mine, and I'll point these out as I go along. However, for the most part, I take this over-arching convergence to be good news: as the reader will notice, the approach I take here is broadly Stalnakerian in spirit.
[3]A couple of other remarks about laws of nature. First, throughout, I use 'laws' and 'laws of nature' as shorthands for 'fundamental physical laws of nature'. I also assume that laws of nature are inviolable. This assumption is not wholly uncontroversial (see, e.g., Lange (2000), Braddon-Mitchell (2001), and Kment (2006, 2014) for dissent). But I don't think rejecting it makes for a very promising response to the deterministic cases. So I won't say anything about it here.
[4]See especially Joyce (2016) and Solomon (MS). Note, however, that Joyce has stressed to me in conversation that he doesn't think being certain of determinism precludes the possibility that an agent can see herself as free simpliciter. Instead, he thinks this is merely a special feature of certain decision problems that we'll consider below.
[5]See also Stalnaker and Thomason (1970). Lewis (1973b) gives a similar semantics for counterfactuals, although it differs from Stalnaker's in a few crucial ways. It's well known, however, that Lewis's semantics coincides with Stalnaker's, given the assumption of determinism. Thus, since I'm making that assumption in this paper, the differences between Stalnaker's theory and Lewis's—like, e.g., the fact that Stalnaker's theory validates the principle of *conditional excluded middle*, and Lewis's does not—aren't relevant here.
[6]This semantics assumes that there always is a *P*-world to be selected. A more general version of the semantics would relax this assumption, with a clause saying what happens when there's no P-world to be selected (see, e.g., Stalnaker (1968)). For present purposes, however, I'll set that case aside.
[7]I'm speaking loosely here. Really, it's the sentences that express counterfactuals that are context-sensitive, and not the counterfactuals themselves. For present purposes, however, I'll mostly elide the distinction between propositions and sentences, since it simplifies things to do so.
[8]Some philosophers argue that the distinction between standard and backtracking counterfactuals is merely one of degree, rather than kind (see, e.g., Holguín and Teitel (MS)). To make things simple here, however, I'm going to assume there's a clearcut distinction between these two kinds of counterfactuals. For a well worked-out theory of this distinction with which I'm sympathetic, see Khoo (2017, 2022).
[9]The argument I give here closely follows Dorr (2016). Note that there's an unstated closure premise in the argument, as I state it. See Dorr's paper for a more careful presentation.
[10]See also Jackson (1977), Bennett (2003), Lange (2000), Kment (2006, 2014), and Khoo (2022).
[11]See Nute (1980), Bennett (1984), Albert (2000), Loewer (2007), Maudlin (2007), and Goodman (2014) for related accounts of similarity. Ahmed (2013, 2014b) denies that CDT can be underwritten by Dorr's account of similarity. But see Dorr (2016, §7) for a reply.
[12]See, e.g., Gibbard and Harper (1978, p. 127, and pp. 160-61, n.2), Lewis (1981, p. 22, especially fn. 16), Sobel (1994, p. 42-43), and Joyce (1999, pp. 169-70).
[13]See, e.g., Williamson and Sandgren (forthcoming), Gallow (2022), Hedden (2023), and Kment (2023) for discussion of deterministic counterexamples that affect a version of CDT which makes use of Dorr's account of similarity.
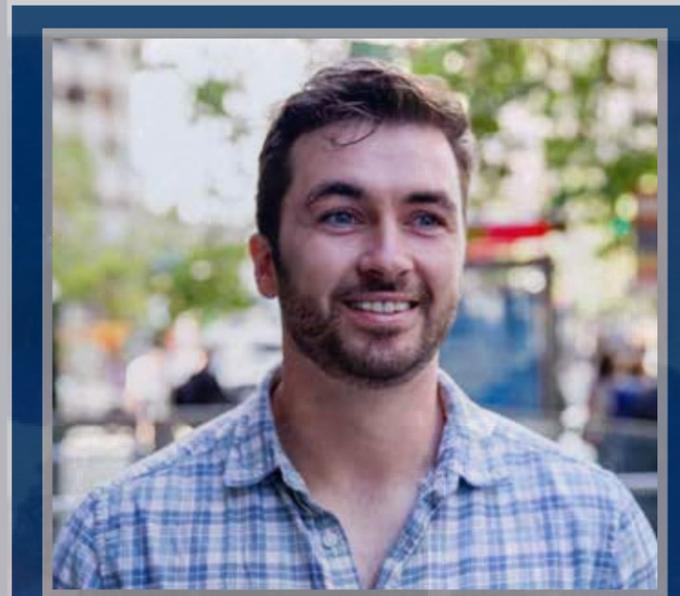
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Fun fact: Calum has an Erdös number of 4 (Me → Snow Zhang → Abigail Raz → Christopher D. Godsil → Paul Erdös).

**ABSTRACT**

In the Fourth Meditation, Descartes famously treats the indifference of the will (roughly, ambivalence of reasons) as the source of error, which many read as oddly suggesting that the will judges arbitrarily. In his letter to Elisabeth dated 1st September 1645, however, he expressly takes passions to be the source of error, saying that passions move the will to judge erroneously by misrepresenting the value of objects. Although these two accounts focus on different kinds of error – theoretical and practical error, respectively – I argue that Descartes is best understood as extending the second account also to the source of theoretical error. On my reading, the first account does not imply that erroneous judgements are simply arbitrary, but it leaves out an explanation why we judge at the time we do, when we could (and should) continue to inquire insofar as we have not yet gathered sufficient evidence. The second account fills in this lacuna by giving an explanation in terms of passions. I further argue that the schematic nature of the first account is due partly to the structure of the *Meditations*, but mainly to the fact that Descartes has not yet systematically examined the nature of passions there.

# Descartes on the Source of Error: The Fourth Meditation and the Correspondence with Elisabeth

**Lianghua Zhou**

According to Descartes, error is not the mere absence of truth but "a privation or lack of some knowledge [*cognitionis*] which somehow should be in me" (AT VII 55/CSM II 38).[1] He gives two accounts of the source of error. In the Fourth Meditation, he claims that "since the will is indifferent in such cases [of obscure and confused ideas[2]], it easily turns aside from what is true and good, and this is the source of my error and sin" (AT VII 58/CSM II 40–1). In his letter to Elisabeth dated 1st September 1645,[3] Descartes addresses the same topic, but he claims that some passions bring it about that pleasurable sensations "often appear much greater than they are, especially before we possess them; and this is the source of all the evils and all the errors of life" (AT IV 284/CSMK 263).

Whereas the first account of the source of error has received considerable attention in the secondary literature, the second account and its relation to the first have seldom been explored.[4] This has led many to read Descartes as oddly suggesting that the will judges arbitrarily in cases of obscure and confused ideas.[5] I resist this kind of reading, as it mistakenly assumes that Descartes takes error to arise *only* when the will is *completely* indifferent, i.e. when there is no reason at all that moves the will to judge. Nonetheless, I do think that the first account leaves a related issue unresolved, namely why we judge at the time we do, when we could (and should) continue to inquire insofar as we have not yet gathered sufficient evidence. While we might cite inconclusive reasons to explain how this kind of premature erroneous judgement is possible, our possession of inconclusive reasons itself cannot explain why we *actually* judge at the time we do rather than waiting to gather further evidence, since both options are consistent with the possession of such reasons.[6] This remaining issue in the first account, I argue, is resolved in the second account by giving an explanation in terms of passions, although the two accounts focus on different kinds of error, viz. theoretical and practical error, respectively.[7] I further argue that the issue in the first account is due partly to the structure of the *Meditations*, but mainly to the fact that Descartes has not yet systematically examined the nature of passions there.

In what follows, I shall begin by setting out Descartes' account of the source of error in the Fourth Meditation, paying particular attention to a remaining issue in this first account (Section 1). Next, I will discuss his second account in the Correspondence and show how it differs from the first account (Section 2). To prepare for my discussion of how these two accounts can be combined into a more elaborate single explanation, I shall explain the relation between the will and passion (Section 3). After clarifying this relation, I will argue that the second account resolves the issue in the first account by citing passions (Section 4). I shall conclude that the two accounts, despite their differences, are unified in one respect: both suggest that we should use reason in the best possible way to avoid error (Section 5).

## 1. The account of the source of error in the Fourth Meditation

In the First Meditation, the meditator considered many different possible scenarios in which error might arise in her. After establishing the existence of God in the Third Meditation, the meditator has to reconsider, in the Fourth Meditation, the possibilities of error, figuring out especially how error is caused within her and how the occurrence of error in her is compatible with the existence of God. To do so, the meditator begins by denying that God could be the cause of error by deceiving us, since God exists as a perfect being while the will to deceive is an indication of malice. Nor would God, as a perfect being, give the meditator a faculty that would enable her to go wrong while she uses the faculty correctly (AT VII 53–4/CSM II 37–8). This leaves the meditator with the possibility that what causes error is her own misuse of a God-endowed faculty.

Descartes then develops an account of the source of error based on this possibility:

[W]hat then is the source of my mistakes [errores]? It must be simply this: the scope of the will is wider than that of the intellect; but instead of restricting it within the same limits, I extend its use to matters which I do not understand. Since the will is indifferent in such cases, it easily turns aside from what is true and good, and this is the source of my error and sin. (AT VII 58/CSM II 40–1)

Descartes takes the occurrence of error to depend on our use of two different faculties: the intellect and the will. The intellect consists in the ability to perceive or understand ideas for potential judgements, and the will consists in the ability to affirm or deny ideas, which results in judgements (AT VII 56/CSM II 39). To address the question, 'What is the source of error?', Descartes first claims that the scope of our will is wider than that of our intellect. Although the scope difference between these two faculties allows us to judge with our will when we do not clearly perceive with our intellect,[8] it does not show that these faculties, both of which are given by God, are causes of error. For neither faculty is intrinsically defective, which is shown by the fact that no error can arise if they are used properly. Instead, Descartes construes error as arising from our own misuse of the will, namely the overreach of the will to obscure and confused ideas; if we otherwise restricted the will to the clear and distinct ideas of the intellect, we would avoid error.[9]

To be clear, the overreach of the will to obscure and confused ideas has two possibilities: either we will to *affirm* obscure and confused ideas, or we will to *deny* them.[10] On Descartes' view, in both cases we do not use the will correctly:

If, however, I simply refrain from making a judgement in cases where I do not perceive the truth with sufficient clarity and distinctness, then it is clear that I am behaving correctly and avoiding error. But if…I either affirm or deny, then I am not using my free will correctly. If I go for the alternative which is false, then obviously I shall be in error; if I take the other side, then it is by pure chance that I arrive at the truth, and I shall still be at fault since it is clear by the natural light that the perception of the intellect should always precede the determination of the will. (AT VII 59–60/CSM II 41)

That is, on the one hand, if our will's affirmation or denial of obscure and confused ideas turns out to be a false judgement, then obviously we misuse our will and fall into error. On the other, if our will's affirmation or denial of these ideas happens to be a true judgement, then we still misuse our will and should be considered to have made a mistake, because we break the rule for correct judgement that Descartes says is "clear by the natural light", namely that we ought not to judge in the absence of clear and distinct ideas produced by the intellect. This means that we err whenever we extend the will to make judgements about matters that we do not fully understand. Moreover, the error under discussion is culpable, because we do not withhold judgement as we should (and are able to do). So the Fourth Meditation suggests that we are always culpable for the overreach of the will to obscure and confused ideas.[11]

I now turn to clarify the relation between the intellect and the will, which can help us see an unresolved issue in the account of the source of error in the Fourth Meditation. Descartes construes the operation of the intellect as involving internal forces, such as reasons of truth and goodness and divinely produced dispositions, which move the will to judge (AT VII 57–8/CSM II 40). Clear and distinct ideas involving reasons of truth and goodness, along with divinely produced dispositions, inevitably incline the will to correct judgements. [12] Unlike these cases in which the will is inclined by indubitable reasons to judge, Descartes argues that the will is indifferent [*indifferens*], i.e. ambivalent about judging,[13] in cases of obscure and confused ideas. For when the will is extended to obscure and confused ideas, there may be no reason at all that moves the will to judge, or even if there are reasons to judge, the mere fact that the ideas are obscure and confused shows that they cannot determine the will in a way that excludes indifference. Still, he suggests that the fact that the will is indifferent can explain why the will judges incorrectly: since the will is indifferent in cases of obscure and confused ideas, it easily turns away from truth, and this is the source of error (AT VII 58/CSM II 41).

However, there is the question whether the fact that the will has an indifference that comes with obscurity and confusion adequately explains the fact that it judges incorrectly. Regarding this, Wilson (*Descartes*, 123) reads Descartes as suggesting that error arises *only* when the will is *completely* indifferent, i.e. when there is no reason at all that moves the will to judge.[14] Based on this sort of reading, Wilson argues that the Fourth Meditation falsely implies that the will arbitrarily judges for no definite reason.[15] This view, she argues, is implausible because it offers no explanation – whether in terms of rational inference/ evidence or psychological motivation – for why the will judges in cases of obscure and confused ideas.

Wilson's reading is not supported by direct textual evidence from the Fourth Meditation, though she tends to read it as if this were the case. However, I think Descartes can deny that error arises only when the will is completely indifferent, as he writes in the Fourth Meditation:

> [I]ndifference does not merely apply to cases where the intellect is wholly ignorant, but extends in general to every case where the intellect does not have sufficiently clear knowledge at the time when the will deliberates. (AT VII 59/CSM II 41)

The context of this passage is that Descartes considers a case of complete indifference in which the intellect does not discern any reason that inclines the will in one way or another. This case corresponds to what he mentions here as the case in which "the intellect is wholly ignorant".[16] But following his discussion of complete indifference, he adds that indifference applies to every other case in which the intellect lacks sufficiently clear knowledge. In these other cases of indifference, there are reasons to judge, but the mere fact that the reasons are obscure and confused shows that they cannot determine the will in a way that excludes indifference. Since these inconclusive reasons cannot exclude indifference but might still incline the will to judge, they seem to suffice to enable erroneous judgements in

these cases.

Nonetheless, even if we grant that Descartes might take inconclusive reasons to be sufficient for explaining how judging in cases of obscure and confused ideas is possible, I think the Fourth Meditation still leaves a related issue unresolved, namely why in these cases we judge at the time we do, when we could (and should) continue to inquire insofar as we have not yet gathered sufficient evidence. The content of our ideas themselves explains why we judge at the time we do in cases of clear and distinct ideas – we judge when we do because of the presence of the clarity of our ideas, which compels us to judge. However, there seems to be no such explanation in cases of obscure and confused ideas, for the indifference that comes with obscurity and confusion can allow us to judge on the one hand but can also allow us to refrain from judging on the other. While in the latter cases we might cite inconclusive reasons to explain how we *could* judge prematurely and erroneously, our possession of inconclusive reasons itself cannot explain why we *actually* judge at the time we do rather than waiting to gather further evidence, since both options are consistent with the possession of such reasons. The problem, then, is that the Fourth Meditation is silent on the question of what psychological story can be told to explain our actual faulty exercise of judgement in the absence of sufficient evidence. [17] Even so, contrary to Wilson's reading, at least some cases of indifference do not commit Descartes to the implausible view that the will arbitrarily judges for no definite reason.

I have now presented Descartes' first account of the source of error in the Fourth Meditation as well as an unresolved issue arising from it. In the following sections, I shall discuss his second account in the Correspondence, showing especially how it differs from the first account (Section 2) but still fills in the lacuna in the first account by resolving the above issue (Sections 3 and 4).

To continue reading Lianghua's article, please visit: https://doi.org/10.1080/09608788.2022.2132908

ENDNOTES (footnoted in original)

[1] So understood, error is stronger than a mere divergence from reality, which may be independent of the subject's judgement. Descartes also distinguishes privation from mere negation. For example, the lack of sight in a rock is a mere negation rather than a privation, for sight is not something that *should* be in a rock. Furthermore, he takes error to be a privation of *cognitio*, not *scientia*. As Christofidou ("Descartes' Dualism", 220) notes, *cognitio* is *subjectively* true and certain and does not need the guarantee of God, while *scientia* is *objectively* true and certain and needs the guarantee of God. For example, an atheist can know that the three angles of a triangle are equal to two right angles, but this knowledge is *cognitio* rather than *scientia* because, without the guarantee of God, it is possible for the atheist to be deceived even when things seem evident to him, although this doubt may never occur to him (AT VII 141/CSM II 101). For discussion, see also Williams, *Descartes*, especially Chapter 7. References to Descartes are in the following form: volume and page number in Adam and Tannery's edition of Descartes'works ("AT")/volume and page number in the Cottingham, Stoothoff, and Murdoch translations ("CSM") or in the Cottingham, Stoothoff, Murdoch, and Kenny translations ("CSMK"). My reference to Elisabeth's letter to Descartes mentions volume and page number in Adam and Tannery's edition of Descartes' works ("AT")/page number in Shapiro's translation ("S").

[2] Obscure and confused ideas contrast with clear and distinct ideas. In the *Meditations*, Descartes does not define clear and distinct ideas. For my purposes, we just need to know that clear and distinct ideas provide conclusive evidence while obscure and confused ideas do not.

[3] In what follows, I shall mean this letter when I mention "the Correspondence". When I mention other letters, I will give their dates and addressees.

[4] For discussion of the first account, see Carriero, *Between Two Worlds*; Curley, "the

Ethics of Belief"; Rosenthal, "the Theory of Judgement"; Wilson, Descartes. For brief mentions of the second account, which do not explore its relation to the first account, see Duboucliez, "Descartes et les quarante passions"; Jayasekera, "the Passions of the Soul".

[5] See Curley, "the Ethics of Belief", 177–8; Rosenthal, "the Theory of Judgement", 407; and Wilson, *Descartes*, 127. See also n. 15.

[6] I thank the anonymous referees and the associate editor for helping me frame the issue this way. I think this issue needs to be resolved independently of whether Descartes is treated as a libertarian or compatibilist about free will. The libertarian/compatibilist dispute concerns whether, for Descartes, the will always has a two-way power of action, which is commonly understood as the ability to do otherwise, or, conversely, the freedom of the will is compatible with the fact that it is determined at least in some cases. This dispute tends to focus on cases of clear and distinct ideas. For a recent debate on this issue, see Lennon, "Descartes is Not a Libertarian"; Ragland, "Is Descartes a Libertarian". I set aside this debate, since I am interested in cases of obscure and confused ideas, which can be put in a neutral way.

[7] Descartes distinguishes these two by defining each in terms of its subject-matter: theoretical error is the sort of error that occurs in distinguishing speculative truth from falsehood, while practical error is the sort of error that occurs in pursuing good and avoiding evil (AT VII 15/CSM II 11). The second account clearly focuses on practical error, but whether the first account focuses only on theoretical error has been disputed. For more on this, see Section 2.

[8] This does not mean that we can extend our will to judge about a thing when the thing is not displayed in the intellect at all. For more on this, see later this section and Section 4.

[9] Descartes mentions similar arguments in *Principles* I, 33 and 35 (AT VIIIA18/CSM I 204– 5). In the *Rules*, he states that we err because we take for granted poorly understood observations or lay down groundless judgements. Descartes does not treat human error as arising from faulty inference, which we today may tend to treat as a typical kind of human error. This is because he thinks "the deduction or pure inference of one thing from another can never be performed wrongly by an intellect which is in the least degree rational" (AT X 365/CSM I 12). On his view, we may err if we do not clearly perceive all the propositions and links in a chain.

[10] As indicated in the following quote, there is the option to suspend judgements in cases of obscure and confused ideas, in which case we use the will properly.

[11] I use 'culpable error' to refer to error involved in cases where we are culpable for falling in error. On Descartes' view, we are culpable whenever we do not use our faculties correctly, even in the case of true judgement. As I will discuss in Section 2, this becomes less definitive when extending the will to obscure and confused ideas in practical cases (e.g. when we have to come to a decision under time pressure). Here, he seems to focus just on theoretical cases where we should (and could) postpone judgement, but we do not.

[12] Descartes sometimes takes divine grace to lead us to affirm something that we do not fully grasp, e.g. the Trinity (AT VIIIA 14/CSM I 201). This seems to show that divinely produced dispositions can lead us to affirm obscure and confused ideas. Relatedly, Descartes claims that while faith concerns obscure matters, the obscurity only refers to the subject-matter that faith relates to; the formal reason that leads us to affirm matters of faith consists in an inner light from God, which is not obscure (AT VII 147–8/CSM II 105). But I do not think this is a problem because, on his view, we can have a clear and distinct idea of God (with respect to the things we know), although the idea does not fully represent everything in God (AT VIIIA 26/CSM I 211; AT VII 46/CSM II 31–2). Also, while what the dispositions lead us to affirm or deny is obscure and confused, the reasons for the affirmation or denial are clear and distinct insofar as they are grounded in the clear and distinct perception that dispositions from a perfect God always lead us to the truth.

[13] In a letter to [Mesland] dated 9th February 1645, Descartes distinguishes two different senses of indifference: (1) a positive power of self-determination (roughly an ability to do otherwise) and (2) ambivalence of reasons (not having any more reason to affirm than to deny in a paradigm case of this sort of indifference, but Descartes suggests that having more reasons on one side while less on the other still counts as indifference in this sense) (AT IV 173/CSMK 245). The Fourth Meditation seems to focus on (2), as Descartes discusses it in his Sixth Set of Replies (AT VII 433/CSM II 292). For discussion, see Alanen, *Descartes' Concept of Mind*, 228–9; Beyssade, "Descartes' Doctrine of Freedom", 193–6; Carriero, *Between Two Worlds*, 257–64; Lennon, "Descartes is Not a Libertarian", 57–62; Ragland, "Is Descartes a Libertarian", 88–90; Schmaltz, "Human Freedom", 10–3; Shapiro, "Descartes' Account of Free Will", 35–7.

[14] Given the previous note about the sense of indifference in the present context, the reader might immediately find Wilson's reading suspicious: it does not cover the cases in which some insufficient reasons enable erroneous judgements. I will return to this point shortly.

[15] Wilson (*Descartes*, 127) claims that she is following Curley ("the Ethics of Belief", 177–8; cf. 176), who takes judgement in cases of obscure and confused ideas to be a bare act of the will for Descartes. Similarly, Rosenthal ("the Theory of Judgement", 407) takes Descartes to mean that the wanton use of the will in these cases causes error.

[16] Descartes later eliminates cases of complete indifference when addressing an objection from Gassendi. I will discuss this shift in Section 4, as it is related to how Descartes resolves a remaining issue that I will mention shortly.

[17] Alternatively, one might appeal to some external explanation, saying that we judge in

the absence of sufficient evidence due to practical demands upon life. As we will see in Section 2, Descartes considers practical contingencies and just requires moral certainty for judgements in practical cases, but he does not think the same applies to purely theoretical cases.



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# RECENT GRADUATE NEWS

**Lingxi Chenyang (PhD 2023, JD 2020 [Yale])** defended her dissertation **"Property Theory, Land Use Law, and Climate Change"**, under the supervision of Professor Elizabeth Anderson. She argued over three related papers that foundational theories of property rules and other environmental management strategies must engage with empirical science. She further notes that by abstracting from biology and ecology in particular, these theories will fail to capture promising solutions for our most pressing environmental problems. Lingxi is currently an Associate Professor of Law, S.J. Quinney School of Law, University of Utah.

**Chris Nicholson (PhD 2023, JD 2013 [Yale])** defended his dissertation **"Essays on Belief, Decision, and Learning",** under the supervision of Professor Jim Joyce. His dissertation examined the scope of the epistemic imperative to pursue accurate belief, beginning by arguing that the accuracy comes from believing self-fulfilling prophecies have no epistemic value. It further discussed a theory of the act of suspending judgment about a proposition, exploring the question of how the concept fits within a notion of degrees of belief. Chris is currently the Senior Vice President, Head of Research for STRIVE Asset Management.

**Kevin Craven (PhD 2023)** defended his dissertation **"Mistaken Identity: Conceptual Change, Pragmatism, and the Truth About Gender",** under the supervision of Professor Ishani Maitra. His dissertation aimed to contribute to two recently burgeoning literatures in philosophy: that surrounding conceptual engineering and that surrounding the metaphysics of gender. He began with a criticism of the recent conceptual engineering literature, arguing that the idea of rationally warranted conceptual change raises irresolvable puzzles as long as the kind of rationality at work is assumed to be the familiar type of instrumental rationality. Kevin is currently a case manager at the Shelter Association of Washtenaw County.

**Sherice Ngaserin Ng Jing Ya (PhD 2023)** defended her dissertation **"Towards a Buddhist Metaphysics of Gender"**, under the supervision of Professor Tad Schmaltz. She focused on demonstrating three different metaphysical accounts of the gender-related indriyas that are found within the texts of the classical Śrāvakayāna tradition, resulting in a multiplicity of attitudes about gender and disagreeing with what is generally accepted in current scholarship about gender-related indriyas. A Yale-NUS alumnus (BA '18), Sherice remains connected as an Overseas Graduate Scholar, and will be returned there Fall 2023 as a Lecturer in Philosophy. Additionally, she will be giving research talks organized by the Centre for International & Professional Experience (CIPE). She is also a collaborator for a Yale-NUS Grant on Buddhist-Platonist Dialogues.

**Rebecca Harrison (PhD 2023)** defended her dissertation **"Negotiating What We Do With Words: A Social Contestation Theory of Speech Acts"**, under the supervision of Professor Ishani Maitra. Her dissertation challenges us to move away from an individualistic theory of speech acts, where the focus is on the speaker and the moment of speech, and towards a more fully social theory of speech acts—a theory of how we perform actions with words over time with others (thus called a Social Contestation Theory of speech acts). As of Fall 2023, Rebecca began a TT position as an Assistant Professor at Binghamton University, SUNY.

**Sumeet Patwardhan (PhD 2023)** defended his dissertation **"Consent, Blame, and Sex",** under the supervision of Professor Ishani Maitra. He notes that "[i]t's a commonplace principle that 'ethical (sexual) interactions must be consensual.' But what is involved in abiding by this principle? [T]he first chapter focuses on consent-undermining coercion, the second chapter focuses on consent-undermining ignorance." He further argued that consent can be undermined in far subtler ways than we often recognize, especially within close relationships. As of Fall 2023, Sumeet began a TT position as an Assistant Professor at Macalester College.

# Alumni News



**Marie Jayasekera (PhD '10)** - will be transitioning to Assistant Professor at Cal State Long Beach beginning Fall 2023. Marie's research focuses on how early modern philosophers understand free will and human agency. She is interested in how thinkers conceive of the will, activity, and freedom, and the general move in the period away from traditional conceptions of the will as the locus of freedom and agency. She has taught courses that explore issues in epistemology, metaphysics, philosophy of mind, moral philosophy, and political philosophy in the 17th, 18th, and 19th centuries; on the contemporary literature in moral psychology; as well as those that introduce students to philosophy and to critical thinking and writing. Recent publications include "'All in Their Nature Good': Descartes on the Passions of the Soul," *Journal of the History of Philosophy* 58 (2020): 71–92 and "Imitation and 'Infinite' Will: Descartes on the Imago Dei." In *Oxford Studies in Early Modern Philosophy*, Volume VIII, edited by Daniel Garber and Donald Rutherford, 1–38. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2018.



**Laura Soter (PhD '22)** - will be starting as an Assistant Professor at York University beginning Fall 2024. She is currently completing her second year as a Postdoctoral Research Associate at Duke. Her research focuses on topics relating to the ethics of belief, mental state control, and moral psychology. She is broadly interested in issues at the intersection of cognitive science, philosophy of mind, ethics, and epistemology, and in using empirical psychology as a tool to both highlight new philosophical questions and make new progress on old ones. Her recent publications include "Acceptance and the Ethics of Belief" *Philosophical Studies* (2023), "What We Would (but Shouldn't) Do for Those We Love: Universalism versus Partiality in Responding to Others' Moral Transgressions" *Cognition* (2021), with Berg, M.K., Gelman, S.A., & Kross, E., and "Cultural Schemas: What They Are, How to Find Them, and What to Do Once You've Caught One" *American Sociological Review* (2021) with Boutyline, A.
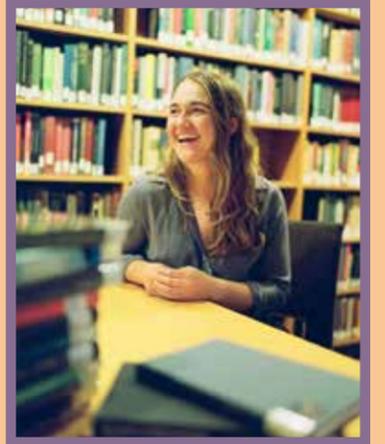


**Eli Lichtenstein (PhD '19)** - will be transitioning to Lecturer in Philosophy at University of Edinburgh beginning Fall 2023. Eli's research interests include social values in science, scientific and technological control of nature, artistic understanding, environmental art and aesthetics, anthropocentrism and ecocentrism, objectivity, post-Kantian philosophy (especially Nietzsche), history of modern art and science. HIs recent publications include "Revaluing Laws of Nature in Secularized Science" in Y. Ben-Menahem (ed.), *Rethinking the Concept of Law of Nature* (Springer, 2022), 347–377, "Inconvenient Truth and Inductive Risk in Covid-19 Science", *Philosophy of Medicine* 3.1 (2022): 1–25, and "Artistic Objectivity: From Ruskin's 'Pathetic Fallacy' to Creative Receptivity", *British Journal of Aesthetics* 61.4 (2021): 505–526.



**Joe Shin (PhD '22)** - will be continuing as a DeVries Postdoctoral Fellow at Calvin University for AY 2023-2024 where he will be starting as a TT Assistant Professor of Philosophy in Fall 2024. His research interests include moral philosophy, moral psychology, and epistemology. His many presentations includes "What Ignorant Wrongdoers Needn't Do", presented at the Vienna Forum for Analytic Philosophy, University of Vienna (2022) [an earlier version was presented while at U-M in 2021], "Must Blame: Self vs. Other", presented at Baylor University (2022) and at the Georgia Philosophical Society, University of Georgia (2022), and "Must We Blame Epistemically?", presented at the Long Island Philosophical Society, Molloy College (2022). His works in progress include "No Self-Directed Wrongs", "Blaming, Judging, and Moral Standing", and "Doing Good and Feeling Bad". He also has several papers under review on blameworthiness and blame as well as one on mistaken normative beliefs and the norms of apologies.

**Are you a UM Phil Alum? Please let us know so we can add your updated bio to** *The Grue, Michigan Philosophy News*. **Please send to phil-exec-sec@umich.edu**

The **Fourth Biannual Alumni Conference** took place July 21-22, **organized by Julian Rome, Adam Waggoner, and Glenn Zhou**. Five alumni came back to Michigan to reconnect with faculty, meet current graduate students, and present their current research. **Stephen Angle** (PhD 1994), now Professor of Philosophy and East Asian Studies at Wesleyan University, presented a talk titled "Mind the Gap: Methodological Pluralism in Comparative Philosophy," with comments by Glenn Zhou. **Zoë Johnson King** (PhD 2018), now Assistant Professor of Philosophy at Harvard University, presented a talk titled "The Slow Clap Phenomenon," with comments by Abdul Ansari. **Ian McCready-Flora** (PhD 2011), now Associate Professor of Philosophy at University of Virginia, presented a talk titled "Precision and Firmness in Aristotle," with comments by Adam Waggoner. **Van Tu** (PhD 2020), now Assistant Professor of Philosophy at California State University, San Bernardino, presented a talk titled "The Reasons of Love in Plato's Phaedrus," with comments by Julian Rome. **Hanna Kim** (PhD 2006), now Associate Professor of Philosophy at Washington & Jefferson College, presented a talk titled "Reconsidering Commonsense Consent," with comments by Margot Witte. The conference culminated with a panel featuring all five alumni speakers, where they offered advice and answered questions about philosophy, the academic job market, and beyond.



clockwise: Stephen Angle, Mansfield Freeman Professor of East Asian Studies (Wesleyan); Zoë Johnson King, Assistant Professor of Philosophy (Harvard); Ian McCready-Flora, Associate Professor of Philosophy (Virginia); Hanna Kim, Associate Professor of Philosophy (Washington & Jefferson); Van Tu, Assistant Professor of Philosophy (CSUSB)

**4TH BIANNUAL**

# Alumni

## CONFERENCE

**FRIDAY, JULY 21ST**
9:30 AM - 6:00 PM

**SATURDAY, JULY 22ND**
9:30 AM - 5:30 PM

James and Anne Duderstadt Center
Presentation Room 1180

**M PHILOSOPHY**
UNIVERSITY OF MICHIGAN

University of Michigan's Philosophy Department will be holding their Fourth Biannual Alumni Conference. The Conference will include talks from alumni, grad student comments, meals, and an alumni panel Q&A.

**Stephen Angle** - Wesleyan University:
*"Mind the Gap: Methodological Pluralism in Comparative Philosophy."*

**Zoë Johnson King** - Harvard University:
*"The Slow Clap Phenomenon"*

**Ian McCready-Flora** - University of Virginia:
*"Precision and Firmness in Aristotle"*

**Van Tu** - California State University, San Bernardino:
*"The Reasons of Love in Plato's Phaedrus"*

**Hanna Kim** - Washington & Jefferson College:
*"Reconsidering Commonsense Consent"*

**See you in 2025 for our next Bi-Annual Alumni Conference**

excerpts from

# MEANING, DECISION, & NORMS
## THEMES FROM THE WORK OF ALLAN GIBBARD

Edited by Billy Dunaway and David Plunkett
Maize Books, U-M Publishing (2022)
available online: https://www.fulcrum.org/concern/monographs/cz30pv97b?locale=en



Cover photo: © David Braddon-Mitchell



**Prof. Billy Dunham (PhD '13)**

"We first had the idea for a volume of this kind in 2014 on a walk together in England. Since then, our vague idea for a volume has taken concrete shape, and a number of people have helped make this possible. We would like to thank everyone who has helped make it a success... This project has been a wonderful way for us to spend more time thinking through [Alan's} work, and, in the process, creating a volume that we hope will be useful for a wide range of philosophers, across a range of subfields."*



**Prof. David Plunkett (PhD '10)**

Following Professor Gibbard's retirement from Michigan in 2015, coeditors (and former PhD students) **Billy Dunaway** (PhD '13), Associate Professor of Philosophy University of MO-St. Louis and **David Plunkett** (PhD '10), Professor of Philosophy, Dartmouth, compiled a very Michigan-heavy feschrift in Allan's honor: "It is not an exaggeration to say that Allan Gibbard is one of the most significant contributors to philosophy over the last five decades. We intend this volume both as a tribute to this work and as a cutting-edge work in the field that engages with it. In putting this volume together, we have aimed to reflect the scope and significance of Gibbard's contributions. The scope of Gibbard's work is evident from the sections in this volume, which we summarize below. As we discuss, Gibbard's work covers an impressive number of subfields within philosophy, including ethics, philosophy of language, decision theory, epistemology, and metaphysics. It also engages with, and makes significant contributions to, work from the natural and social sciences (e.g., evolutionary psychology and economics). The significance of Gibbard's work is reflected in a second aspect of the present volume. The philosophers who have agreed to publish their work in this volume range from some of the most influential senior philosophers in the field (many of whom have long been interlocutors for Gibbard) to younger philosophers who are just beginning their promising careers. There is a final aspect of this volume that speaks to the significance of Gibbard's work as well. This volume is not a collection of artifacts from past decades of philosophy. Instead, it is a collection of essays that each make a significant contribution to contemporary work in philosophy. This reflects the fact that Gibbard's work has not only had a massive influence on past discussion in philosophy but also continues to influence new directions of philosophical research."

excerpt from Introduction (p XXIII) to *Meaning, Decision, and Norms, Themes from the Work of Allan Gibbard* (Maize Books, U-M Publishing (2022)

Immanuel Kant painting, by Renee Jorgensen, U-M Assistant Professor of Philosophy

I work primarily on Kant's theoretical philosophy—in particular, on issues in his epistemology, philosophy of mind, logic, and aesthetics. Whereas much of the interpretive work in these areas focuses on Kant's account of objective and a priori knowledge, a central goal of my research is to develop a systematic reading of the subjective and empirical elements of his account of human cognition. My aim in doing so is two-fold. First, many of Kant's most important arguments rely crucially on the distinction between the objective and the subjective, and I believe an inaccurate view of this distinction has tended to obscure these arguments. Second, by attending to these elements of his account, I hope to show that he has a less intellectualist and idealized—and therefore, more compelling—view of human psychology than is often thought.

A unifying area of focus in my work has been the comparatively neglected but necessary role played by the imagination in Kant's account. Across a set of papers, I defend a novel reading of the relation between the contributions of the faculties of imagination and understanding. I argue, first, that some key cognitive tasks that Kant is usually thought to assign exclusively to the understanding are in fact carried out by the imagination in its "reproductive" capacity—that is, its capacity to recall past representations through association.

Second, I argue that the connections and differences between the contributions made by the imagination and the understanding underlie Kant's central distinction between subjective and objective validity, and also shed light on his discussions of synthesis, empirical self-consciousness, empirical concepts, judgments of beauty, error and prejudice, as well as his response to his predecessors. I describe my research on these topics in more detail below.

## 1. Judgment and Synthesis

The Transcendental Deduction is an essential part of Kant's project in the *Critique of Pure Reason* to show how *a priori* knowledge in metaphysics is possible. One of Kant's primary goals in the Transcendental Deduction is to establish that the *a priori* concepts he calls "categories" are necessary conditions for making objectively valid judgments. Understanding the arguments of the Deduction, I argue, requires correctly understanding the distinction between objective and merely subjective validity. In "For Me, In My Present State: Kant on Judgments of Perception and Mere Subjective Validity" (2020), I reject a standard reading of this distinction, according to which a merely subjectively valid judgment reports how objects *seem* from the point of view of the particular subject making the judgment. I point out that this reading overlooks a defining feature of merely subjectively valid judgments, namely, that they express a subject's consciousness of her own representational states, rather than of the objects represented. In place of the standard reading, I argue that a subject makes a subjectively valid judgment when she expresses merely a series of representations she finds herself with as a result of her reproductive imagination, without claiming that this series corresponds to a connection in the objects the perceptions are of. I show that my reading not only explains all of Kant's puzzling examples but also illuminates the central role the distinction between objective and merely subjective validity plays in the Deduction. Take the pair of judgments Kant discusses in §19 of the Deduction. On the standard reading, the judgment, "When I carry a body, I feel a pressure of weight" is merely subjectively valid because it reports that the body *seems* heavy to the subject carrying it. On my interpretation, in contrast, in making this judgment, the subject claims merely that her perception of carrying a body is followed by a perception of weight, without claiming that the body itself *is* or even *seems* heavy. Understood in this way, Kant's example successfully illustrates the role the category of substance-inherence plays in making the corresponding objectively valid judgment "It, the body, is heavy." For it is in virtue of applying this concept that the subject first relates the sequence of her perceptions to the object perceived and can think of the heaviness as *inhering* (or indeed, *seeming* to inhere) in the body.

My interpretation relies on the claim that the reproductive imagination is responsible for putting together and holding a series of representations in a subject's mind in accordance with laws of association, whereas the understanding is responsible for judging whether this series corresponds to a connection in the objects the representations are of. In a more recent paper, "Is it the Understanding or the Imagination that Synthesizes?" (2022), I argue that having these two separate contributions in view is also necessary for understanding Kant's key notion of *synthesis*, and for reconciling his seemingly conflicting claims that sometimes assign synthesis to the imagination and sometimes to the understanding.

## 2. Self-consciousness

Kant's account of self-consciousness and self-knowledge is a second central area of research. Kant is said to be the first to distinguish between two kinds of self-consciousness: consciousness of oneself *qua* subject, or transcendental self-consciousness, and consciousness of oneself *qua* object, or empirical self-consciousness. In my research, I focus in particular on the latter—that is, on consciousness of the "empirical self" that appears to and is known through inner sense. Whereas many interpreters understand empirical self-consciousness to simply be the instantiation of transcendental self-consciousness, I argue that they are different in kind. In "Kant on Empirical Self-Consciousness" (2021), I propose that the key to understanding these two types of self-consciousness or "apperception" is the fact that each corresponds to a distinct type of "unity of apperception"—that is, a distinct way in which representations can be related for a subject. Whereas the "transcendental unity of apperception" requires that the subject actively combine representations through her understanding, the "empirical unity of apperception" obtains when she passively finds representations to be combined by her reproductive imagination. In light of this, I argue that Kant's two types of self-consciousness correspond to a cognitive subject's consciousness of two essential aspects of herself—her rational and spontaneous character, on the one hand, and her sensible and receptive character, on the other.

Building on this claim, in "Form and Matter in Kant's Account of Self-Consciousness" (forthcoming), I argue that my account can explain why Kant puzzlingly connects transcendental and empirical self-consciousness respectively to the form and matter of experience in general. On my reading, empirical self-consciousness accompanies exercises of the imagination that are necessary for consciousness of the sensible matter of experience, while transcendental self-consciousness accompanies exercises of the understanding that give experience its necessary conceptual *form*.

Part of my concern in both the above projects has also been to point the way towards a more nuanced understanding of Kant's response to his empiricist predecessors. I have argued that Kant does not reject Hume's associationism wholesale, as is usually thought; rather, the associations of the reproductive imagination play a necessary role in experience on Kant's account as well. Neither does he fully reject Hume's "bundle" theory of self-consciousness; rather, he takes empirical self-consciousness to consist in consciousness of merely associatively combined representations. As I understand it, then, Kant agrees with Hume on more than has been recognized; his point against Hume is that if we were limited to the resources of the imagination alone, we could not even *take* our representations to be related to objects, and could not even *take* our representations to belong to an 'I', as Hume seems willing to grant we do. In future work, I plan to develop these points further in order to defend Kant against the common complaint that his response to Humean skepticism begs the question against Hume. A full defense will not only involve spelling out the details of Kant's argument but will also require interpretive work to show that Hume does in fact hold the claims that Kant ascribes to him.

My work on empirical self-consciousness also suggests a different starting point for Kant's response to Cartesian skepticism about the external world, which he presents in his well-known "Refutation of Idealism." On a prominent reading, Kant's argument begins by presupposing that we have empirical *self-knowledge* concerning the temporal order of our mental states; this presupposition, however, is once again thought to beg the question against the skeptic. In future work, I will argue that Kant's argument is not subject to this worry since it begins with the less demanding content of empirical *self-consciousness,* which, as I have already argued, consists merely in a subject's consciousness of her representations as related to each other in time.

### 3. Beauty and empirical concepts

A third interpretive project concerns Kant's *Critique of Judgment* and, in particular, its description of the type of "reflecting judgment" that claims intersubjective validity without being determined by objective rules. A primary example of such a judgment according to Kant is a judgment of *beauty*. In my paper, "Two Feelings in the Beautiful: Kant on the Structure of Judgments of Beauty" (2019), I propose a solution to two notorious puzzles for Kant's account of judgments of beauty. The first puzzle arises because Kant appears to claim both that judgments of beauty are grounded in a feeling of pleasure, and that the feeling of pleasure cannot precede the judgment of beauty. The second puzzle arises due to his claim that the ground of judgments of beauty is a condition of cognition in general: if this ground is a feeling of pleasure, this would entail that cognition in general is pleasurable. To solve both these puzzles, I point to overlooked textual evidence that Kant in fact distinguishes the feeling of pleasure from a *sui generis* feeling of harmony between the imagination and the understanding. It is the latter, I argue, that is the ground of judgments of beauty and a condition of cognition in general. This renders consistent Kant's claim that pleasure is a *consequence* of judgments of beauty and also blocks the absurd implication that all cognition is pleasurable.

In a follow-up paper, "Kant on Common Sense and Empirical Concepts" (*Kantian Review*, 2022), I argue, first, that Kant's puzzling notion of "common sense" refers to the capacity to become aware of the relation between the imagination and understanding through the very *sui generis* feeling I identify in the paper above. Second, I explain Kant's claim that this feeling and the capacity to sense it are required for cognition in general, by arguing that it plays a necessary role in his account of how we acquire and systematize empirical concepts. To bring this role into view, I provide evidence that the acquisition of empirical concepts depends essentially on the associations of the reproductive imagination; for an

association to form the basis of a new concept, however, it must conform with the requirements of the understanding, which is the faculty of concepts. I argue that it is this preconceptual harmony between the imagination and the understanding that is sensed by common sense, and indeed, that this explains Kant's intriguing claim that we follow the same procedure when we judge beauty and when we form empirical concepts. In future work, I hope to explore the connection between Kant's account of empirical concepts and more recent work in metaphysics on the distinction between natural and non-natural kinds.

### 4. Error and Prejudice

My most recent project—**for which I was awarded the Steelcase Faculty Fellowship by the Institute of Humanities at the University of Michigan**—turns to Kant's account of the type of merely subjective judgment involved in error, as well as the role played by the imagination in bringing it about. In a resulting paper, "Kant on Prejudice" (in progress), I work out the details of Kant's view of what he calls "prejudice [*Vorurteil*]," which he describes as involving a kind of "mechanistic" judging in which the subject allows her judgments to be influenced by her associations and desires rather than the rules of the understanding. I conclude by suggesting that Kant's account provides an attractive framework for thinking about prejudice in the more contemporary sense of the term. In allowing that subjective causes like a subject's associations and inclinations can lead her to judge and act in prejudiced ways, I argue that Kant in fact anticipates contemporary discussions of *implicit bias*. At the same time, however, he maintains that a subject is rationally accountable for her prejudices, since, on his view, she can always refrain from automatically endorsing her associations and inclinations. In this way, I argue, he successfully avoids either over- or under-intellectualizing prejudice.

In the future, I aim to expand my work on prej-

udice in order to provide a complete reading of Kant's account of error. Kant describes error in general as occurring due to the unnoticed influence of sensibility on the understanding; I believe the role played by the imagination in this influence is crucial and has been underappreciated. I am also interested in exploring Kant's view of the relation between what he calls our sensible and intelligible characters in his practical philosophy. Just as there is a question about how Kant can allow for the understanding to judge merely subjectively in the theoretical case, there is a question of how his account allows for 'bad' actions that can nevertheless be freely chosen by rational agents. I will argue that the notion of mechanistic judging that I explore in my paper on prejudice can point the way to the right view of how sensible inclinations exert influence on the free choices of beings that are subject to moral obligations precisely because they have both sensible and rational characters.

Over the next few years, I plan to work on a book manuscript, tentatively entitled *Kant on Subjectivity and Self-Consciousness*. In it, I aim to develop an extended case for my reading of the relation between the sensible and intellectual faculties of the human subject on Kant's account, and explore its implications for his epistemology, ethics, and aesthetics, as well as for related contemporary philosophical debates.



**Janun Sethi, Associate Professor of Philosophy,** works primarily on Kant and early modern philosophy. Her recent research has focused on Kant's view on self-consciousness, the imagination, subjective judgment and judgements of beauty. A central goal of her research is to develop a systematic interpretation of Kant's account of the subjective and empirical elements of human cognition.

# COURSE REPORT: PHIL 361 - ETHICS
## By Dan Lowe, LEO Lecturer

How did ethics textbooks get to be so similar? I don't mean this as a rhetorical question; I genuinely don't know. But at some point the major ethics textbooks coalesced upon the same approach: presenting moral philosophy as primarily about the attempt to find some criterion (or criteria) of right action. I get the appeal of this approach – it simplifies ethics and puts the theories in dialogue by treating the major moral philosophers as all attempting to answer the same question. But put to the side – or left out entirely – are theories of wellbeing, moral psychology, moral epistemology, and still others.

*Clutch of circumstances #1,* Painting, Enamel on Canvas, Rodrigue Semabia, United States

## Issues with the Dominant Approach to Teaching Ethics

I have a couple of reservations with this approach. First, if you try to shoehorn a theory into this framework that doesn't fit, you end up distorting the theories and making them seem implausible. Virtue ethics, for instance, is presented as the idea that an action is right if it is what a virtuous person would do in the situation. If this is what Aristotle is trying to say, he sure does a good job of hiding it. But it's also an implausible theory, raising the virtuous person to unrealistic and unattainable heights. After all, even virtuous people aren't perfect – they do the right thing reliably, but not always. And it gives the impression they magically confer rightness on their own actions; but of course an action isn't right because the virtuous person does it, the virtuous person does it because it's right. Textbooks then recite these very criticisms, treating them as problems with virtue ethics, and not problems with the articulation of its content and aims.

A more important problem is that centering theories of right action suggests a moral psychology that I think is way off. The idea seems to be that ethical thinking consists in running the empirical facts of your situation through the right moral principle to yield an obligation.

The ultimate version of this is Benthamite utilitarianism, where moral reasoning involves a simple and single moral principle – once you know it, all the remaining questions are simply empirical. I guess I've reasoned like this on occasion, but not very often. (And if the professor of moral philosophy doesn't reason like this, think how rarely our students do!) When I'm confused or at loose ends about some moral issue, my uncertainty usually isn't that of the impartial skeptic who simply doesn't know how to weigh out all the different factors. In my experience, moral reasoning is shot through with desire and fear – I *want* it to be okay to do something; I *worry* that the force of moral obligation will push me in some direction I don't want to go; I *despair* that I won't be able to tell when I'm thinking clearly and when I'm just rationalizing what I want to do anyway.

## An Alternative Approach to Teaching Ethics

I try to build PHIL 361 around this felt experience of inner emotional conflict. Most of the semester is taken up by two units: one on theories of wellbeing, and one on right action. The unit on wellbeing helps students reflect on what kind of life they really want to lead. The unit on right action contains has some theory, but is mostly applied, about arguments that we are obligated to give money to charity, abstain from eating factory farmed meat, and adopt instead of procreate. Students love thinking about the theories of wellbeing, reflecting on what their best life looks like. But when it comes to applied ethics, students experience a variety of negative emotions – confusion, guilt, resentment, defensiveness. I'm prompting these emotions on purpose. One unit points them in the direction of what is good for them, and the other unit tells them that morality might require them to give some of that up.

This doesn't just reflect how moral reasoning goes; it also helps them see how hard reasoning well about ethics is. Morality is rarely simple, but it's still a lot easier to come up with the right moral answer when there are no emotional or material stakes. A course which helps you think about morality when there is no skin in the game doesn't really help you think about morality.

## Resources for Dealing with Inner Moral Conflict

Students shouldn't just experience this struggle privately – it's important to talk about it publicly and explicitly in class. The course offers a few ways of addressing these conflicts, and the first involves gaining self-knowledge. I assign an article by our own Elizabeth Anderson on the pragmatist approach to moral philosophy, which gives up the search for a universal theory of right action in exchange for focusing on intelligently updating our moral beliefs.[1] Liz does a wonderful job in the article of explaining how to identify, block, and overcome cognitive biases which affect our moral reasoning. Although there are widely recognized biases that affect all of us, which ones affect an individual most and in which circumstances varies from person to person. So ultimately reflection on your biases is about gaining self-knowledge – what Socrates thought was the starting point of ethics – so that we can tell when we are simply rationalizing what we want to do.

Being on the lookout for rationalization takes practice. In the section on applied ethics, we often ask whether the objections given to certain arguments are not only sound, but honest. Consider the objection to Peter Singer's view on charity that giving can make recipients dependent and so ultimately worse off. Although some sorts of donations might do this, I can't imagine anyone thinks this in a thoroughgoing way, because it would entail that giving to charity is not only not obligatory, but is actually *bad*. This is the tell that such an objection is really a defensive maneuver to preserve one's behavior, rather than a thoughtful and reasoned disagreement.

Knowing you're not rationalizing is helpful, but it doesn't eliminate the internal tension itself. Dissolving that requires a focus on character development, the subject of the final unit of the course. And this is where virtue ethics – not construed as a bad attempt at a theory of right action – can fit in. Aristotle's account of virtue helps us see that one's good and the right need not pull in opposite directions. On Aristotle's view, being good isn't a matter of having an iron will, forcing yourself to do the things you hate. Instead, the virtuous person *wants* to do the right thing; they *enjoy* doing it. Aristotle's discussion of friendship contains his most vivid description of the virtuous person:

> His opinions are harmonious, and he desires the same things with all his soul … Such a man wishes to live with himself, for he does so with pleasure, since the memories of his past acts are delightful and his hopes for the future are good, and therefore pleasant. His mind is well stored too with subjects of contemplation… he has, so to speak, nothing to regret.[2]

If being a good person is about reconciling one's good with what is right, then students learn that the internal tension they face isn't an inevitable feature of their lives. It doesn't have to be this way.

Aristotle's theory of virtue is hopeful, but also demanding – you not only have to do the right thing, you have to feel the right way about it. And for many of us, this is quite distant from our current characters. But happily, Aristotle gives a lot of excellent, and startlingly simple, advice about how to become good. We become a good person the same way we become a good musician or basketball player or carpenter: practice. And so although students might feel overwhelmed by what is asked of them by applied ethics, there are ways to practice, little by little, giving to charity or abstaining from eating meat.

Sometimes I worry that this sucks the moral oomph out of these arguments, giving students permission to think they're doing *enough* by simply doing *something*. I suppose this is where self-knowledge comes in again: Are you using these small actions as a way to pat yourself on the back, and tell yourself that you're doing everything you need to? Or are you using these small actions as a foundation to ask more of yourself, as part of an undertaking to change your own character? Aristotle uses the word *spoudaios* to describe the person who achieves eudaimonia. *Spoudaios* is sometimes translated just as "good," but can also be translated as "serious" and "zealous."[3]  To be a good musician or basketball player or carpenter isn't merely to practice those things, but to do so seriously, with zeal – exactly the way one must undertake to change one's character.

This sounds like a lot of work, and it is. But the good news is that the way habit works, the more you practice, the easier it is. As a character in *Bojack Horseman*, a show which has a lot to say about ethics, remarks: "Every day it gets a little easier. But you've got to do it every day – *that's* the hard part. But it does get easier."[4]

### The Limits of Theory

I don't want to give the impression that all we talk about is self-knowledge and moral development. We still manage to cover all the usual topics: utilitarianism, Kantianism, existentialism. Nevertheless, there's a lot less than you might think about normative theory as it's traditionally construed. And since this reflects my substantive beliefs, I should put my cards on the table. I think there are real limits to how useful theory is in grappling with the

on-the-ground messiness of morality. Theory has a place, of course. But like Aristotle, I think that our best shot is not to go into a morally fraught situation with the right theory in hand. It's to go in being the right kind of person, so that we will see things clearly, and make good and honest judgments.

This might seem like I'm siding with virtue ethics against utilitarianism and Kantianism. And it's true that I don't buy either of those as the correct theory of the supreme principle of morality. But I think this is another place where the major textbooks have distorted the meaning of these theories. There's this implicit notion that the point of finding the supreme principle of morality is to *not* have to make discerning moral judgments. Benthamite utilitarianism is again the exemplar here. I think some people want Kantianism to be like this as well, where the appeal of the First Formulation is that you can tell whether a maxim is morally acceptable or not simply by evaluating whether it's internally consistent. The ideal seems to be to find a principle which, if fully grasped and endorsed, would guide the action of even a moral idiot. We have the rules so that we *don't* need to have the right character to make the correct moral judgments.

This might be true of Benthamite utilitarianism, but I think it's a misreading of Mill and Kant. On Mill's version of utilitarianism, difficult moral judgments are still required, since one is not merely counting up pleasures and pains, but evaluating the quality of pleasures as well. And as he writes in *On Liberty*, "the human faculties of perception, judgment, discriminative feeling, mental activity, and even moral preference, are exercised only in making a choice… The mental and moral, like the muscular powers, are improved only by being used."[5]  Likewise, the categorical imperative famously requires subtle judgments in how to formulate one's maxims in ways that are sensitive to the moral features of the situation; otherwise, the test will fail. Likewise with the Second Formulation, where Kant gives us no obvious way to discern when someone is being used as a *mere* means. The ideal of a moral formula which can be applied correctly without regard to one's character is not just unrealistic; it has the strange effect of taking all the moral judgment out of moral theory.

### Changes for the Future

The course illustrates how I think about ethics and moral growth, but I struggle with the question of whether this approach is successful. What is the metric of success? Each semester I ask my students (anonymously) in their end

of year evaluations to note whether they changed their behavior in any ways in response to the material. And each semester I must admit that I am disappointed by how few do. You get some people who were vegetarian and decide to go vegan; others talk about how they'll give more to charity when they make more money later in life. (Now *there's* an easy promise to make). Perhaps these are the biggest wins I can reasonably expect; perhaps an ethics class can't (or even *shouldn't*) work quickly, and the best we can hope is that it plants seeds which sprout later. Maybe. But I like to think I can do better.

One area where I'd like to improve the course is to include some more literature and perhaps even biography which would make these issues more vivid and concrete. It's not enough to know in the abstract how to improve and to be admonished to do so; we also need to be inspired by stories of people becoming better.

I'm also interested in making the writing assignments more personal. When I teach the course in the Fall, I'm replacing one of the essays with a letter students write to their present self from the best version of their future self. Hopefully this will help them spur reflection and take ownership over their own course of moral improvement.

The syllabus also needs to be less narrowly focused on mainstream analytic philosophy. Feminist ethics has a lot to say about the subtle ways in which gender and patriarchy influence the judgments of ethical burdens and benefits; Buddhist ethics has a lot to say about wellbeing and its relationship to desire; and Confucianism has a lot to say about character and moral development.

Getting to teach ethics is a real treat, and one I don't think I'll ever get tired of. It's so easy to work up student enthusiasm for these subjects. I tell them on the first day that the course is about just one, brief question that we will talk about all semester: How should I live my life? Talk about an easy sell!

[1] Elizabeth Anderson, "Moral Bias and Corrective Practices: A Pragmatist Perspective," Proceedings and Addresses of the APA, vol. 89, pp. 21-47 (2015).
[2] Aristotle, *Nicomachean Ethics*, IX.4, translated by Lesley Brown.
[3] This dimension of Aristotle's ethics is emphasized nicely by a commentary on the *Nicomachean Ethics*, Francis Sparshott's Taking Life Seriously (Toronto University Press, 1994).
[4] *Bojack Horseman*, Season 2 Episode 12, "Out to Sea."
[5] Chapter 3, "Of Individuality, as One of the Elements of Wellbeing."

**Dan Lowe** is a LEO Lecturer who works primarily on social and political philosophy, ethics, and moral epistemology.  His publications include "Biological Explanations of Social Inequalities." *Pacific Philosophical Quarterly*. Vol. 103, No. 4. (December 2022), pp. 694-719 and "Privilege: What Is It, Who Has It, and What Should We Do About It?" in *Ethics, Left and Right,* edited by Bob Fischer (Oxford University Press, 2020), pp. 457-464. Dan is one of our core PPE instructors and teaches both *Intro to Political Economy* (PPE 300) and S*eminar on Political Economy: Economic Inequality* (PPE 400). He is also an editor for *1000-Word Philosophy: An Introductory Anthology*, an ever-growing set of over 175 original 1000-word essays on philosophical questions, theories, figures, and arguments. You can find out more about Professor Lowe and *1000-Word Philosophy* at https://www.dan-lowe.com/home-and-cv

# Faculty News/Awards

**Elizabeth Anderson (Max Shaye Professor of Public Philosophy, John Dewey Distinguished University Professor; Arthur F. Thurnau Professor)** received the 2023 Sage-CASBS Award (Center for Advanced Study in the Behavioral Sciences, Stanford). Established in 2013, the Sage-CASBS Award recognizes outstanding achievement in the behavioral and social sciences that advances our understanding of pressing social issues. It underscores the role of the social and behavioral sciences in enriching and enhancing public discourse and good governance. Professor Anderson, along with co-recipient Alondra Nelson (Institute for Advanced Study), will appear together for an award event on November 16, 2023 at the Center. Her books include *Private Government: How Employers Rule Our Lives (And Why We Don't Talk About It)* (2017); and the forthcoming *Hijacked: How Neoliberalism Turned the Work Ethic Against Workers and How Workers Can Take It Back* (September 2023). *Congratulations, Professor Anderson!*

**Dave Baker has been promoted to Professor of Philosophy,** beginning Fall 2023. He is a leading scholar of the metaphysics who is known particularly for his work on different notions of symmetry in physics and their implications for the nature of reality. He is one of a very small group of philosophers able to draw on a mastery of the technical details of various branches of mathematical physics to enrich a deep and broad engagement with central issues in metaphysics. C*ongratulations, Professor Baker!*

**Sarah Buss** received Rackham Graduate School's 2023 John H. D'Arms Faculty Award for Distinguished Graduate Mentoring in the Humanities (honoring the former Dean of the Graduate School and Vice Provost for Academic Affairs), which recognizes tenured faculty who are outstanding mentors of doctoral students in the humanities, who support their intellectual, creative, scholarly, and professional growth, and foster a culture of intellectual engagement in which they thrive. *Congratulations, Professor Buss!*

**Kristie Dotson (University Diversity and Social Transformation Professor)** received the Dr. Martin R. Lebowitz and Eve Lewellis Lebowitz Prize for Philosophical Achievement and Contribution. It is presented to two philosophers (along with Suzanna Siegel (Harvard)) who hold contrasting views on a chosen topic of current interest in philosophy. The topic chosen, "Norms of Attention", will be presented at the January 2024 Eastern Division Meeting of the APA. The prize is awarded by the Phi Beta Kappa Society, in conjunction with the APA, and also comes with a $25,000 honorarium. She is currently working on her manuscript, *Love Politic: Black Feminist Love Letters in the 21st Century*. *Congratulations, Professor Dotson!*

**Sarah Moss (William Wilhartz Professor of Philosophy)** for the second year in a row, has been awarded the APA's Article Prize for the best published article by a younger scholar. Her article, "Pragmatic Encroachment and Legal Proof" was published in *Philosophical Issues,* 2021. Her work on probabilistic knowledge has implications for formal semantics and the philosophy of mind, as well as for social and political questions concerning racial profiling and legal standards of proof. Her work on "Pragmatic Encroachment and Legal Proof" was supported in part by her year spent as the Thomas E. Sunderland Faculty Fellow at the University of Michigan Law School. *Congratulations, Professor Moss!*

**Janum Sethi has been promoted to Associate Professor of Philosophy,** beginning Fall 2023. She is a scholar of Kant's theoretical philosophy who focuses on relatively underexplored issues regarding his treatment of the subjective and empirical aspects of self-consciousness. She also has contributed work on Kant's accounts of the phenomenology of aesthetic judgment, the formation of empirical concepts, and the sources of prejudice that serve to reinforce and enrich her interpretation of his empirical psychology. *Congratulations, Professor Sethi!*

**Chandra Sripada (Theophile Raphael Professor)** has been appointed as Director of the Weinberg Institute for Cognitive Science. He will serve in this capacity through June 2026. He holds joint appointments in both Philosophy and Psychiatry and his research examines agency, decision, and self-control from cross-disciplinary perspectives. His most recent, and co-authored article "Socioeconomic Resources are Associated with Distributed Alterations of the Brain's Intrinsic Funtional Architecture in Youth", *Developmental Cognitive Neuroscience* (Vol. 58, Dec., 2022), can be read in full at: https://www.sciencedirect.com/science/article/pii/S1878929322001074?via%3Dihub**.** (See also related news and article on page 84). *Congratulations, Professor Sripada!*

# You may be thinking about animals all wrong (even if you're an animal lover)

Philosopher Martha Nussbaum says humans should grant equal rights to animals, even in the wild. Is she right?

By Sigal Samuel Updated Jan 25, 2023, 6:53am EST
to read complete article, please visit:
https://www.vox.com/the-highlight/23522207/animal-rights-justice-ethics-martha-nussbaum

image by Gianna Meola for Vox

Martha Nussbaum['s]...new volume, *Justice for Animals*, plunges into the animal welfare debate, billing itself as a "revolutionary new theory" in how we humans think about other animals. Which makes it all the more surprising that, at its heart, her theory isn't very revolutionary at all.

Nussbaum...contends that pretty much everyone has been thinking about animals wrong — including animal lovers. She rejects the leading ethical approaches to animals and urges us to accept hers: the capabilities approach. And as a philosopher who is also steeped in the law, she wants her theory to change real-world policy.

Nussbaum first co-developed the capabilities approach in the 1980s with humans in mind, working with its original architect, the Nobel-winning economist Amartya Sen. The theory argues that a just society should give each human the chance to flourish, which requires the opportunity to access some core entitlements to at least some minimum degree — things like good health and physical safety that any living thing requires, but also social relationships and play...

Now, she wants us to extend this approach to other species. Each species will have its own list of core entitlements, tailored to its unique form of life. The animal's nature — its intrinsic capacities — would decide how it has the right to be treated, as opposed to us humans deciding how we think it should be treated.

The appeal of the capabilities approach is that it gives us clear rules about what we can and can't do to animals, an ethical formula that can claim to be rooted in something intrinsic or objective...But ultimately, it does humanity a disservice. The obligations we feel to animals can't be captured by any immutable formula because they don't only flow from the animals' intrinsic capacities; they're also shaped by the relationships those animals can have with us, and by our own historical, economic, and cultural conditions, which are always changing.

By clinging to the dominant style of argument in animal ethics — a style that says our obligations to animals are forced on us by the nature of animals themselves or even the nature of reasonableness itself — Nussbaum's theory ends up leading to some iffy conclusions. It leads to a focus on helping individual animals, not species. And it prompts us to consider the idea that we should intervene to help not just those animals we've domesticated, which are utterly dependent on human beings, or those directly harmed by our actions, like endangered species, but also those trillions of animals that suffer and have always suffered in the wild.

By the end of the book, Nussbaum is declaring things like this: "To say that it is the destiny of antelopes to be torn apart by predators is like saying that it is the destiny of women to be raped. Both are terribly wrong."

Other philosophers push back on that stance. Take **Elizabeth Anderson**, who was once Nussbaum's student at Harvard and who now teaches at the University of Michigan. She subscribes to the school of thought in philosophy known as pragmatism, which sees moral truths as contingent, not objective. This results in a story about animals that is very different from the one Nussbaum tells.

Anderson points out that for most of human history, we couldn't have survived and thrived without killing or exploiting animals for food, transportation, and energy. The social conditions for granting animals moral rights didn't really exist on a mass scale until recently (although certain non-Western societies did ascribe moral worth to some animals). "The possibility of moralizing our relations to animals," she writes, "has come to us only lately, and even then not to us all, and not with respect to all animal species."

Anderson notes that we feel different levels of moral obligation to different species, and that has to do not only with their intrinsic capacities like intelligence or sentience, but also with their relationships to us. It matters whether we've made them dependent on us by domesticating them — like the more than 30 billion domesticated chickens alive at any given time, most of them suffering terrible pain at our hands — or whether they live in the wild. It also matters whether they're fundamentally hostile to us.

For example, if you find bedbugs in your house, nobody expects you to say, "Well, they're maybe sentient and definitely alive, so they have moral value. I'll just live and let live!" It is absolutely expected that you will exterminate them. Why? Because with vermin, Anderson writes, "there is no possibility of communication, much less compromise. We are in a permanent state of war with them, without possibility of negotiating for peace. To one-sidedly accommodate their interests ... would amount to surrender."

Anderson's point is not that animals' intelligence and sentience don't matter. It's that lots of other things matter, too, including our own ability to thrive. So her view doesn't require us to draw one bright line through nature. Anderson is inclined to value all living things, including plants, which she notes clearly have interests. And she's inclined to think protecting a species in some cases can justify getting rid of non-endangered individuals, as in the case of Australia's action against invasive rabbits. Individuals' sentience isn't a trump card. "There's a plurality of values at stake here, and I'm disinclined to think that any single one of them necessarily overrides all the others," Anderson told me. "It depends on the context."

Anderson's insistence on taking seriously a plurality of values also guides her approach to the question of animals in the wild. She thinks it's bizarre to worry about wild animals suffering at the hands of predators. Suffering, after all, "is inherent to the animal condition," she told me. "The idea of minimizing suffering becomes a single-minded goal that doesn't really grasp the vital importance of predators for ecosystems."

It's possible to wed Anderson's inclination to value all living things and the ecosystems that support them with Nussbaum's capabilities approach. You can say, "This is the human form of life, and to some extent it is different from other forms of life. All lives are uniquely wonderful in their own way" — and then to apply the capabilities approach by respecting each and every organism's form of life as much as you can.

But there are two very understandable fears about adopting this view. One is that it's just going to make things, well, really hard! If every living thing is potentially invested with moral value, that seems to impose on us a crushing amount of responsibility. How could we even move at all in such a world, knowing that every step we take could change that world and the animals that live in it? What would we do when the needs of different species conflict?

To which Anderson essentially responds, that's life. The best we can do is look at creatures' intelligence and sentience and aliveness and relationships to us as clues about their importance. But it doesn't tell us how to weight those clues and what to do when they conflict. "There's no simple formula," Anderson told me. "I think that's a hopeless quest."

The other fear you might have is the inverse: Instead of worrying that people will now care about everything, you might worry that people will now care about nothing. If you say creatures do not have objective rights, why shouldn't we treat nature as a free-for-all — which is largely what humans have done through most of our existence?

But that's the point: History shows that saying creatures have objective rights doesn't magically convince people to treat animals well. Most people are not moral philosophers and are not swayed by a priori reasoning alone. Where they change their behavior to be more considerate of other beings, it's often because the economic and cultural constraints operating on them have changed.

Similarly, if a society feels it needs to eat animal products to get enough nutrition, it might have a hard time viewing all animals as morally valuable. But if a society doesn't feel it needs to eat animal products, it may have an easier time looking upon animals and feeling awe or empathy. Our ability to access those sorts of emotions is constrained or bolstered by the context we live in.

According to that line of thinking, even the cleverest moral arguments may have less influence on animal welfare than the advent of cheap and delicious plant-based meat, like Beyond Meat and Impossible Burgers, as well as plant-based dairy and eggs. This type of tech innovation could free us up to see animals as creatures inspiring awe or empathy, making it easier to adopt kinder practices toward them.

Ultimately, concern for animals is not forced on us by the nature of animals themselves. And if it's not forced on us, that means it has to be a choice. Perhaps the best we can do is influence economic and cultural conditions to make it more possible for people to choose to care.

But even the most convincing of grand theories have never managed on their own to compel everyone to behave a certain way. And any grand theory will be unconvincing for those of us who ask: If morality is conditioned by our cultural context, why would there ever be one universal, timeless formula that tells us how to slice up nature into clear moral categories?
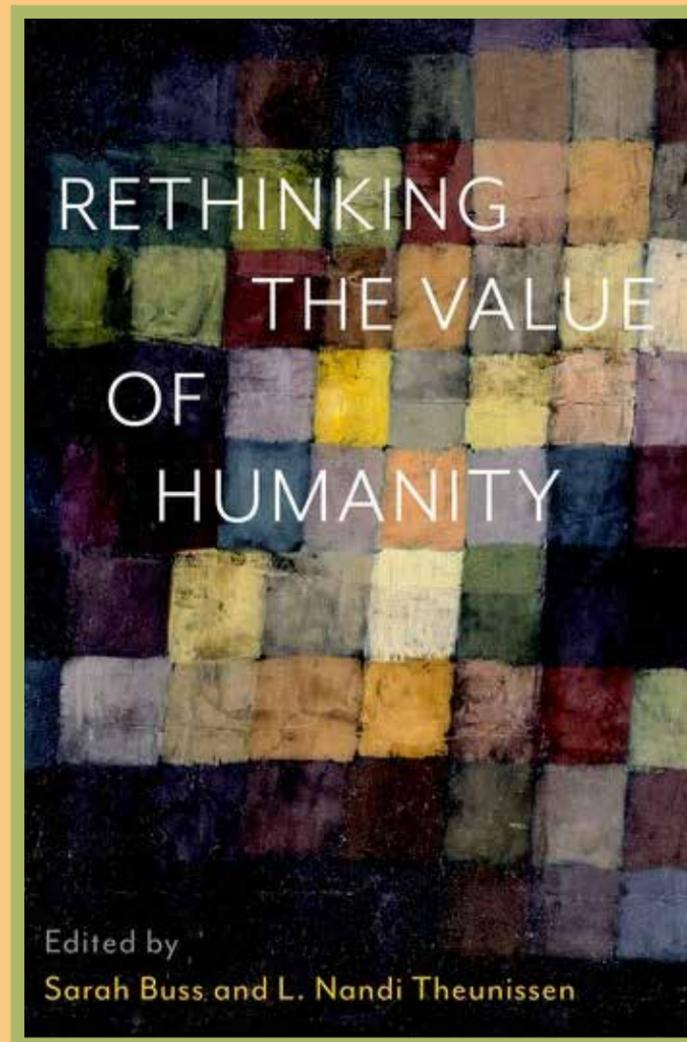


Elizabeth Anderson is the Max Shaye Professor of Public Philosophy, John Dewey Distinguished University Professor,and Arthur F. Thurnau Professor. Her interests include moral psychology, political philosophy, feminist philosophjy, and ethics.

# RETHINKING THE VALUE OF HUMANITY

## co-edited by Sarah Buss and Nandi Theunissen (Pitt)



To treat some human beings as less worthy of concern and respect than others is to lose sight of their humanity. But what does this moral blindness amount to? In exploring the value of humanity, the essays in this volume offer a wide range of competing, yet overlapping, answers to this question. Some essays examine influential views in the history of Western philosophy. In others, philosophers currently working in ethics develop and defend their own views. Some essays appeal to distinctively human capacities. Others argue that our obligations to one another are ultimately grounded in self-interest or certain shared interests or our natural sociability. The philosophers featured here disagree about whether the value of human beings depends on the value of anything else. They disagree about how reason and rationality relate to this value, and even about whether we can reason our way to discovering it. This rich selection of proposals encourages us to rethink some of our own deepest assumptions about the moral significance of being human.

excerpts from Introduction by Sarah Buss:

I begin the task of writing this introduction at a precarious moment in U.S. history— and, indeed, in the history of humanity. Many people are far more qualified than I am to shed light on the rise of authoritarian regimes across the globe, the increasing power of groups organized around programs of exclusion and violence, the normalization of unapologetic expressions of hatred and contempt. For insight into these matters, we must turn to historians, sociologists, political scientists, economists, and journalists. But there are other questions. Philosophical questions. On what grounds can we claim that someone is mistaken if she believes that certain human beings have no right to be treated with concern and respect (the same concern and respect as others) because they belong to a given tribe, race, ethnicity, religion, or are citizens of a certain nation, or have a certain sexual orientation or gender? To what can we appeal to justify our conviction that it is wrong to distribute power and privilege and status on the basis of such distinctions?

We have heard the answer many times: to treat some human beings as less worthy of concern and respect is to lose sight of their humanity. Surely, this is a thought we have all had ourselves. But to what are we calling attention when we express this thought? What is the connection between our "common humanity" and the fact that we are morally obligated to treat one another in certain ways? How does someone's humanity impose constraints on what other human beings have reason to do? What is the value of humanity, such that we fail to acknowledge this value if we fail to acknowledge these constraints? These are the guiding questions of the essays collected here.

Each essay approaches these questions in a different way, and each offers different, though overlapping, answers. Together they constitute an invitation to reflect on some of the challenges to our deepest moral assumptions. I will briefly single out some of the themes that recur in these essays. Before I take up this task, however, I want to place the philosophical enterprise to which they contribute in a broader context. Though the main readership of this volume is sure to be other philosophers, Professor Theunissen and I realize that the issues raised here are not purely disciplinary, or even scholarly. We thus think it is important to address those who share our interest in these issues but have misgivings about the sort of inquiry to which we and all the contributors are committed.

Such misgivings are not without some justification. After all, I have just acknowledged that the beliefs, attitudes, actions, and policies we reject when we appeal to the value of humanity have a complex political, social, and economic history. Surely, this is no less true of our own opposition to these beliefs, attitudes, actions, and policies: if we are convinced that human beings have a value that grounds certain rights and obligations, this conviction must reflect the influence of a complex set of contingent factors. Once we concede this point, moreover, we may wonder what to make of any attempt to justify this conviction. Isn't the additional (higher- order) belief that there is a compelling justification also the product of a complex set of influences— including, importantly, the influence of structures of power and privilege? What, then, is the point of attempting to determine whether anything can be said in support of our appeal to "the value of humanity"? Isn't any such inquiry bound to be naïve, at best (because it mistakes mere contingent attitudes for something timeless), and morally suspect, at worse (because it obscures the special interests that underlie these attitudes and are served by them)?

Even if we leave such worries to one side, the fact that our evaluative assumptions reflect a particular cultural, economic, and social reality can appear to rule out the possibility that we can fruitfully— and even intelligibly— explore whether human beings really do have a morally significant value. In any case, we know that whatever arguments appear to provide the looked-for support will be provisional in the important sense that they will not be immune to further challenges. So, again, why should we bother probing the moral significance of our common humanity? Shouldn't we concede that, even if this is not a morally problematic exercise, there is nothing to be gained from it?

The essays in this volume reject such a counsel of despair. They reflect the conviction that in investigating the value of humanity— where this includes investigating the history of philosophical positions on the moral significance of being human— we can gain genuine insight into what is at stake for us when we appeal to our "common humanity", and what can be said for and against the evaluative assumption that underlies this appeal. As those with the concern mentioned in the previous paragraph would predict, these essays do not yield any uncontroversial conclusions. They call attention to how difficult it is to make sense of the value of humanity in terms we ourselves can accept. In part for this reason, they encourage us to take on the important task of deepening our own understanding of where we stand on this subject— and why. They urge us to rethink our assumptions about the moral significance of being human, where this rethinking involves everything from probing these assumptions more fully to offering alternative, revisionary, accounts.

Professor Theunissen and I believe that the value of such inquiry is best appreciated by engaging with the essays themselves and reflecting on the dialogue established among them. Nonetheless, I would like to supplement their implicit response to the concerns raised above by making a few general observations. Since these concerns direct our attention to the extent to which our values are the product of various contingent power structures, it is fitting for me to begin these observations by turning to an important power struggle in the past.

To read Prof. Buss' full Introduction as well as the book in its entirety, please visit: https://academic.oup.com/book/45417



Sarah Buss, Professor of Philosophy, and recipient of Rackham Graduate School's 2023 John H. D'Arms Faculty Award for Distinguished Graduate Mentoring in the Humanities is interested in issues at the intersection of metaphysics and ethics.



Nandi Theunissen is an Associate Professor of Philosophy at the University of Pittsburgh. She works on foundational topics in ethics with a focus on the nature of value, including the value of humanity.

**Professor Chandra Sripada's expertise was heavily relied upon in Maia Szalavitz's guest essay "This is What Neuroscientists and Philosophers Understand About Addiction",** *The New York Times* **(April 24, 2023). Szalavitz is a contributing opinion writer who covers addiction and public policy.**

When I was arrested and charged with possession with intent to sell cocaine in 1986, I was addicted to both coke and heroin. Although I was facing a 15 years-to-life sentence, the first thing I did after my parents bailed me out and held a family meeting was to find and secretly inject some prescription opioids that I knew the police hadn't confiscated. I knew that doing this further jeopardized my life prospects and my relationships with everyone I cared about. I knew it made no sense. But I didn't believe that I could cope in any other way. Until I finally recognized that I needed treatment and began recovery in 1988 — with the prospect of that lengthy sentence under New York's draconian Rockefeller laws still occluding my future — I didn't think I had any real choice.

Was my brain hijacked by drugs — or was I willfully choosing to risk it all for a few hours of selfish pleasure? What makes people continue taking drugs like street fentanyl, which put them at daily risk of death? These questions are at the heart of drug policy and the way we view and treat addiction. But simplistic answers have stymied efforts to ameliorate drug use disorders and reduce stigma.

Research now shows that addiction doesn't mean either being completely subject to irresistible impulses, or making totally free choices. Addiction's effects on decision-making are complex. Understanding them can help policymakers, treatment providers and family members aid recovery. Claims that people with addiction are unable to control themselves are belied by basic facts. Few of us inject drugs in front of the police, which means that most are capable of delaying use. Addicted people often make complicated plans over days and months to obtain drugs and hide use from others, again indicating purposeful activity. Those given the option will use clean needles. Moreover, small rewards for drug-free urine tests — used in a treatment called contingency management — are quite successful at helping people quit, which couldn't be possible if addiction obliterated choice.

However, those who contend that substance use disorder is just a series of self-centered decisions face conflicting evidence, too. The most obvious is the persistence of addiction despite dire losses like being cut off by family members or friends, getting fired, becoming homeless, contracting infectious diseases or being repeatedly incarcerated. Most people who try drugs don't get addicted, even to opioids or methamphetamine, which suggests that factors other than simply being exposed to a drug can contribute to addiction. The majority of people who do get hooked have other psychiatric disorders, traumatic childhoods or both — only 7 percent report no history of mental illness.

Nearly 75 percent of women with heroin addiction were sexually abused as children — and most people with any type of addiction have suffered at least one and often many forms of childhood trauma. This data implies that genetic and environmental vulnerabilities influence risk.

So how does addiction affect choice? Neuroscientists and philosophers are beginning to converge on answers, which could help make policy more humane and more effective. Brains can be seen as prediction engines, constantly calculating what is most likely to happen next and whether it will be beneficial or harmful. As children grow up, their emotions and desires get calibrated to guide them toward what their brains predict will meet their social and physical needs. Ideally, as we develop, we gain more control and optimize the ability to choose. But there are many ways that these varied processes can go awry in addiction and alter how a person makes choices and responds to consequences.

Traditionally, researchers focused on how the drug experience changes during addiction. At first, using is fun, perhaps exciting, perhaps soothing. It solves a problem like social anxiety or an absence of pleasure. Then, however, it becomes less effective: More is needed to get the desired effects, and coping without it begins to seem impossible. As addiction becomes ingrained, the craving for drugs intensifies even as they become less enjoyable. In my own experience with cocaine, this disconnect was pronounced. At first, I found it euphoric. Toward the end of my addiction, I was injecting dozens of times a day, desperately wanting coke but also knowing it would make me feel hideous. The incentive salience theory suggests that addiction is a problem of outsized "wanting" despite reduced "liking," which becomes less amenable to cognitive control over time.

During addiction, people also tend to prioritize short-term rewards over long-term gains, which means that they postpone the pain associated with quitting, often indefinitely. This idea, which is known as "delay discounting", further helps explain why people with chaotic childhoods and precarious incomes are at higher risk: When a better future seems unlikely, it is rational to get whatever joy you can in the present.

**Chandra Sripada, professor of psychiatry and philosophy at the University of Michigan**, argues that distorted thinking is more important in addictive behavior than overwhelming desire, leading to what he calls "unreliable" control over use. He focuses on how addiction affects our stream of consciousness. During addiction, he contends, despairing thoughts about oneself and the future — not just thoughts about how good the drug is — predominate. At the same time, thoughts about negative consequences of use are minimized, as are those about alternative ways of coping. Drugs are overvalued as a way to mitigate distress; everything else is undervalued. The result is an unstable balance, which, more often than not, tips toward getting high. This theory is helpful for explaining who is most likely to get addicted and what is most likely to generate recovery. Risk factors like poverty, a traumatic childhood and mental illness generate excess stress while tending to produce negative thoughts about oneself. In my case, I was depressed and isolated because of what I later learned was undiagnosed autism spectrum disorder — and hated myself for my inability to connect. The result was a mental climate conducive to relying on drugs, even when they no longer provided relief.

Factors linked to recovery — like social support and employment — can offset distorted thoughts and inflated valuation of drug use. Essentially, people make better choices when they recognize and have access to better options. If you are locked in a room with an escape route unknown to you hidden under the carpet, you are just as trapped as if that exit didn't exist. My recovery began when I saw that there was a bearable way out. This is why punitive approaches so often backfire: Causing more pain to people who view drugs as their only way to cope drives desire to use even more. Punishment doesn't teach new skills that can allow better decisions. I was just lucky that I got help before it was too late.

But if addicted people are making choices that are harmful to themselves or others, shouldn't they be held responsible for their behavior? Hanna Pickard, distinguished professor of philosophy and bioethics at Johns Hopkins University, calls for a framework she labels "responsibility without blame." In this view, addicted people do have some control over their decisions. However, that doesn't mean they deserve blame or that shaming and punishing them will improve matters. Instead, providing people with both the skills and the resources they need to change, and compassionately holding them accountable as they learn to make different choices, can promote recovery. (This approach is a therapeutic one, not aimed at adjudicating addiction-related crimes, although the idea could potentially be extended into the legal realm.)

Research finds that framing addictive behavior as an involuntary brain disease reduces the tendency to blame people for it. But this perspective does not necessarily alleviate stigma or the desire to punish. This is probably because viewing individuals as having no autonomy dehumanizes them and makes others want to lock them up in an attempt to protect society. The "responsibility without blame" concept offers a way around this: People with addiction have agency, but it is compromised. And this is not unique to addiction.

"I will have less control, if I'm exhausted and tired and upset, then if I'm well-slept in a stable happy place in my life," said Professor Pickard, noting that being "hangry" is a classic example of diminished emotional control. To recover, people with addiction need both new skills and an environment that provides better alternatives. This doesn't mean rewarding people for bad behavior. Instead, we must recognize that compulsive drug use is far more often a response to a life where meaning and comfort appear out of reach than it is a selfish quest for excess pleasure.

Maia Szalavitz (@maiasz) is a contributing opinion writer and the author, most recently, of "Undoing Drugs: How Harm Reduction Is Changing the Future of Drugs and Addiction."



Dr. Chandra Sripada is the Theophile Raphael Professor of Psychiatry and Philosophy and holds joint appointments in Philosophy and Psychiatry. He is also the Director of the Weinberg Institute for Cognitive Science. He has written extensively on self-control and executive functions. His research examines the cognitive and neural mechanisms underpinning regulation of emotion, attention, and motoric responses in attention-deficit/hyperactivity disorder (ADHD) and substance use disorders (SUDS). His recent work emphasizes neurodevelopmental perspectives. He has a special interest in neuroimaging methodology, including machine learning, pattern classification, whole-brain connectomics, effective connectivity, graph theory, and multi-modal methods.

# Philosophy Faculty

**DEPARTMENTAL FACULTY**

Elizabeth Anderson - John Dewey Distinguished University Professor of Philosophy and Women's Studies, Arthur F. Thurnau Professor, Max Shaye Professor of Public Philosophy, Politics, and Economics, Professor of Philosophy and Women's and Gender Studies, College of Literature, Science, and the Arts; Moral and Political Philosophy, Epistemology, Feminist Theory, Philosophy of Social Science

David Baker - Professor and James B. and Grace J. Nelson Fellow; Philosophy of Physics, Philosophy of Science

Gordon Belot - Lawrence Sklar Collegiate Professor of Philosophy and James B. and Grace J. Nelson Fellow; Philosophy of Physics, Philosophy of Science

Sarah Buss - Professor and James B. and Grace J. Nelson Fellow; Ethics, Action Theory, Moral Psychology

Victor Caston - Professor and James B. and Grace J. Nelson Fellow; Ancient Philosophy, Medieval Philosophy, Austrian Philosophy, Philosophy of Mind, Metaphysics

Emmalon Davis - Assistant Professor; Ethics, Social and Political Philosophy, Epistemology

Kristie Dotson - Professor of Philosophy; Professor, Department of Afroamerican and African Studies; University Diversity and Social Transformation Professor

Anna Edmonds - LEO Lecturer II; Ethics, Epistemology, Philosophy of Mind

Maegan Fairchild - Assistant Professor; Metaphysics, Philosophical Logic

Daniel Herwitz - Frederick G. L. Huetwell Professor; Aesthetics, Film, Philosophical Essay, Transitional Societies

Renée Jorgensen - Assistant Professor; Social and Political Philosophy, Philosophy of Language

James Joyce - Cooper Harold Langford Collegiate Professor; Decision Theory, Epistemology, Philosophy of Science

Eric Lormand - Associate Professor and James B. and Grace J. Nelson Fellow; Philosophy of Mind, Philosophy of Cognitive Science, Language

Daniel Lowe - LEO Lecturer II; Moral and Political Philosophy, Feminist Philosophy, Moral Epistemology

Ishani Maitra - Professor and James B. and Grace J. Nelson Fellow; Philosophy of Language, Feminist Philosophy, Philosophy of Law

David Manley - Associate Professor and James B. and Grace J. Nelson Fellow; Metaphysics, Philosophy of Language, Epistemology

Sarah Moss - William Wilhartz Professor of Philosophy and James B. and Grace J. Nelson Fellow; Philosophy of Language, Metaphysics, Epistemology

Wade Munroe - Adjunct Lecturer in Philosophy; Research Fellow; Epistemology, Philosophy of Psychology, Ethics

Sonya Özbey - Assistant Professor and Denise Research Fellow; Chinese Philosophy

Peter Railton - Gregory S. Kavka Distinguished University Professor; John Stephenson Perrin Professor; Arthur F. Thurnau Professor; Ethics, Philosophy of Science, Political Philosophy, Moral Psychology, Aesthetics

Laura Ruetsche - Louis Loeb Collegiate Professor and James B. and Grace J. Nelson Fellow; Philosophy of Physics, Philosophy of Science

Tad Schmaltz - Department Chair, Professor and James B. and Grace J. Nelson Fellow; History of Early Modern, History and Philosophy of Science

Janum Sethi - Associate Professor and Denise Research Fellow; Kant, History of Modern Philosophy, Aesthetics

Chandra Sripada - Professor and James B. and Grace J. Nelson Fellow; Ethics, Moral Psychology, Mind, Cognitive Science

Eric Swanson - Professor and James B. and Grace J. Nelson Fellow; Philosophy of Language, Philosophy of Mind, Metaphysics, Formal Epistemology

James Tappenden - Professor and James B. and Grace J. Nelson Fellow; Philosophy of Language, Philosophy and History of Mathematics, Philosophical Logic

Brian Weatherson - Marshall M. Weinberg Professor; Epistemology, Philosophy of Language

**AFFILIATED FACULTY**

Linda A.W. Brakel - Research Associate; Adjunct Clinical Associate Professor of Psychiatry, Medical School

Nicolas Cornell - Professor of Law and Philosophy, UM Law School

Daniel Fryer - Assistant Professor of Law, UM Law School

Scott Hershovitz - Professor of Philosophy of Law, Ethics, Political Philosophy; Thomas G. & Mabel Long Professor of Law, UM Law School

Ezra Keshet - Associate Professor of Philosophy; Associate Professor of Linguistics

Mika LaVaque-Manty - Associate Professor of Philosophy, Arthur F. Thurnau Professor, Associate Professor of Political Science

George Mashour - Adjunct Research Associate of Philosophy; Robert B. Sweet Professor of Anesthesiology, Chair, Department of Anesthesiology; Adjunct Professor of Psychology

Gabe Mendlow - Professor of Philosophy; William W. Bishop Jr. Collegiate Professor, Professor of Law, UM Law School

Will Thomas - Assistant Professor of Business Law, Ross School of Business

Kyle Whyte - George Willis Pack Professor of Environment and Sustainability; Affiliate Professor of Philosophy

Ekow Yankah - Thomas M. Cooley Professor of Law, UM Law School

**EMERITUS FACULTY**

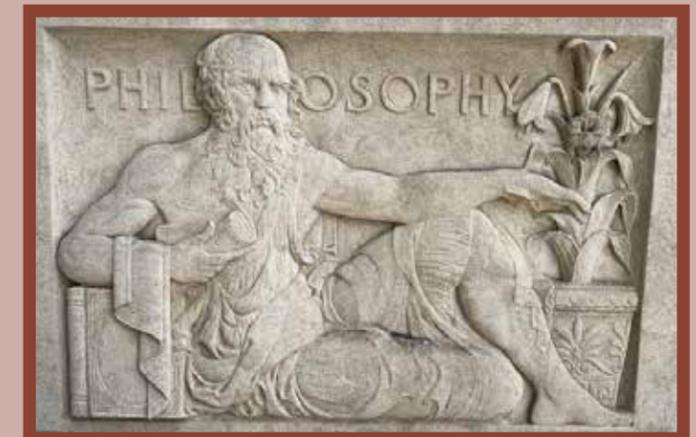Edwin Curley
Stephen Darwall
Allan Gibbard
Louis Loeb
Donald Regan
Lawrence Sklar
Richmond Thomason
Kendall Walton
Nicholas White

# AFFILIATED FACULTY NEWS



**Nicolas Cornell**, Professor of Law and Philosophy, U-M Law School, hosted a workshop this spring for his in-progress book, "Wrongs and Rights Come Apart", which concerns the relationship between our rights and the wrongs that we suffer.
Watch this space for more once published!



**Scott A. Hershovitz**, Thomas G. and Mable Long Professor of Law, U-M Law School, whose book _Nasty, Brutish and Short_ as reported in _The Grue_, Fall 2022, is now available in paperback. His book also made NPR's _Books We Love_ list. Excerpts have run in _The New York Times_, _The Atlantic_, and even _Men's Health_ and there are currently 17 translations worldwide!



Effective Fall '23, Assistant Professor of Business Law, Ross School of Business, **W. Robert (Will) Thomas (JD '12, PhD '15)** will hold an affiliated/courtesy appointment with Philosophy. His scholarship has focused on the moral and conceptual foundations of corporate criminal law and has drawn heavily on philosophical research into issues of collective moral agency that began while he was a graduate student.



**Kyle Whythe**, George Willis Pack Professor, SEAS, became the first U-M faculty member named as an environmental justice expert of the U.S. Science Envoy, Department of State. Through the Science Envoy Program, eminent U.S. scientists and engineers travel to foreign countries as private citizens, leveraging their expertise and networks to forge connections and identify opportunities for sustained international cooperation.

# VISITING FACULTY



**Bryan Parkhurst (MA Music Theory '12, MA Philosophy '12, Joint PhD '14, Music Theory and Philosophy), Assistant Professor of Music Theory and Assistant Professor of Philosophy (Oberlin) and the James B. and Grace J. Nelson Visiting Professor, Winter 2023.** Parkhurst was the first person to earn a joint PhD in music and philosophy at U-M. He has written extensively on the connections between the history of philosophy and the history of music theory. In addition to his scholarly work, Parkhurst is a professional harpist. As a child, he was one of the last students of the legendary pedagogue and Oberlin harp professor Alice Chalifoux. He went on to study harp with Joan Holland at the Interlochen Arts Academy and with Paula Page at Rice University. He also is an amateur accordion player.

Professor Parkhurst was one of three Oberlin Conservatory faculty honored with an Excellence in Teaching Award for the 2021-22 academic year. The award, presented in spring 2023, recognizes faculty who have demonstrated sustained and distinctive excellence in their teaching. He coedited the forthcoming book _Perspectives on Contemporary Music Theory: Essays in Honor of Kevin Korsyn_ (Taylor & Francis, 2023), dedicated to the longtime music theorist at the U-M.

During his visit, Professor Parkhurst taught PHIL 153 - Philosophy and the Arts, which explored the philosophical significance of art and philosophy. The couse was met with excellent reviews from his students.

# From Dismissive to Diehard: How U-M's Chief Marshal Learned to Love Commencement

by Juan Ochoa Erickson, Michigan News, 4/25/23

A self-described "snotty, anti-ritual guy" who didn't attend his own college graduation may seem an unlikely choice for chief marshal of the university. But soon after he accepted the volunteer position in 2008, Mika LaVaque-Manty gained a new perspective.

"My attitude about, 'Oh, I'm so above ceremonies,' has totally changed," said **LaVaque-Manty, Arthur F. Thurnau Professor, and associate professor of political science, of philosophy, and in the Honors Program in LSA.** "Seeing how excited students are, and how excited their families are, is just so much fun for me."

LaVaque-Manty is preparing for his last commencement as chief marshal. He began volunteering as a faculty marshal in 2002 and has been the university's chief marshal since 2008. After April 29, he will pass the torch to John Pasquale, the Donald R. Shepherd Clinical Associate Professor of Conducting, director of Michigan Marching and Athletic Bands and the associate director of bands.

The university created the chief marshal position around 1883, according to records at the Bentley Historical Library. The role usually is filled by a faculty member who helps ensure the program runs smoothly. Marshals often help hood graduates, provide directions, answer questions, and escort graduates to their seats during the commencement ceremonies.

LaVaque-Manty volunteered as chief marshal at the request of Linda Gregerson, the Caroline Walker Bynum Distinguished University Professor of English and director of the MFA Program. She was going on sabbatical for a year, so LaVaque-Manty thought he was merely filling in. Then he received a letter from the provost congratulating him for accepting the three-year post.

Fortunately, LaVaque-Manty said, he had an ideal role model in Gregerson and felt prepared.

Spring Commencement in Michigan Stadium is a lively, high-visibility event that can get a little rowdy, and it's here where the marshal helps control the crowds while treating everyone with respect.

"It's a serious but a celebratory event," LaVaque-Manty said. "It's fun, but (we're) not going to the beach or a party, and the marshal's responsibility is to balance the social aspect of the event."

Although he dismissed his own undergrad commencement and doctoral ceremonies as meaningless at the time, LaVaque-Manty began to see things differently while teaching at the University of Washington. He was in his first faculty position there and presided as faculty marshal three times.

"This is where I realized how much graduation matters for the students, their families and especially those that are first-generation graduates," he said.

As U-M's chief marshal, LaVaque-Manty is preparing for the April 29 ceremony. It's one of the most "enthusiastic" experiences he oversees on campus, with more than 7,500 graduates and their families generating excitement in the stands.

And while graduate and doctoral ceremonies at Hill Auditorium may be more "solemn," LaVaque-Manty said he loves "the academic pomp" the graduate ceremonies always deliver.

One of the most rewarding aspects of being chief marshal is experiencing the speakers and the irinspiring presentations up close, he said. In 2010, when former U.S. President Barack Obama delivered the commencement address, more faculty marshals volunteered than ever before.

"Everybody suddenly was like, 'Oh, I've always wanted to do this,'" LaVaque-Manty said. "But people didn't realize they couldn't get to the robing room with President Obama and take selfies. I knew I didn't get to do that because I was on the field."

There are plenty of other meaningful opportunities to make memories at these events, he noted. In 2015, the university bestowed an honorary degree on then-U.S. Rep. John Dingell Jr., D-Dearborn, the longest-serving member of Congress in history.

LaVaque-Manty identified a colleague who would be thrilled to push the politician's wheelchair. "I knew this faculty member really admired (Dingell), so I paired him to do this assignment," he said.

LaVaque-Manty reflected on his years as chief marshal with a sense of fulfillment. He enjoyed the work and the challenges it brought, he said, and he'll always remember the pride he shared with the graduating classes — and his colleagues who participated in the events.

"In addition to all the other reasons I loved marshaling, I have loved working with the U-M staff," he said, citing partners in the Office of University Development, as well as Michigan Media, Michigan News, Michigan Photography, the Division of Public Safety and Security, and the teams that manage facilities and events.

"All those people play a huge role and have been wonderful collaborators for me. We often forget the amazing professionals that keep the university running and who really care about this place, our students and other people."

# Environmental Justice Expert Selected as U-M's First US Science Envoy by State Department

by Jim Erickson, Michigan News, 12/6/22

University of Michigan environmental justice expert **Kyle Whyte** is one of seven distinguished scientists in the country named U.S. Science Envoys by the Department of State.

Through the Science Envoy Program, eminent U.S. scientists and engineers travel to foreign countries as private citizens, leveraging their expertise and networks to forge connections and identify opportunities for sustained international cooperation.

Whyte, the George Willis Pack Professor at the U-M School for Environment and Sustainability, is **the first U-M faculty member to receive the honor**, according to the State Department.

"I'm inspired by what all my colleagues are doing at SEAS—there's really no place like it—and I'm thrilled to carry over that inspiration to my endeavors as the first U.S. Science Envoy hailing from our campus," said Whyte, an enrolled member of the Citizen Potawatomi Nation whose research focuses on Indigenous peoples' rights and knowledge in climate change and conservation planning, education and policy.

"My selection signals to me that the U.S. is serious about making major transformative changes that uplift Indigenous peoples' leadership and success in the important scientific fields that address sustainability, climate change, food and agriculture, and biodiversity.

"It's a rare opportunity, and I will work extremely hard to honor the generations of Indigenous scientists and allied scientists who have fought for scholarly diversity, inclusion, and justice in academia."

At SEAS, Whyte teaches in the environmental justice specialization. He is founding faculty director of the Tishman Center for Social Justice and the Environment, and principal investigator of the Energy Equity Project.

Whyte serves on the White House Environmental Justice Advisory Council and is the Chapter Lead Author of the Tribes and Indigenous Peoples chapter in the upcoming U.S. National Climate Assessment.

"Professor Whyte is an exceptional interdisciplinary scholar dedicated to making a real difference to society, and in particular to communities and people who need to be heard and at the table when it comes to climate change and other environmental challenges of our time," said Jonathan Overpeck, the Samuel A. Graham Dean of the School for Environment and Sustainability.

"It is important that both the University of Michigan and the U.S. Department of State share this commitment both at home in Michigan and around the planet — our future depends on it."

Since 2010, U.S. Science Envoys have made more than 60 trips to dozens of countries across Africa, the Middle East, Central Asia, South America and Southeast Asia and have engaged with a multitude of government officials, including heads of state.

Like their 23 predecessors, the new U.S. Science Envoys are approved by the U.S. Secretary of State and will engage internationally at the citizen and government levels to enhance relationships between other nations and the United States, to develop partnerships and to improve collaboration.

U.S. Science Envoys also convene meetings on topics at the intersection of foreign policy, science, technology and innovation. Past meetings have addressed oceans, emerging technology, wildlife conservation, public health, STEM education and diversity, and energy.

At a kick-off meeting in Washington, D.C., at the end of January, the new envoys will solidify plans for their personal projects and travels.

"My hope is that some of my areas of focus will come into play, including my work advancing the status of Indigenous peoples' knowledge in scientific assessments, supporting the growth of Indigenous-led research institutions and empowering Indigenous values, research methods and perspectives in climate and environmental science fields," Whyte said.

During his tenure as a U.S. Science Envoy, Whyte will continue to work at U-M.

"I hope that being both rooted on campus and serving as a U.S. Science Envoy will enrich cross-pollination while I am in service," he said.

The U.S. Department of State's underlined announcement includes a list of the seven honorees.

## 2023 Tanner Lecture on Human Values
# ANNUAL UMICH TANNER LECTURE DISCUSSES INTERSECTIONALITY AND OPPRESSION



L to R: PHIL graduate students Margot Witte, Rebecca Harrison, Paul de Font-Reaulx & Aaron Glasser

Our annual **Tanner Lecture on Human Values** and accompanying symposium were held March 29 & 30, 2023. This year's Tanner Lecturer, **Sally Haslanger, the Ford Professor of Philosophy and Women's and Gender Studies (MIT), presented** "Intersecting Social Systems and the Reproduction of Injustice".

As reported by Talia Belowich (Michigan Daily, 3/30/23):

[Over 150]...University of Michigan students and faculty alike gathered in Rackham Auditorium for the annual Tanner Lecture...Haslanger's lecture focused on intersectional oppression, "think" social categories and institutional capitalism....[T]he lecture [began with] an overview on what both discrimination and social formation mean...[Haslanger] questioned how the formation of social groups revolves around shared identities between different people. "Intersectionality, as I understand it, is the result of the different dynamics at work in the system that produce social groups... [t]hese different dynamics, and others, embed 'logics' of capital, gender, race, citizenship, disability and the like. They play out in historically complex ways."

The **Symposium**, held the following day, featured professor **Nora Berenstain (UT Knoxville), Robin Dembroff (Yale), and Nancy Fraser, Louise Loeb Professor of Political and Social Science (The New School), moderated by Kristie Dotson (U-M).**

To view the lecture in its entirety, please visit: https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=OkIqlwGq9y8.



PHIL graduate student Abdul Ansari, PHIL Chair Tad Schmaltz





Professors Liz Anderson & Jim Joyce



Engaged undergrad during Q&A session



L to R: PHIL Chair Tad Schmaltz, PHIL graduate students Emma Hardy and Alice Kelley & Lecturer Dan Lowe



Sally Haslanger, 2023 Tanner Lecturer



Symposiates L to R: Nora Berenstain, Robin Dembroff, Nancy Fraser, Kristie Dotson, Sally Haslanger

# TANNER LECTURE
# ON HUMAN VALUES

## with Professor Hélène Landemore (Yale)
### Professor of Political Science



**Professor Landemore** is professor of political science (with a specialization in political theory) and faculty fellow with Yale's Institution for Social and Policy Studies (ISPS), where she is a leader of Democratic Innovations, a new ISPS program designed to identify and test new ideas for improving the quality of democratic representation and governance. She is also a Distinguished Research Fellow at the Oxford University Institute for Ethics in AI. Her research and teaching interests include democratic theory, political epistemology, the philosophy of social sciences (particularly economics), constitutional processes and theories, workplace democracy, and the ethics and politics of artificial intelligence. Her monographs include *Open Democracy* (Princeton University Press 2020), a vision for a new, more open form of democracy based on non-electoral forms of representation, including representation based on random selection; *Debating Democracy* (Oxford University Press 2021), where she argues against her co-author Jason Brennan that we need more rather than less democracy.

## The People Know Best: Toward a Democratic Political Epistemology

In this lecture I argue that the regime form we call "democracy" is rooted in a certain kind of political epistemology, namely a political theory of knowledge, including political knowledge, which has long remained undertheorized. Going back to the ancient Greeks, we can trace this political epistemology in the teachings of the Sophists and by contrast with the arguments of the most ferocious critic of democracy, Plato. I argue that the political epistemology of the Greeks includes several tenets: (1) a belief that political knowledge is something that can only be shaped, produced, or identified collectively (2) a belief that every citizen shares in political knowledge and should be treated as an epistemic peer and (3) a belief that expert knowledge, while politically useful (and in order to be useful) needs to be subordinated to the collective judgment of ordinary citizens. Armed with what can be characterized as a democratic political epistemology, I then interrogate the practices and institutions of modern representative democracy. This interrogation reveals that very few of our institutions reflect the above tenets. Instead, our tendency to delegate political judgment to professional politicians, judges, experts, and even technologies like artificial intelligence suggest a different kind of political epistemology, one that places much less trust in ordinary citizens and much more in experts and professional politicians. I consider various reasons why this could be justified—such as the claim that modern political problems are more complex than ancient ones—and find them mostly wanting. I then propose various political reforms, including representation by lot and direct democracy mechanisms, that would make our contemporary political systems more aligned with a democratic political epistemology. I conclude with an invitation to political theorists and political philosophers to pay greater attention to the epistemological foundations of political regimes. I defend the value of political epistemology as a budding field of inquiry and explain the questions it seeks and has yet to answer.

**Lecture: Tuesday, April 16, 2024 @ 4:00 PM — Rackham Auditorium**

**Symposium: Wednesday, April 17, 2024 @ 10:00 AM — 12:30 PM Rackham Amphitheatre**

**Symposiates:**
**JASON BRENNAN, Robert J. and Elizabeth Flanagan Family Term Professor and Director, Georgetown Institute for the Study of Markets and Ethics (Georgetown)**
**KYLA EBELS-DUGGAN, Associate Professor of Philosophy (Northwestern)**
**ANNE PHILLIPS, Emeritus Professor of Political Theory (LSE)**

**\*\*Lecture and Symposium are free and open to the public\*\***
Wheelchair and handicap accessible. ASL interpreted.

# Department Colloquium
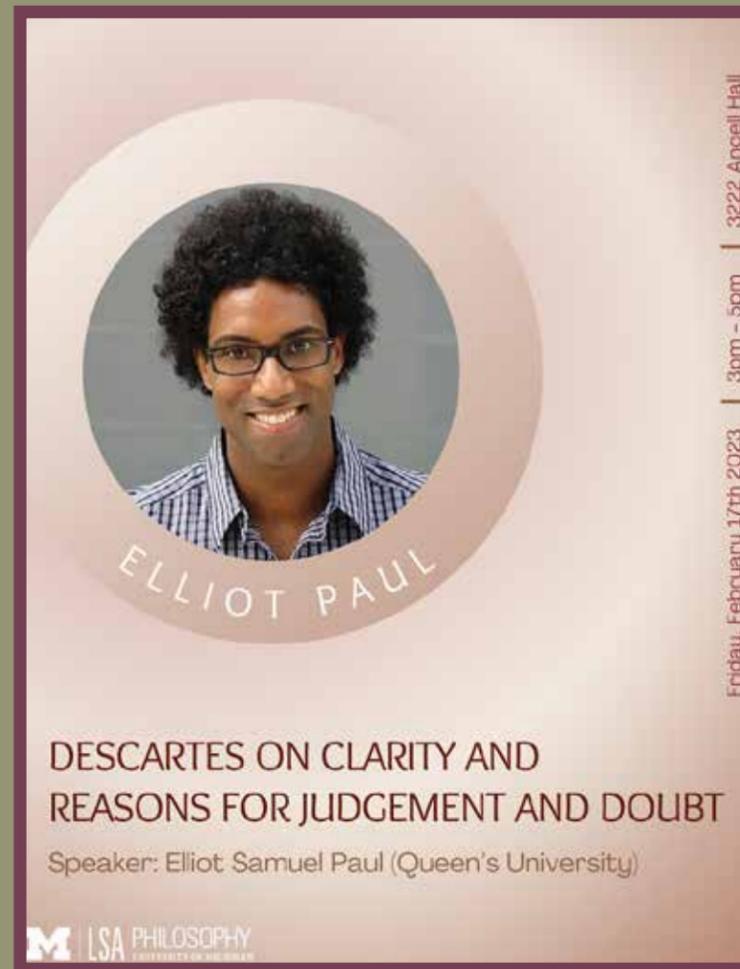


**Elliot Samuel Paul (Associate Professor, Queen's University)**, who specializes in early modern philosophy, epistemology, and philosophy of creativity, presented "Descartes on Clarity and Reasons for Judgement and Doubt". He argued that "commentators increasingly recognize that, for Descartes, when you perceive something clearly and distinctly, you thereby have a normative reason (not just a psychological compulsion) to judge it to be true. They haven't been able to explain why, however, because they haven't identified what clear and distinct perception is. I argue that distinctness is just the highest degree of clarity – complete clarity – and that clarity is presentationality, i.e. the phenomenal quality you experience when something is presented to you as true. Anticipating a current view called Presentationalism, Descartes holds that presentationality (clarity) provides reason for judgment: when you perceive $p$ clearly, you thereby have reason to judge that $p$ is true, precisely because $p$ is presented to you as true. Today's Presentationa lists posit only defeasible reasons for judgment – ones that can be defeated by reasons for doubt. Descartes is bolder in asserting that the highest degree of clarity – complete clarity – provides indefeasible reasons for judgment – ones that preclude any possible reason for doubt. Why? The answer, I argue, flows from a unified account wherein all epistemic reasons – reasons for assent and reasons for doubt – arise from clarity".

# MAP Martin Luther King Jr Symposium - 2023



**SaraEllen Strongman, Assistant Professor, U-M Department of Afro-American and African Studies**, presented "'I accuse you': Black Feminism, Solidarity, Conflict, and Intersectionality. "This talk draws on black feminist theory to ask what happens when one's political and personal commitments conflict with your allies'. Given the vulnerability of multiply marginalized groups, how do individuals and larger social movements navigate conflicting positions and investments? What can black feminist thought and history teach us about the dangers of these conflicts?

The spring and summer of 1982 tend to be dominated in feminist historiography by the aftermath of the infamous 1982 Barnard Conference on Sexuality. Indeed, letters to the editors section of the July issue of *off our backs* from that year is dominated by reactions to the newspaper's coverage of the conference. But a set of statements printed within that same issue would set off a new set of controversies and bitter, contentious disagreements between lesbian feminists – this time focused around racism, anti-semitism, and the 1982 Lebanon War. This controversy would reverberate for months afterwards in the pages of *oob*, in letters between individual feminists, and even at that year's NWSA conference. This paper examines not the debate itself but rather how relationships and solidarities were disrupted by it.

Specifically, I examine an archive centered around a set of statements and letters about the Israel Palestine conflict and the 1982 Lebanon War. Two from the Jewish lesbian feminist group Di Vilde Chayes, one from the group Women Against Imperialism, a response to Di Vilde Chayes by black feminist writer June Jordan, and, finally, a response to Jordan's letter by a group of feminists, including Audre Lorde and Barbara Smith. Through this archive, I seek to explore the stakes and consequences of lesbian feminist solidarities. When does coalition break down—both on the individual and group level—and what happens afterwards?

This case study taps into other instances I'm interested in where racial and ethnic differences create fissures where understanding might have been. What possibilities are foreclosed by this rupture and what can we, today, in this moment of a resurgence of antisemitism alongside right wing hatred, learn from these past failings."

THE 2023 PROGRAM IN PHILOSOPHY, POLITICS, AND ECONOMICS LECTURE

# Justice by Means of Democracy



Dr. Danielle Allen
Harvard University

September 11 2023
4PM - 6PM
Rackham Amphitheatre

**M | PHILOSOPHY   M | PPE**

On September 11, 2023, the Department of Philosophy welcomed Professor Danielle Allen (Harvard) who presented *Justice by Means of Democracy* (U Chicago Press, 2023) our 2023 Philosophy, Politics, and Economics Lecture (formerly the Ferrando Family Visiting Lecture).

Professor Allen offered a new paradigm for political economy, power-sharing liberalism. Building on the work of scholars like Amartya Sen, Philip Pettit, and Elizabeth Anderson, she offered an innovative reconstruction of liberalism based on the principle of full inclusion and non-domination—in which no group has a monopoly on power—in politics, economy, and society. At a time of great social and political turmoil, when many residents of the leading democracies question the ability of their governments to deal fairly and competently with serious public issues, and when power seems more and more to rest with the wealthy few, she reconsidered the very foundations of justice and democracy. The surest path to a just society in which all have the support

necessary to flourish is the protection of political equality, that justice is best achieved by means of democracy; and that the social ideals and organizational design principles that flow from recognizing political equality and democracy as fundamental to human well-being provide an alternative framework not only for justice but also for political economy. Professor Allen identified this paradigm-changing new framework as "power-sharing liberalism."

Liberalism more broadly is the philosophical commitment to a government grounded in rights that both protect people in their private lives and empower them to help govern public life. Power-sharing liberalism offers an innovative reconstruction of liberalism based on the principle of full inclusion and non-domination—in which no group has a monopoly on power—in politics, economy, and society. By showing how we all might fully share power and responsibility across all three sectors, she advanced a culture of civic engagement and empowerment, revealing the universal benefits of an effective government in which all participate on equal terms.

Professor Allen is the James Bryant Conant University Professor and director of the Edmond and Lily Safra Center for Ethics at Harvard University. She was a recipient of a MacArthur Fellowship in 2001 and was elected to the American Academy of Arts and Sciences in 2009. In 2020, she won the Kluge Prize for Achievement in the Study of Humanity, administered by the Library of Congress, that recognizes work in disciplines not covered by the Nobel Prizes. Her many books include the widely acclaimed *Our Declaration: A Reading of the Declaration of Independence in Defense of Equality* and *Cuz: The Life and Times of Michael A.*

# Tanner Library Happenings

## By Summer Mengarelli, Tanner Library Manager

**As we bid farewell to Summer Mengarelli and welcome our new Tanner Library Manager, Tyra Briscoe (beginning Fall 2023), we look forward to more in-person interactions and, as always, more improvements to our little gem of a library**

Dear Students, Staff, Faculty & Friends of UM Philosophy,

When my predecessor, Stephen Hayden (MSI '21), wrote his second and final State of the Library report, it was 2021, Tanner Library was preparing to reopen, and I was preparing to take over as its manager. Now, as I'm typing up my second and final report, a new semester is about to begin, and I will soon pass the keys to the kingdom onto the new library manager, Tyra Briscoe. First, though, an update on the library's goings-on in the 2022-2023 academic year.

Along with the usual work of cataloging new accessions – Oxford Studies monographs, university journals, donations, undergraduate theses, and all the interesting books the graduate students ask me to add to Tanner's collections – I worked this year to ensure all undergraduate theses were properly linked to their digital copies on DeepBlue Documents, where applicable. With the help of some undergraduate students, I also completed my second review of our collections, this time using the Inventory feature in LibraryWorld, the Integrated Library System (ILS) to which Stephen migrated the catalog during his time here.

While completing inventory using a spreadsheet, as was previously the case, worked just fine, there were some major benefits to using LibraryWorld. First, the system provided helpful error messages that led to corrections that would be missed using the spreadsheet. Occasionally, a book would have a barcode number inside its cover that didn't match the barcode number in its digital record, and LibraryWorld would alert us to the problem. It even gave an error message if two books were scanned in the wrong order, prompting us to check if they were being reshelved improperly. This was an especially helpful feature since the student workers

were not necessarily familiar with Library of Congress classification, an admittedly more complex ordering system than the Dewey Decimal. Finally, completing inventory in LibraryWorld allowed us to generate a report with the books that were not inventoried, giving us a clearer sense of what may be missing.

My biggest goal for my second year at Tanner was to improve its circulation system, while honoring its legacy as an open resource for the philosophy department's faculty and graduate students. For a long time, those with access to the library – faculty and graduate students – could come and go as they pleased, taking books and journals on the honor system or by leaving their information on a paper form. Scott Dennis, whom many of you know as the Librarian for Philosophy, confirmed that this was true in 1987-1991 when he managed the Tanner Library during and after his time in grad school. This policy was updated in 2019 when Stephen introduced active circulation to directly record checkouts when he was in the office, while continuing the form for after-hours use.

After circulation was paused for a time during the COVID-19 pandemic, and the catalog was migrated to LibraryWorld, checkouts were again relegated to a paper form. As I took over, I liked to check the form when I came in for a new shift – it helped me learn the names in the department, and it served as a partial record for what happened in Tanner when I wasn't there. There were some concerns, though, that made me want to implement a different system. The first was that paper can be lost – and having now completed two inventories of Tanner's collection, I can confirm that paper is lost, even if it's bound between two covers. Those lost books echo this first concern: is a book truly lost, or is it sitting in the office of a lecturer who dutifully filled out the circulation form, only for the form to be lost?

Both Stephen and I kept digital records of checkouts, but it would be safer to cut out the paper middleman altogether.

Another reason I wanted to revive a digital circulation system is so that we can have a better sense of what materials are being used. This is essential for any library to know how it can better serve its patrons, and it would be useful data for Tanner even if its collection doesn't evolve with as much frequency as other libraries. Finally, there is the matter of patron privacy: the Bill of Rights for the American Library Association (ALA) states that "All people... possess a right to privacy and confidentiality in their library use. Libraries should advocate for, educate about, and protect people's privacy, safeguarding all library use data, including personally identifiable information." Of course, given that the patrons of Tanner Library constitute a close-knit community of scholars who share interests, collaborate, and often use Tanner as a place for discussions and reading groups, I'm sure that few of you are concerned that your personal information and library use are on a form left out in the open. Since I was already convinced by the other reasons laid out here to keep a digital circulation system, though, it also appealed to me that this was an opportunity to more fully follow ALA best practices.

I therefore focused in the past year on implementing a new checkout system. LibraryWorld, which we previously used only to maintain the library's catalog, also came with circulation features, like storing patron information, setting policies (like loan periods – ours is six months :) !!), and of course checking items in and out. I was happy to find that LibraryWorld supports self-checkout with an easy-to-use public interface. We acquired an extra barcode scanner and set it up with a new computer, which you may have seen on the table in front of my desk. With the system in place, all that we needed was patrons, so in March we hosted an event to sign up for a Tanner "library card." It was great to see so many of you there, get you added to the system as a library user, and walk you through how to check out books using your MCard as your "library card."

I'm proud that this new system was implemented during my tenure at Tanner. It's still in its infancy, though, and I've kept a paper form out on the table in case the computer is not working or you haven't signed up for an account yet. This is the perfect place to remind you to sign up if you haven't, which you can do by emailing tanner-library@umich.edu or stopping by the library – which makes this the perfect place to introduce Tyra!

As already noted, starting in Fall 2023, Tanner will be in the capable hands of Tyra Briscoe, a rising senior at the School of Information. Tyra will wrap up her Bachelor of Science in Information (BSI) in User Experience Design during her first year at Tanner, and then complete an accelerated master's in Digital Archives, Library Science, and Preservation during her second year. Before transferring to the University of Michigan last year, Tyra graduated from Oakland Community College with an Associate of Applied Science in Library Services & Technology.

If the resume doesn't speak for itself, Tyra and I are also co-workers at Hatcher Graduate Library's Clark Library, so I know firsthand that she will be fantastic in her role at Tanner.

Now the report is given, and it's my time to say goodbye to Tanner Library and its wonderful community of patrons. While I will be on campus for one more year to wrap up my MSI in Digital Archives, Library Science, and Preservation and MS in Geospatial Data Science, I will no longer be working in Tanner. This job was lined up before I even found my apartment in Ann Arbor, so I'm feeling a bit sentimental about leaving it. It doesn't help that through this position I got to meet you all – the warm, welcoming, and intriguing Philosophy Department! I know that you'll be just as warm to Tyra, and I can't say thank you enough for welcoming me.
Summer Mengarelli



Thank you to Summer Mengarelli!



Welcome to Tyra Briscoe!

I'm **Tyra Briscoe, the new Student Library Manager of the Tanner Philosophy Library.** I earned my associate degree in Library Technical Services and transferred to the University of Michigan School of Information, where I will ultimately earn a master's degree in Digital Archives, Library Science, and Preservation. Over the next two years, I hope to build upon the work of the previous library managers to continue developing the Tanner Library into a welcoming, accessible, and established resource for both students and faculty. I'm looking forward to working with and getting to know the Philosophy Department!

# Ian Fishback's American Nightmare

## He was a decorated soldier, a whistle-blower against torture.
## Then he was undone by his own mind - and a healthcare system that utterly failed him.

By C.J. Chivers, as first appearing in *The New York Magazine*, Feb. 21, 2023. Excerpts that follow used with permission.





In February, 2021, C.J. Chivers, staff writer for *The New York Magazine*, published a fascinating and in-depth article surrounding the shocking and sudden death of **Dr. Ian Fishback (West Point: BS Middle Eastern Studies 2001; UMich: MA Philosophy 2012; PhD Philosophy 2020)**. What follows are excepts of his article that can be read in full at **https://www.nytimes.com/2023/02/21/magazine/ian-fishback.html.** Chivers begins his investigation with Ian's life story and history, his illustrious military career, his successful academic careers, and ends with a detailed account of Ian's final days. Chivers took great time and care to speak to Ian's family, friends, collegues, peers, fellow military service members and commanders, investigators, former students, and faculty members.

Fishback once seemed a gentlemanly embodiment of martial ideals. Intellectually driven, impressively fit, a West Point graduate and Arabist with one combat tour to Afghanistan and three to Iraq, he was heralded as morally inquisitive and ethically rigorous, qualities that earned him international praise after he went public with accounts that fellow paratroopers had humiliated, beat and tortured Iraqi men in 2003. His allegations, confirmed by other paratroopers, shattered the Pentagon's insistence that the sadism and brutalities at Abu Ghraib prison were isolated crimes and revealed systemic military failures to set humane standards for prisoner treatment. His message was so resonant that it swiftly spurred Congress to action, leading to a new federal law intended to protect anyone in American custody from the sorts of abuses that Fishback insisted were widespread.

Two tours in the Special Forces followed, then a promotion to major. After earning a pair of master's degrees, he transferred to West Point in 2012 to teach courses about war and morality to cadets, before resigning his commission in 2015 for a career as a philosopher. His prospects appeared boundless. Hard-working scholar, sought-after public speaker, Fishback was a one-man brand — a soldier-turned-public-intellectual willing to expose the dark underside of American power.

Fishback was an unlikely candidate for martial life. Born in Detroit in 1979, he was raised by parents [John Fishback and Sharon Ableson] with strong antiwar sentiments. When Ian was an infant, the couple settled on a 10-acre homestead in the forest west of Newberry, Mich., in the Upper Peninsula... The family used an outhouse and bathed in a tub beside a woodstove; water came from a well down the road. Outside, the Fishbacks raised turkeys, chickens and rabbits beside vegetable gardens.

As an athlete with high grades, he was accepted to West Point, securing a place as a cadet in return for five years of active service after graduation. Newberry, population about 2,000, was proud. In summer 1997, he left for austere cadet life - [t]he spartan quarters at West Point were a step up...He majored in Middle East foreign area studies, learned Arabic and joined a Christian fellowship. He let it be known that he intended to become an infantry officer — one of the Army's most demanding tracks.



[His] battalion returned to Fort Bragg in spring 2004. Within weeks, *The New Yorker* published a report on the torture and humiliation of Iraqis at Abu Ghraib prison... Fishback spent a weekend writing a memorandum of his concerns, along with a request for clarification on the standards for prisoner treatment... "There was widespread agreement that the pre-9/11 standard interpretation of the Geneva Conventions many of us learned at West Point was jettisoned in favor of something else," Fishback wrote. "The question was: What is the new standard? No one knew."...[I]n mid-2005, more than a year after the crimes at Abu Ghraib, Fishback called the office of Human Rights Watch in the Empire State Building and told the receptionist he was an American soldier and wanted to talk about torture... Soon the staff at Human Rights Watch connected Fishback to members of Congress... Fishback composed a letter to [Senator McCain] a man he expected would understand.... Weeks later, in an editorial titled "The Shame of Torture," the journal *America: The Jesuit Review* summarized the power of Fishback's letter... That December, President Bush signed into law the Detainee Treatment Act of 2005.

Fishback's life changed. Outside the military, he was hailed as a person of conscience who fought his own employer to protect the powerless and prevent soldiers from disgracing themselves...inside the Army [he] often felt like an outcast...[By late 2008], Fishback was reporting medical problems that caregivers thought had psychiatric roots... Some members of his family now wonder if his complaints and self-diagnosis were flashes of early mental illness.... Fishback moved in summer 2010 to Ann Arbor, where he enrolled in the University of Michigan's master's programs in philosophy and political science. The move marked a personal and professional pivot. In academia he was regarded as a moral figure, a man to be heard, not shunned. [And from 2012-2015 he served as an instructor at West Point.] Teaching wove powerful strands from Fishback's life into what seemed the peak of his career. He proved to be an earnest, committed professor whose four wartime tours as a paratrooper and Special Forces officer lent him experientialist cred, a form of West Point gravitas that could be riveting.
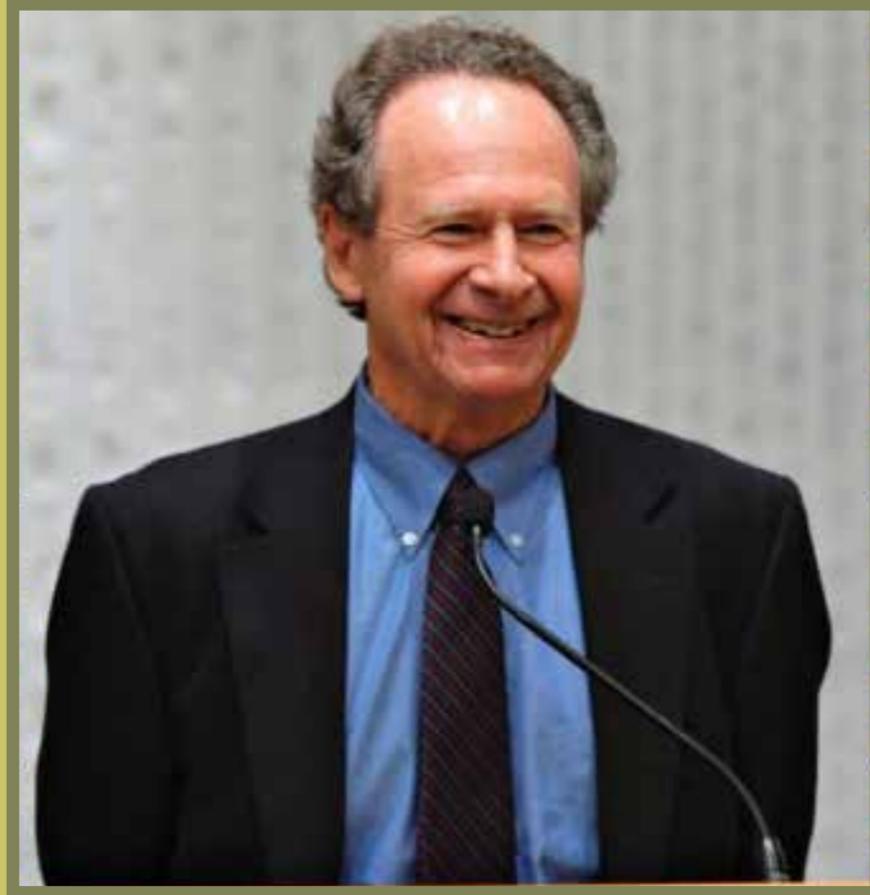
As his teaching tour wound down, Fishback opted to leave the Army and return to Michigan in 2015 for doctoral work... Whatever Fishback's frustrations and troubles, he remained positive in front of his students... In early 2016, another V.A. clinician concluded that Fishback had suffered from an unspecified adjustment disorder, most likely caused by stresses during military service, that appeared resolved. The assertion that Fishback's mental-health struggles were resolved was wrong...[F]rom 2017 until 2021, as his mental state deteriorated...[he] generally resisted further care... On the basis of the strength of his earlier work, [he] was awarded a Fulbright scholarship for a year at Lund University in Sweden...and he defended his dissertation... December, 2020.

*We invite you to complete your reading of Ian's distinguished, and too short, life by visiting the link noted above.*

# In Memoriam - Donald Munro (1931-2023)



**In June, 2023, Professor Donald J. Munro passed away in Salt Lake City, Utah at 92 years old.**

Professor Munro was born on March 5, 1931. He grew up in Cleveland, Ohio. He received a BA from Harvard University and then spent several years in the US Navy. While working in Washington, DC, he met the love of his life, Ann Patterson. They were married in 1956 while stationed in the Philippines.

He received a PhD in Philosophy from Columbia University, and spent his career as a Professor of Philosophy and Chinese at the University of Michigan. He focused on the origins of ideas of human nature in Chinese philosophical traditions. His work was unusual in his desire to expand traditional philosophical approaches through an openness to perspectives from social and natural sciences.

He was invited to be part of the academic exchanges that deepened connections between China and the West in the late 1970s and 1980s. He taught at Peking University  and The Chinese University of Hong Kong, and he was appointed as a visiting scholar at the Chinese Academy of Social Sciences in Beijing. He received a Guggenheim Fellowship and served on the American Council of Learned Societies.

His many books and articles were highly regarded by both Chinese and Western scholars. After he retired from teaching, he and Ann endowed the Tang Junyi Professorship at the University of Michigan to bridge Philosophy and Chinese Studies. He was beloved by his students and cared deeply about them. He was a model scholar, a 'master teacher' who embodied the principles and insights he sought to transmit. He formed lifelong friendships with many of his students and had a deep impact on the next generation of China scholars.

Professor Munro was endlessly curious about the world and could predictably be found stretched out on the couch reading, with a cat on his belly. He loved books about WWII, science, evolution, history, travel, nature, and beyond. He reveled in conversations about what he was reading and loved to exchange ideas with friends, colleagues and family. He traveled the world with Ann, and brought back new ideas and stories to share from across the globe.

He also loved walking in the woods, especially the woods of northern Michigan. Those who were lucky enough to be part of his world were invited to help Don and Ann build a log cabin (Canta Rana), from scratch, on their property on the Leelanau Peninsula. These friends share wonderful summer memories of hammering, building, jumping in the pond and swimming in Lake Michigan. He was steadfast and loyal, clear with wisdom and encouragement for those around him. He told wonderful stories, and brought laughter and silly jokes to every gathering.

Above all, Don loved his family. He and Ann were the air each other breathed. Ann and their daughter, Sarah (Munro Holzner), were the center of his world. He loved them beyond measure, and with them his sisters and many nephews and nieces, his son-in-law Claudio Holzner, and grandsons Powell and Nicolas. When his grandsons were young they formed a trio called the 'Magical Tricksters' and performed magic shows for friends and neighbors, and preschool classes, whom they amazed with disappearing coins, chopped off fingers, and tales of the magical powers of the Monkey King. He brought so much love and joy, and deep kindness, to all of us.

Contributions to his memory may be made to the Chinese Philosophy Fund.

# In Memoriam - David Dick (1979-2022)



**Dr. David ("Dave") G. Dick (PhD '09)**, beloved Associate Professor of Philosophy and Fellow of the Canadian Centre for Advanced Leadership in Business in the Haskayne School of Business at the University of Calgary and the leader of the Integrity Network, passed away on November 15, 2022, at the age of 43. Prior to his fellowship, he was Chair of Business Ethics at U Calgary. Professor Dick's research focused on issues relating to ethics and money, including questions about justice and wealth distribution, individual ethics of wealth and charity, as well as questions about the nature of money. He developed an innovative and popular undergraduate course on the Philosophy of Money, and in 2015 he was the inaugural recipient of the University of Calgary's highest teaching honor, the McCaig-Killam Teaching Award. In addition to his research and teaching, Dick engaged in a significant amount of public-facing work, presenting philosophy in a variety of mainstream media outlets and serving as the coordinator for the Integrity Network, a working group of ethics professionals from corporate, academic, and non-profit sectors. In 2017 he was named one of Calgary's *Avenue Magazine's* "Top 40 under 40". The chair of Calgary's Department of Philosophy, Nicole Wyatt, writes, "David was a much loved and respected colleague who was always kind and generous with his time. His enthusiasm for teaching and for philosophy was apparent to anyone who spent time with him, as was his genuine affection for his students and colleagues..." He was a born storyteller equally at home discussing the philosophy of money as expounding on *Animal Crossing* or the latest episode of *RuPaul's Drag Race*, or sharing his love of Freddie Mercury, and was known for his self-deprecating sense of humour — "Dr. Dick" didn't shy from jokes about his own name. He will be missed by many and remembered for his many contributions.
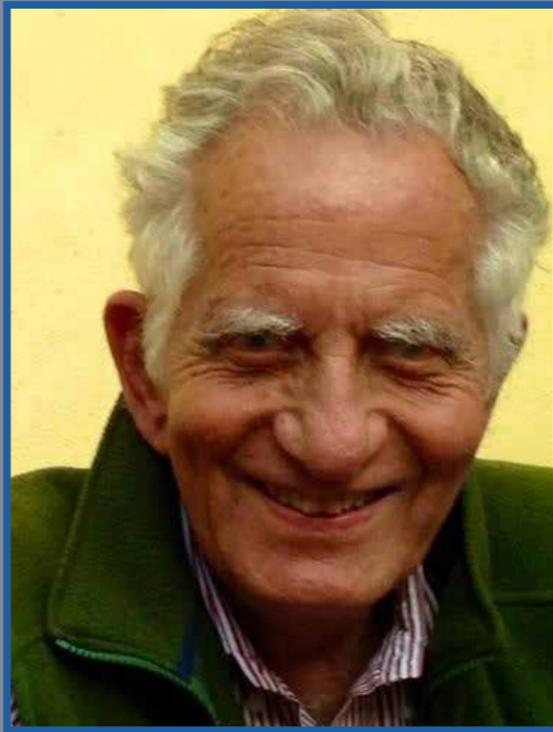
# In Memoriam - John T. Granrose (1939-2022)
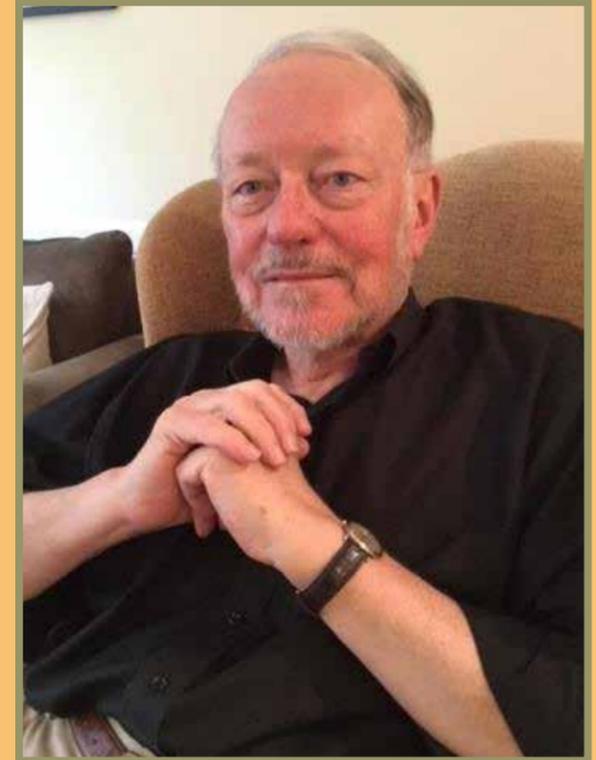


**Dr. John Thomas Granrose (PhD '66)**, 83, died peacefully at home on November 24, 2022, in Malton, England. Dr. Granrose graduated from the University of Miami in 1961 where he was active in the UM Honors Program, president of the UM Philosophy Club and was elected to several honor societies including Phi Beta Kappa and Iron Arrow, the highest honor awarded at UM. After graduation, he studied as a Fulbright Scholar, in Austria and Heidelberg, Germany. After receiving his PhD in Philosophy at the University of Michigan in 1966, he taught Philosophy at the University of Georgia for 27 years until he retired in 1993. While teaching at UGA, he won many teaching awards including the Meigs Distinguished Teaching Award in 1984. He published several books including *Introductory Readings in Ethics*, co-edited with William Frankena and *Practical Business Ethics*, co-authored with Warren French. He was an active member of the American Philosophical Association where he edited the APA Newsletter on Teaching Philosophy. He is remembered fondly by the many students and colleagues whose lives he touched. (His UGA memorial can be found at https://www.phil.uga.edu/news/stories/2022/memory-john-granrose-1939-2022) In addition to his time at UGA, Professor Granrose taught as a visiting exchange professor at Keele University in England and at the University of Erlangen-Nürnberg in Germany. During the semester in England, he became a member of The Magic Circle in London and thereafter remained an accomplished magician his entire life. In 1996, he graduated from the C.G. Jung Institute Zurich and had a private practice in Athens, GA. In 1998, he returned to the Jung Institute as Director of Studies in Zurich, Switzerland. In addition to magic, music had always been a part of his life from playing the bassoon and trombone in high school to playing the banjo and recorder later in life. He sang in the church choir and loved his time singing in several barbershop quartets across Europe and the US. In 2018, Dr. Granrose moved to Malton, England, a small market town in North Yorkshire, to be closer to his wife's family. He leaves behind his loving wife, Jennifer (Ilife); daughter Karen (Bruce) Friend of Roswell, GA; son Jonathan (Krista) Granrose of Raleigh, NC; former wife and mother of his children, Cherlyn (Skromme) Granrose; seven grandchildren and four great-grandchildren.

*contributed by daughter Karen Granrose Friend*

# In Memoriam - Carl Cohen (1931-2023)



**Carl Cohen, Ph.D and professor of philosophy at UM**, admired and loved by thousands of students and colleagues **during his 62 years on the Michigan faculty**, died on August 26, 2023 at the age of 92. His tenure at Michigan was **one of the longest in the history of the university**. He joined UM faculty in 1955, after completing his Ph.D at UCLA. He was one of the planners and founding members of the UM Residential College in 1967, a unit within the larger university designed to maintain the spirit of cooperative study. He was the founder, and for ten years Director, of the Program in Human Values in Medicine at the UM Medical School. He served as Chairman of the UM Senate Advisory Committee on University Affairs (SACUA), and on the Executive Committee of the College of LS&A.

Born in Brooklyn on April 30, 1931, Cohen moved from New York to Miami, FL at the age of 12 and attended school there. In 1947 he won a Coca-Cola scholarship to the U of Miami, where he participated actively in its national championship debate team. He graduated summa cum laude in 1951, going on to a Master's degree at the U of IL in 1952, and to UCLA where he received his PhD in philosophy in 1955. In the fall of 1955 he began his career at UM, retiring only after suffering a stroke in 2017. He taught many classes in the Residential College, Department of Philosophy, and elsewhere throughout his tenure.

For many years, Cohen was a member of the National Board of Directors of the ACLU, and participated as Chair of its MI affiliate from 1971-1974. Cohen believed that even the most terrible positions people may hold must not be silenced. He was also an active member of the labor panel of the American Arbitration Association, and he served as a consultant to the Judiciary Committee of the U.S. Senate, the Rockefeller Foundation, the National Humanities Center, and the National Endowment for the Humanities. During sabbaticals and leaves Cohen served as visiting professor of philosophy at universities around the world, including the National University of Singapore, the Hebrew University in Jerusalem, universities in Cuzco and Trujillo in Peru (where he taught in Spanish), Hong Kong University, and the universities of Otago and Victoria in New Zealand.

His ten books, translated into many languages, include *Democracy* (1972), *A Conflict of Principles: The Battle over Affirmative Action at the University of Michigan* (2014), and, most recently, *Both Wrong and Bad* (2018). He is the coauthor of several books including the most widely used textbook in logic around the globe, *Introduction to Logic*, (with Irving Copi) whose 15th edition was published in 2016 (with Victor Rodych).
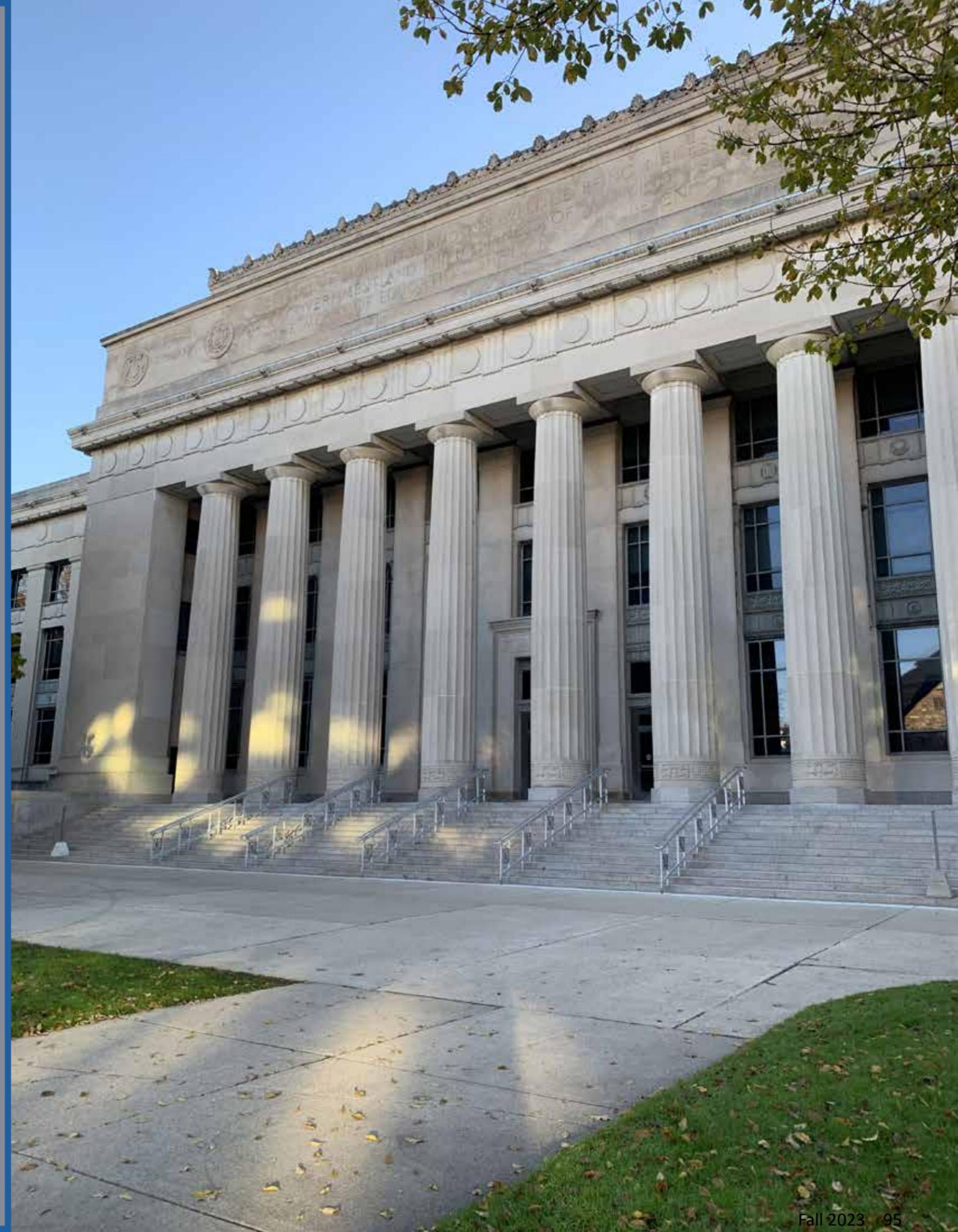
He also published scores of essays on contemporary philosophical controversies, e.g.: abortion, freedom of speech, conscientious objection, college admission, human subject use, genetic engineering, organ transplantation, and the use of animals in biomedical research, in many periodicals. Cohen's books and articles contributed to the history of American philosophy – and to the personal opinions of many people.

Traveling widely, Carl would often hike solo on remote islands – Aland in Finland and Laeso in Denmark, Sark, the Isle of Mull and the Isle of Man, Sardinia and Crete, Shodoshima, and many others. He also hiked Angel's Landing at Zion National Park and all the way down the Grand Canyon at the age of 77. Chess was one of the passions of his early life and he was a lifelong member of the US Chess Federation. Additionally, he was a low-brow astronomer and had a passion and love of dogs, mourning four faithful friends through the years.

Carl's impact on the field of contemporary philosophy, as a teacher, and as a parent and uncle, will be felt for decades to come. Alongside his notable intellectual and worldly accomplishments, Carl's exuberant, energetically warm, generous, sometimes provocative, and highly engaged spirit is legendary among all he encountered.

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