

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

Till my death, I am changing, and I am not completely indifferent to *how* I change as a thing in progress. In addition, I appear to exercise some power over myself and my life. Thus, I treat myself and my life as a *work* in progress. But this control I have is limited: the world often proves uncooperative; besides, my preferences may be imperfect, so that what I envision to be the ideal itinerary may in fact be poor voyaging. I cannot just will these two kinds of limitations away. Because the ship of change that is me is already at sea, this work in progress is specifically a Neurath's ship in progress: if I can work on my imperfect or ever-changing self at all, I can do so only while also relying on it. Accordingly, my research progresses largely on three fronts: understanding change and limitations, finding hope despite the limitations, and questioning voyage-optimization. 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

Peer-Reviewed Journal 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

Book Chapters

- On anxiety, in *Ancient Philosophy: 20 Questions for Today*. Series editor: Anna Marmodoro. forthcoming
- “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

Under Review (available upon request)

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

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

- Moderator and Lead Discussant at Duke University
• *Reading Group of Philosophical Texts in Classical Chinese* since F 2025
- Instructor of Record at Duke University
History of Ancient Greek Philosophy F 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

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 Doubleness

- Biennial Conference of the European Association for Chinese Philosophy, University of Iceland, Reykjavík 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 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

- 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 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*
 - Graduate Phil. Conference, 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, United Nations
Sustainable Development Solutions Network, Qufu and Beijing Jul 2024
- “Flying by Not Having Wings” – In and beyond the Zhuangzi*
 - 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 May 2022
The Franke Institute for the Humanities, University of Chicago, Chicago, IL
- 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 Apr 2022
State University, State College, PA

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 Oct 2016
Fordham University, New York City, NY

The Stoic Response in de Finibus to the Epicureans' "Cradle Argument"

- Philosophy Club, San Francisco State University, San Francisco, CA Apr 2016

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

Associate Director, Duke Center for Comparative Philosophy	Since 2025
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

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 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
Hagop Sarkissian CUNY Baruch College; Graduate Center hagop.sarkissian@baruch.cuny.edu	Kwong-loi Shun University of California, Berkeley klshun@berkeley.edu
Michael Thompson University of Pittsburgh mthomps@pitt.edu	Justin Tiwald Hong Kong University jtiwald@hku.hk
Bryan Van Norden Vassar College; Wuhan University brvannorden@vassar.edu	David Wong Duke University d.wong@duke.edu