

## Lokchun K. Gustin LAW

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### Research and Teaching Interests

*AOS* Ancient Philosophy (Chinese & Greco-Roman), Moral Psychology, Action

*AOC* Chinese Buddhism, Neo-Confucianism, Medieval Ethics, Bioethics, Social-Political Philosophy

I investigate how to defy human limitations without naïveté: Our abilities, our resources, and what is up to us are limited. But we defy limitations when we strive toward ideals, refuse to stop caring about people and affairs, or connect our minds with unchanging objects, rising above the ebbs and flows of history. The posture could be romantic – valuing perfect adherence to an ideal over how the world turns out; it could also be empty – not valuing anything at all. Are transcendent attitudes compatible with having concern for others? Can and should the romantic postures be squared with realistic considerations about our limitations? Is an empty posture compatible with a romantic one? In what sense is getting ourselves into perfect adherence to an ideal natural or not natural? What is causality as an unchanging object of spectator knowledge if the knowledge is to be perfect? Some sources of special significance to my thinking are Mencius, the *Zhuangzi/Chuangtzu*, Aristotle, Anselm of Canterbury, Iris Murdoch, and G.E.M. Anscombe.

### Academic Appointments

<i>Research Associate</i> , Department of Philosophy, Duke University	since 2025
<i>Associate Director</i> , Duke Center for Comparative Philosophy, Duke University	since 2025
<i>Harper-Schmidt Fellow &amp; Collegiate Assistant Professor</i> , University of Chicago	2021-25
<i>Visiting Assistant Professor</i> , Vassar College	2020-21
<i>Adjunct Assistant Professor</i> , Vassar College	2019-20
<i>Visiting Lecturer</i> , University of Pittsburgh	2018-19

### Education

#### *Degrees and Certificate*

- Ph.D. in Philosophy (Graduate Program in Classics, Philosophy, and Ancient Science), University of Pittsburgh 2018
- Postbaccalaureate Certificate in Classics, UCLA 2010
- B.A. in Philosophy (minor in Greek Studies), UC Berkeley 2008

#### *Other*

- Visiting Doctoral Fellow, Universität Leipzig summer 2016
- Visiting Student Researcher, UC Berkeley spring 2016
- Visiting Doctoral Student, Universität Potsdam summer 2015
- Visiting Postgraduate Student, The Chinese University of Hong Kong summer 2011
- Mount San Antonio College (before transferring to UC Berkeley) 2003-2005

**Peer-Reviewed Articles**

- “Aristotle’s Final-Causal Syllogistic in *Posterior Analytics* 2.11.” *Revue de philosophie ancienne*. forthcoming
- “Mengzi’s reception of two all-out externality statements on *yi* 義.” *Dao: A Journal of Comparative Philosophy* 24: 55-84 (<https://rdcu.be/d7RKC>). 2025
- “Ethical advance and ethical risk – a Mengzian reflection.” *Dao: A Journal of Comparative Philosophy* 19: 535-558 (<https://rdcu.be/b74FC>). 2020
- “Is human virtue a civic virtue? A reading of Aristotle’s *Politics* 3.4.” In *Aristotle’s Practical Philosophy*, edited by E. Cohen de Lara and R. Brouwer, 93-118. Springer. 2017

**Invited Contribution**

- In *Ancient Philosophy: 20 Questions for Today*. Oxford University Press. Series editor: Anna Marmodoro. forthcoming

**Under Review (available upon request)**

- “[Comparative philosophy; name redacted to facilitate anonymous review.]” present
- “[History of early Chinese philosophy; name redacted.]” present
- “[History of ancient Greek philosophy; name redacted.]” present

**Book Reviews and Book Note**

- Cause and Explanation in Ancient Philosophy*, eds. A. Ross and D. Vázquez.  
*The Classical Review* forthcoming
- Naturalism, Human Flourishing, and Asian Philosophy: Owen Flanagan and Beyond*, ed. B. Seok.  
*Notre Dame Philosophical Reviews* 2021
- The Many Moral Rationalisms*, eds. K. Jones and F. Schroeter.  
*Australasian Journal of Philosophy*, Volume 98 Issue 2, 417 2020

**Book Proposal Scheduled for Review**

- [*Trade book on issues about persuasion*], C. Marshall and L. K. G. Law present

**Refereed Presentations**

- Yan Hui as an Improv Artist in the Theater of Life*
- Carolinas Conference on Chinese Thought, Sweet Briar College, Sweet Briar VA Apr 2026
- Native Abilities and Situational Goodness in Mengzian Thought*
- APA Central Division Meeting, Chicago Feb 2026

- Northeast Conference on Chinese Thought,  
Duke University, Durham NC Nov 2025
- Is It Our "Nature" to Become Virtuous? Interviewing Aristotle and Mengzi*
- APA Eastern Division Meeting, Baltimore Jan 2026
  - Midwest Conference on Chinese Thought,  
University of Wisconsin, La Crosse, La Crosse WI Apr 2025
- Zhuangzian Doubtiness*
- Biennial Conference of the European Association for Chinese  
Philosophy, University of Iceland, Reykjavik Jun 2025
- Fasting of the Heart, Mirror Poetry, Cure for the State*
- International Society for Chinese Philosophy Conference, University  
of Ljubljana, Ljubljana Jun 2025
  - East-West Philosophers' Conf., University of Hawai'i, Honolulu, HI May 2024
  - APA Central Division Meeting, New Orleans, LA Feb 2024
  - Canadian Philosophical Association Congress, Toronto May-Jun 2023
  - Rutgers Workshop on Chinese Philosophy,  
Rutgers University, New Brunswick, NJ Apr 2023
  - APA Eastern Division Meeting, Montreal Jan 2023
- The Function of "Zhongni" and the Supposed Result of "Fasting" in Zhuangzi 4/1-34*
- The 28<sup>th</sup> Southeast Early China Roundtable,  
University of North Carolina, Chapel Hill, NC Oct 2024
- Mengzi's Reception of Meng Jizi's All-Out Externality Claim on Yi*
- Midwest Conference on Chinese Thought,  
Indiana University Bloomington, IN Apr 2024
- What Makes Causes Causes in Aristotle?*
- Marquette Summer Seminar on Aristotle and the Aristotelian  
Tradition, Marquette University, Milwaukee, MI Jun 2021
  - Society of Ancient Greek Philosophy Annual Meeting,  
Christopher Newport University, Newport News, VA Nov 2019
- Is Yi "External" or "Internal"? Mengzi's Resistance and Reticence*
- APA Eastern Division Meeting, New York City, NY Jan 2021
- Gaozi's Maxim as a Recipe for the Unwavering Heart*
- APA Eastern Division Meeting, Savannah, GA Jan 2018
- Ethical Advance and Ethical Risk – a Mengzian Reflection*
- The Bay Area Conference on Chinese Thought, UC Davis, Davis Oct 2017
  - Northeast Conference on Chinese Thought  
University of Bridgeport, Bridgeport, CT Nov 2016
  - APA Central Division Meeting, Chicago, IL Mar 2016
  - International Conference on Ancient and Medieval Philosophy  
Fordham University, New York City, NY Oct 2015
  - Australasian Society for Asian and Comparative Philosophy Jul 2012

Conference, University of New South Wales, Sydney	
<i>What About Causal Determinism Can Explain Privation of Responsibility?</i>	
• Oxford Graduate Student Conference, Oxford	Nov 2016
• Florida State University Free Will, Agency, and Moral Responsibility Graduate Conference, Tallahassee, FL	Oct 2016
<i>What is Shown through the Middle Term? – a Reading of Posterior Analytics II.11</i>	
• International Conference on Ancient and Medieval Philosophy, Fordham University, New York City, NY	Oct 2016
• Marquette Summer Seminar on Aristotle and the Aristotelian Tradition, Marquette University, Milwaukee, MI	Jun 2014
<i>The Stoic Response in de Finibus to the Epicureans’ “Cradle Argument”</i>	
• Ancient Philosophy Society Meeting, Colby College, Portland, ME	Apr-May 2016
• International Conference on Ancient and Medieval Philosophy, Fordham University, New York City, NY	Oct 2015
<i>Is Human Virtue a Civic Virtue? – a Reading of Aristotle’s Politics III.4</i>	
• Expert Meeting on the Relationship between Aristotle’s <i>Nicomachean Ethics</i> and <i>Politics</i> , Amsterdam U. College, Amsterdam	Jun 2015
<i>Autonomy in Instrumental Reasoning</i>	
• Graduate Phil. Conference, Universiteit van Amsterdam, Amsterdam	Dec 2011

### Invited Presentations and Discussions

<i>Is It Our “Nature” to Become Virtuous? Interviewing Aristotle and Mengzi</i>	
• Columbia University, New York City, NY	Mar 2026
• Chinese University of Hong Kong, Hong Kong	May 2025
<i>Comments on Mike Ashfield, “Aptic Normativity: The Right Fit for Confucian Righteousness?”</i>	
• APA Pacific Division Meeting, San Francisco, CA	Apr 2025
<i>“Responding, They Do Not Store” – Two Anxieties about Artificial Intelligence</i>	
• Confucius-Aristotle Symposium, United Nations Sustainable Development Solutions Network, Qufu and Beijing	Jul 2024
<i>“Flying by Not Having Wings” – In and beyond the Zhuangzi</i>	
• Summit on Chinese and Greek Civilizations in Dialogue, Southwest University China, Chongqing	Jul 2024
<i>Comments on J. Baird Callicott, “The Topos of Mu and the Predicative Self”</i>	
• Weissbourd Spring Conference, University of Chicago, Chicago, IL	May 2023
<i>Comments on Sungwoo Um, “The Boundaries of Honesty and Dishonesty”</i>	
• APA Eastern Division Meeting, Montreal	Jan 2023
<i>The Mirror-Like Mind and Action as Reflection of Reality in the Zhuangzi</i>	
• Workshop: Centrality of Truth The Franke Institute for the Humanities, University of Chicago, Chicago, IL	May 2022

- History of Philosophy Roundtable, Loyola University Chicago, Chicago, IL Mar 2022
- University of Washington, Seattle, WA Feb 2022
- The Word huparchein in Aristotle's Syllogistic*
- Ancient Philosophy Society Annual Independent Meeting, Pennsylvania State University, State College, PA Apr 2022
- Ways of Being: A Research Overview*
- Weissbourd Fall Symposium, University of Chicago, Chicago, IL Oct 2021
- Is Yi "External" or "Internal"? Mengzi's Resistance and Reticence*
- Ethics & Value Symposia, Loyola University Chicago, Chicago, IL Sep 2021
- Ethical Advance and Ethical Risk – A Mengzian Reflection*
- Lake Forest College, Lake Forest, IL Feb 2020
- What Makes Causes Causes in Aristotle?*
- Siena College, Troy, NY Nov 2019
- San Francisco State University, San Francisco, CA Jan 2019
- Comments on Michael Szlachta, "The First Movements of the Will and the Intellect: A Puzzle in Thomas Aquinas' Moral Psychology"*
- APA Central Division Meeting, Kansas City, MO Mar 2017
- Gaozi's Maxim as a Recipe for the Unwavering Heart*
- International Conference on Ancient & Medieval Philosophy Fordham University, New York City, NY Oct 2016
- The Stoic Response in de Finibus to the Epicureans' "Cradle Argument"*
- Philosophy Club, San Francisco State University, San Francisco, CA Apr 2016

### Teaching (S = spring; Su = summer; F = fall; W = winter)

- Moderator and Lead Discussant (Duke University)
  - *Reading Group of Philosophical Texts in Classical Chinese* F 2025, S 2026
- Instructor of Record at University of Chicago
  - *Greece and Rome: Texts, Traditions, and Transformations III: Comedies* S 2022, 23, 24, 25
  - *Greece and Rome: Texts, Traditions, and Transformations II: Tragedies* W 2022, 23, 24, 25
  - *Greece and Rome: Texts, Traditions, and Transformations I: Epic Poetry* F 2021, 22, 24
- Instructor of Record at Hyde Park Institute
  - *Mini Seminar on the Zhuangzi* S 2023
- Instructor of Record at Vassar College
  - *Early Chinese Philosophy* F 2019, S 2021
  - *Biomedical Ethics in the Pandemic* F 2020, S 2021
  - *Medieval Ethics* F 2020
  - *Neo-Confucianism and Chinese Buddhism* S 2020
  - *Philosophical Questions* S 2020
  - *Introduction to Chinese and Japanese Literature* F 2019

## Instructor of Record at University of Pittsburgh

- *Introduction to Chinese Philosophy* S 2019
- *Philosophy and Public Issues* F 2018
- *Introduction to Biomedical Ethics* S 2018

## Writing Practicum Instructor at University of Pittsburgh

- *Philosophy and Public Issues* (Michael Kessler; Gus Law) F 2013, F 2018
- *Introduction to Political Philosophy* (Japa Pallikkathayil; Greg Strom) S 2014, F 2017

## Discussion Section Instructor at University of Pittsburgh

- *Introduction to Existentialism* (Greg Strom; Greg Strom) S 2015, S 2017
- *History of Ancient Philosophy* (Kristen Inglis; Jessica Gelber) F 2011, F 2016
- *Introduction to Ethics* (Michael Thompson) F 2014
- *History of Modern Philosophy* (Anja Jauernig) S 2012

**Mentorship**

## Philosophy Undergraduate Mentoring Program, University of Pittsburgh

- Directed study on free will, agency, causation 2018-19
- Directed study on early Confucianism F 2016

**Pedagogy Development**

- Workshop: Eli Review, for a Writing-Intensive Hybrid Class, Vassar College Jul 2020
- Workshop: Responsive Curriculum in Times of Crisis, Vassar College Jun 2020
- Achievement in Pedagogy, University of Pittsburgh ([credential](#)) Sep 2018
- Inclusive Pedagogy Workshop, American Association of Philosophy Teachers Feb 2017

**Honors and Awards**

- Dean's Tuition Scholarship, Dietrich School of A&S, University of Pittsburgh 2018
- Rescher Dissertation Fellowship 2018
- Nominee for Elizabeth Baranger Excellence in Teaching Award 2017, 18
- Andrew W. Mellon Foundation Research Fellowship 2012-13, 15-16
- 1st Prize, Graduate Essay Competition, Australasian Society for Asian and Comparative Philosophy 2012
- Chinese Nationality Room Scholarship, University of Pittsburgh 2011
- Andrew W. Mellon Foundation First-year Doctoral Fellowship 2010-11
- Phi Beta Kappa 2008

**Professional Service**

- Co-Chair, Bernard Weissbourd Symposium Series, University of Chicago 2022-2023

Editorial Panelist, Special Issue of <i>Australasian Philosophical Review</i>	2021-2023
Reviewer, <i>Synthese</i>	since 2021
Reviewer, <i>Dao: A Journal of Comparative Philosophy</i>	since 2019
Vice President, Philosophy Graduate Student Body, University of Pittsburgh	2013-14

## Professional Affiliations

American Philosophical Association  
 International Society for Chinese Philosophy  
 United Nations Sustained Development Solutions Network (UN-SDSN)

## Dissertation

*Free Will as Etiological Self-Sufficiency*      John McDowell, Michael Thompson (co-chairs)  
 Stephen Engstrom, Kieran Setiya, Karl Schafer

## Language Proficiency

Cantonese	Mandarin	Classical Chinese (reading)
German (reading)	Classical Greek (reading)	Classical Latin (reading)

## References

James Allen  
 University of Toronto  
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Jamie Kelly (teaching reference)  
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