

Victor Kumar

Curriculum vitae

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Areas of Focus

AOS **Ethics, Moral Psychology, Philosophy of Cognitive Science**
AOC **Epistemology, Feminist Philosophy, Philosophy of Race**

Academic Appointments

2017-present **Boston University** Assistant Professor of Philosophy
Director of Mind and Morality Lab
2015-2017 **University of Toronto** Postdoctoral Research Fellow
2013-2015 **University of Michigan** Postdoctoral Research Fellow

Education

2013 **University of Arizona** Ph.D. Philosophy; minor in Cognitive Science
2007 **University of Alberta** M.A. Philosophy
2005 **Dalhousie University** B.A. Philosophy; B.Sc. Psychology & Biology

Publications

Book

2022 *A Better Ape: The Evolution of the Moral Mind and How it Made Us Human*,
w/ Richmond Campbell (Oxford University Press)

Edited Collections

2018 *The Moral Psychology of Disgust*, co-edited w/ Nina Strohminger (Rowman and Littlefield)
2017 *Cognition* special issue on moral learning, co-edited w/ Peter Railton and Fiery Cushman

Journal Articles and Book Chapters

Forthcoming “Precis of *A Better Ape*” & “Response to critics” (w/ Richmond Campbell)
Biology and Philosophy
Forthcoming “Moral Reasoning and Moral Progress” (w/ Joshua May)
The Oxford Handbook of Metaethics (OUP), David Copp & Connie Rosati (Eds.)
Forthcoming “Harnessing Moral Psychology to Reduce Meat Consumption” (w/ Joshua May)
Journal of the American Philosophical Association

- 2020 “The Science of Effective Altruism”
The Oxford Handbook of Consequentialism (OUP), Douglas Portmore (Ed.)
- 2020 “The Ethical Significance of Cognitive Science”
Current Controversies in Philosophy of Cognitive Science (Routledge), Adam Lerner, Simon Cullen & Sarah-Jane Leslie (Eds.)
- 2019 “Empirical Vindication of Moral Luck”
Nous, 53: 987-1007.
- 2018 “How to Debunk Moral Beliefs,” (w/ Joshua May)
Methodology and Moral Philosophy (Routledge), Jussi Suikkanen & Antti Kauppinen (Eds.)
- 2018 “Moral Reasoning and Emotion” (w/ Joshua May)
The Routledge Handbook of Moral Epistemology (Routledge) Aaron Zimmerman, Karen Jones, and Mark Timmons (Eds.)
- 2018 “Disgust: A Cross-Pollination” (w/ Nina Strohminger)
The Moral Psychology of Disgust (Rowman and Littlefield) Nina Strohminger and Victor Kumar (Eds.)
- 2017 “Foul Behavior”
Philosophers’ Imprint, 17: 1-17.
- 2017 “Moral Vindications”
Cognition, 176: 124-34.
- 2017 “Moral Learning: Psychological and Philosophical Perspectives” (w/ Fiery Cushman and Peter Railton)
Cognition, 176: 1-10.
- 2016 “Nudges and Bumps”
Georgetown Journal of Law and Public Policy, 14: 861-76.
- 2016 “The Empirical Identity of Moral Judgment”
The Philosophical Quarterly, 66: 783-804
- 2016 “Psychopathy and Internalism”
Canadian Journal of Philosophy, 46: 318-45
- 2016 “Honor & Moral Revolution” (w/ Richmond Campbell)
Ethical Theory & Moral Practice, 19: 147-59
- 2015 “Moral Judgment as a Natural Kind”
Philosophical Studies, 172: 2887-2910
- 2014 “‘Knowledge’ as a Natural Kind Term”
Synthese, 191: 439-57
- 2013 “Pragmatic Naturalism & Moral Objectivity” (w/ Richmond Campbell)
Analysis, 73: 446-55

- 2012 “On the Normative Significance of Experimental Moral Psychology” (w/ Richmond Campbell)
Philosophical Psychology, 25: 311-30. (Published as winner of the William James Prize from *Society for Philosophy and Psychology*)
- 2012 “Moral Reasoning on the Ground” (w/ Richmond Campbell)
Ethics, 122: 273-312
- 2011 “In Support of Anti-Intellectualism”
Philosophical Studies, 152: 135-54

Fellowships, Grants & Awards

- 2018-2022 Peter Paul Career Development Professorship, Boston University (\$130,000)
University award for early career professors (1 of only 5 across BU College of Arts and Sciences; first philosopher to win award)
- 2018-2023 Ethics and Emerging Science Initiative, Boston University (\$100,000)
Research grant co-led with Rachell Powell
- 2018-2022 Center for Humanities Awards (4), Boston University (\$14,500)
- 2018-2021 Templeton Project on Reasoning in Moral Thought and Action (\$60,000)
Sub award; Project Leaders: Liane Young and Fiery Cushman
- 2015 Jean Hampton Prize for “Empirical Vindication of Moral Luck”
Best essay by younger scholar, American Philosophical Association, Pacific
- 2015-2017 Postdoctoral Fellowship, Social Sci & Hum Research Council (\$80,000)
- 2007-2011 Ph.D. Scholarship, Social Sci & Hum Research Council (\$80,000)
- 2007-2010 Ph.D. Scholarship, Social Sci & Hum Research Council (\$105,000)—declined
- 2005-2006 M.A. Scholarship, Social Sci & Hum Research Council (\$25,000)

Public Philosophy/Outreach

- 2022 [“A Better Ape: The Evolution of the Moral Mind and How it Made Us Human”](#)
(video interview)
The Dissenter with Ricardo Lopes, YouTube, Aug. 29, 2022
- 2022 [“Firing Up the Grill? Why It’s So Hard to Give Up Meat”](#) (interview)
The Brink, July 13, 2022 (also at [Medium](#) and [Futurity](#))
- 2022 [“Evolution and morality”](#) (w/ Richmond Campbell) (podcast interview)
The Side Comment by Oxford University Press, ep. 27, May 25, 2022
- 2022 [“When Moral Reasoning Isn’t Just Rationalization”](#) (w/ Richmond Campbell)
Psychology Today: The Moral Mind, May 19, 2022

- 2022 [“Humans Aren’t Born Selfish—Just the Opposite—And That’s Reason for Hope”](#) (w/ Richmond Campbell)
The Boston Globe, Apr. 10, 2022
- 2022 [“You Don’t Have to be a Vegan to Save the Earth”](#) (w/ Joshua May),
WBUR Cognoscenti, Feb. 17, 2022
- 2021 [“Moral progress”](#) (podcast interview)
The UnMute Podcast with Myisha Cherry, ep. 63, June 18, 2021
- 2018 [“The Weight of Empathy”](#) (video)
Rhett talk at Boston University, YouTube, Sept. 19, 2018
- 2015 [“The Problem of Moral Luck”](#) (animated video)
Wireless Philosophy (Wi-Phi) episode, YouTube, June 22, 2015
- 2014 [“Moral disgust”](#) (w/ Walter Sinnott-Armstrong) (video)
Philosophy TV, Oct. 16, 2014

Presentations (since 2017)

- 2022 “Disgust and Social Injustice”
Disgust and Discourse, Sookmyung Women’s University, Korea (keynote)
- 2022 “Moral Nativism and Gene-Culture Co-Evolution”
Mind and Moral Psychology conference, University of Michigan (keynote)
- 2022 Moral Psychology Research Group, Cornell University
- 2022 “Quarantined in an Echo Chamber”
Moral Psychology Research Group, Duke University
- 2022 Echo Chambers and Political Thought, Boston University
- 2022 Philosophy Department Colloquium, Brandeis University
- 2022 Progress Talks, Utrecht University
- 2022 “How Morality Drives Human Evolution”
Group for Empirical Approaches to Morality and Society, CUNY
- 2022 Navajā talk series, India Institute of Technology, Kanpur
- 2022 Author meets critics session on *A Better Ape*
Southern Society for Philosophy and Psychology, Mobile, AL
- 2021 “Evolution and Progress”
Philosophy Seminar Series, Boston University
- 2021 MANCEPT Workshop on Moral and Socio-Political Progress (keynote)
- 2021 Commentary on Regina Rini’s *The Ethics of Microaggression*
Canadian Philosophical Association
- 2021 “LGBTQ Progress”
Emmanuel College Undergraduate Philosophy Conference (keynote)

2021 “Social Learning and Anti-Gay Attitudes”
Morality Lab, Boston College

2021 “The Evolution of Tribalism”
Philosophy Department Colloquium, McGill University

2021 “Lessons for the Future from the Gay Rights Revolution”
Philosophy Department Colloquium, Cambridge University

2021 Philosophy Department Colloquium, University of British Columbia

2020 Southern Society for Philosophy and Psychology, Louisville, KY

2020 Philosophy Department Colloquium, Dalhousie University

2019 Morality Lab, Boston College

2019 Moral Psychology Research Lab, Harvard University

2019 Public Philosophy Conference, Boston University

2020 “Explaining the Large, Rapid, and Broad Decline in Anti-Gay Attitudes”
Religion and Science Colloquium, Boston University

2020 Concepts and Cognition Lab, Princeton University

2019 “Why Not Nudge?”
Nudging Conference, Boston University

2019 “The Evolution of Norms and Institutions”
Evolution and Ethics Conference, Boston University

2019 “Cultural Evolution in Deep History”
Cooperation Lab, Boston College

2018 Tertulia, Junior Faculty Colloquium, Boston University

2018 Moral Psychology Research Group, University of Minnesota

2018 “Empathy and Moral Progress”
Morality Lab, Boston College

2018 “The Weight of Empathy”
Philosophy Department Colloquium, Wellesley College

2018 Society for Philosophy & Psychology, University of Michigan, Ann Arbor

2018 Ways of Knowing in Ethics Workshop, Simon Fraser University

2018 Canadian Philosophical Association, Université du Québec à Montréal

2017 Ethical and Legal Implications of Moral Psychology, Bielefeld, Germany

2018 “Evolution, Culture and Morality”
Philosophy Department Colloquium, Simon Fraser University

2018 American Philosophical Association: Eastern Division, Savannah, GA

2017 “The Evolutionary Foundations of Morality”
Boston Area Moral (BAM) Cognition Group, Harvard University

2017 Moral Psychology Research Group, Duke University

2017 Canadian Philosophical Association, University of Toronto

- 2017 “Tribal Morality and Beyond” (with Richmond Campbell)
Evolution, Culture, and Morality Workshop, Duke University
- 2017 Atlantic Regional Philosophy Conference, St. Mary’s University
- 2017 “Reasons for Repugnance”
Ethical and Legal Implications of Moral Psychology, Bielefeld, Germany
- 2017 American Philosophical Association: Pacific Division, Seattle, WA
- 2017 Philosophy Department Colloquium, University of Toronto
- 2017 Philosophy Department Colloquium, Rutgers-Newark
- 2017 Philosophy Department Colloquium, Durham University
- 2017 Philosophy Department Colloquium, Carleton University
- 2017 “Foul Behavior”
Moral Sentimentalism Conference, Cal State Fullerton

Teaching Experience

Boston University

- 2019-2022 Evolutionary Cognitive Science and Ethics (graduate/undergraduate)
- 2019-2021 Introduction to Ethics
- 2017-2021 Gender, Race, and Science (graduate/undergraduate)
- 2018 Evolution and Ethics (graduate)
- 2018 Medical Ethics

University of Toronto

- 2017 Ethics of Race and Gender
- 2016 Evolution and Ethics
- 2016 The Moral Mind

University of Arizona

- 2012 Contemporary Moral Problems
- 2012 Medical Ethics

Academic Service

Reviewer

Ethics; Philosophers’ Imprint; Philosophy and Phenomenological Research; Philosophical Studies; Philosophy of Science; Australasian Journal of Philosophy; Canadian Journal of Philosophy; Cognition; Synthese; Philosophy Compass; Social Theory & Practice; Philosophical Psychology; Ethical Theory & Moral Practice; Social Philosophy & Policy; European Journal of Philosophy; Erkenntnis; Neuroethics; Review of Philosophy and Psychology; Utilitas; Journal of Experimental Social Psychology; WIREs Cognitive Science; Oxford University Press; Cambridge University Press; Routledge; Society for Philosophy & Psychology; Cognitive Science Society; Canadian Philosophical Association

American Philosophical Association

- 2017-2020 Committee on Academic Career Opportunities and Placement
- 2014-2015 Committee on Skype Interviewing

Society for Philosophy and Psychology

2016-2019 Executive Committee
2015-2018 William James Prize Committee

Canadian Philosophical Association

2017-2019 Program Committee: Moral Psychology
2015-2017 Program Committee: Metaethics & Moral Psychology

Departmental

2017-present Organizer, Mind and Morality Lab Talk Series, Boston University
2018-present Member of two dissertation committees, Boston University
2021-present Member, Colloquium Committee, Boston University
2021-present Member, Findlay Search Committee, Boston University
2021-present Abner Shimony Award Committee, Boston University
2022-2023 Member, Phil Science and Ethics TT search committee, Boston University
2022 Organizer, Echo Chambers Conference, Boston University
2022 Member, VAP Search Committee, Boston University
2021 Member, Policy Review Committee, Boston University
2019-2020 Member, Climate and Diversity Committee, Boston University
2019 Organizer, Public Philosophy Conference, Boston University
2019 Organizer, Evolution and Ethics Conference, Boston University
2019 Member, Graduate Admissions Committee, Boston University
2018-2019 Member, Social/Political TT search committee, Boston University
2015 Co-organizer, Moral Learning Workshop, University of Michigan
2011-2012 Graduate Representative to Faculty, University of Arizona
2009 Co-organizer, Arizona Workshop in Philosophy, University of Arizona

College

2021-2024 Member, Humanities Curriculum Committee, Boston University
2022 Member, Arts and Sciences Lecture Committee, Boston University

References

Shaun Nichols
Professor of Philosophy
Cornell University
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Peter Railton
Distinguished University Professor of Philosophy
University of Michigan
prailton@umich.edu

Joshua Greene
Professor of Psychology
Harvard University
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Allen Buchanan
Laureate Professor of Philosophy
University of Arizona
allenb@duke.edu