

Cal Fawell

Florida State University
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.) is *empty*—that is, that it lacks a propositional content. For example: if you believe that Mary is in New York, evidence that there is no such person as "Mary" will indicate that that belief is empty. (Other examples may include evidence that your belief makes a category mistake, or utilizes vocabulary (like "wrong" or "beautiful") which may be non-factual.) Truth-aptness defeat does not rationalize lowering credence, even though it makes your credence less likely to be true. Instead, reflection on truth-aptness shows that there must be a heretofore unnoticed dimension along which we can adjust our credences, even credence *i*, and along which we should adjust them upon receiving truth-aptness defeat. I call this dimension how *firmly* you *hold* an attitude. This dimension is *sui generis*, and all of our attitudes (desire, fear, etc.) can vary along it. Hence, my dissertation uncovers an entirely new dimension of the mind.

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. "Hyperintensional Obligations and Perspectival Satisfaction"
4. "The Epistemic Significance of Infelicity"

Selected Presentations

Peer-reviewed:

Jan. 2027	"Rationally Required Fragmentation" Colloquium, Eastern APA
Nov. 2026	"The Epistemic Backstop Remains Intact" (part of panel: <i>AI and the Future of Our Society</i>) PPE Society 10 th Annual Meeting
Oct. 2026	"A New Challenge to Faith" Society of Christian Philosophers, Midwest Regional Conference
Feb. 2026	"Truth-Aptness Defeat and Fixed Credence" Colloquium, Central APA
Mar. 2025	"Cautious Monotonicity: Not Cautious Enough?" Colloquium, Central APA
Feb. 2024	" <i>De Se</i> Ignorance and Self-Promises" Symposium, Central APA
Jan. 2024	"The Varieties of Infelicity" Symposium, Eastern APA

Fellowships and awards

2024-2025	Departmental Research Fellowship (<i>also: Fall 2025, Summer 2024, Summer 2021</i>)
Summer 2025	Departmental Self-Study Fellowship
2020-2021	Horace Williams Fellowship

Teaching

FSU

- Fall 2026 Introduction to Ethics/Applied Ethics (focus: ethics of AI) (enrollment: 45)
Fall 2026 Introduction to Philosophy (120)

UNC (PRIMARY INSTRUCTOR)

- Summer 2026 Introduction to Philosophy (enrollment: 11)
Spring 2026 Introduction to Critical Thinking (31)
Spring 2024 Introduction to the Philosophy of Language (31)
Fall 2023 Introduction to Critical Thinking (38)
Summer 2023 Introduction to Critical Thinking (13)
Spring 2023 Introduction to Philosophy (39)
Fall 2022 Introduction to the Philosophy of Language (36)
Summer 2022 Introduction to Critical Thinking (15)

UNC (TEACHING ASSISTANT)

- 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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Mariska Leunissen (teaching reference)
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as of: October 29, 2026