

## Robert Engelman

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4301 Broadway  
Department of Philosophy  
University of the Incarnate Word  
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### ACADEMIC APPOINTMENTS

Fall 2025–present: Lecturer – University of the Incarnate Word, Department of Philosophy

### EDUCATION

Ph.D. Philosophy (August 2025), Vanderbilt University  
B.A. Hons. Philosophy (May 2017), Boston University (*cum laude*)

### RESEARCH AREAS

AOS: Social and Political Philosophy, 19th-20th Century Philosophy (esp. Frankfurt School Critical Theory)  
AOC: Aesthetics (esp. music and literature), Kant

### DISSERTATION

Title: *Social Criticism and the Risk of Unreasonableness*

Committee: Idit Dobbs-Weinstein, Julian Wuerth (co-chairs), Lucius T. Outlaw (Jr.), Willi Goetschel (University of Toronto)

Abstract: This dissertation offers a Kantian defense of unrestricted social criticism within contemporary debates in critical theory concerning methodological egalitarianism and authoritarianism. It examines social criticism as an everyday communicative activity with enlightenment and moral progress as its ends. By showing that social critics can not only fail to realize those ends, but also undermine them and thereby lapse into malpractice, the dissertation argues that if social criticism's ends require that the activity be unrestricted, as Kant and his successors indicate, then promoting its ends requires accepting rather than avoiding the risk of malpractice. To substantiate this risk, the dissertation reconstructs a tension in the Kantian framework, in which the ends of social criticism require social critics to proceed both with and without respect and trust for persons. The dissertation concludes by offering a normative program called *revisionary autonomism* to productively navigate this tension in a way that accepts the risk of malpractice. Revisionary autonomism takes a temporalized, open-ended relation to the question of whether or not to enact respect and trust in given episodes of social criticism, and advocates for courage and humility so as to mediate between the fearlessness of Marx's methodologically authoritarian, ruthless critique and the modesty of Allen's contextualist methodological egalitarianism.

### ACADEMIC PUBLICATIONS

\* = *invited*

5. Hall, Zachary and Robert Engelman. "Kant, Nonsense, and the Suprasensible Reality of Thinking: Re-Reading Wittgenstein's 'Picture Theory'." *Wittgenstein-Studien*. (Forthcoming.)

4. Engelman, Robert. "The Historicisation of the Human Senses from Feuerbach to Marx." *Philosophy & Social Criticism*, vol. 51, no. 8 (September 2025): 1333-57.
3. Engelman, Robert. "The Collegial Structure of Kantian Public Reason." *Inquiry: An Interdisciplinary Journal of Philosophy*, vol. 68, no. 10 (2025): 3926–3958.
2. Engelman, Robert. "Modern Scepticism, Metaphysics, and Absolute Knowing in Hegel's *Science of Logic*." *Hegel Bulletin*, vol. 45, no. 3 (December 2024): 442-469.
1. Engelman, Robert. "Reading Into It or Hearing It Out? Cavell on Modernism and the Art Critic's Hermeneutical Risk." In *Continuing Cavell: Must We Mean What We Say? At Fifty*, 121-34. Edited by Greg Chase, Juliet Floyd, and Sandra Laugier. Cambridge, UK: Cambridge University Press, 2022.

## **PUBLIC PHILOSOPHY**

\* = *invited*

2. Engelman, Robert. "In Praise of Slacker Rock." In *90s Alternative and Philosophy: Thinking Outside the Heart-Shaped Box*. Edited by Joshua Heter and Richard Greene. McFarland and Co. Publishers Inc. (Forthcoming.)
1. APA Blog Interview with Dr. Smrutipriya Pattnaik on Work–Life Balance: <https://blog.apaonline.org/2025/01/20/apa-member-interview-robert-engelman/> (2025) \*

## **WORK IN PROGRESS**

4. Article project on suspicion and political epistemology (r&t)
3. Article project on the concept of "propaganda" (under review)
2. Article project that offers a social- and feminist-epistemological reading of an opera (under review)
1. Article project on Kant and social criticism (draft)

## **PRESENTATIONS**

\* = *refereed*

17. 2026: "'At Once of Madness and of Plainness': Cavell and Adorno on Beckett's *Endgame*," Stanley Cavell at 100: An International Centennial Conference \* (Boston, MA)
16. 2025: "What is Social Criticism, and What is it For?," Pi and Phi at the University of the Incarnate Word (San Antonio, TX)
15. 2025: "Judith as Inquirer: *Duke Bluebeard's Castle* as a Feminist Epistemological Opera," Association for Philosophy and Literature \* (Frankfurt, Germany)
14. 2024: "Actual Communication and the Critical Politics of Public Reason: Reading Kant with and against Arendt," Tennessee Philosophical Association \* (Nashville, TN)

13. 2024: “Actual Communication and the Negativity of Public Reason: Reading Kant with and against Arendt,” St. Andrews Kant and Arendt Reading Party \* (St. Andrews, Scotland)
12. 2023: “Between Respect for Persons and Disrespectful Critique: Reason’s Constitutive Tension,” Tennessee Philosophical Association \* (Nashville, TN)
11. 2023: “Intellectual Freedom and Cooperative Communication in Kantian Public Reason,” Vanderbilt Association for Modern Philosophy \* (Online)
10. 2023: (with Zachary Hall): “Metaphysical Quietism About the Thinking Subject in Kant and Wittgenstein,” Metaphysical Society of America 73rd Annual Meeting \* (Atlanta, GA) (Declined due to scheduling conflict)
9. 2021: “Unifying Contemporary Philosophical Approaches to Propaganda,” 38th NASSP International Social Philosophy Conference \* (Online)
8. 2020: “Propaganda’s Soft Power” 28th Annual Critical Theory Roundtable \* (Online)
7. 2020: “Micrological Analysis and Adorno’s Immanent Critique of Positivism,” 13th International Critical Theory Conference of Rome \* (Canceled due to COVID-19 pandemic)
6. 2020: “Recovering Alban Berg’s Philosophical Significance for Adorno,” 9th Annual Meeting of the Association for Adorno Studies \* (Canceled due to COVID-19 pandemic)
5. 2020: “The Aestheticization of Electoral Politics: Toward A Benjaminian Account,” American Society for Aesthetics, Pacific Division \* (Canceled due to COVID-19 pandemic)
4. 2019: “Walter Benjamin and the Aestheticization of Electoral Politics,” Tennessee Philosophical Association \* (Nashville, TN)
3. 2019: “Reading-Into or Hearing-Out?: Cavell on Skepticism and the Art Critic’s Hermeneutic Risk,” American Society for Aesthetics, Rocky Mountain Division \* (Santa Fe, NM)
2. 2019: “On Adornian Investigations: Philosophizing with a Microscope and a Telescope,” 12th International Critical Theory Conference of Rome \* (Rome, Italy)
1. 2019: Roundtable on Aesthetics and Modernism, Continuing Cavell: *Must We Mean* at Fifty (Boston, MA)

## **COMMENTARY**

**(invited unless specified)**

9. 2025: Matthew Delhey, “Visions of Community at the University of Berlin: Kant, Fichte, Schleiermacher,” APA Eastern Divisional Meeting (New York, NY)

8. 2024: Meredith Sheeks, “The Importance of Being Rude,” Tennessee Philosophical Association (Nashville, TN)
7. 2023: Dario Vaccaro, “Kantian Infallibilism vs. Kantian Fallibilism: An Analysis,” Tennessee Philosophical Association (Nashville, TN)
6. 2022: Elijah Millgram, “Who Was Nietzsche’s Psychologist?” Vanderbilt Philosophy Colloquium (Online)
5. 2021: Sarah Mattice, “Sampling as Hermeneutic Paradigm,” Tennessee Philosophical Association (Online)
4. 2021: Noah Greenstein, “Wittgenstein’s Wager: On [Absolute] Certainty,” Southwest Philosophical Society (Online)
3. 2020: J. M. Bernstein, “The Responsibility Nexus: Vulnerability, Dependence, and Power,” Vanderbilt Philosophy Colloquium (Online)
2. 2019: Charles E. Cardwell, Author Meets Critic session on *Hornbook Ethics* Tennessee Philosophical Association (Nashville, TN)
1. 2018: Grant Heller, “The Subjective Necessity of Taste and the Possibility of Common Sense,” Tennessee Philosophical Association: 50th Anniversary Conference (Nashville, TN)

## **MODERATION**

3. 2022: Panel featuring Jerome Clarke, “The Data of Blackness,” and Kelly Swope, “A Dialectical Critique of Public Schooling in the United States” - Critical Theory Roundtable (Nashville, TN)
2. 2020: Leonard Harris, “What, then, is Philosophy Born of Struggle?” - Vanderbilt Philosophy Colloquium (Online)
1. 2020: Brandon Hogan, “What ‘Black Lives Matter’ Should Mean” - Vanderbilt Philosophy Colloquium (Online)

## **TEACHING**

### **Instructor of Record (University of the Incarnate Word)**

Spring 2026:

Continental Philosophy, one section

Introduction to Philosophy, two sections

Fall 2025:

Introduction to Philosophy, three sections

### **Instructor of Record (Vanderbilt University)**

Spring 2025:

General Logic, one section

Fall 2024:

General Logic, one section

Spring 2024:

Introduction to Philosophy (writing-intensive), one section

Spring 2022:

General Logic, one section

Fall 2021:

Introduction to Ethics, one section

Summer 2021:

Introduction to Philosophy (writing-intensive), one section

Spring 2020:

Introduction to Philosophy (writing-intensive), one section

### **Teaching Assistant (Vanderbilt University)**

Fall 2019:

Philosophy of Language (Matthew Congdon), one section

Spring 2019:

Introduction to Ethics (Gary Jaeger), two sections

### **Grader (Vanderbilt University)**

Fall 2023:

Formal Logic and its Applications (Scott Aikin), one section

Fall 2020:

General Logic (Matthew Congdon), one section

### **AWARDS, SCHOLARSHIPS, AND GRANTS**

2023-24: Vanderbilt University - Berry Graduate Student Publication Award (\$200)

2022-23: Vanderbilt University - Berry Graduate Student Publication Award (\$200)

2022-23: DAAD and Freie Universität Berlin - Graduate Exchange Fellowship (~€1,200/month)

2022-23: Vanderbilt University - Robert Penn Warren Interdisciplinary Seminar Organizer - "Trends in Social Criticism" (\$1000)

2021-23: Vanderbilt University - Harold Stirling Vanderbilt Award (\$5,000/year)

2021-22: Vanderbilt University - Berry Graduate Student Publication Award (\$200)

2021-22: Vanderbilt University - Robert Penn Warren Interdisciplinary Seminar Organizer - "Political Ideology in Modern Life" (\$1500)

2018-23: Vanderbilt University - College of Arts & Sciences Fellowship (~\$25,000/year)

2017: Boston University - Matchette Prize for Excellence in Philosophy - Best Senior Paper

2016: University of Auckland - PHIL732: Philosophy of the Arts 2 - First in Class

### **PROFESSIONAL SERVICE**

#### **Philosophy Profession**

Referee: *Philosophy* & *Social Criticism*

Professional Society Memberships: The American Philosophical Association, North American Society for Social Philosophy, Aesthetics & Ethics Research Group

### **University of the Incarnate Word**

2025-26: Ethics Bowl Coach

### **Vanderbilt University**

2023-25: Philosophy Graduate Colloquium Organizer

2023-24: Philosophy Graduate Professionalization Committee Member

2021-22: Philosophy Graduate Professionalization Committee Member

2020-21: Philosophy Graduate Education Committee Member

2019-21: Philosophy Programming Committee Member

2019-20: Arts Council Graduate Student Representative

2018-19: Philosophy Graduate Writing, Research, and Professionalization Committee Member

### **RESEARCH ASSISTANCE**

2024: Archival research in Glatzer/Schocken Books papers for manuscript on early 20th century philosopher Margaret Susman (Willi Goetschel)

2020-21: Editing final proofs for the *Cambridge Kant Lexicon* (Julian Wuerth)

### **LANGUAGES**

English (native)

German (advanced)

### **GRADUATE COURSEWORK**

Fall 2018

*Philosophy Proseminar* - Robert B. Talisse

*Black Aesthetics* - Paul C. Taylor

*Critical Theory* - Karen Ng

*Ralph Waldo Ellison* - Lucius T. Outlaw (Jr.)

Spring 2019

*Feminist Epistemology* - Hanna Gunn

*Spinoza* - Idit Dobbs-Weinstein

*Wittgenstein* - Michael P. Hodges

Fall 2019

*German Idealism* - Karen Ng

*Philosophy of Race and Racism* - Paul C. Taylor

*Twentieth-Century German Modernism* - Meike Werner (German Studies)

Spring 2020

*Adorno* - Idit Dobbs-Weinstein

*Art, Form, and Analysis* (Independent Study) - Idit Dobbs-Weinstein

*Kant's Ethics* - Julian Wuerth

*Epistemology of Disagreement* - Scott Aikin

Fall 2020

*Philosophical Anthropology* - Karen Ng  
*Maimonides and Friends* - Lenn Goodman  
*American Debates in Propaganda* (Independent Study) - Paul C. Taylor

Spring 2021

*Democracy* (Audit) - Robert B. Talisse  
*Kant's Theoretical Philosophy* (Visitor) - Julian Wuerth

Fall 2022/Spring 2023

*Schwerpunkte in der klassischen deutscher Philosophie* (at FU Berlin – Visitor) - Dina Emundts  
*Kolloquium Sozialphilosophie* (at Humboldt University – Visitor) - Rahel Jaeggi

Fall 2024

*Inquiry* (Audit) - David Thorstad  
*The Epistemology of Democracy* (Visitor) - Jacob Barrett

## **REFERENCES**

Dr. Idit Dobbs-Weinstein

Professor of Philosophy at Vanderbilt University, Emerita (cross-listed in Jewish Studies)  
[idot.dobbs-weinstein@vanderbilt.edu](mailto:idot.dobbs-weinstein@vanderbilt.edu)

Dr. Lucius T. Outlaw (Jr.)  
W. Alton Jones Professor of Philosophy at Vanderbilt University, Emeritus  
[l.outlawjr@vanderbilt.edu](mailto:l.outlawjr@vanderbilt.edu)

Dr. Matthew Congdon (Teaching Reference)  
Assistant Professor of Philosophy at Vanderbilt University  
[matthew.congdon@vanderbilt.edu](mailto:matthew.congdon@vanderbilt.edu)

Dr. Christopher Edelman (Teaching Reference)  
Professor of Philosophy and Philosophy Department Chair at the University of the Incarnate Word  
[edelman@uiwtx.edu](mailto:edelman@uiwtx.edu)

Dr. Dylan Shaul  
Assistant Professor of Philosophy at the University of California, Riverside (cross-listed in Religion)  
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