



Dr. Brian M. Johnson

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CURRICULUM VITAE

Profile

I am currently completing two years as Visiting Assistant Professor in Purdue's Cornerstone Program for Integrated Liberal Arts. My academic training combines ethics and value theory with the history of European philosophy, and my teaching experience extends beyond standard introductory courses to include BioMedical Ethics, World Religions, Philosophy of Religion, Great Books, and first year writing and public speaking courses. I am committed to showing how the humanities can enrich lives, regardless of a student background or primary area of study.

Education

Purdue University – Ph.D., Philosophy, 2019

The University of Memphis – M.A., Philosophy, 2007

The University of Memphis – Graduate Certificate, Women's Studies, 2007

Simpson College, Indianola, IA – B.A., Philosophy and English, 2005

Areas of Research and Teaching

AOS: 18th and 19th Century European Philosophy; Ethics; Continental Philosophy

AOC: Social and Political Philosophy; Moral Psychology; Aesthetics; Epistemology

Dissertation

Title: *Conscience, Human Nature, and the Evolutionary Challenge*

Year: 2019

Director: Dr. Christopher Yeomans

Committee: Dr. Patrick Kain; Dr. Daniel Kelly; Dr. Daniel Smith

Languages

German, Reading and Speaking: Demonstrated Translation Proficiency, Purdue University, Fall 2014; Deutsch als Fremdsprache, Sommer Intensivkurse, 2016 (Mainz, A2.1-A2.2) and 2017 (Wiesbaden, A2.2-B2.1).

French, Basic Reading Knowledge (Simpson College, 2003).

Latin, Basic Reading (Princeton University, Summer Intensive Latin Course, 2013).

Publications

"Random Acts of Poetry? The Omission of Biography in Heidegger's Reading of Trakl," *Janus Head: Journal of Interdisciplinary Studies in Literature, Continental Philosophy, Phenomenological Psychology and the Arts*, [Forthcoming, 2022]

Presentations

"Vocal Music in Hegel's Aesthetics," Pacific APA, March 2021.

"Response to Elise Frketch's Essay: 'Kant and Hegel on Biology and Individuation,'" Workshop: *The Unity of Hegel's Philosophy of Nature*, Purdue University, 2020.

"The Constitutivist's Dilemma: A Problem for the Self-Conception Strategy," Minnesota Philosophical Society Conference, October 26, 2019.

"Response to Asngar Lyssy's 'Beyond Our Given Nature – Kant on the Inviolable Holiness of Humanity,'" Workshop: *Dimensions of Normativity: Kant on Morality, Legality, and Humanity*, Purdue University, 2018.

"Heidegger, Spatiality, and the Phenomenological Body," Presented at Seminar on French and Analytic Approaches to Science in the 20th Century and Beyond, Archives Henri Poincaré - Université de Lorraine, June, 2015

"Response to Ryan Pollock's 'The Generosity and Capacity of our Nature: Hume's Reply to Hutcheson in the Treatise,'" Joint Meeting of the Indiana Philosophical Association and the Kentucky Philosophical Association, 2015

"Johann Georg Hamann and Hegel's Dialectic of Sense Certainty," Mid-South Philosophy Conference, Rhodes College, 2012

"Response to Timothy Martell's 'Edith Stein's Phenomenology of Collective Emotional States'" Mid-South Philosophy Conference, University of Memphis, 2009

"Judith Butler and Linda Alcoff on the Metaphysics of Sexual Difference" Iowa Philosophical Society Annual Conference, Simpson College, 2006

Works In Progress

Conscience and Humanity: A Modest Defense of Moral and Aesthetic Perception

"A Modest Defense of an Immodest Paper: What Watkins' Epistemic Rights Approach Gets Wrong About Journalism Ethics"

"The Normative Limits of Evolutionary Debunking in Moral Epistemology"

Teaching Experience

INSTRUCTOR

2020 – 2022	Purdue University (Cornerstone)	Lafayette, IN
Spring 2019	St. Catherine University	St. Paul, MN
2014 – 2015	Ivy Tech Community College	Marion, Indiana
2009 – 2012	Harper College	Palatine, Illinois
2009 – 2012	Oakton Community College	Des Plaines, Illinois
Spring, 2008	Simpson College	Indianola, Iowa
2007 – 2008	Des Moines Area Community College	Des Moines, Iowa

ONLINE INSTRUCTOR

2020 – 2020	Purdue University (Cornerstone)	Lafayette, IN
2015 – 2017	Purdue University, Distance Learning	West Lafayette, IN

TEACHING ASSISTANT

2012 – 2015	Purdue University	West Lafayette, IN
2006 – 2007	The University of Memphis	Memphis, TN

ENGLISH AS A SECOND LANGUAGE

Summer, 2018	EvoSchule, Mainz	Mainz, Germany
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Past Courses

Transformative Texts I: Antiquity to Modernity (Purdue University), 2020-2022

Transformative Texts II: Modernity to the Present Day (Purdue University), 2020-2022

Online Course Development, "The Ethics of Data Science" (Purdue University), 2019-20

Instructor, Biomedical Ethics, (St. Catherine University), Spring 2019

Privatdozent: English as a Second Language, EvoSchule, Mainz, Summer 2018

Instructor, Critical Thinking (Purdue, Distance Learning), Summer 2016–Spring 2017

Instructor, Intro to Philosophy (Purdue, Distance Learning), Summer 2015–Spring 2016

Instructor, Ethics (Purdue), Fall 2014, Spring 2015

Instructor, Religions of the East (Purdue), Summer 2014

Teaching Assistant, Dr. Paul Draper, Philosophy of Religion (Purdue), Spring 2014

Teaching Assistant, Dr. Levi Williams, Religions of the East (Purdue), Fall 2013

Instructor, Ethics and Introduction to Philosophy, Ivy Tech Community College, 2014

Teaching Assistant, Dr. Daniel Kelly, Introduction to Philosophy (Purdue) Spring 2013

Teaching Assistant, Dr. Evan Williams, Ethics (Purdue), Fall 2012
Instructor, Ethics, Logic, and Introduction to Philosophy (Oakton) 2009-2012
Instructor, Ethics, Critical Thinking, and Introduction to Philosophy (Harper), 2009-2012
Instructor, Philosophy of Religion (Simpson College), Spring 2008
Instructor, Logic, Intro to Philosophy, Des Moines Area Community College 2007-2008
Teaching Assistant, Dr. Kas Saghafi, Intro to Philosophy (Memphis), Spring 2007
Teaching Assistant, Dr. David Henderson, Logic (Memphis), Fall 2006
Tutor, Hawley Academic Resource Center, Philosophy (Simpson College), 2004-2005

Awards

Purdue's *Cornerstone Review* featured two essays written by students in my SCLA 101 and 102 courses:

Catie Flemming's "Discrimination Towards Minorities Amongst the Outbreak of Disease" was featured in the Fall 2021 issue.

Malini Nair's "Why Alcott's *Little Women* Deserves to be Taken Seriously" was featured in the Spring 2022 issue and won honorable mention in that year's Cornerstone Contest.

Purdue Research Foundation (PRF), Research Grant, 2017-18

Partner University Fund of the French American Cultural Exchange, Scholarship for summer seminar:

"French and Analytic Approaches to Science in the 20th Century and Beyond,"
Archives Henri-Poincaré - Université de Lorraine in Nancy, France, 2015.

Purdue University, Graduate Teaching Assistantship, 2012-2017

University of Memphis, Graduate Teaching Assistantship, 2006-2007

Simpson College, Norman Thomas Outstanding Student in Philosophy Award, 2004

Professional Affiliations

Member of the American Philosophical Association (APA) from 2011 to present

DISSERTATION ABSTRACT

TITLE:

Conscience, Human Nature, and the Evolutionary Challenge

ABSTRACT:

The purpose of this dissertation is to rebut some skeptical arguments in moral epistemology by appealing to philosophical resources from the history of European philosophy. The skeptical arguments I counter are grounded in a the perspective of contemporary evolutionary biology. Put quickly, our evolutionary history is said to undermine our claims to moral knowledge because the process by which our capacity for such knowledge developed was determined by adaptive and reproductive fitness. The determinations of fitness, it is said, cannot be expected to align with standards of objective moral value. I argue that some major figures from the history of philosophy—in particular, Rousseau, Kant, and Hegel—are capable of meeting the evolutionary challenge. In the first chapter, I spell out the importance of evaluative perception. The need for a capacity to perceive value raises the concern that moral psychology is something mysterious. In the second chapter, I consider some skeptical arguments in moral epistemology that conclude we have no good reason to believe we are wired to be receptive to objective moral truth. While some of these arguments purport to undermine our access to objective moral truths, I conclude that they do not succeed in undermining a philosophically sophisticated conception of objective value. The remainder of the dissertation considers the work of Rousseau, Kant, and Hegel in light of the concerns raised in part one. Despite initial appearances, these authors understand the relation of conscience and human nature in a way that points toward a defensible view, even in light of the challenges raised by contemporary biology. The resulting view is an account of the moral conscience that emphasizes autonomy and rational agency and recognizes the value of human agency in virtue of its concrete expression in a social context.