

## BRIAN A. EPSTEIN

Philosophy Department  
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Tufts University, Medford, MA 02155

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### PROFESSIONAL APPOINTMENTS

May 2015-present

**Associate Professor, Department of Philosophy, Tufts University, Medford, MA**

October 2015-June 2016

**Honorary Research Associate, Department of Economics, University of Cape Town, Cape Town, South Africa**

September 2009-May 2015

**Assistant Professor, Department of Philosophy, Tufts University, Medford, MA**

September 2004-August 2009

**Assistant Professor, Department of Philosophy, Virginia Tech, Blacksburg, VA**

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### EDUCATION

**Ph.D, Philosophy**

**Stanford University, Stanford, CA, 2004**

*Dissertation title:* Simple Words and Subtle Things: Social Kinds and the Making of Reference

*Dissertation committee:* John Etchemendy, John Perry, Kenneth Taylor, Mark Crimmins

**M.St, Philosophy**

**University of Oxford, New College, Oxford, England, 1992**

**A.B. *summa cum laude*, Philosophy**

**Princeton University, Princeton, NJ, 1990**

Thesis in epistemology (advisor: David Lewis)

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### PUBLICATIONS

#### Book

*The Ant Trap: Rebuilding the Foundations of the Social Sciences*, Oxford University Press, 2015.

Winner of 2016 Joseph B. Gittler Award, American Philosophical Association

Winner of 2016 Lakatos Award, London School of Economics

#### Symposia:

*Lakatos Workshop on The Ant Trap*, LSE, London, UK, November 2017.

*Pacific APA book symposium*, Seattle, WA, April 2017.

*Journal of Social Ontology* 2, No. 1 (2016), 125-172.

*European Network on Social Ontology*, Palermo, Sicily, September 2015

#### Reviews:

by Robert Sugden, *Journal of Economic Literature* 54, No. 4 (2016), 1377-89.

By Mantas Radzvilas, *Economics and Philosophy* 32, No. 3 (2016), 553-560.

by James Swindler, *Philosophy in Review* 36, No. 3 (2016), 103-108.

by Arif Assaf, *Times Literary Supplement*, April 29, 2016

by Mark Risjord, *Metascience* 25, No. 1 (2016), 135-137.

by R. Hudelson, *Choice*, September 2015

by Alban Bouvier, *Revue philosophique de la France et de l'étranger*, 2015/4, Tome 140.

**Articles**

- "Social Ontology," *Stanford Encyclopedia of Philosophy*, <http://plato.stanford.edu/social-ontology>
- "What are Social Groups? Their Metaphysics and How To Classify Them," *Synthese* (2017), doi:10.1007/s11229-017-1387-y
- "Social Ontology," in *The Routledge Companion to Philosophy of Social Science*, ed. by Lee McIntyre and Alex Rosenberg, pp. 240-253. New York: Routledge, 2017.
- "Social Construction and Social Facts," *The Routledge Handbook on Collective Intentionality*, edited by Marija Jankovic and Kirk Ludwig, pp 265-76. New York: Routledge, 2017.
- "Précis of The Ant Trap," *Journal of Social Ontology* 2, No. 1 (2016), 125-134.
- "Replies to Guala and Gallotti," *Journal of Social Ontology* 2, No. 1 (2016), 159-172.
- "A Framework for Social Ontology," *Philosophy of the Social Sciences* 46, No. 2 (2016), 147-167.
- "Why Macroeconomics does not Supervene on Microeconomics," *Journal of Economic Methodology* 21, No. 1 (2014), 3-18.
- "How Many Kinds of Glue Hold the Social World Together?" in *Social Ontology and Social Cognition*, ed. by Mattia Gallotti and John Michael, pp. 41-55. Dordrecht: Springer, 2014.
- "What is Individualism in Social Ontology? Ontological Individualism vs. Anchor Individualism," in *Rethinking the Individualism/Holism Debate: Essays in the Philosophy of Social Science*, ed. by Finn Collin and Julie Zahle, pp. 17-38. Dordrecht: Springer, 2014.
- "Social Objects without Intentions," in *Institutions, Emotions, and Group Agents: Contributions to Social Ontology*, ed. by Anita Konzelmann Ziv and Hans Bernhard Schmid, pp. 53-68. Dordrecht: Springer, 2013.
- "Sortals and Criteria of Identity," *Analysis* 72, No. 3 (2012), 474-478.
- "The Perils of Tweaking: How to Use Macrodata to Set Parameters in Complex Simulation Models" with Patrick Forber, *Synthese* 190, No. 2 (2012), 203-218.
- Review of *Creations of the Mind*, edited by Margolis and Laurence, *Mind* 121, No. 481 (2012), 200-204.
- Review of *The SAGE Handbook of the Philosophy of Social Sciences*, ed. by Jarvie and Zamorra-Bonilla, *Economics and Philosophy* 28, No. 3 (2012), 428-435.
- "Agent-Based Models and the Fallacies of Individualism," in *Models, Simulations, and Representations*, ed. by Paul Humphreys and Cyrille Imbert, pp. 115-144. New York: Routledge, 2011.
- "The Diviner and the Scientist: Revisiting the Question of Alternative Standards of Rationality," *Journal of the American Academy of Religion* 78, No. 4 (2010), 1048-1086.
- "History and the Critique of Social Concepts," *Philosophy of the Social Sciences* 40, No. 1 (2010), 3-29.
- "Ontological Individualism Reconsidered," *Synthese* 166, No. 1 (2009), 187-213.
- "Grounds, Convention, and the Metaphysics of Linguistic Tokens," *Croatian Journal of Philosophy* 9 No. 25 (2009), 45-67.
- "The Realpolitik of Reference," *Pacific Philosophical Quarterly* 89 (2008), 1-20.
- "When Local Models Fail," *Philosophy of the Social Sciences* 38 (2008), 3-24.
- "The Internal and the External in Linguistic Explanation," *Croatian Journal of Philosophy* 8 No. 22 (2008), 77-111.
- Review of *Language: A Biological Model* by Ruth Millikan, *Notre Dame Philosophical Reviews* (April 2006).

**Op-eds**

- "What Alabama's Roy Moore Got Right," New York Times – The Stone philosophy column, February 16, 2015.

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**PRESENTATIONS AND INVITED TALKS**

- "Two Ways of Making the Social World," *Davidson College Colloquium and Seminar*, Charlotte, NC, April 26, 2018.
- "Beyond Parts and Relations: Implications of the Metaphysics of Social Groups," *Social Metaphysics Conference*, University of Southern California, January 20, 2018.
- "Biko on Non-White and Black," *Minorities and Philosophy Colloquium*, Boston, MA, November 30, 2017.
- "Building Robust Institutions," *Waseda University Colloquium*, Tokyo, Japan, November 24, 2017.
- "Two Ways of Making the Social World," *Tokyo Forum for Analytic Philosophy Colloquium*, Tokyo University, Tokyo, Japan, November 20, 2017.
- "Précis of The Ant Trap," *Lakatos Workshop on The Ant Trap*, LSE, London, UK, November 10, 2018
- "Rebuilding the Foundations of the Social Sciences," *Lakatos Award Lecture*, LSE, London, UK, November 9, 2017.
- "Two Ways of Making the Social World," *Université de Québec à Montréal Colloquium*, Montreal, Canada, October 27, 2017.
- "The Nature and Design of Robust Institutions," *Tufts Political Philosophy Symposium*, September 29, 2017.
- "A Framework for Social Ontology," *IRIT Colloquium*, Toulouse, France, June 26, 2017.
- "Groups and Institutions as Cognizers: Diversifying the parts of a thinking system," *Distributed Agents*, London, UK, June 22, 2017.
- "Why the Anchoring and Grounding Projects in Social Ontology are Distinct," *Critical Social Ontology Workshop*, St. Louis, MO, June 17, 2017.
- "Replies to Tollefsen, Ritchie, and Schaffer," *Book Symposium on The Ant Trap*, Pacific APA, Seattle, WA, April 14, 2017.
- "Grounding and Anchoring," *University of Leeds Philosophy Colloquium*, Leeds, UK, March 24, 2017.
- "What are Social Groups?" *Workshop on Representation*, Leeds, UK, March 23, 2017.
- "A Framework for Social Ontology," *University of Sheffield Philosophy Colloquium*, Sheffield, UK, March 22, 2017.
- "Social Ontology," *Conference on Social Metaphysics*, University of Nottingham, Nottingham, England, March 20, 2017.
- "A Framework for Social Ontology," *Berkeley Social Ontology Group Colloquium*, Berkeley, CA, March 1, 2017.
- "Introduction to Social Ontology," *University of California Merced Philosophy Colloquium*, Merced, CA, February 28, 2017.
- "A Framework for Social Ontology," *Wharton Legal Studies and Business Ethics Colloquium*, University of Pennsylvania, Philadelphia, PA, February 16, 2017.
- "Functions, Institutions, and Social Ontology," *Workshop on Social Functions*, Essen, Germany, February 2, 2017.
- "A Framework for Social Ontology," *University of Rochester Philosophy Colloquium*, Rochester, NY, November 11, 2016.
- "A Framework for Social Ontology," *University of Buffalo Philosophy Colloquium*, Buffalo, NY, November 10, 2016.
- "Economic Models and the Nature of Institutions," *Philosophy of Science Association Meeting*, Atlanta, GA, November 3, 2016.
- "What are Social Groups?" *MANCEPT*, University of Manchester, Manchester, England, September 9, 2016.

- "Biko on Black vs. Non-White," *University of Oslo Philosophy Department*, Oslo, Norway, September 5, 2016.
- "A Framework for Social Ontology," *University of Oslo Philosophy Department*, Oslo, Norway, September 5, 2016.
- "What are Social Groups?" *Collective Intentionality X*, The Hague, Netherlands, August 31, 2016.
- "What are Social Groups?" Keynote talk at *European Network for the Philosophy of Social Science Conference*, Helsinki, Finland, August 25, 2016.
- "The Nature of Religious Institutions," *Embodied Religion Workshop*, University of Colorado, Boulder CO, August 8, 2016.
- "Biko on Black versus Non-White: Some Uses and Risks of Conceptual Ethics," *Philosophy in Africa, Africa in Philosophy Research Seminar*, University of Cape Town, Cape Town, South Africa, June 14, 2016.
- "Two Ways of Making the Social World," *Hoernlé Philosophy Seminar*, University of the Witwatersrand, Johannesburg, South Africa, April 14, 2016.
- "Two Ways of Making the Social World," *Philosophy Department Seminar*, University of Johannesburg, Johannesburg, South Africa, April 13, 2016.
- "Two Ways of Making the Social World," *Philosophy Department Seminar*, Stellenbosch University, Stellenbosch, South Africa, April 7, 2016.
- "How to Keep Groups Alive: Collective Intentionality Made Easy," *UCT Philosophy Seminar*, Cape Town, South Africa, March 7, 2016.
- "Economics and Social Ontology," *Institute for New Economic Thinking Young Scholars Initiative Webinar*, March 2, 2016.
- "Social Ontology and the Practice of Economics," *International Network for Economic Methodology Conference*, Cape Town, South Africa, November 19-22, 2015.
- "Response to commentators in symposium on *The Ant Trap*," *European Network for Social Ontology*, Palermo, Sicily, September 24-26, 2015.
- "Three-day course on social ontology: 1. Grounding and anchoring; 2. Group intentions and actions; 3. History and social kinds." *A Summer Course on Philosophy of Social Science*, Tampere, Finland, August 18-20, 2015.
- "The Uses of Genealogy," *The Philosophical Significance of Conceptual History*, St. Andrews, Scotland, June 2015.
- "How Many Kinds of Glue Hold the Social World Together?" *Philosophy of the Social Sciences Roundtable*, Seattle, WA, May 8-10, 2015.
- "Two Ways of Making the Social World," *MIT Work-in-Progress Colloquium*, Cambridge, MA, March 12, 2015.
- "Groups and Shared Intentions," *Utah Social Ontology Research Group*, Salt Lake City, Utah, February 17, 2015.
- "Two Ways of Making the Social World," *University of Utah Philosophy Colloquium*, Salt Lake City, UT, February 13, 2015.
- "Ambient Intelligence: How We Developed the Idea," *Monterey Institute of International Studies*, November 23, 2014.
- "Assessing Two Approaches to Groups: Social Integrate vs. Status Models," *Thinking About Groups*, Copenhagen, October 8-10, 2014.
- "How Many Kinds of Glue Hold the Social World Together?" *Collective Intentionality IX*, Bloomington, IN, September 10-13, 2014.
- "Two Ways of Making the Social World," *New Perspectives on Realism and Anti-Realism*, Rome, Italy, May 27-28, 2013.
- "When the Intentions of the Members are Irrelevant to the Intentions of the Group," *Collective Intentionality VIII*, Manchester, England, August 27-30, 2012.
- "The Roles of Cognition in Social Ontology," *Objects in Mind*, Aarhus, Denmark, June 25-26, 2012.

- "The Puppet-Master: When Individual Intentions are Irrelevant to Group Intentions," *American Philosophical Association, Eastern Division Meeting*, Washington, DC, December 27-30, 2011.
- "Economics and Nonsupervenience," *International Network for Economic Methodology Conference*, Helsinki, Finland, September 1-3, 2011.
- "Two Kinds of Ontological Individualism," *Philosophy of the Social Sciences*, Copenhagen, Denmark, August 28-29, 2011.
- "Metaphysics in Social Science," *Metaphysics and Philosophy of Science*, Toronto, ON, May 13-15, 2011.
- "The Perils of Tweaking," *Epistemology of Modeling and Simulation National Conference*, Pittsburgh, PA, April 1-3, 2011.
- "Comments on D. Kwon, How 'Dthat' Can Model 'That'," *American Philosophical Association, Eastern Division*, Boston, MA, December 27-30, 2010.
- Roundtable Participant, *Atlas Economics Conference*, George Mason University, Fairfax, VA, September 9-12, 2010.
- "Social Objects Without Intentions," *Collective Intentionality VII*, Basel, Switzerland, August 22-26, 2010.
- "The Perils of Tweaking: When Can Macrodata be Used to Set Parameters in a Microfoundational Simulation?" *Models and Simulations 4*, Toronto ON, May 7-9, 2010.
- Comments on Ori Simchen, "The Necessity of Reference," *Inland Northwest Philosophy Conference*, Moscow, ID and Pullman, WA, April 30-May 2, 2010.
- "The Foundations and Metafoundations of Objects," *Auburn Philosophy Conference on Ordinary Objects*, Auburn, AL, March 25-28, 2010.
- Liberty Fund Roundtable, *Conference on the Works of James Buchanan*, Blacksburg, VA, September 20-23, 2009.
- "History and the Critique of Social Concepts," *Philosophy of the Social Sciences Roundtable*, Atlanta, GA, March 20-22, 2009.
- "Agent-Based Modeling and the Fallacies of Individualism," *Modeling and Simulations 3*, Charlottesville, VA, March 6-8, 2009.
- "A Theory of External Linguistic Objects," *International Conference on the Philosophy of Linguistics*, Dubrovnik, Croatia, September 8-12, 2008
- "Nonlocal Properties and Modeling Social Change," *Collective Intentionality VI: Social Change*, Berkeley, CA, July 8-11, 2008
- "Economics and Nonsupervenience," *Sydney-Tilburg Conference on Reduction and the Special Sciences*, Tilburg, Netherlands, April 10-12, 2008
- "The Internal and the External in Linguistic Explanation," *Virginia Tech*, November 2007
- "Ontological Individualism Reconsidered," *University of Virginia*, September 2007
- "The Internal and the External in Linguistic Explanation," *International Conference on the Philosophy of Linguistics*, Dubrovnik, Croatia, July 2007
- "When Local Models Fail," *Philosophy of the Social Sciences Roundtable*, Tampa, FL, March 2007
- "Ontological Individualism," *Colloquium for the Alliance of Social, Political, and Cultural Thought*, November 2006
- "Intervening in the Aggregate," *The Social Sciences and Democracy*, Ghent, Belgium, September 2006
- Comments on George Ainslie's "Picoeconomics and the Breakdown of the Will," *James M. Buchanan Colloquium*, May 2006
- "Experiences in the Academy," *Keasbey Foundation 50th Anniversary Conference*, September 2005
- "The Realpolitik of Reference," *4th Barcelona Workshop on Reference*, Barcelona, Spain, June 2005
- Comments on Elaine Scarry's "Visual Cognition," *Cognitive Science and the Humanities Conference*, Stanford University, November 2004

"Reference Fixing and Social Kinds," *Stanford Humanities Center*, Stanford University, February 2004

"Conceptual Schemes and The Two Wittgensteins," *Stanford Humanities Center*, Stanford University, November 2003

"Playing it Loud at Half-Three: On Musical and Temporal Concepts," *Philosophy Colloquium*, Stanford University, April 2003

"How to Succeed in Reference Without Really Trying," *Graduate Student Philosophy Colloquium*, Stanford University, March 2003

## MEDIA AND PUBLIC PRESENTATIONS

Interview with Howard Burton for Ideas Roadshow, 2016.

Interview with Carrie Figdor on *New Books in Philosophy* podcast, discussing *The Ant Trap*, released March 15, 2016.

"How the Social World is Built and Why It Matters," *UCT Philosophy Society*, Cape Town, South Africa, February 23, 2016.

"The End of Social Science As We Know It," *TEDxStanford*, Stanford, CA, May 17, 2015.

WGBH Radio, Interview on the Public Sphere, February 2012.

WGBH Radio, Interview on Recognition, for radio series "Recognizing Bruce," January 2011.

## HONORS AND FELLOWSHIPS

**Lakatos Award**, London School of Economics, 2016

**Joseph B. Gittler Award**, American Philosophical Association, 2016

**Institute for Society, Culture and the Environment**, Virginia Tech, Research Fellowship, Spring 2008

**Virginia Tech International Travel Grants**, Fall 2007, Fall 2006, and Summer 2005

**Humanities Summer Stipend Award**, Virginia Tech, for work on History and the Constitution of Social Objects, Summer 2006

**Geballe Dissertation Fellowship**, year in residence at Stanford Humanities Center, 2003-2004

**Mellon Dissertation Completion Fellowship**, 2002-2003

**Stanford University Fellowship**, for graduate study, 1996-1998, 2001-2002

**Keasbey Foundation Scholarship**, full tuition and stipend for study at University of Oxford in Philosophy, 1991-1992

**Dickinson Thesis Prize**, Princeton University, 1990

## RECENT SERVICE

### Profession

Principal Organizer, *Social Ontology 2018* conference at Tufts, August 2018

Treasurer, *International Network for Economic Methodology*, 2016-present

Secretary and steering committee member, *International Social Ontology Society*, 2014-present

Reviewer for *Australasian Journal of Philosophy*, *British Journal for the Philosophy of Science*, *Croatian Journal of Philosophy*, *Dialectica*, *Economics and Philosophy*, *Erkenntnis*, *European Journal for Philosophy of Science*, *International Studies in Philosophy of Science*, *Journal of Economic Methodology*, *Journal of Social Ontology*, *Journal of Social Philosophy*, *Legal Theory*, *Mind*, *The Monist*, *Oxford University Press*, *Perspectives on Science*, *Phenomenology and the Cognitive Sciences*, *Philosophical Psychology*, *Philosophical Quarterly*, *Philosophical Studies*, *Philosophy Compass*, *Philosophy of the Social Sciences*, *Routledge*, *Rowman and Littlefield*, *Synthese*, *Theoria*.

PhD external examiner, *Leeds University*

Grant reviewer, *Social Sciences and Humanities Research Council, Online Library of the Humanities*

Referee, *Stanford Humanities Center Fellowships, 2005-2009*

## Departmental

### *At Tufts*

Graduate student advisor, 2009-present

Undergraduate major advisor, 2012-present

Faculty Search, 2009-2010, 2011-2012, 2012-2013, 2013-2014, 2016-2017

Graduate Admissions, 2009-2010, 2012-2017

Library Liaison, 2009-2013

IT Liaison, 2009-2010

### *At Virginia Tech*

Teaching and Honorifics Committee, 2008-2009

Graduate committee, 2004-2008

Faculty search, 2004-2005, 2005-2006, 2007-2008

Faculty advisor, Philosophy Club, 2004-2007

Chair, Curriculum Committee, 2004-2005

Ongoing participation in department bylaws development, 2004-2006

Session chair, Symposium on Visual Images, April 2006

## University

### *At Tufts*

Freshman advisor, 2012-2013, 2017-2018

Work with Associate Provost of Academic Planning on University Strategic Plan, 2013

Participant, Arts and Sciences Graduate Policies and Procedures meetings, 2012-2013

Member, Tisch library renovation faculty group, 2012

Reviewer of courses for the Experimental College, 2010, 2012

### *At Virginia Tech*

Member, Steering committee for college strategic plan, College of Liberal Arts and Human Sciences, 2008-2009

Member, Discovery domain committee for college strategic plan, College of Liberal Arts and Human Sciences, 2008-2009

Search committee, Dean of the College of Liberal Arts and Human Sciences, 2006-2007

Worked with Provost on University Strategic Plan, 2005-2006

Participation in design of new interdisciplinary PhD in Alliance for Social, Political, Ethical, and Cultural Thought, 2005-2009

## COURSES TAUGHT

**Radical Thought**, Tufts, Fall 2017

**Foundations of Philosophy of Cognitive Science**, (with Daniel Dennett), Tufts, Fall 2017

**Language and Mind (Phil 003)**, Tufts, Spring 2013, Spring 2014, Fall 2014, Fall 2016

**Seminar on Law and Institutions**, (with Erin Kelly), Tufts, Spring 2017

**Metaphysics (Phil 120)**, (core for majors and graduate students), Tufts, Spring 2010, Spring 2011, Spring 2013, Spring 2015, Spring 2017

- Graduate Research Seminar: Functions and Functionalism**, Tufts, Spring 2015
- Graduate Research Seminar: Group Intention and Action (Phil 292)**, Tufts, Spring 2014
- Graduate Writing Seminar (Phil 297)**, Tufts, Fall 2013, Fall 2014
- Intermediate Logic (Phil 103)**, Tufts, Fall 2012
- Philosophy of Social Science (Phil 134)**, (intermediate-level survey of historical and contemporary work), Tufts, Fall 2009, Fall 2010, Fall 2012, Fall 2013, Fall 2016
- Language, Thought, and Culture (Phil 092)**, (introductory undergraduate course), Tufts, Spring 2011
- The Metaphysics of Language (Phil 191)**, (seminar for graduates and undergraduates), Tufts, Fall 2010
- Social Construction (Phil 092)**, (seminar on history and contemporary analysis of social construction, with applications to the theory of race), Tufts, Spring 2010
- Metaphysics of Material Objects (Phil 191)**, (upper-level seminar), Tufts, Fall 2009
- Speech Acts and Pragmatics**, (seminar for graduates), Virginia Tech, Spring 2009
- Metalogic** (formal results through Löwenheim-Skolem and Gödel incompleteness), Virginia Tech, Spring 2006, Spring 2009. Crosslisted graduate/undergraduate class.
- Symbolic Logic** (first-order logic, proofs, translation, and introduction to metatheory), Virginia Tech, Fall 2004, Fall 2005, Fall 2006, Fall 2007, Fall 2008
- Groups and Individuals** (seminar on realism and methodological individualism, with a focus on the philosophy of economics), Virginia Tech, Spring 2005. Crosslisted with Department of Economics.
- The Construction of Social Reality** (seminar on the metaphysics of social kinds and the semantics of social kind terms), Virginia Tech, Spring 2004
- Musical Indeterminacy** (composition and philosophy of music seminar), Stanford University, Spring 2002. Team-taught with Mark Applebaum, composer and associate professor of music.
- Language and Logic** (critical thinking, argumentation, and introduction to Aristotelian syllogistic and sentential logic), Virginia Tech, Fall 2004

## ECONOMICS AND LEADERSHIP EXPERIENCE

- 1999 – 2001 Took three year leave from graduate work at Stanford to found venture-funded internet company. Also in 2001 advised Korean government on curriculum for technology entrepreneurs.
- 1993 – 1996 Economics and strategy consultant, focusing on economic modeling, finance, and technology, for Monitor Company and Palo Alto Ventures. Based in Cambridge MA and Palo Alto, CA; major projects in New York, Tokyo, Tel Aviv, and Eindhoven.