

Frances Heather Fairbairn

Cornell University Philosophy Department

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Areas of Specialization

Social Epistemology
Philosophy of Science
Metaphysics

Areas of Competence

Philosophy of Education
Feminist Philosophy
Environmental Ethics

Academic Employment

Philosophical Review Lecturer , The Sage School of Philosophy, Cornell University	2019-20
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Education

PhD , Cornell University, Philosophy Dissertation: <i>Concepts in a Web: How do our concepts code for one another?</i> Committee: Karen Bennett (chair), Dick Boyd, Will Starr, Ted Sider (external), Elizabeth Barnes (external)	2013-19
MA , Cornell University, Philosophy Committee: Ted Sider (chair), Karen Bennett, Will Starr	2012-15
MA , The University of Leeds, Philosophy Dissertation: <i>Counterfactual Epistemology without Conceivability</i> Advisor: Scott Shalkowski	2011-12
BA (Hons, 1st class) , The University of Leeds, Philosophy Dissertation: <i>Does Modal Realism Reduce Modality?</i> Advisor: John Divers	2008-11

Publications

Epistemic Injustice in the Spaces Between Concepts *Forthcoming in the Southern Journal of Philosophy*

Transformative Education in the Prison Classroom *Published in the Teaching-as-Research Work-in-Progress journal through the Center for Teaching Excellence at Cornell University (not a peer reviewed journal).*

Works in Progress

Advanced Modals, Advanced Quantifiers, and Reduction (*Under Review at the Australasian Journal of Philosophy*)
Mental Illness and Naturalism Under a Pathological Inference Web
In Defence of Lewis on Counterfactuals
On the Ethical Collection of Bird Research Samples (*co-authored with Vanya Rohwer*)

Presentations

* = *peer refereed*

In Philosophy

Coding Groups and Naturalism Regarding Mental Illness

- *International Society for the History, Philosophy and Social Studies of Biology, 2019 Meeting. Norwegian University of Science and Technology. Oslo, Norway Summer 2019
- *British Society for the Philosophy of Science Annual Conference. Durham University. Durham, England Summer 2019

Epistemic Injustice in the Spaces Between Concepts

- *The Epistemology of Justice. Southern Journal of Philosophy Workshop. University of Memphis. Memphis, Tennessee Spring 2019
- *Epistemic Injustice, Reasons, and Agency, two-day workshop at the University of Johannesburg. Johannesburg, South Africa Spring 2019
- *Society for Women in Philosophy. Switzerland Chapter Networking Conference. Bern, Switzerland Fall 2018

Uptake, Looping, and the Concept of Stereotype Magnetism

- *The Royal Institute of Philosophy Annual Conference Harms and Wrongs in Epistemic Practice. Sheffield, UK Summer 2017

Advanced Modalizing

- *The Society for the Metaphysics of Science, Annual Conference. Geneva, Switzerland Fall 2016
- *Modal Metaphysics: Issues on the (Im)Possible IV. Bratislava, Slovakia Fall 2016
- *Athena in Action, A Networking and Mentoring Workshop for Women in Philosophy. Princeton, NJ Summer 2016
- *Metaphysical Mayhem. Rutgers, NJ Summer 2016
- *Fifth Italian Conference in Analytic Ontology. Padua, Italy Summer 2016
- Graduate Women in Metaphysics Workshop. Northampton, MA Spring 2016

On the Scholarship of Teaching and Learning (SoTL)

Power and Inclusivity in the Prison Classroom

- *American Association of Philosophy Teachers ('AAPT'), Twenty-First Biennial Workshop-Conference on Teaching

Philosophy. Saginaw Valley, Michigan	Summer 2016
<i>Trust, Power, and Transformation in the Prison Classroom</i> *The First Annual, National Teaching as Research Conference. Ithaca, NY	Summer 2017
Center for the Integration of Research, Teaching, and Learning (‘CIRTL,’ www.cirtl.cornell.edu) Teaching-As-Research Series. Online	Spring 2017
Classroom Research and Teaching Symposium for Current and Future Faculty. Ithaca, NY	Spring 2016
*Center for the Integration of Research, Teaching, and Learning (CIRTL) All-Network Teaching-As-Research Series. Online	Spring 2016

On Pedagogy

<i>Think-Alouds: Eavesdropping on your Students’ Thinking</i> Cornell’s Center for Teaching Innovation (‘CTI,’ formerly the ‘Center for Teaching Excellence,’ www.teaching.cornell.edu). Cornell University, NY	Fall 2017
<i>Engaging lectures and Effective Presentations</i> Cornell’s Center for Teaching Innovation. Cornell University, NY	Fall 2016
<i>Leading a Discussion in an Online Classroom</i> Cornell’s Center for Teaching Innovation. Cornell University, NY	Fall 2016
<i>Enhancing your Teaching with Research-Based Principles</i> Cornell’s Center for Teaching Innovation. Cornell University, NY	Spring 2016
<i>Developing Rubrics for Efficient and Consistent Grading</i> Cornell’s Center for Teaching Innovation. Cornell University, NY	Spring 2016
<i>Designing Student Assessment to Evaluate yourself as a Teacher</i> Cornell’s Center for Teaching Innovation. Cornell University, NY	Fall 2015

As a Commentator

<i>At the American Philosophical Association’s Central Meeting</i> On Daniel Z. Korman’s ‘A Puzzle about Places’	Spring 2018
<i>At the American Philosophical Association’s Pacific Meeting</i> On Jonah Nagashima’s ‘Control and Contrastive Explanations’	Spring 2018
<i>At the American Philosophical Association’s Pacific Meeting</i> On Daniel Padgett’s ‘Scientific Depravity and Ontological Commitment’	Spring 2017
<i>At the Society for the Metaphysics of Science, Annual Conference</i> On Nick Byrd’s ‘A Causal Network Account of Ill-Being’ Geneva, Switzerland	Fall 2016
<i>At Modal Metaphysics: Issues on the (Im)Possible IV</i> On Joachim Horvath’s ‘Philosophical Analysis: The Concept- Grounding View’ Bratislava, Slovakia	Summer 2016

Teaching Experience

As an Instructor

<i>Philosophy 101</i> Cornell University	Spring 2019
<i>Teaching Writing</i> Cornell University (co-instructor)	Fall 2018
<i>Non-Credit Writing Workshop: Science Fiction and Philosophy</i> Cornell Prison Education Program ('CPEP,' www.cpep.cornell.edu) Cayuga Correctional Facility (CPEP)	Summer 2018
<i>Introduction to Logic</i> Auburn Correctional Facility (CPEP)	Spring 2018
Five Points Correctional Facility (CPEP)	Fall 2017
<i>Conservation Ethics</i> Cornell University	Spring 2018
<i>Between Theory and Reality: Issues in the Philosophy of Science</i> Cornell University	Spring 2019
Cornell University	Fall 2019
Cornell University	Fall 2018
Cornell University	Fall 2017
<i>Introduction to Philosophy</i> Auburn Correctional Facility (CPEP, co-instructor)	Spring 2016
<i>Is Everything Real Made of Atoms?</i> Cornell University	Fall 2016
<i>Introduction to Ethics</i> Five Points Correctional Facility (CPEP)	Fall 2016
<i>Discussions of Justice</i> Cornell University	Spring 2016
<i>Special Topics in Philosophy: Philosophy of Mind</i> Auburn Correctional Facility (CPEP, co-instructor)	Spring 2016
<i>Special Topics in Philosophy: Space and Time</i> Auburn Correctional Facility (CPEP)	Fall 2015
Cayuga Correctional Facility (CPEP)	Summer 2015
<i>Introduction to Philosophy</i> Auburn Correctional Facility (CPEP)	Spring 2015

As a Teaching Assistant

<i>Ethics of Eating (Will Starr and Andrew Chignell)</i> Cornell University	Spring 2015
<i>Introduction to Metaphysics (Karen Bennett)</i> Cornell University	Fall 2014
<i>Introduction to Philosophy (Zach Abrahams)</i> Cornell University	Spring 2014
<i>Philosophy of Science (Dick Boyd)</i> Cornell University	Fall 2013
<i>Introduction to Ethics (Nick Jones)</i>	

University of Leeds	Spring 2012
<i>Introduction to Philosophy (Robin LePoidevin)</i>	
University of Leeds	Fall 2011

Professional Development

<i>Graduate Institute Summer School in Philosophy of Education. Center for Ethics and Education (www.ethicsandeducation.wceruw.org).</i>	
Chicago, IL	2016-17
<i>Athena in Action: A Networking and Mentoring Workshop for Graduate Women in Philosophy.</i>	Princeton, NJ
	Summer 2016
<i>Metaphysical Mayhem.</i>	Metaphysics Summer School. Rutgers, NY
	Summer 2016

Awards and Fellowships

<i>Dissertation Completion Fellowship</i>	
Cornell University, Sage School of Philosophy	2018-19
<i>Graduate Teaching Assistant Fellowship</i>	
Cornell's Center for Teaching Innovation	
<i>Awarded annually to a cohort of 7-10 graduate students to work closely with the Center for Teaching Innovation providing general mentoring in teaching. Includes \$1000 stipend</i>	2016-17
<i>Cornell Knight Institute Fellowship to teach First-Year Writing Seminar</i>	
Knight Institute for Writing, Cornell University	2016-17
<i>Graduate Research in Teaching Fellowship</i>	
Cornell's Center for Teaching Innovation	
<i>Awarded annually to a cohort of 7-10 graduate students to develop a 'Teaching-as-Research' project. Includes \$1000 stipend</i>	2015-16
<i>Sage School of Philosophy Fellowship</i>	
Cornell University, Sage School of Philosophy	2011-12
<i>Research Preparation Award for study towards a Masters</i>	
Arts and Humanities Research Council ('AHRC,' www.ahrc.ukri.org)	
<i>Awarded to two students for the academic year 2011-12. Provides full tuition support plus maintenance grant</i>	
<i>(http://www.postgraduatefunding.com/award-2566)</i>	2011-12
<i>Students as Scholars Award</i>	
Leeds University, Philosophy Department (Mentor: Heather Logue)	
<i>Awarded annually to especially promising freshmen. Recipients are paired with a mentor and invited to attend research events:</i>	
<i>(www.arts.leeds.ac.uk/ugresearch/students-as-scholars/)</i>	2008

Professional Service

Conference Organizing

<i>University-Wide Teaching Conference</i> Cornell University, Ithaca, NY	Fall 2017
<i>University-Wide Teaching Conference</i> Cornell University, Ithaca, NY	Spring 2016
<i>The British Undergraduate Philosophy Society Spring Conference</i> Leeds University, Leeds, UK	Spring 2011

Mentoring in Teaching

<i>The Center for Teaching Innovation Teaching Excellence Program</i> Facilitator	2015-16
<i>Cornell Teaching Discussion Group in Philosophy</i> Founder and Organizer	2015-16
<i>Center for Teaching Innovation, Pizza and Discussion Series</i> Discussion Leader & Facilitator	Fall 2015

Refereeing

For the journal <i>Organon F</i>	Spring 2018
For the journal <i>Mind</i>	Fall 2017

Leadership Positions

<i>Cornell Sage School of Philosophy</i> Graduate Student Representative & Faculty Liaison	2014-16
<i>Cornell's Graduate Field Organization</i> Cohort Representative for Philosophy	2014-15
<i>Leeds University Philosophy Department</i> Graduate Student Representative & Faculty Liaison	2011-12
<i>The Leeds Philosophy Subject Centre Advisory Board</i> Graduate Student Representative	2010-11
<i>The British Undergraduate Philosophy Society</i> President, Chair, Delegate	2009-12

Chairing

<i>The Society for the Metaphysics of Science, Second Annual Conference</i> Session on 'Causation, Biomedical Issues.' Geneva, Switzerland	Fall 2016
<i>The Society for the Metaphysics of Science, Second Annual Conference</i> Session on 'Realism, Determinism, Kinds.' Geneva, Switzerland	Fall 2016
<i>The Society for the Metaphysics of Science, Second Annual Conference</i> Session on 'Modality.' Geneva, Switzerland	Fall 2016
<i>2016 Henle Conference on The Nature of Necessity</i> Meghan Sullivan's session on 'Anti-Essentialism.' Saint Louis University. Saint Louis, MO	Spring 2016

Graduate-Level Coursework

(indicates audit)*

Philosophy of Science

Naturalism* (Dick Boyd)
Philosophy of Medicine* (Ann Johnson)
Philosophy of Science* (Dick Boyd)
Philosophy of Physics: Philosophy of Space and Time* (Jill North)
Philosophy of Science: Philosophical Naturalism* (Dick Boyd)
Topics in Philosophy of Physics* (Jill North)
Philosophy of Science: Philosophical Naturalism* (Richard Boyd)

Feminist Philosophy

Feminism and Philosophy* (Kate Manne)
Feminism and Philosophy* (Michelle Kosch and Kate Manne)

Metaphysics

Metaphysics: Fundamentality* (Karen Bennett)
Metaphysics: Free Will (Derk Pereboom)
Metaphysics* (Ted Sider)
Metaphysics* (Karen Bennett)
Advanced Topics in Modality* (John Divers)

Pedagogy

Writing 7100: Teaching Writing* (Jessica Sands)
Teaching as Research in Higher Education (Kimberly Williams)
Teaching in Higher Education (David Way)

Other

Aristotle (Rachana Kamtekar)
Topics in German Philosophy (Andrew Chignell)
Topics on the Philosophy of Language (Will Starr)
Ethics and Value Theory (Nicholas Sturgeon)
Seminar in 20th C. Philosophy (Matti Eklund)
Pro-Seminar in Philosophy (Will Starr)
Logic for Philosophy (Ted Sider)
Plato (Gail Fine)
Advanced Topics in the Philosophy of Mind (Andrew McGonigal)
Analytic Philosophy (John Divers and Andrew McGonigal)

Other Interests

I maintain a close connection with the ornithology community by taking classes and contributing to various ornithological programs.

Spring Field Ornithology

Cornell Lab of Ornithology

Students attend weekly talks on bird identification and conservation and engage in weekly bird walks throughout upstate New York. For this course I won a working scholarship where my tuition fees were partly covered in exchange for some work during the course.

Comprehensive Bird Biology

Cornell Lab of Ornithology

An online course run through the Cornell Lab of Ornithology. Students learn about the anatomy, behaviour, ecology, and conservation of birds. I am in the process of completing this course. More information can be found [here](#).

Techniques of Avian Specimen Preparation

Cornell's Ecology and Evolutionary Biology department

Course members learn to prepare bird skins for research purposes. I also participated in a reading group made up of select members of the class which investigated the ethics of bird collection.

Maine Seabird Biology and Conservation

Audubon

Participants engaged in conservation volunteer work on Hog Island off the coast of Maine. The course was and involved activities such as cleaning up beaches to maintain bird habitat, and creating decoys for repopulation efforts. More information is available [here](#).

Arts and Birding

Audubon

Participants attended classes focused on the artistic recording and documenting of birds while in the field. Takes place on Hog Island off the coast of Maine. I was awarded a \$500 scholarship from Audubon for this class. More information is available [here](#).

I also have a keen interest in the arts. I hold an art foundation qualification from the Manchester Metropolitan University and during my time at Cornell I have completed several courses in fine art (for example portraiture and watercolour techniques). I also apply my artistic interest to my love of birding and have produced scientific illustrations for Audubon (used in an online course called 'Raptor Rapture'). I have a small quilting company by the name of 'Beneath the Brambles' through which I create and sell quilting patterns which aim to bring awareness to the world of birds and wildlife that can be found in the simple back yard. In this vein I have also taught quilting and needlework classes at my local quilt store.

References

Research

Karen Bennett: kbennett@philosophy.rutgers.edu

Will Starr: will.starr@cornell.edu

Elizabeth Barnes: e.j.barnes@virginia.edu

Richard Boyd: rnb1@cornell.edu

Ted Sider: sider@rutgers.edu

Teaching

Karen Bennett: kb383@cornell.edu

Will Starr: will.starr@cornell.edu

Derina Samuel: dss279@cornell.edu

Dissertation Abstract

My dissertation brings into communication the disciplines of social metaphysics, philosophy of science, feminist epistemology, and metaphysics more traditionally conceived. As such, my work is fundamentally interdisciplinary along two dimensions: i) I investigate issues that arise when these disciplines intersect, ii) I continue to produce work in traditional metaphysics which informs my work elsewhere (and vice versa).

I am interested in the ways in which we tend to group concepts. Take the things on this list: rocks, socks, atoms, the economy, and the stack of books currently propping up my computer. If you had to sort these things into two groups, how would you sort them? I bet you'd put rocks and atoms together in one group, and socks, the economy, and my stack of books in another. Why is that?

A suggestion: what socks, the economy, and my stack of books have in common is the fact that they are social entities; entities that are non-natural and can be reduced to other, more natural, real things (such as rocks and atoms). That sounds pretty good as a start, but this is a fuzzy picture. In explaining what links the target objects, I gave a list of concepts that sound closely related but are actually quite disparate. We are left wondering: what links the fact that something is 'reducible' with the fact that it is social, or that it is 'non-natural'? And how are these concepts contrasted against the real and the natural? For example, is each individual thing in the second group reducible to any one of the things in the first group? Is anything reducible also non-natural? Does 'social' imply 'less real'?

I suggest that we operate under 'inferential webs': these are groups of concepts that 'code for' one another. I use 'code for' as a term of art here; it is a deliberately vague expression that is intended to capture the way that different concepts may be loosely grouped. To say that 'natural' implies 'non-social' would be too strong. But to say that 'natural' brings to mind 'non-social' would be too weak. I'm interested in exactly how these concepts are connected in our thinking and patterns of argumentation. And I want to know whether such 'coding' is legitimate here and in other cases. This question forms the broad arc of my research interests. My dissertation work approaches this general question against a backdrop of three particular disciplines.

Philosophy of Science and Social Metaphysics

The question 'what is mental illness?' has generally been taken to have two possible answers: either it is a socially constructed phenomenon or it is a natural one. In this literature, the term 'natural' is taken to code for a group of concepts including 'natural,' 'fundamental,' 'real,' and

‘non-normative.’ Similarly, the term ‘socially constructed’ is taken to code for concepts such as ‘social,’ ‘non-fundamental,’ and ‘reducible.’ I show that the relationships between concepts in the two groups are far from clear, and that the mental illness literature is substantially harmed by a severe ambiguity in their usage.

Feminist Epistemology and Epistemic Injustice

I argue that one way that I might be harmed *specifically in my capacity as a knower* is if my epistemic community fails to count me as having had a certain experience that I in fact had. This can occur if I fail to demonstrate the outward signs that are taken to be evidence of that experience; though I may in fact be suffering from Bipolar Disorder, others may take me to be exaggerating or melodramatic if my reported experience does not fit the common stereotype of ‘the experience of Bipolar Disorder.’ This is a case where inferential relations between concepts can lead to significant epistemic harms. In my work, I introduce the terminology ‘experience stereotype’ and ‘stereotype magnetism’ to help elucidate a new type of epistemic injustice which results from problematic relations between concepts in our epistemic community. Often there is an additional layer to the epistemic wrong suffered in these cases: I fail to be counted as having had an experience which I did in fact have and *as a result* I get counted as having had an experience which I did not in fact have. The issue of being ‘counted’, here, is multi-faceted due to the relational and interdependent nature of our social meanings; my ability to know myself as a person with Bipolar Disorder depends, to some extent, on your acknowledging me as such.

Analytic Metaphysics and Modality

I offer a Lewis-friendly solution to the ‘Problem of Advanced Modalizing.’ You get an advanced modal if you take the sentence ‘there are many possible worlds’ and add ‘possibly’ to the beginning of it. Since the Lewisian thinks that ‘there are many possible worlds’ is true, she should also think that ‘possibly, there are many possible worlds’; after all, anything that is true must be possibly true. But ‘possibly there are many possible worlds’ translates (via Lewis’ translation schema) into ‘there is a possible world in which there are many possible worlds.’ This last sentence must be false for the Modal Realist, since according to her worlds are spatiotemporally isolated from one another. I argue that the problem of advanced modalizing arises because of a misunderstanding about the reductive component of Lewis’ account. I argue that we ought not require, as a necessary condition of successful reduction, that we can locate the reduced property (i.e. modality) in the reductive base (possible worlds).