

Curriculum Vitae

Brian Weatherson

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Areas of Expertise: Philosophy of Language, Philosophy of Probability, Epistemology

Areas of Competence: Metaphysics, Logic, Philosophy of Mind

Education

BA (Hons), Monash University, 1994 (Major in Philosophy, Minor in Politics)

Ph. D., Monash University, 1998 (Thesis Topic: On Uncertainty)

Professional Appointments

1999-2001: Sutton Faculty Fellow, Department of Philosophy, Syracuse University

This was a postdoctoral fellowship. I taught two courses a year (one undergraduate and one graduate), but my major role was to participate in departmental life by attending seminars, commenting on colleagues' and graduate students' papers, and leading reading groups.

2001- 2004: Assistant Professor, Department of Philosophy (and from 2002, adjunct member of Department of Linguistics and Cognitive Sciences), Brown University

This was a tenure-track position. I taught four courses a year (one undergraduate, one graduate, and two mixed), almost all of which were new preparations, and generally focused on logic and language. I also did quite a bit of research while here (as the latter parts of this CV indicate), was on several graduate student committees, and was on some departmental committees (such as graduate admissions and search).

2004- : Associate Professor, Sage School of Philosophy, Cornell University

This is a tenured position. I'm teaching four courses a year (two undergraduate, one graduate and one mixed), including the large introductory course. I'm also doing some Honours supervision and serving on graduate committees. I've served on several departmental committees, and am currently co-editor of *Philosophical Review*.

Teaching

Below is a table of the courses I have taught, their level and the number of students involved. Here is a more detailed description of some of the courses.

Logic and Language

I have taught ten courses in logic and language. In each (academic) year from 2001-2 to 2004-5, I taught an intermediate logic course based on Barwise and Etchemendy's *Language Proof and Logic*, working from the basics of propositional logic to Gödel's completeness theorem. I've taught an introductory logic course to nearly 90 students at Brown. (I believe this was the biggest philosophy course in the department that semester.) And I've taught three graduate logic classes. At Syracuse I taught a course I developed that focused on philosophical applications of logic and the connection between logic and language. At Brown I taught a course on Gödel's incompleteness theorem, and a course I devised on modal and non-classical logics. I also taught two upper level philosophy of language courses, based on classic and contemporary readings.

Graduate Seminars

I've taught four graduate seminars, and will teach a fifth in the spring. For two of these, the seminar on intuitions at Syracuse and the seminar on vagueness at Brown, I wrote extensive lecture notes (about 60000-80000 words in total) that I've posted to my website (and received positive feedback about in each case). I'm doing something similar for the seminar on Lewis I taught at Cornell. I've also done a seminar on conceivability and possibility at Brown (that was largely a repeat of the intuitions seminar) and a seminar on philosophy of economics.

Introductory

As well as the introductory logic course I mentioned above, I have taught three other introductory courses. I taught a freshman seminar on time travel at Brown that was capped at 18 students, and introduced some metaphysics and philosophy of science through discussion of time travel. I have thrice taught the introduction to philosophy survey course at Cornell, which has focussed on questions from philosophy of religion and philosophy of mind. The average enrollment for the class has been about 100. In summer 2005 I developed and taught a summer course on topics in applied ethics.

Other Courses

I've twice taught upper level undergraduate classes on decision theory. Both times I used a textbook (Michael Resnik's *Choices*) to start the course, but the majority of the course was based on recent articles I selected. And I've taught two history courses. I taught an undergraduate course on Hobbes, Locke and Rousseau at Syracuse, and a course at Cornell on the highlights of philosophy from the immediate post-war years (including Carnap, Quine, Wittgenstein and Ryle).

Summary of Courses Taught

Year	Semester	School	Course Topic	Course Level	Enrollments
1999	Fall	Syracuse	Intuitions	Grad Seminar	10
2000	Spring	Syracuse	Decision Theory	Majors Seminar	9
2000	Fall	Syracuse	Logic & Language	Graduates	13
2001	Spring	Syracuse	History of Political	Undergraduate	49
2001	Fall	Brown	Philosophy of Language	Undergraduate	5
2001	Fall	Brown	Intermediate Logic	Undergraduate	23
2002	Spring	Brown	Vagueness	Grad Seminar	5
2002	Spring	Brown	Non-Classical Logic	Graduate Class	5
2002	Fall	Brown	Intermediate Logic	Undergraduate	30
2002	Fall	Brown	Conceivability	Grad Seminar	5
2003	Spring	Brown	Philosophy of Language	Mixed	8
2003	Spring	Brown	Introductory Logic	Freshman	88
2003	Fall	Brown	Time Travel	Freshman	18
2003	Fall	Brown	Logic	Advanced	8
2004	Spring	Brown	Philosophy of Economics	Grad Seminar	2
2004	Spring	Brown	Intermediate Logic	Undergraduate	23
2004	Fall	Cornell	Intermediate Logic	Undergraduate	40
2004	Fall	Cornell	Decision Theory	Undergraduate	5
2005	Spring	Cornell	Mid 20th Century	Mixed	5
2005	Spring	Cornell	Introduction to Philosophy	Freshman	75
2005	Summer	Cornell	Applied Ethics	Freshman	39
2006	Spring	Cornell	David Lewis	Grad Seminar	6
2006	Spring	Cornell	Introduction to Philosophy	Freshman	142
2006	Fall	Cornell	Introduction to Philosophy	Freshman	96

Each of these courses had approximately 40 total contact hours, except for the graduate seminars at Brown, and the summer course, which had approximately 35 total contact hours.

Other Responsibilities

I've been an external examiner for a Masters degree at the University of Melbourne, and a PhD at Rutgers. I was also an examiner for two PhDs at Brown. I have been on several PhD committees, and am currently chair of David Jehle's committee at Cornell.

Research

Major Research Articles (>5000 words)

1. "Indicative and Subjunctive Conditionals" *Philosophical Quarterly* 51 (2001) 200-216.
2. "Intrinsic Properties and Combinatorial Principles" *Philosophy and Phenomenological Research* 63 (2001): 365-80.
3. "Keynes, Uncertainty and Interest Rates" *Cambridge Journal of Economics* 26 (2002) 47-62.
4. "What Good are Counterexamples" *Philosophical Studies* 115 (2003): 1-31.
5. "Many Many Problems" *Philosophical Quarterly* 53 (2003): 481-501.
6. "From Classical to Intuitionistic Probability" *Notre Dame Journal of Formal Logic* 44 (2003), 111-123.
7. "Morality, Fiction and Possibility", *Philosophers Imprint*, vol 4, number 3.
8. "True, Truer, Truest" *Philosophical Studies* 123 (2005): 47-70.
9. "Epistemic Modals in Context" with Andy Egan and John Hawthorne, in *Contextualism in Philosophy: Knowledge, Meaning, and Truth*, edited by Gerhard Preyer and Georg Peter, Oxford University Press, 2005, pp. 131-169.
10. "Should we Respond to Evil with Indifference?" *Philosophy and Phenomenological Research* 70 (2005): 613-35.
11. "Scepticism, Rationalism and Externalism", *Oxford Studies in Epistemology* 1 (2005): 311-31
12. "Can we Do Without Pragmatic Encroachment?" *Philosophical Perspectives* 19 (2005): 417-43.
13. "The Asymmetric Magnets Problem", *Philosophical Perspectives* 20 (2006): 479-92.

Conversation Pieces (generally < 5000 words)

1. "Begging the Question and Bayesianism", *Studies in History and Philosophy of Science* 30 (1999): 687-697.
2. "Intrinsic vs Extrinsic Properties" in *Stanford Encyclopaedia of Philosophy*.
3. "Problem of the Many" in *Stanford Encyclopaedia of Philosophy*.
4. "Misleading Indexicals" *Analysis* 62 (2002): 308-10.
5. "Are You a Sim?" *Philosophical Quarterly* 53 (2003): 425-31.
6. "Epistemicism, Parasites and Vague Names" *Australasian Journal of Philosophy* 81 (2003): 276-9.
7. "Nine Objections to Steiner and Wolff on Land Disputes" *Analysis* 63 (2003): 321-8.
8. "Luminous Margins" *Australasian Journal of Philosophy* 83 (2004): 373-83.
9. "Chopping up Gunk" with John Hawthorne, *Monist* 87 (2004): 339-50.
10. "Prankster's Ethics" with Andy Egan, *Philosophical Perspectives* 18 (2004): 45-52.

11. "Questioning Contextualism" in *Aspects of Knowing*, edited by Stephen Hetherington, Elsevier, 2006, pp. 133-47.
12. "Humeans Aren't Out of Their Minds" forthcoming in *Noûs*.
13. "Doing Philosophy with Words" forthcoming in *Philosophical Studies*.

Book Reviews

1. Of Michael DePaul (ed.) *Rethinking Intuition*. *Ethics* 112 (2002): 361-4
2. Of Ted Lockhart, *Moral Uncertainty and Its Consequences*. *Mind* 111 (2002): 693-6.
3. Of Rosanna Keefe, *Theories of Vagueness*. To appear in *Philosophy and Phenomenological Research*.
4. Of David Wiggins, *Sameness and Substance Renewed*. *Notre Dame Philosophical Reviews*: <http://ndpr.nd.edu/review.cfm?id=1090>.
5. Of Roy Sorensen, *Vagueness and Contradiction*. *Australasian Journal of Philosophy* 81 (2003): 290-2.
6. Of Christopher Gauker, *Words without Meanings*. *Notre Dame Philosophical Reviews*: <http://ndpr.nd.edu/review.cfm?id=1333>.
7. Of William Lycan, *Real Conditionals*. *Philosophical Review* 111 (2002): 609-11.
8. Of Christopher Peacocke, *The Realm of Reason*, in the *Times Literary Supplement*, Oct 15, 2004, 8-9.
9. Of Frank Jackson and Graham Priest (eds) *Lewisian Themes: The Philosophy of David K. Lewis*. *Notre Dame Philosophical Reviews*: <http://ndpr.nd.edu/review.cfm?id=3381>.
10. Of Daniel Nolan, *David Lewis*, forthcoming in *Mind*.

Invited Lectures

1. "Stages, Worms, Slices and Lumps" at Syracuse University, May 2000.
2. "A Puzzle About Duplication" at Monash University, June 2000
3. "Indicatives and Subjunctives" at Brown University February 2001
4. ——— at Rutgers University February 2001
5. ——— at University of Colorado February 2001
6. "True, Truer, Truest" at University of Michigan, October 2001.
7. "My Favourite Puzzle" at University of Melbourne, October 2002
8. "Scepticism, Rationalism and Externalism" at Cornell University, October 2003
9. "My Favourite Puzzle" at University of California, Davis, January 2004
10. "Intuitions and Meanings" at ANU, January 2005
11. "Vagueness as Uncertainty" at ANU, January 2005
12. "Intuitions and Meanings" at University of Glasgow, February 2005
13. "Vagueness as Uncertainty" at Princeton University, February 2005
14. "Knowledge, Justification and Practical Interests" at Monash University, September 2005
15. ——— at ANU, October 2005
16. "Natural Quantities" at University of Manitoba, March 2006
17. "In Defence of a Dogmatist" at University of Texas, May 2006

18. ——— at Stanford University, May 2006
19. “Natural Quantities” at Stanford University, May 2006
20. “The Bayesian and the Dogmatist” at Rutgers University, October 2006
21. ——— at University of Oklahoma, November 2006
22. ——— at University of California, Berkeley, November 2006

Invited Conference Papers Read

1. “Morality in Fiction and Consciousness in Imagination” at the 2004 APA Pacific Division Conference, Pasadena CA.
2. “Uncertainty, Probability and Non-Classical Logic” presented at 2004 Formal Epistemology Workshop, May 2004, Berkeley CA.
3. “Morality, Fiction and Possibility” at the 2004 American Society for Aesthetics Conference, Houston TX.
4. “Intuitions and Meanings” at the Fribourg Workshop on Intuitions, November 2004, Fribourg Switzerland.
5. “Vagueness as Indeterminacy” at the Arché Workshop on Vagueness, February 2005, St Andrews Scotland.
6. “Dutch Books and Infinity” at the Prague International Colloquium on Dutch Book Arguments, August 2005, Prague Czech Republic.
7. “Conditionals and Relativism” at LOGOS Workshop on Relativising Utterance Truth, September 2005, Barcelona Spain.
8. ——— at Workshop on Conditionals, April 2006, University of Connecticut.
9. “Norms of Assertion and Expressivism”, at workshop on ethics and epistemology, September 2006, University of Missouri – Columbia.

Other Conference Papers Read

1. “Inductive Arguments and Probability” presented to the 1996 Australasian Association of Philosophy conference, University of Queensland, Brisbane, Australia, July 1996.
2. “The Possibility of Revealed Preference”, presented to 1996 International Economics and Philosophy Society Conference, University of Queensland, Brisbane, Australia, July 1996, and published in conference proceedings: Julian Lamont (ed.) *Edited Proceedings of the 1996 International Economics and Philosophy Society Conference*, 121-125.
3. “The Dutch Bookie Goes to Market” presented to 1997 International Economics and Philosophy Society Conference, University of New South Wales, Sydney, Australia, July 1996, and published in conference proceedings: Julian Lamont and Christi Dawn Favor (eds.) *Edited Proceedings of the 1997 International Economics and Philosophy Society Conference*, 97-100.
4. “Supertruth” presented to the 1998 Australasian Association of Philosophy conference, Macquarie University, Sydney, Australia, July 1998.
5. “What Good Are Counterexamples?” presented to the 1999 Australasian Association of Philosophy conference, University of Melbourne, Australia, July 1999.

6. "Is This Title Ambiguous?" presented to the 2000 Australasian Association of Philosophy conference, University of Queensland, Brisbane, Australia, July 2000.
7. "Growing Individuals and Intrinsic Properties" presented to the 2001 APA Pacific Division Conference, San Francisco, CA, USA, March 2001.
8. "True, Truer, Truest" presented to the 2002 APA Central Division Conference, Chicago, IL, USA, April 2002, and the Bellingham Summer Philosophy Conference, Western Washington University August 2003.
9. "Justification and Innateness" presented to the 2002 Australasian Association of Philosophy conference, University of Canterbury, Christchurch, New Zealand, July 2002.
10. "Prankster's Ethics" (with Andy Egan) presented at the 2003 International Symposium on Theoretical and Applied Ethics, Louisiana State University, February 2003 and the 2003 APA Central Division Conference, Cleveland OH, April 2003.
11. "Scepticism, Rationalism and Externalism" presented at 2004 Inland Northwest Philosophy Conference, April 2004
12. "Replacing Logic", part of author meets critics session on David Christensen's *Putting Logic in Its Place*, APA Pacific Division Conference, Portland OR, March 2006.
13. "Tracking, Closure and Conjunctions", part of author meets critics session on Sherri Rousch's *Tracking Truth*, PSA, Vancouver BC November 2006.

Invited Commentaries

1. Metaphysical Mayhem V, Syracuse University, August 2000
2. Bellingham Summer Philosophy Conference, Western Washington University, August 2001
3. APA Pacific Division, San Francisco, March 2003
4. Syracuse Workshop on Metaphysics, Syracuse University, August 2003
5. BloggerCon, Harvard University, October 2003
6. Bellingham Summer Philosophy Conference, Western Washington University, August 2004
7. APA Central Division, Chicago, April 2005
8. Arizona Ontology Conference, January 2006
9. Panel on Blogging in Philosophy, APA Pacific Division, March 2006
10. NYU Causation Workshop, Florence, June 2006

Research Plans

The largest part of my current research concerns debates in epistemology. In broad outline I want to defend a Keynesian theory in which our primary epistemic notion is probabilistic justification given evidence. It seems to me much more promising to start epistemology with a quantitative concept, or least a comparative concept (e_1 justifies p_1 more than e_2 justifies p_2) rather than merely a binary concept which may not even be sufficiently informative to let us recover the comparative concept. On Keynes's theory, it is a priori how much some evidence on its own justifies each proposition. Such a theory is only plausible if

two striking philosophical claims are true, but I believe each can be defended. The first, which I discuss in “Scepticism, Rationalism and Externalism,” is that some ‘hinge propositions’ can be known a priori. The second, which I discuss in “Keynes, Uncertainty and Interest Rates” and “Should we Respond to Evil with Indifference?” is that degrees of probabilistic support are sometimes incomparable. With those assumptions, I think a plausible Keynesian theory can be defended. Such a theory must answer three questions.

First, what is evidence? Keynes was an internalist about this, but I’m tempted to think that we need a concept of evidence in this theory where it is built into the concept that evidence comes from reliable sources. I also think that whether something is a source of basic evidence for a creature depends on whether the creature’s response to that source is innate or learned. So I suspect that we can get evidence from visual perception, but not from clairvoyance, even if one of us becomes reliably clairvoyant, but a creature that was innately clairvoyant and blind could get evidence from clairvoyance but not directly from visual perception. I plan to work on whether this suspicion can be turned into a theory.

Second, how does this relate to our ordinary concept of justified belief? I think we answer this by looking at how the concept of belief relates to the concept of partial belief. I favour a functionalist account of how these fit together, as described in “Can We Do Without Pragmatic Encroachment?”. Given that functionalist account, it turns out that whether an agent is justified in believing p given her evidence turns on what her practical interests are, even though there is nothing in our core epistemological notion that is sensitive to practical interests.

Finally, how does this relate to knowledge? In “Questioning Contextualism” I argue against contextualist accounts of the connection between justification and knowledge. But I do think, following recent work by John Hawthorne and Jason Stanley, that our concept of knowledge is in some ways sensitive to practical interests. What I don’t know is whether this is solely because of the functionalist analysis of belief, as discussed above, or because we need to talk about practical interests in order to give a good account of an epistemic defeater. This is something I plan to work on in the future.

The Keynesian picture naturally goes along with a deontological view of epistemic justification. We should believe some things given our evidence and disbelieve others. Many philosophers hold that a deontological view about justification is implausible because doxastic voluntarism is false. I am writing a paper arguing that in the relevant sense doxastic voluntarism is true. Forming *irrational* beliefs is like engaging in a habit we know to be bad; it is something we can stop with sufficient self-control. To the extent that justification requires rationality, it is a deontological concept. On my view justification goes beyond rationality however. Someone who heeds evidence that happens to be misleading might be rational, but misleading evidence doesn’t justify.

I have three other, unrelated, research plans.

In “Epistemic Modals in Context” (written with Andy Egan and John Hawthorne) I defend a relativist semantics of epistemic modals. By a relativist semantics I mean a theory on which utterances are not true or false *simpliciter* but

only relative to a context of assessment. I plan to work on whether such a theory could be true of indicative conditionals, or of statements about parts of the world where science appears to tell us that what seemed to be absolute facts are actually relative facts, e.g. about mass or colour. Traditionally semanticists have assumed that utterances have their truth values absolutely, and there is still some work to be done on arguing why we should allow in this kind of relativism rather than stick with tradition. I am confident this can be successfully done, but I am much less confident that this kind of relativism can be applied beyond the topics I mentioned above. So in particular I want to argue in future work in favour of a traditional picture, and against relativism, about claims concerning morality and taste.

In “Many Many Problems” and “True Truer Truest”, along with the unpublished “Vagueness as Indeterminacy”, I set out many of the parts that I think should fit together into a good theory of vagueness. Unfortunately, the parts are in some amount of tension, primarily over the issue of whether we use determinate truth to explain what precisifications are, or whether we use precisifications to explain what determinate truth is. I hope to resolve this tension, and to write a short book setting out the unified theory.

Finally, I believe that there will be some projects that arise out of the Lewis seminar I am teaching in the spring. I have already drafted one paper arguing that Lewis needs a theory of magnitudes in places where he uses a theory of properties. This paper arose out of some complications I noticed when preparing seminar notes and I imagine some further short papers will arise as I work through the course.

Professional Service

I am one of the two primary editors of *Philosophical Review*. I was recently appointed by Blackwell to be the inaugural editor of *Philosophy Compass*. Compass publishes articles that survey the state of the art in all areas of philosophy. I am also an associate editor of *Noûs*.

I have refereed journal articles for *American Philosophical Quarterly*, *Australasian Journal of Philosophy*, *Australasian Journal of Logic*, *Dialectica*, *Journal of Philosophical Logic*, *Linguistics and Philosophy*, *Mind and Language*, *Noûs*, *Philosophers' Imprint*, *Philosophical Quarterly*, *The Philosophical Review*, *Philosophical Studies*, *Philosophy and Phenomenological Research* and *Synthese*.

I have refereed book manuscripts for Oxford University Press, Princeton University Press, the Association for Symbolic Logic and the Aid to Scholarly Publications Programme (ASPP) of the Humanities and Social Sciences Federation of Canada. I have refereed multiple book proposals for Oxford University Press.

At Brown, I was a member of the 2002 and 2004 graduate admissions committee, the 2002-3 external speakers committee, and the 2003 search committee. In 2002-3 I was a Freshman Academic Advisor. In 2004-5 I was on the search committee at Cornell, and coordinated the external speaker series.

From 2002 to 2005 I ran the Online Papers in Philosophy website, providing daily updates to where new philosophical papers have been posted on the internet.

References

Ernest Sosa, Brown University and Rutgers University

Ted Sider, Rutgers University

John Hawthorne, Oxford University and Rutgers University