

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 & 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

Book Proposal Scheduled for Review

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

Peer-Reviewed Articles

“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

“[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

Refereed Presentations

Yan Hui as an Improv Artist in the Theater of Life

- The 3rd 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, Nov 2025

Duke University, Durham NC

Is It Our “Nature” to Become Virtuous? Interviewing Aristotle and Mengzi

- APA Eastern Division Meeting, Baltimore Jan 2026
- The 19th Annual Midwest Conference on Chinese Thought, University of Wisconsin, La Crosse, La Crosse WI Apr 2025

Zhuangzian Doubtiness

- The 5th 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

- The 24th International Society for Chinese Philosophy Conference, University of Ljubljana, Ljubljana Jun 2025
- The 12th East-West Philosophers’ Conference, 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
- The 6th 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 28th 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

- The 18th Annual 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 Conference, University of New South Wales, Sydney Jul 2012

- What About Causal Determinism Can Explain Privation of Responsibility?*
- Oxford Graduate Student Conference, Oxford Nov 2016
 - Florida State University Free Will, Agency, and Moral Responsibility Graduate Conference, Tallahassee, FL Oct 2016
- What is Shown through the Middle Term? – a Reading of Posterior Analytics II.11*
- 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
- The Stoic Response in de Finibus to the Epicureans’ “Cradle Argument”*
- Ancient Philosophy Society 16th Annual Independent Meeting, Colby College, Portland, ME Apr-May 2016
 - International Conference on Ancient and Medieval Philosophy, Fordham University, New York City, NY Oct 2015
- Is Human Virtue a Civic Virtue? – a Reading of Aristotle’s Politics III.4*
- Expert Meeting on the Relationship between Aristotle’s *Nicomachean Ethics* and *Politics*, Amsterdam U. College, Amsterdam Jun 2015
- Autonomy in Instrumental Reasoning*
- Amsterdam Grad. Phil. Conference, Institute for Logic, Language, and Computation, Universiteit van Amsterdam, Amsterdam Dec 2011

Invited Presentations and Discussions

- Is It Our “Nature” to Become Virtuous? Interviewing Aristotle and Mengzi*
- Columbia University, New York City, NY Mar 2026
 - Chinese University of Hong Kong, Hong Kong May 2025
- Comments on Mike Ashfield, “Aptic Normativity: The Right Fit for Confucian Righteousness?”*
- APA Pacific Division Meeting, San Francisco, CA Apr 2025
- “Responding, They Do Not Store” – Two Anxieties about Artificial Intelligence*
- Confucius-Aristotle Symposium 2024, United Nations Sustainable Development Solutions Network, Qufu and Beijing Jul 2024
- “Flying by Not Having Wings” – In and beyond the Zhuangzi*
- The 2nd Summit on Chinese and Greek Civilizations in Dialogue, Southwest University China, Chongqing Jul 2024
- Comments on J. Baird Callicott, “The Topos of Mu and the Predicative Self”*
- Weissbourd Spring Conference, University of Chicago, Chicago, IL May 2023
- Comments on Sungwoo Um, “The Boundaries of Honesty and Dishonesty”*
- APA Eastern Division Meeting, Montreal Jan 2023
- The Mirror-Like Mind and Action as Reflection of Reality in the Zhuangzi*
- 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 21st 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"*
- Guest Lecture Series, 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's Center for Teaching and Learning (credential: <https://credly.com/credit/15717487>) 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

Action Network (formerly, *Praktisches Denken und gutes Handeln*)
 American Philosophical Association
 Association of Chinese Philosophers in America
 International Society for Chinese Philosophy
 United Nations Sustained Development Solutions Network (UN-SDSN)
 Young Scholars of the Midwest in Ancient Philosophy

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 jv.allen@utoronto.ca	Jamie Kelly (teaching reference) Vassar College jamkelly@vassar.edu
Gabriel Richardson Lear University of Chicago grlear@uchicago.edu	John McDowell University of Pittsburgh jmcowell@pitt.edu
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