

Elise Woodard

University of Michigan
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Areas of Specialization

Epistemology • Ethics • Social Philosophy

Areas of Competence

Feminist Philosophy • Political Economy • Decision Theory

Education

- 2016–2022
(expected) PhD in Philosophy, University of Michigan
Dissertation Committee: Brian Weatherson (Co-Chair), Sarah Moss (Co-Chair), James Joyce, Maria Lasonen-Aarnio, Sarah Buss, & Scott Hershovitz (Law)
- 2015 BA in Philosophy, Reed College

Awards & Fellowships

UNIVERSITY OF MICHIGAN

- 2016–2022 Rackham Merit Fellowship (RMF)
Funding package which recognizes diverse students who “show exceptional potential for scholarly success in their graduate program, and demonstrate promise for contributing to wider academic, professional, or civic communities”
- 2021–22 Cornwell Prize
For best philosophy paper submission (prize: full year of fellowship)
- 2020 Diversity, Equity, & Inclusion (DEI) Prize
Recognizes special contributions to departmental DEI activities
- 2020 Dewey Prize for Excellence in Teaching
- 2019, 2020 APA Graduate Student Travel Award
- 2019 Honored Instructor
By student nomination (university-wide)
- 2018 Special Prize for Leadership in Cocurricular Enrichment (SPLICE)
Inaugural prize that “recognizes graduate students who have made outstanding contributions to cocurricular efforts”
- 2018 Marshall M. Weinberg Summer Fellowship
Awarded to students “who have shown distinction during their second year of study”

2017 Rackham Graduate Student Research Grant

REED COLLEGE

2016 Edwin N. Garlan Memorial Prize in Philosophy for best thesis in philosophy

2016 Phi Beta Kappa

2015 Ruby-Lankford Grant for Faculty-Student Research (with Prof. Steve Arkonovich)

2012–15 Commendation for Academic Excellence

Publications

forthcoming “A Puzzle About Fickleness,” *Noûs*

forthcoming “Bad Sex and Consent,” *Palgrave Handbook of Sexual Ethics*, edited by David Boonin

UNDER REVIEW

A paper on evidence-gathering

A paper on double-checking

A paper on knowing and wondering

Conference Participation & Talks

TALKS

6/2021 “The Ignorance Norm & Paradoxical Assertions,” 10th Edinburgh Graduate Epistemology Conference†

4/2021 “Gathering Evidence as an Epistemic Obligation” (with Carolina Flores), Pacific APA Colloquium†

3/2021 “Epistemic Vigilance: In Defense of Epistemic Norms on Evidence-Gathering” (with Carolina Flores), Early Career Inquiry Network

1/2021 “Why Double-Check?,” UC Berkeley Philosophy Colloquium

7/2020 “Why Double-Check?,” Early Career Inquiry Network

3/2020 “Doxastic Atonement,” Michigan-MIT Social Philosophy Workshop†

12/2019 “Epistemic Vigilance,” USC Speculative Society

11/2019 “Diachronic Normativity: A Puzzle About Fickleness,” Reed College Colloquium (invited)

10/2019 “Diachronic Normativity: A Puzzle About Fickleness,” NYU Washington Square Circle

8/2019 “Probabilistic Reasons” (with Calum McNamara), Princeton-Michigan Normativity Workshop

3/2019 “Bad Sex & Consent,” Bad Romance Conference, *Harvard University*†

1/2019 “Gaslighting, Implicit Bias, and Higher-Order Evidence,” Eastern APA Symposium†

10/2018 “Consent & Luminosity,” Michigan-MIT Social Philosophy Workshop†

8/2018 “Against the New Pragmatists,” Princeton-Michigan Metanormativity Workshop

3/2018 “Gaslighting, Implicit Bias, and Higher-Order Evidence,” IIFS-UNAM Philosophy Graduate Conference†

- 8/2017 “Moral Deference: Pure and Impure,” Princeton-Michigan Metanormativity Workshop
 8/2016 “A Puzzle About Moral Knowledge,” Princeton-Michigan Metanormativity Workshop

COMMENTS

- 5/2021 Jude Buckner, “Permission to Exist: Social Classification and Identity Politics,” *Re-evaluating Social Essences Workshop*, University of Victoria
 3/2021 Ann Cahill, “Disclosing an Experience of Sexual Assault: Ethics and the Role of the Confidant,” Spring Colloquium on *Between I and We: Structures, Individuals, and Power*, University of Michigan
 1/2020 Eyal Tal, “A Dilemma for Higher-Level Suspension,” Eastern APA: Philadelphia, PA
 5/2019 Jason Konek, “Aggregating Imprecise Probabilities Using Epistemic Utilities,” *Michigan Alumni Conference*, University of Michigan (with Calum McNamara)
 2/2019 Jane Friedman, “The Epistemic & The Zetetic,” Spring Colloquium on *Epistemology: Norms and Values*, University of Michigan
 6/2018 Chloé de Canson, “Salience & The Sure-Thing Principle,” *Athena in Action: Networking & Mentoring Workshop for Graduate Student Women in Philosophy*, Princeton University†
 3/2017 Mari Mikkola, “Extensional Intuitions and Gender Terminology,” Spring Colloquium on *Theory, Practice, and the Contemporary Experience of Gender*, University of Michigan

OTHER

- 4/2020 PACIFIC APA, MAP: “Countering Bullying, Harassment, and Microaggressions” (Co-Organizer) (rescheduled for Eastern APA 2021 due to COVID)
 2/2020 CENTRAL APA, MAP: “Setting Boundaries: Personal & Professional” (Panelist, Workshop Leader, & Organizer)
 1/2020 EASTERN APA, MAP: “Distribution & Recognition of Service Work” (Speaker, Workshop Leader, & Organizer)
 4/2019 PACIFIC APA, MAP: “Creating Inclusive Spaces” (Organizer/Chair)
 1/2019 EASTERN APA, MAP: “Skill Building & Improving the Profession” (Organizer/Chair)
 10/2018 NY MAP Conference, “Oppression and Resistance” (Invited to co-run a MAP workshop)
 2018 EASTERN & CENTRAL APA’s, “The State of MAP: From the Chapter to the International” (Organizer/Speaker)
 4/2017 “The Gender Gap in Philosophy & Diversifying Philosophy Syllabi,” Michigan MAP Panel†
 8/2016 “Teaching Epistemology,” with Troy Cross, AALAC Workshop, *Reed College*

Professional Activities

- 2018–19 [Michigan Alumni Conference](#), *Co-Organizer*
 2018–19 [Spring Colloquium - Epistemology: Norms & Values](#), *Co-Organizer*
 2018 Research Assistant, *for Brian Weatherson* (Prepared the index for *Normative Externalism*)
 2018–20 Michigan-MIT Social Philosophy Workshop, *Co-Organizer/Co-Founder*
 2018, 2019 *Philosopher’s Annual*, *Co-Editor*
 2018 National High School Ethics Bowl, *Judge*

Conference participation marked with a dagger (†) was invited following blind review of a paper or abstract.

2017, 2019 Research Assistant, *for Sarah Moss*
2017, 2018 [Princeton-Michigan Metanormativity Workshop](#), *Co-Organizer*
2017 European Summer School in Logic, Language, and Information (ESSLLI), *Participant*

DIVERSITY, EQUITY, & INCLUSION

2020– Minorities and Philosophy ([MAP](#)), Board of Trustees
2016–20 Minorities and Philosophy ([MAP](#)), *Director/International Organizer*
Director from 2017–19; Co-Director 2016–17
2020, 2021 [Colorado Summer Seminar](#), *Panelist* on “Women and Graduate School in Philosophy”
2019 [GPS](#) at the University of Southern California, *Panelist and Presenter*
Participated in a panel on ‘Being a Minority in Philosophy’ & gave a ‘Ted Talk’-style presentation on my research
2016–18 [COMPASS](#) Workshop, *Co-Organizer*
Co-organizer for the inaugural 2017 and 2018 Workshops; spearheaded mentorship program
2017, 18, 20 COMPASS Workshop, *Mentor*
2016 AALAC Workshop: Diversifying Core Philosophy, *Assistant Organizer, Reed College*

READING & WORKING GROUPS (AS ORGANIZER)

2020– Epistemology Work-In-Progress & Reading Groups
2020 Reading Group on Julia Staffel’s *Unsettled Thoughts*
2016–20 Race, Gender, & Feminist Philosophy ([RGFP](#)): Interdisciplinary Working Group
2018–19 Epistemic Norms & Values ([ENVy](#)): Reading & Working Group
2017 Philosophy of Time and Modality Reading Group

ADDITIONAL SERVICE TO THE DEPARTMENT

2020–21 Wellness & Peer Support Co-Coordinator
2019–20 Wellness & Peer Support Co-Coordinator • Events Coordinator
2018–19 Admissions Committee • Friday Colloquium Coordinator
2017–18 Graduate Representative to the Executive Committee • Social Chair • MAP Facilitator

PUBLIC WRITING

5/2020 “[Setting Boundaries: Personal and Professional](#),” *The Philosophers’ Cocoon* (primary author; co-authored with Carolina Flores, Milana Kostic, Angela Sun, and Jingyi Wu)
2/2020 “[Recognizing Graduate Student Service Work Beyond Compensation](#),” *Daily Noûs* (co-authored with Carolina Flores, Milana Kostic, Angela Sun, and Jingyi Wu)
12/2019 “[Compensate Graduate Students for Service Work](#),” *Daily Noûs* (co-authored with Carolina Flores, Milana Kostic, Angela Sun, and Jingyi Wu)

OTHER PROFESSIONAL SERVICE

Referee for *Philosophy and Phenomenological Research*; *Pacific Philosophical Quarterly*; *Legal Theory*; *Inquiry*; *Ethical Theory & Moral Practice*

VISITS (FALL 2019)

New York University (sponsored by Jane Friedman)

University of Southern California (sponsored by Mark Schroeder)

Teaching

PRIMARY INSTRUCTOR

Spring 2020 PHIL 202: *Introduction to Philosophy*

GRADUATE STUDENT INSTRUCTOR

Winter 2019 PHIL 444: *Groups & Choices*, for James Joyce

Fall 2018 PHIL 443: *Rational Choice Theory*, for James Joyce

Winter 2018 PPE 300: *Introduction to Political Economy*, for Elizabeth Anderson

Fall 2017 PHIL 384: *Applied Epistemology: Race, Ethnicity, and Knowledge*, for Sarah Moss

TRAINING AND MENTORSHIP

4/2020 [Mentoring the Mentors Workshop](#), Participant

2020–2021 Philosophy Graduate Student Teaching Mentor (3 semesters)

2020 Teaching Certificate, U. Michigan Center for Research on Learning and Teaching

2018 Athena in Action, Participant

2016 Center for Talented Youth (CTY), *Teaching Assistant: Philosophy of Mind; Logic*

References

Brian Weatherson

Marshall M. Weinberg Professor of Philosophy

University of Michigan, Ann Arbor

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James Joyce

C. H. Langford Collegiate Professor of Philosophy

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Laura Ruetsche (Teaching)

Louis Loeb Collegiate Professor of Philosophy

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Sarah Moss

William Wilhartz Professor of Philosophy

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Maria Lasonen-Aarnio

Associate Professor of Philosophy

University of Helsinki

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Graduate Coursework

Fall 2021 Vices: A User's Guide,* *Brian Weatherson*

Winter 2021 Recent Work in Decision Theory,* *James Joyce*

Philosophy of Law,* *Scott Hershovitz*
 Fall 2020 Philosophy of Mind and Action,* *Sarah Moss*
 Winter 2020 Knowledge & Interests,* *Brian Weatherson*
 Fall 2019 Epistemic Psychology* (Rutgers, 1st half of semester), *Ernest Sosa & Matthew McGrath*
 Attributive Silencing* (USC, 2nd half of semester), *Mark Schroeder*
 The Structure of Epistemic Normativity* (USC), *Ralph Wedgwood & Maria Lasonen-Aarnio*
 Winter 2019 Attunement to Reasons,* *Peter Railton*
 Fall 2018 Skill & Achievement,* *Brian Weatherson*
 Consent & Coercion, *Sarah Moss & Scott Hershovitz*
 Winter 2018 Stoic Philosophy of Mind & Language, *Victor Caston*
 Language & Natural Reasoning, *Guillermo Del Pinal*
 Practical & Theoretical Rationality, *James Joyce*
 Fall 2017 Ethics: Aspiration & Moral Failure, *Sarah Buss*
 Independent Study: Higher-Order Evidence & Rationality, *Maria Lasonen-Aarnio*
 Moral Epistemology,* *Elizabeth Anderson*
 Winter 2017 Trust & Its Discontents, *Ishani Maitra*
 Applied Epistemology, *Sarah Moss*
 Independent Study: Metaethics & Language, *Eric Swanson*
 Sex Equality, *Catharine MacKinnon*
 Critique of Judgment, *Janum Sethi*
 Fall 2016 Responsibility & Respect, *Brian Weatherson*
 Proseminar, *Eric Swanson*
 Formal Philosophical Methods, *Sarah Moss*

* = Audited

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Dissertation abstract below

Dissertation Abstract

Elise Woodard

My dissertation defends the importance of epistemic norms on what I call ‘inquiring further.’ Inquiring further is a familiar practice we all engage in when we redeliberate, gather more evidence, or double-check our beliefs. Yet many philosophers have argued that norms governing when we should gather evidence and reinquire are at most practical or moral norms. Against this, I argue that norms on inquiring further are central to our conception of responsible epistemic agency. I do this by appealing to the roles of epistemic evaluations and our practices in holding agents epistemically accountable. My dissertation thus helps expand and enrich our understanding of epistemic evaluations and normativity.

Each chapter of my dissertation focuses on a different practice of inquiring further. The first, “A Puzzle About Fickleness,” motivates a puzzle about changes of mind resulting from redeliberation. The puzzle is to explain the asymmetry between one-off changes of mind, which often seem permissible if not praiseworthy, and multiple changes of mind—or fickleness—which often seem problematic. After motivating an epistemic solution to the puzzle, I propose and defend the *Ratifiable Reasoning Account*. According to this solution, as agents redeliberate, they gain two types of evidence. First, they gain inductive evidence that they will not stably settle their belief. Second, this inductive evidence affords higher-order evidence that they are unreliable at assessing the matter at hand. The fact that fickle agents gain this higher-order evidence explains why fickleness can be epistemically—not just practically—irrational. In addition to solving the puzzle, my account captures a wide range of contextual factors that are relevant for our judgments.

The second chapter turns to our practices of evidence-gathering. In “Epistemic Vigilance,” I and my co-author, Carolina Flores (Rutgers), argue that there are epistemic norms on evidence-gathering and propose one such norm. Though the view that there are such norms seems intuitive, it has found surprisingly little defense. Rather, many philosophers have argued that norms on evidence-gathering can only be practical or moral (e.g. Earl Conee, Richard Feldman, Thomas Kelly, and Brian Hedden). On a prominent evidentialist version of this position, epistemic norms only apply to responding to the evidence one already has; justified or rational beliefs are those based on appropriate responses to that evidence. Here we challenge the orthodoxy. First we argue that there is no relevant normative difference between responding to evidence you have and gathering more evidence. Second, we argue that our practices of holding agents epistemically accountable for poor evidence-gathering indicate that there are epistemic norms on evidence-gathering. Finally, we argue that epistemic norms on evidence-gathering can help us offer illuminating and nuanced epistemic assessments in a wide range of socially and politically important cases, such as cases of epistemic bubbles and echo chambers.

The third chapter, “Why Double-Check?,” explores the relationship between double-checking and knowledge. I argue that agents can both know that p and rationally double-check that p at the very same time. Although intuitive, this thesis faces two types of challenges. First, some have argued that agents who double-check ought to suspend judgment while inquiring; they thus lose knowledge while double-checking, if only temporarily. Second—motivated by strong conceptions of belief or pragmatic encroachment—some have argued that if it is rational to double-check that p , then one does not know that p . I argue that these competing views fail to accommodate the epistemic value of double-checking and the many reasons why agents might double-check. These reasons range from seeking certainty to increasing the resilience of their beliefs. Moreover, the alternative views rely on overly strong assumptions about what inquiry, knowledge, or belief requires. Finally, I marshal linguistic data in favor of the compatibility of knowledge and double-checking.