

Christopher James Britton

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EDUCATION

PhD	University of California, Santa Barbara, Philosophy	2023
MA	University of California, Santa Barbara, Philosophy	2022
C Phil	University of California, Santa Barbara, Philosophy	2019
BA	Western Washington University, Philosophy (Minors: Economics, Political Science)	2014
AA	Columbia Basin College	2012

AREAS OF SPECIALIZATION

Philosophy of Mind, Philosophy of Cognitive Science

AREAS OF COMPETENCE

Political Philosophy, Early Modern Philosophy, Epistemology

DISSERTATION

Title: Conceptual Atoms and Conceptual Structures: A Proposed Mediation Between Philosophy and Scientific Psychology on the Nature of Conceptual Representations

Committee: Kevin Falvey (Chair), Aaron Zimmerman, Thomas Barrett

Abstract: Philosophers in the philosophy of mind often understand concepts as the constituents of whatever mental representations support the having of propositional attitudes. By contrast, psychologists often see concepts as mental representations which support the having of core cognitive capacities, such as those for categorization and reasoning of various kinds. It has long been hoped that these competing understandings of concepts can somehow be unified. I argue that such unification is not forthcoming. Philosophers and psychologists are theorizing about distinct, but closely related, kinds of mental representation. What philosophers posit are conceptual atoms, semantically unstructured mental representations which combine together to form conceptual structures, with these structures forming an open-ended class of mental representation that includes the prototypes, exemplars, and folk theories posited by psychology. It is these conceptual structures that both guide our practical activities and support our having of propositional attitudes. In short, what are called “concepts” by philosophers are the building blocks of what are called the same by psychologists. I additionally discuss the need for a robust concept pluralism as well as the need to adopt a teleosemantic approach when theorizing about conceptual representations.

SELECTED WORKS IN PROGRESS

“Descartes and the Perception of Primary Qualities”

“From Concepts to Conceptual Atoms and Structures”

ACADEMIC EMPLOYMENT

As sole instructor at Allen Hancock College

Survey of Philosophy: Spring 2023 (upcoming)

Ethics: Spring 2023 (upcoming)

As sole instructor at University of California, Riverside

Languages and Minds: Fall 2023 (30 students)

As sole instructor at University of California, Santa Barbara

Punishment and Responsibility: Summer 2021, Summer 2022 (50 students)

Epistemology: Summer 2020 (50 students)

Critical Thinking: Spring 2021, Fall 2021, (350 students)

Introduction to Philosophy: Summer 2019 (50 students), Winter 2021 (350 students)

Academic Writing: Fall 2022, Winter 2023, Spring 2023 (25 students)

As Teaching Assistant at the University of California, Santa Barbara

Philosophy of Mind: Winter 2018, Winter 2020, Spring 2022

Philosophy of Science: Fall 2020

Ethics: Fall 2019, Winter 2022

Epistemology: Spring 2019

Empiricists to Kant: Spring 2018

Medieval Philosophy: Winter 2017

Introduction to Philosophy: Fall 2016, Spring 2017, Fall 2018

Introduction to Ethics: Spring 2020

Critical Thinking: Fall 2017, Winter 2019

As Course Reader at University of California, Santa Barbara

Philosophy of Religion: Summer 2018

Philosophical Psychology: Summer 2018

Punishment and Responsibility: Summer 2018

Last Updated 11/2023

As Course Reader at Western Washington University

Introduction to Logic: Fall 2013, Winter 2014, Spring 2014

Intermediate Logic: Fall 2013

Other

Participant, PIPS Program (Philosophy in Public Schools): Western Washington University, Spring 2014

CAMPUS TALKS

2021 – “Conceptual Atoms and Conceptual Structures”, UCSB Graduate Student Colloquium

2019 – “A Teleosemantic, Atomistic Approach to Concepts”, UCSB Graduate Student Colloquium

2018 – “Descartes on the Perception of Primary Qualities”, UCSB Graduate Student Colloquium

AWARDS, HONORS, AND FELLOWSHIPS

Paul Wienpahl Award for Excellence in Teaching, 2020-2021

R.W. Church Scholarship, UC Santa Barbara, 2016-2022

Departmental Fellowship, UC Santa Barbara, 2015-2016

Departmental (Philosophy) Tuition Waiver Scholarship, Western Washington University, 2013-2014.

The Honor Society of Phi Kappa Phi, Western Washington University, 2013-2015

Dean's List, Western Washington University, 2012-2014

President's List, Columbia Basin College, 2011-2012

CAMPUS COLLABORATIONS

2019 (Spring) – Teleosemantics Reading Group Organizer

2018 (Spring) – 2019 (Winter), Concepts Reading Group Organizer

2018 (Summer) – *Concept of Mind* Reading Group Organizer

2017 (Spring) – Language Comprehension Reading Group Participant

REFERENCES

Kevin Falvey – falvey@philosophy.ucsb.edu

Aaron Zimmerman – azimmerman@philosophy.ucsb.edu

Thomas Barrett – tbarrett@philosophy.ucsb.edu