Cayla Clinkenbeard

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Website

AREAS OF SPECIALIZATION:
Social Epistemology; Ethics; Social and Political Philosophy

AREAS OF COMPETENCE:
Philosophy of Mind; Philosophy of Technology (AI ethics)

EDUCATION

The New School for Social Research   **May 2024 (expected)**
PhD in philosophy
Dissertation: Abusing Trust: Disinformation, Echo Chambers, and Collective Epistemic Responsibility
Committee: Zed Adams (chair), Alice Crary, Jay Bernstein

The New School for Social Research   **May 2017**
M.A. in philosophy
Thesis topic: The limits of rational grounds in persuasion in Wittgenstein's *On Certainty*
Thesis Chair: Alice Crary and Richard J. Bernstein

Angelo State University, San Angelo, TX
B.A. philosophy   **Aug. 2014**
Minor: English

B.A. English and political science   **May 2012**
Minor: Philosophy

DISSERTATION SUMMARY

In this dissertation, I argue that knowledge depends on trust and that abuses of trust destroy knowledge. Focusing on abuses of trust in disinformation campaigns and echo chambers, I examine how these cases involve relationships that destroy the underlying conditions for knowledge. After reviewing the literature on epistemic dependence and trust, I examine political and industry disinformation campaigns to show how they undermine the credibility of received knowledge and expert views. I then examine abuses of trust within echo chambers, communities that are closed off from information that discredits their views. I argue against a prominent account of what makes echo chambers epistemically unhealthy and provide my own alternative account of what distinguishes epistemically healthy from unhealthy communities. My view depends crucially on my account of epistemic nihilism. In my view, epistemically pernicious communities use authority to incite a general distrust of received knowledge that is ultimately self-defeating. Finally, I offer a view of how social media platforms contribute to abusing trust by explaining their roles in forming trust networks and spreading disinformation. My research is the first to argue for a network model of collective epistemic responsibility. My view is contrasted to both individualistic models of epistemic responsibility—according to which knowers have a duty to be epistemically virtuous in their pursuit of knowledge—and interpersonal models—according to which the responsibility of groups to their audiences is modeled on testimony. Instead, I argue that the credibility of knowledge claims is determined by a network of individuals, groups, and institutions that corroborate the claim, and as such, the network is the proper locus of responsibility. My research challenges prominent assumptions in social epistemology and ethics about the nature of epistemic groups, the causes of widespread distrust of knowledge, and diagnoses of epistemic perniciousness in groups such as echo chambers.

PUBLICATIONS

Articles:

- "Collective Deception: Toward a Network Model of Epistemic Responsibility," *Synthese* 202:3 (2023)

Book Reviews:

- Review of Anna Boncompagni, *Wittgenstein and Pragmatism*, *Graduate Faculty Philosophy Journal* 39:2 (2018).

Works in Progress:

- "Abusing Trust: The Problem with Echo Chambers"
- "Social Media's Responsibility for Disinformation"
- "AI and Epistemic Responsibility"
- "Individuating Epistemic Networks"
- "Epistemic Authority and Trust"
- *Abusing Trust* (book proposal)
- "Wittgenstein on Trust"

CONFERENCE PRESENTATIONS

- "Echo Chamber Individuation" **Mar. 2024**
  American Philosophical Association, Pacific division
- "Echo Chamber Individuation" **Nov. 2-3, 2023**
  Northwest Philosophy Conference, Lewis & Clark College
- "Contagions of Distrust: The Epistemic Vulnerability of Misinformation Groups" **Mar. 23, 2023**
  Policy, Expertise and Trust, PERITIA conference at University College Dublin
- "Deceptive Epistemic Networks and the Climate Crisis" **Oct. 9, 2022**
  Food, Consumption, Climate Change, University of North Texas
- "A Network Model of Epistemic Responsibility" **Sept. 7, 2022**
  British Society for Theory of Knowledge Conference, University of Glasgow
- Response to Mario Juarez-Garcia, "Moral Incompetence & Expert Failure: How to be **Jan. 11, 2020**
  Virtuous in Corrupt Environments," APA Eastern Division Meeting, Philadelphia, USA
- "Concepts, Thoughts, and Non-Rational Animals" **Feb. 27, 2016**
  Phenomenology and Mind: Collaborative Investigations, New School for Social Research
- "Why I Can Never Be an It," **Apr. 5, 2014**
  New Mexico West Texas Philosophical Society Colloquium,
  University of Texas at El Paso
- "Conrad, Wittgenstein, and the Epistemic Limitations of Solipsism," **Mar. 22, 2013**
  New Mexico West Texas Philosophical Society Colloquium, San Antonio College
- "The Unconscious and the Text," **Apr. 26, 2013**
  Graduate Student Symposium poster presentation, Angelo State University
- "The Noblest Roman's Death: Brutus's Justification for Suicide," **Apr. 5, 2013**
  International Conference on Medieval and Renaissance Thought,
  Sam Houston State University
- "A Critique of the Holocaust Metaphor in 'Daddy': Is Plath a 'Bit of a Jew?,'" **Apr. 13, 2012**
  TTU Women's Conference, Texas Tech University
- "A Dose of Androgyny: The Cure for Inevitably Sexist Gender Identity," **Feb. 4, 2011**
  TTU Women's Conference, Texas Tech University

INVITED TALKS

- Abusing Trust: The Problem with Echo Chambers   **Nov. 17, 2023**
  Angelo State University
- Abusing Trust: The Problem with Echo Chambers   **Sept. 15, 2023**
  The New School for Social Research
- Epistemic Responsibility for Climate Science Disinformation Campaigns   **Sept. 10, 2023**
  Environmental Ethics course at Eugene Lang College

INTERVIEWS

- The Philosopher's Nest   **Nov. 2023 (TBD)**
  (with Oxford University graduate students Lewis Williams and Kyle van Oosterum)

AWARDS AND HONORS

- Dissertation Fellowship   **2022–2023**
- Research Travel Awards, The New School   **2022–2023**
- Bursary award to attend and give a paper at the PERITIA conference in Dublin   **2023**
- Teaching Fellowship, Eugene Lang College, The New School   **2020–2021**
- Centennial Research Award (with Ceciel Meiborg & Joel de Lara), The New School   **2019**
  to support publishing the centennial issue of the *Graduate Faculty Philosophy Journal*
- Prize Fellowship   **2016–2019**
- Dean's scholarship at The New School for Social Research   **2014–2016**
- Nominee for Presidential Academic Excellence Award, Political Science and Philosophy Dept.   **Apr. 2014**
- Weldon and Virginia Fikes Scholarship   **Spring 2014**
- Graduate Research Fellowship recipient for course "The Unconscious & the Text"   **Spring 2013**
- Best Undergraduate Paper Award, Texas Tech University   **Apr. 2011**
- CARR Scholarship recipient   **2006**

TEACHING

Eugene Lang, The New School, New York, NY   **Jan. 2020 – May 2021**
Teaching Fellow
Modern philosophy: Will, Intellect, and Belief Formation

Hunter College, New York, NY   **Aug. 2019 – Dec. 2019**
Teaching Assistant
Introduction to Philosophy, supervised by Professor Frank Kirkland

Eugene Lang, The New School, New York, NY   **Aug. 2019 – Dec. 2019**
Teaching Assistant
New School Histories, supervised by Professors Mark Larrimore and Julia Foulkes

Borough of Manhattan Community College, New York, NY
Adjunct Lecturer   **Aug. 2018 – Dec. 2018**
Introduction to Philosophy course

NSSR, The New School, New York, NY

Teaching Assistant—Proseminar Facilitator   Aug. 2016 – Dec. 2016
Explained exam and writing requirements to new MA and PhD philosophy students

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EDITING

Graduate Faculty Philosophy Journal, New York, NY
Senior Editor—Budget Officer   Jan. 2018 – Aug. 2020
Communicate with authors, supervise Editorial Assistants, fact check articles, edit for style and grammar, solicit articles, write blurbs, help organize events, write budget proposal, manage funds

Editorial Assistant   Aug. 2016 – Dec. 2017
Fact check articles, edit for *GFPJ* style consistency, copyediting, give solicitation recommendations, write blurbs

Canon, Interdisciplinary Journal of NSSR, New York, NY
Editor   Oct. 2014 – May 2016
Contributed blog posts, helped select and edit submissions, brainstormed topics for new issues

Undecidable Unconscious, New York, NY
Proofreader   Aug. 2015

RESEARCH ASSISTANTSHIPS

NSSR, New York, NY
Research Assistant — for Professor Alice Crary   Aug. 2016 – May 2021

TUTORING

City College Writing Center, New York, NY
College Assistant   Oct. 2015 – May 2016
Collaborated with students with various learning needs to improve writing skills (including papers and application materials); worked with ESL students, students with dyslexia, and MA students.

Angelo State University Writing Center, San Angelo, TX
Peer Tutor   Jan. 2011 – May 2014
Assisted undergrad and graduate students with brainstorming, grammar, and research

Angelo State University Department of English
Graduate Assistant – for Dr. Linda Kornasky   Aug. 2012 – Aug. 2013
Assisted undergrad students with writing skills, graded papers, led class discussions

Angelo State University Department of Political Science and Philosophy
Ethics Tutor – for Dr. Susana Badiola   Oct. 2010 – May 2012

Introduction to Philosophy Tutor – for Dr. Susana Badiola   Oct. 2010 – Dec. 2011

Modern Political Theory Tutor – for Dr. John Glassford   Jan. – May 2011

ACADEMIC SERVICE

- Faculty Liaison for the NSSR Philosophy Forum and member of faculty hiring committee   2017–2018

WORKSHOPS

- Coordinator of the NYC Wittgenstein Workshop 2015–2018
- Facilitator, People in Support of Women in Philosophy 2015–2016

MEMBERSHIPS

British Society for Theory of Knowledge, American Philosophical Association, NYC Wittgenstein Workshop, People in Support of Women in Philosophy, SWIP

LANGUAGES

German: Reading
Spanish: Reading

REFERENCES

Zed Adams, Associate Professor of Philosophy; Co-director, Institute for Philosophy and the New Humanities, zed@newschool.edu

Alice Crary, University Distinguished Professor of Philosophy, The New School for Social Research Department of Philosophy, New York, crarya@newschool.edu

Jay Bernstein, University Distinguished Professor of Philosophy, The New School for Social Research Department of Philosophy, New York, bernstej@newschool.edu