

Cal Fawell

University of North Carolina, Chapel Hill
Dept. of Philosophy
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Areas of specialization and competence

AOS Epistemology, Language
AOC Mind

Employment

2026-
Dean's Postdoctoral Scholar
Florida State University

Education

2026
University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill
Ph.D. in Philosophy
dissertation: *Truth-Aptness Defeat*
committee: James Pryor (chair), Ram Neta, Alex Worsnip, Roger White (external)

abstract: My dissertation systematically investigates *truth-aptness defeat*: evidence that your belief (credence, etc.) isn't only not true, it doesn't have a propositional content, and so doesn't even have truth-conditions. For example: expert testimony that your high credence that stealing is wrong is merely a pseudo-credence in a disguised imperative like "don't steal!" Truth-aptness defeat shows that there must be a second dimension along which we can adjust our attitudes, even credence *i*. I call this dimension how *firmly* you *hold* an attitude. This dimension is *sui generis*, and all of our attitudes can vary along it: desire, fear, etc. Hence, my dissertation uncovers an entirely new dimension of the mind. Truth-aptness defeat does not rationalize lowering credence, even though it makes your credence less likely to be true. Instead, I argue, it requires *holding* the defeated credence *less firmly*.

2022
M.A. in Philosophy
thesis title: *The Explanatory Power of KK*
committee: Ram Neta, James Pryor, Alex Worsnip

Fall 2024
Massachusetts Institute of Technology
Visiting student

2019
University of Chicago
B.A. in Philosophy, minor in Mathematics

Publications

Forth. "Interrogating the Linguistic Argument for KK", *The Journal of Philosophy*

Papers in Progress

drafts available upon request

1. "Truth-Aptness Defeat and Credence"
2. "Truth-Aptness Defeat and Firmness of Hold"
3. "A New Case for Epistemic Permissivism"
4. "The Epistemic Significance of Infelicity"
5. "Hyperintensional Obligations and Perspectival Satisfaction"

Selected Presentations

Peer-reviewed:

- Jan. 2027 "Rationally Required Fragmentation"
Colloquium, Eastern APA
- Feb. 2026 "Truth-Aptness Defeat and Fixed Credence"
Colloquium, Central APA
- Mar. 2025 "Cautious Monotonicity: Not Cautious Enough?"
Colloquium, Central APA
- Feb. 2024 "*De Se* Ignorance and Self-Promises"
Symposium, Central APA
- Jan. 2024 "The Varieties of Infelicity"
Symposium, Eastern APA

Fellowships and awards

- Fall 2025 Departmental Research Fellowship
Summer 2025 Departmental Self-Study Fellowship
2024-2025 Departmental Research Fellowship
Summer 2024 Departmental Research Fellowship
Summer 2021 Departmental Research Fellowship
2020-2021 Horace Williams Fellowship

Teaching

AS PRIMARY INSTRUCTOR (AT UNC):

Summer 2026	Introduction to Philosophy
Spring 2026	Introduction to Critical Thinking
Spring 2024	Introduction to the Philosophy of Language
Fall 2023	Introduction to Critical Thinking
Summer 2023	Introduction to Critical Thinking
Spring 2023	Introduction to Philosophy
Fall 2022	Introduction to the Philosophy of Language
Summer 2022	Introduction to Critical Thinking

AS TEACHING ASSISTANT (AT UNC):

Spring 2022	Introduction to Critical Thinking
Fall 2021	AI and the Future of Humanity

Service

2022-24, 25-26	Graduate Student Mentor
2024-2025	Graduate Student Mentoring Committee

References

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Roger White
Professor of Philosophy
Dept. of Linguistics and Philosophy, Massachusetts Institute of Technology
rog@mit.edu

Mariska Leunissen (teaching reference)
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as of: June 8, 2026