

Curriculum Vitae

James Turner

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Areas of specialization

Philosophy of Cognitive Science, Philosophy of Mind, Philosophy of Psychiatry

Areas of competence

Philosophy of Biology, Philosophy of Science, Philosophy of Medicine, Philosophy of Film, Moral Psychology

Current Position:

- Kempe Foundation Postdoctoral Fellow at Umeå University, September 2025-August 2026

Previous Position:

- Associate Researcher at the Hang Seng Centre for Cognitive Studies, The University of Sheffield, January 2025-September 2025

Education

- PhD Philosophy, The University of Sheffield, UK, October 2019-January 2024 (passed with no corrections)
Dissertation: *Low Mood: Evolution, Cognition, and Disorder*
Supervisors: Dr Luca Barlassina (primary); Dr Max Khan Hayward (secondary)
Examiners: Prof Justin Garson (CUNY); Prof Stephen Laurence
- MA Philosophy (distinction), The University of Sheffield, UK, September 2018-August 2019
- BA Philosophy (1st class honors), The University of Sheffield, UK, September 2014-July 2017
Awards: Peter H Nidditch Award for best undergraduate performance in philosophy

Publications

- Turner, J., (Forthcoming) “What’s low mood all about? An indicative-imperative account of low mood’s content”, *Philosophy of Science* doi:10.1017/psa.2025.10
- Turner, J., (2024) “Bad feelings, best explanations: In defence of the propitiousness theory of the low mood system”, *Erkenntnis*, <https://doi.org/10.1007/s10670-023-00773-5>

Works in Progress

- **Turner, J.**, Hundertmark, F. (Under review) “Swampman goes to the doctor”

- Hundertmark, F., **Turner, J.** (Under review) “Moving Past Ahistorical Theories of Malfunction”
- Kürthy, M., **Turner, J.**, Gibson-Miller, J., Martinez-Perez, A., Webster, R K., and Barlassina, L. (Under Review) “In case it happens again: Predicted behavioural responses to the prospect of a novel Covid-19 outbreak in the UK population”
- Turner, J., (In Preparation) “Don’t be thick: Behave naturally!”

Grants and Awards

- White Rose College of Arts and Humanities (WRoCAH) Full-Time PhD Scholarship (£15,009 per annum + fees paid for), October 2019-August 2023
- WRoCAH Large Award + University of Sheffield Research Stimulation Fund to cover attendance and travel to the *Phil in Biomed Summer School* at the University of Bordeaux, France, June 2022
- WRoCAH Student Led Forum award + Mind Association award for the running of the conference *Understanding Value X*, June 2021
- University of Sheffield Faculty of Arts and Humanities Doctoral Academy Research Preparation Scholarship, September 2018-August 2019 (£10,000)
- Peter H Nidditch Award for best undergraduate performance in philosophy, July 2017

Teaching Experience

Primary Instructor:

- PHI372/PHI6372, *Pain, Pleasure, and Emotions*, 3rd year UG and MA (co-taught with Dr Luca Barlassina), University of Sheffield, Spring Semester 2023

TA:

- PHI381, *Moral Theory and Moral Psychology*, 3rd year UG and MA, University of Sheffield, Autumn Semester 2022
- PHI132, *Death*, 1st year UG, University of Sheffield, Autumn Semester 2022
- PHI123, *Philosophy of Science*, 1st year UG, University of Sheffield, Autumn Semester 2021
- PHI158, *Philosophy of Sex*, 1st year UG, University of Sheffield, Autumn Semester 2021

Guest Lecturer:

- PHI381, *Moral Theory and Moral Psychology*, University of Sheffield, November 2022
- PHI372/PHI6372, *Pain, Pleasure, and Emotions*, 3rd year UG and MA, May 2022

Academic Talks (Selection)

- The Evolutionary Psychiatry Debate and Dinner 2025, The University of Cambridge, August 2025. (Invited)
Details: invited as the sole defender of the motion that “Most cases of major depressive disorder are functional” against one speaker.
- “Rethinking depression: What philosophy teaches us about depression’s status as a dysfunction”, *World Psychiatric Association Evolutionary Psychiatry Section Webinar*, Online, November 2024 (Invited)
- “The dysfunction is in the details: a case study of depression”, *Fifth Phil In Biomed Meeting*, Universität Bielefeld, Germany, September 2024 (Competitive CFA)
- “Proper functions for large language models”, with Dr Fabian Hundertmark, *German Congress of Philosophy XXVI*, Universität Münster, Germany, September 2024 (Competitive CFA)
- “Depression is not a dysfunction”, *Bielefeld Workshop on Philosophy of Psychiatry*, Universität Bielefeld, Germany, May 2024 (Invited)
- “Rethinking depression: Or why most cases of depression are not dysfunctional”, *Templeton-Sowerby Workshop on Function and Dysfunction*, King’s College London, UK, February 2024 (Competitive CFA)
- “Bad feelings, best explanations: In defence of the propitiousness theory of the low mood system”, *Fourth Phil In Biomed Meeting*, The University of Cambridge, UK, May 2023 (competitive CFA)
- “Bad feelings, best explanations: In defence of the propitiousness theory of the low mood system”, *The Social Roots of Mental Disorders: Philosophy and Psychiatry*, University of Granada, Spain, February 2023
- “What’s low mood all about: An indicative-imperative account of low mood’s content”, *Colloquium in Philosophy of Psychiatry*, Bielefeld University, Germany, January 2023
- “Don’t be thick! Behave naturally,” *Cognitive Science Research Group*, The University of Sheffield, UK, November 2020
- “The loss of depression: How the harmful dysfunction theory transforms disorder into normality,” *WRoCAH Conference*, The University of York, UK, October 2019 (competitive CFA)
- “Can philosophy be done through cinematic means in and of themselves?”, *Philosophy of Film Without Theory Conference*, The University of York, UK, January 2019 (competitive CFA)

Public engagement

- “Low mood, evolution, and dysfunction: A philosopher’s perspective”, *Sheffield Health and Social Local Grand Round Teaching Programme*, Tupton Hall, Sheffield, UK, October 2024 (Invited)
- “Low mood, depression, and dysfunction”, *Philosophy Meetup Group*, Exeter, UK, April 2023
- “What’s low mood all about?”, *PubHD*, Sheffield, UK, May 2022
- “Mental health and evolutionary psychology”, *Philosophy Meetup Group*, Exeter, UK, November 2020

Administrative roles/Service to the profession

- Member of the Royal College of Psychiatrists’ Evolutionary Psychiatry Special Interest Group, August 2024-Present
- International Liaison Officer for the WUN-funded project “Emotional pathways to a post-pandemic world”, April 2022-January 2024
- Conference organizer for the conference *Understanding Value X*, January 2021-July 2022
- Graduate Intern: Marketing and Recruitment for the Faculty of Science at the University of Sheffield, January 2018-July 2018
- Reviewer for *Synthese*, *Erkenntnis*, *Philosophy of Medicine*, *Discover Mental Health*, *Philosophia*

References

Dr Luca Barlassina (Supervisor)
Department of Philosophy
University of Sheffield
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Professor Justin Garson
Department of Philosophy
Hunter College and The Graduate Center, City University of New York
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Professor Dominic Gregory (Teaching)
Department of Philosophy
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