

Samuel Z. Elgin

Curriculum Vitae

Contact Information

Address

U. C. San Diego
9500 Gilman Drive
La Jolla, CA 92093

Phone Number

(781) 472-0150

Email Address

elgin.samuel@gmail.com

Website

<http://samelgin.com>

Area of Specialization

Metaphysics

Areas of Competence

Epistemology, Logic, Normative Ethics

Employment

University of California, San Diego 2018-20
Postdoctoral Fellow in Philosophy

Education

Yale University 2011-18
Ph.D. in Philosophy

University of California, Berkeley 2016-18
Exchange Scholar

Reed College 2007-11
B.A. in Philosophy

Publications

Merely Partial Definition and the Analysis of Knowledge
Synthese 2018

On Question-Begging and Analytic Content
Synthese 2018

The Unreliability of Foreseeable Consequences:
A Return to the Epistemic Objection
Ethical Theory and Moral Practice 2015

Works Under Review

There Are no Metaphysical Primitives
Revise and Resubmit at the Journal of Philosophy

The Semantic Foundations of Philosophical Analysis

Normalcy and the Contents of Philosophical Judgments

Dissertation

Essence, Definition and the Semantic Foundations of Analysis

Committee: Michael Della Rocca (Chair), David Charles, Shamik Dasgupta

My dissertation clarifies pervasive misunderstandings in foundational metaphysics. In the first chapter, I undermine the notion of a metaphysical primitive. I argue that, if there were primitives, they would be essentially primitive. This requires them to have essences, which contradicts the assumption that they are primitive. In the second chapter, I demonstrate how metaphysical developments shed light on the analysis of knowledge. I argue that knowledge may have a real definition that is not uniquely individuating. This accommodates the persistence of Gettier cases as well as knowledge-first epistemology does, but allows knowledge to be ontologically dependent on justification, truth and belief. In the third chapter, I provide an analysis of question-begging in terms of analyticity; an argument begs the question just in case its conclusion is an analytic part of the conjunction of its premises. This explains how question-begging arguments are circular, and allows for valid arguments that do not beg the question. Finally, I provide an analysis of generalized identities (sentences of the form 'To be *F* is to be *G*') in terms of exact truth-maker semantics; these sentences are true just in case that which makes something *F* is that which makes it *G*.

Presentations and Commentary

Presentations

The Semantic Foundations of Philosophical Analysis <i>Invited Colloquium at Reed College</i>	2018
Question-Begging and Analytic Content <i>IIFs-UNAM Philosophy Graduate Conference in Mexico City</i>	2018
Question-Begging and Analytic Content <i>Central Division American Philosophical Association</i>	2018
Truthmakers, Predicates and the Semantic Foundations of Analysis <i>Berkeley Wolheim Society</i>	2017
Merely Partial Definition and the Analysis of Knowledge <i>Philosopher's Cocoon at the University of Tampa</i>	2017
Merely Partial Definition and the Analysis of Knowledge <i>Epistemic Virtues and Epistemic Skills in Bled, Slovenia</i>	2017
Computability and Conceivability <i>Conference on Evidence and Imagination at Graz University</i>	2016
Merely Partial Definition and the Analysis of Knowledge <i>Northern New England Philosophical Association</i>	2016
Dewey, Confucius and the Aims of Education <i>Hangzhou Normal University Conference on Educational Reform</i>	2016
Concerning the Nature of Definition <i>Northern New England Philosophical Association</i>	2015
Ethical Atomism and the Immorality of Hypocrisy <i>Salzburg Conference for Young Analytic Philosophers</i>	2015
Hypocrisy: The Tribute Vice Pays to Virtue <i>Syracuse Graduate Conference</i>	2015
The Myth of Balanced Consequences <i>British Society for Ethical Theory</i>	2014
Epistemic Contextualism <i>Pacific University Undergraduate Philosophy Conference</i>	2009

Commentary

Compliance and Command, by Kit Fine <i>Yale Graduate Philosophy Conference</i>	2016
Diamonds are Forever, by Cian Dorr <i>Yale Graduate Philosophy Conference</i>	2015
Natural Kinds <i>Light</i> , by Ásta Kristjana Sveinsdóttir <i>American Philosophical Association, Eastern Division</i>	2012
Explanatory Kinds: A Definition of Normality for Generics, by Bernard Nickel <i>American Philosophical Association, Eastern Division</i>	2012

Honors and Fellowships

2018	Graduate Student Travel Stipend Prize, Central Division APA
2016	Robert M. Leylan Fellowship
2015	Edgar H. Stone Fellowship
2014	Edgar H. Stone Fellowship
2012	Frank Patterson Fellowship
2011	Commendation for Excellence in Academic Performance
2009	Commendation for Excellence in Academic Performance

Teaching Experience

As a Teaching Assistant

Philosophical Methods Primary Instructor: Geoffrey Lee University of California, Berkeley	Fall 2017
Philosophical Methods Primary Instructor: Lara Buchak University of California, Berkeley	Spring, 2017
Philosophical Methods Primary Instructor: Daniel Warren University of California, Berkeley	Fall, 2016
Perspectives on Human Nature Primary Instructor: Joshua Knobe Yale University	Spring, 2015
First Order Logic Primary Instructor: Bruno Whittle Yale University	Fall 2013 & Fall 2014
Life Primary Instructor: Shelly Kagan Yale University	Spring, 2014

Academic and Professional Service

2016	Reviewer: Journal of Philosophical Research
2015-16	Organizer: Epistemology, Logic, Language & Metaphysics Working Group
2015	Organizer: Yale Graduate Student Philosophy Conference
2015	Teacher: Splash! Outreach Program for Local Middle/High School Students
2013-15	Volunteer Tutor: New Haven Reads

Graduate Coursework

Mathematical Logic	Sun-Joo Shin
Topics in Epistemology	Keith DeRose
First-Year Seminar	George Bealer and Bruno Whittle
Frege's Philosophy of Logic and Language	Susanne Bobzein
Computability and Logic	Sun-Joo Shin
Monism	Michael Della Rocca
Metaethics*	Matthew Smith
Belief	Keith DeRose and Bruno Whittle
Philosophy of Philosophy	George Bealer
Logical Foundations of Metaphysics	George Bealer
Normative Ethics	Shelly Kagan
History of Early Modern Ethics	Stephen Darwall
Leibniz	Michael Della Rocca
Topics in the Philosophy of Mathematics*	Bruno Whittle
Works in Progress	Zoltan Szabo and Jason Stanley
Definition, Essence, and Ground*	George Bealer
Works in Progress	Sun-Joo Shin
Theories of the Good*	Shelly Kagan
Reductionism*	Elizabeth Miller
Seminar on Teaching Philosophy	Lara Buchak
Truth-Maker Semantics*	Kit Fine
Why is there Anything Except Physics?*	Shamik Dasgupta and Geoffrey Lee

* audit

Summer Courses

Metaphysical Mayhem <i>Rutgers University</i>	2014
The History and Metaphysics of the Concept of Laws of Nature <i>Central European University</i>	2018

References

Michael Della Rocca

Andrew Downey Orrick Professor of Philosophy
Yale University
michael.della@yale.edu

Judith Thomson

Professor Emeritus of Philosophy
Massachusetts Institute of Technology
jtt@mit.edu

David Charles

Howard H. Newman Professor of Philosophy
Yale University
david.charles@yale.edu

Shamik Dasgupta

Associate Professor of Philosophy
University of California, Berkeley
shamik@shamik.net