

# DAVID THORSTAD

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- CONTACT INFORMATION** Vanderbilt University  
2301 Vanderbilt Place  
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Email: david.thorstad@vanderbilt.edu  
Website: www.dthorstad.com
- EMPLOYMENT** **Vanderbilt University**  
Assistant Professor of Philosophy August 2023-
- Global Priorities Institute, Oxford**  
Postdoctoral Research Fellow July 2020-August 2023
- Kellogg College, Oxford**  
Junior Research Fellow (Nonstipendiary) October 2020-August 2023
- AFFILIATIONS** **MINT Lab, Australian National University**  
Research Associate April 2024-
- Global Priorities Institute, Oxford**  
Senior Research Associate August 2023-
- EDUCATION** **Harvard University**, PhD in Philosophy May 2020  
**Haverford College**, BA in Philosophy and Mathematics May 2012  
**Global Priorities Institute, Oxford**, Visiting Fellow Summer 2019  
**Australian National University**, Visiting Student Summers 2017, 2018  
**London School of Economics**, Visiting Student Academic Year 2017-18  
**Pembroke College, Oxford**, Visiting Student Academic Year 2010-11
- PUBLICATIONS** **The zetetic turn and the procedural turn**, forthcoming in *Journal of Philosophy*.
- Mistakes in the moral mathematics of existential risk**, forthcoming in *Ethics*.
- Why bounded rationality (in epistemology)?**, forthcoming in *Philosophy and Phenomenological Research*.
- Against the singularity hypothesis**, forthcoming in *Philosophical Studies*.
- Against the newer evidentialists**, forthcoming in *Philosophical Studies*.
- General-purpose institutional decisionmaking heuristics**, forthcoming in *British Journal for the Philosophy of Science*.
- Norms of inquiry**, forthcoming in *Philosophical Topics*.
- The accuracy-coherence tradeoff in cognition**, forthcoming in *British Journal for the Philosophy of Science*.
- High risk, low reward: A challenge to the astronomical value of existential risk mitigation**, *Philosophy and Public Affairs* 51.4 (2023): 373-412.

**There are no epistemic norms of inquiry**, *Synthese* 200, 410 (2022).

**Two paradoxes of bounded rationality**, *Philosophers' Imprint* 22.15 (2022).

**Tough enough? Robust satisficing as a decision norm for long-term policy analysis** (w/Andreas Mogensen), *Synthese* 200 (2022): 1-26.

**Inquiry and the epistemic**, *Philosophical Studies* 178.9 (2021): 2913-28.

**Permissive metaepistemology**, *Mind* 128.511 (2019): 907-26.

**SHORTER  
PIECES**

**Review of *Idealization in epistemology* by Dan Greco**, forthcoming in *Mind*.

**Accuracy and coherence: Can bounded agents have both?**, *BJPS Short Reads* (2022).

**UNDER  
CONTRACT**

***Inquiry under bounds***, research monograph under contract with Oxford University Press.

***Essays on longtermism*** (w/Hilary Greaves and Jacob Barrett), edited volume under contract with Oxford University Press.

**FELLOWSHIPS  
AND GRANTS**

**Robert Penn Warren Center for the Humanities**, Vanderbilt Faculty fellowship 2024-2025

**Effective Altruism Infrastructure Fund** (\$24,460) 2023  
Grant to support a summer diversity program

**Center for Effective Altruism** (£20,000) 2023  
Event Support Grant (with Bridget Williams)

**Manifund** (\$2,000) 2023  
Grant to support public philosophy connected to effective altruism

**John Fell Fund** (£10,000), University of Oxford 2022  
Grant to support a workshop on inquiry

**Center for Effective Altruism** (\$40,000) 2022  
Event Support Grant (with Charlotte Siegmann)

**PPE Society** (\$250) Travel Grant 2022

**Provostial Fund for the Arts and Humanities** (\$4,000) 2020  
Harvard University, Conference Organization Grant (with Branden Fitelson and Ned Hall)

**Dissertation Completion Fellowship** (\$32,000) 2019-2020  
Harvard University

**GSC Travel Grant** (\$750), Harvard University 2019

**Frank Knox Memorial Traveling Fellowship** (\$25,000) 2017-18

	Harvard University	
	<b>GSAS Predissertation Summer Fellowship</b> (\$6,000) Harvard University	2015
	<b>Magill-Rhoades Scholarship</b> (full need), Haverford College	2008-12
<b>AWARDS / HONORS (ACADEMIC)</b>	<b>Francis Bowen Prize</b> , Harvard University Recognizes the best essay on a subject in moral or political philosophy.	2020
	<b>Bechtel Prize</b> , Harvard University Recognizes the best essay on a philosophical topic.	2019
	<b>Summa Cum Laude</b> , Haverford College	2012
	<b>Phi Beta Kappa</b> (as junior), Haverford College	2011
	<b>Collection Prizes</b> (all subjects), Pembroke College, Oxford	2010-11
<b>AWARDS / HONORS (TEACHING)</b>	<b>Special Commendation for Extraordinary Teaching in Extraordinary Times</b> , Harvard University	2020
	<b>Derek C Bok Award for Excellence in Graduate Student Teaching</b> , Harvard University Harvard's highest graduate teaching award. 5 awarded annually university-wide.	2019
	<b>Certificates of Distinction and Excellence in Teaching (x6)</b> , Harvard University:	2016-19
	Virtue	Spring 2019
Social epistemology	Fall 2018	
Saints, heretics, and atheists	Spring 2017	
Fundamentals of logic	Fall 2016	
Frege, Russell, and the early Wittgenstein	Fall 2016	
Logic and philosophy	Spring 2016	
<b>TALKS</b>	<b>“The zetetic turn and the procedural turn”</b>	
<b>(†) Refereed</b>	<i>Inquiry Workshop</i> , Brown University	(April 2024)
	<i>Southeast Graduate Philosophy Conference</i> , University of Florida	April 2024
	<i>Workshop on the Nature and Normativity of Inquiry</i> , University of Pavia	January 2024
	<i>Southeastern Epistemology Conference</i> , Spartanburg, South Carolina	October 2023
	† <i>Duke-UNC Epistemology Workshop</i>	September 2023
	† <i>Australasian Association of Philosophy Annual Conference</i>	July 2022
	<i>Workshop on Norms of Inquiry</i> , Complutense University of Madrid	June 2022
<i>University of Zürich</i>	May 2022	

<i>Groupe de Recherche Interuniversitaire Sur la Normativité (GRIN), Montreal</i>	March 2022
<i>Cologne Center for Contemporary Epistemology and the Kantian Tradition (CONCEPT), University of Cologne</i>	January 2022
<i>Ideal and Non-Ideal Epistemology Seminar Series</i> (Organized by Robin McKenna and Michael Hannon)	December 2021
<b>“The complexity-coherence tradeoff in cognition”</b>	
† <i>Formal Epistemology Workshop, Boston</i>	June 2023
<i>Formal Methods Group, King’s College, London</i>	May 2023
<b>“Against the singularity hypothesis”</b>	
<i>Colloquium on Artificial Intelligence and Catastrophic Risk</i> Australian National University	March 2024
<b>“Mistakes in the moral mathematics of existential risk”</b>	
<i>Moral philosophy working group, Yale</i>	(April 2024)
<i>Mimir Institute for Long-Term Future Studies, Stockholm</i>	December 2023
<i>7th PPE Society Conference, New Orleans</i>	November 2023
<i>Global Priorities Institute / LSE Joint Workshop, London</i>	May 2023
<i>Workshop on Pluralisms in Existential Risk Studies, Oxford</i>	May 2023
<b>“Why bounded rationality (in epistemology)?”</b>	
<i>7th PPE society Conference, New Orleans</i>	November 2023
<b>“Norms of inquiry”</b>	
† <i>Central APA, Chicago, Illinois</i>	February 2022
<i>Workshop on Inquiry, Southern Normativity Group</i>	September 2021
<i>Aarhus University</i>	May 2021
† <i>Southern Society for Philosophy and Psychology</i> <i>Annual Meeting, Louisville, Kentucky</i>	December 2020
<i>Workshop on Bounded Rationality, Harvard</i>	October 2019
<b>“Three paradoxes of bounded rationality”</b>	
† <i>Between Formal and Informal Methods in Philosophy, Warsaw</i>	September 2021
<i>Group for Analytic Metaphysics and Epistemology</i> Texas A&M	July 2020
† <i>British Society for the Philosophy of Science</i> <i>Conference, Kent</i>	July 2020
<b>“There are no epistemic norms of inquiry”</b>	
<i>Episteme group, University of Cambridge</i>	March 2023
<b>“High risk, low reward: A challenge to the astronomical value of existential risk mitigation”</b>	
† <i>Philadelphia Normativity Conference, UPenn</i>	October 2023
† <i>International Society for Utilitarian Studies 2023, Rome</i>	July 2023

† <i>Ethics After Parfit</i> , LMU Munich	January 2023
† <i>6th PPE Society Conference</i> , New Orleans	November 2022
† <i>Formal Philosophy 2022</i> , Moscow (Hybrid)	October 2022
<i>Tenth Oxford Workshop on Global Priorities Research</i>	June 2022
<i>Center for Population-Level Bioethics</i> , Rutgers	April 2022
<i>Ninth Oxford Workshop on Global Priorities Research</i>	March 2022
<b>“General-purpose institutional decisionmaking heuristics: The case of decisionmaking under deep uncertainty”</b>	
<i>17th International Congress on Logic, Methodology, and Philosophy of Science and Technology</i> , Buenos Aires	July 2023
<b>“The scope of longtermism”</b>	
<i>Legal Priorities Project</i> , Harvard	February 2022
<i>Seventh Oxford Workshop on Global Priorities Research</i>	June 2021
<b>“Inquiry and the epistemic”</b>	
<i>Oxford Epistemology Group</i> , Oxford	November 2020
<i>Inquiry Network</i> , Online	November 2020
<b>“The dual deontic role of unpossessed evidence”</b>	
† <i>Great Lakes Philosophy Conference</i> Siena Heights University	April 2021
<b>“Satisficing reclaimed”</b>	
† <i>PLM Network Conference</i> , St. Andrews	August 2019
<i>Bounded Rationality Reading Group</i> , Oxford	July 2019
<b>“Heuristics and longtermism”</b>	
<i>Second Oxford Workshop on Global Priorities Research</i> , Oxford	July 2019
<i>Global Priorities Institute</i> , Oxford	June 2019
<i>Future of Humanity Institute</i> , Oxford	June 2019
<b>“Pure time-preference: some error-theoretic remarks”</b>	
<i>Workshop on Longtermism</i> , Oxford	March 2019
<b>“Omission bias revisited”</b>	
† <i>Australasian Association of Philosophy / New Zealand Association of Philosophy Annual Conference</i> , University of Wellington, NZ	July 2018
<i>ANU Modeling Ethical Theories Reading Group</i> Australian National University	July 2018
<b>“Inquiry under bounds”</b>	
<i>LSE Work in Progress Group</i> , London School of Economics	February 2018
<b>“Permissive metaepistemology”</b>	

<i>ANU Epistemology Reading Group,</i> Australian National University	June 2018
† <i>Yale Graduate Philosophy Conference,</i> Yale	April 2017
† <i>UT-Austin Graduate Philosophy Conference,</i> UT-Austin	April 2017
† <i>Northwestern/Notre Dame Graduate Epistemology Conference,</i> Notre Dame	April 2017
† <i>BARSEA Epistemology Workshop,</i> Cambridge University	February 2017
† <i>UConn Graduate Philosophy Conference,</i> University of Connecticut Storrs	November 2016

**PUBLIC TALKS “Existential risk pessimism and the time of perils”**

ERA Fellowship, Cambridge	August 2023
EAGxCambridge	March 2023
EAGxSingapore	September 2022
EAGxOxford	March 2022

**“Challenges to effective altruism”**

Tarbell Fellowship Program, Oxford	March 2023
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**TEACHING**

**At Vanderbilt University**

Ethics of AI	Spring 2024
Introduction to philosophy of AI	Spring 2024
Introduction to philosophy	Fall 2023
Inquiry (graduate seminar)	Fall 2023

**As primary instructor at Harvard University**

Rationality	Spring 2020
Virtue	Spring 2019
Social epistemology	Fall 2018
Introduction to logic (Harvard Summer School)	Summers 2018, 2019

**As teaching fellow at Harvard University**

Saints, heretics, and atheists	Spring 2017
Fundamentals of logic	Fall 2016
Frege, Russell, and the early Wittgenstein	Fall 2016
Logic and philosophy	Spring 2016

**As grader at Harvard University**

Topics in logic	Spring 2017
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**Other teaching**

**Advisor,** Global Priorities Institute Early Career Conference Program.

Thomas Rowe (2021), Paul Forrester (2022), Leah Pierson (2021 and 2023), Tena Thau (2023).

**Advisor,** Oxford UNIQ+ Graduate Access Program, Elsie Lidington (2023).

<b>Harvard edX</b> , Content developer	2018-2020
<b>Harvard Precollege Passport Program</b> , Instructor	2019
<b>Lawrence International High School</b> , Mathematics teacher	2012-13

**PROFESSIONAL SERVICE** Conferences organized

<i>Southeastern Epistemology Congress</i> , Vanderbilt University	(2024)
<i>Inquiry Network workshop</i> , Vanderbilt University	(2024)
<i>Bayesianism and its rivals</i> (with Branden Fitelson, Will Fleisher and Ned Hall), Harvard	2022
<i>Oxford workshops on global priorities research</i>	
<i>Twelfth Oxford workshop on global priorities research</i> (with Loren Fryxell)	2023
<i>Eleventh Oxford workshop on global priorities research</i> (with Loren Fryxell)	2022
<i>Tenth Oxford workshop on global priorities research</i> (with Loren Fryxell)	2022
<i>Ninth Oxford workshop on global priorities research</i> (with Loren Fryxell)	2022
<i>Eighth Oxford workshop on global priorities research</i> (with Loren Fryxell)	2021
<i>Seventh Oxford workshop on global priorities research</i> (with Loren Fryxell, Rossa O’Keeffe-O’Donovan, and Benjamin Tereick)	2021
<i>Sixth Oxford workshop on global priorities research</i>	2021
<i>Fifth Oxford workshop on global priorities research</i> (with Andreas Mogensen and Rossa O’Keeffe-O’Donovan)	2020
<i>Workshop on bounded rationality</i> (with Branden Fitelson and Ned Hall), Harvard	2019
<i>Harvard-MIT graduate philosophy conference</i> (with Kevin Dorst, Jen Nguyen, and Max Siegel), Harvard	2015

**Panels organized**

<i>Non-ideal theory</i> , PPE Society Conference	2023
<i>Ethics and the far future</i> , PPE Society Conference	2023
<i>Inquiry</i> , Southern Society for Philosophy and Psychology	2020

**Reading groups organized**

<i>Critiques of effective altruism</i> (with Jacob Barrett) Global Priorities Institute, Oxford	2023
<i>The scope of longtermism</i> (with Hilary Greaves and Christian Tarsney), Global Priorities Institute, Oxford	2021
<i>Social justice and longtermism</i> (with Christian Tarsney), Global Priorities Institute, Oxford	2020
<i>Bounded rationality reading group</i> (with Sven Neth), Global Priorities Institute, Oxford	2019

<i>Epistemology reading group</i> (Four sessions. Unit on epistemic permissivism), ANU	2018
<i>Formal philosophy reading group</i> , Harvard	2016
<i>Accuracy-first reading group</i> , Harvard	2016
<i>Ethics and mathematics reading group</i> (with Zeynep Soysal), Harvard	2013-14

### Other organizing

<i>Inquiry Network</i> , Founder and co-organizer (w/Dennis Whitcomb and Arianna Falbo)	2020-
<i>Second Open Student Workshop on Global Priorities Research</i> (w/Bridget Williams), for members of traditionally underrepresented groups in global priorities research	2023
<i>First Open Student Workshop on Global Priorities Research</i> (w/Charlotte Siegmann)	2022
<i>GPI + WANBAM (Women and Non-Binary Altruism Mentorship) workshop</i> (w/Charlotte Siegmann)	2021

### Administrative responsibilities

<i>Steering Committee</i> , Vanderbilt Grand Challenge on AI	2024-
<i>Secretary</i> , Vanderbilt Philosophy Department	2023-
<i>Diversity Initiative Chair</i> , Global Priorities Institute	2021-2023
<i>College Advisor</i> , Kellogg College	2020-2023

**Refereeing (\* denotes multiple):** *AI & Society, Analysis, Australasian Journal of Philosophy, British Journal for the Philosophy of Science, Canadian Journal of Philosophy, Dialectica, Episteme, Erkenntnis, Ethical Theory and Moral Practice, Journal of Philosophy, Mind, Noûs, Open Philanthropy, Oxford University Press, Pacific Philosophical Quarterly, Philosophy Compass, Philosophy and Phenomenological Research, Philosophical Studies, Philosophical Topics, Rethink Priorities, Simon Institute for Longterm Governance, Southwestern Philosophical Society, Synthese, Utilitas.*

## REFERENCES

### Ned Hall

Norman E. Vuilleumier Professor of Philosophy and Chair, Department of Philosophy, Harvard University  
ehall@fas.harvard.edu

### Hilary Greaves

Professor of Philosophy and Director, Global Priorities Institute, Oxford University  
hilary.greaves@philosophy.ox.ac.uk

### Susanna Rinard

Professor of Philosophy, Harvard University  
susannarinard@fas.harvard.edu

### Susanna Siegel

Edgar Pierce Professor of Philosophy, Harvard University  
ssiegel@fas.harvard.edu



**Warren Goldfarb** (Teaching Reference)  
Walter Beverly Pearson Professor of Modern Mathematics and Mathematical Logic,  
Harvard University  
goldfarb@fas.harvard.edu