

BENJAMIN BAYER

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EDUCATION

University of Illinois, Urbana-Champaign, M.A. in Philosophy, December 2000; Ph.D. in Philosophy, October 2007
The Objectivist Graduate Center, The Ayn Rand Institute, Coursework completed, 2006
Lawrence University (Appleton, WI), B.A. in Philosophy (minor: physics), June 1998, *cum laude*
Georgetown University, School of Foreign Service, 1994–1995 (international politics; transferred)

EMPLOYMENT HISTORY

Fellow, The Ayn Rand Institute, Irvine CA, Spring 2017–Present
Visiting assistant professor, Department of Philosophy, Loyola University New Orleans, Fall 2010–Spring 2017
Adjunct professor, Metropolitan State College of Denver, Spring 2010
Visiting assistant professor, Department of Philosophy, Colorado College, Fall 2008–Fall 2009
Lecturer, Department of Philosophy, Loyola University of Chicago, Fall 2007–Spring 2008
Teaching assistant, Department of Philosophy, University of Illinois, Fall 1998–Spring 2007

AREA OF SPECIALIZATION

Objectivism, epistemology, free will and determinism

AREAS OF COMPETENCE

Ethical theory

DISSERTATION

Title: *Varieties of Naturalized Epistemology: Criticisms and Alternatives*, University of Illinois, 2007
Committee: Gary Ebbs (Indiana University), Jonathan Waskan, Arthur Melnick, Patrick Maher (See abstract below.)

PUBLISHED ACADEMIC ARTICLES (PEER-REVIEWED)

[“The Elusiveness of Doxastic Compatibilism.”](#) *American Philosophical Quarterly*, 52(3), 2015
[“How we Choose our Beliefs”](#) (as second author, with Gregory Salmieri, Boston University), *Philosophia* 42, 2014
[“Internalism Empowered: How to Bolster a Theory of Justification with a Direct Realist Theory of Awareness.”](#) *Acta Analytica*, December 2012
[“A Role for Abstractionism in a Direct-Realist Foundationalism.”](#) *Synthese*, June 2011
[“Quine’s Pragmatic Solution to Skeptical Doubts.”](#) *International Journal of Philosophical Studies*, May 2010
[“How Not to Critique Quine: Evaluating Kim’s Alternatives to Naturalized Epistemology.”](#) *Southern Journal of Philosophy*, December 2007

PUBLISHED ACADEMIC ARTICLES (INVITED)

“Ayn Rand on Moral Virtue and Moral Character,” *Ayn Rand and Aristotle*, Ayn Rand Society Philosophical Studies, Vol. 4, Salmieri and Lennox (eds.), University of Pittsburgh Press (forthcoming)
“Comments on ‘The Underdetermination Objection to Bare Difference Arguments,’” *Southwestern Philosophy Review*, July 2013
[“Keeping Up Appearances: Reflections on the Debate over Perceptual Infallibilism.”](#) in *Concepts and their Role in Knowledge: Reflections on Objectivist Epistemology*, Ayn Rand Society Philosophical Studies, Vol. 2, Gotthelf and Lennox (eds.), University of Pittsburgh Press, 2013
[“The Fountainhead and the Spirit of Youth.”](#) in Robert Mayhew (ed.) *Essays on Ayn Rand’s The Fountainhead*. Rowman and Littlefield, 2007

PUBLISHED BOOK REVIEWS

“Review of *Causality and Explanation* by Wesley Salmon,” *Review of Metaphysics*, March 2000

SELECTED ACADEMIC PRESENTATIONS

- “Ayn Rand’s Defense of Abortion Rights vs. Contemporary Kantian Defenses.” Presented at the British Society for the History of Philosophy Annual Conference (“Women in the History of Philosophy”), University of Durham (UK), April 2021
- “A Positive Evidentialist Account of Epistemic Possibility.” Presented at the Southern Epistemology Conference, Department of Philosophy, Loyola New Orleans, October 2015
- “A Positive Evidentialist Account of Epistemic Possibility.” Presented at Science and Certainty: Historical and Contemporary Perspectives, Department of Philosophy, UC San Diego, May 2015 [Invited]
- “Belief Ownership without Belief Authorship: Agent Reliabilists’ Unlucky Gambit against Reflective Luck.” Presented at the American Philosophical Association, Pacific Division, Vancouver, BC, April 2015
- “Why Internalists Need an Enriched Theory of Perceptual and Conceptual Awareness to Escape from Bergmann’s Dilemma.” Presented at the 9th International Symposium of Cognition, Logic and Communication, University of Latvia, Riga, Latvia, May 2013
- “Believing at Will and the Will to Believe the Truth.” Presented at the American Philosophical Association, Eastern Division, Atlanta, GA, December 2012
- “Nested Testimony, Nested Probability, and a Defense of Testimonial Reductionism.” Presented at the Northwest Philosophy Conference, Lewis and Clark College, November 2011 (trip cancelled but comments received)
- “How Understanding the Nature of Perception Helps Solve Central Problems in Epistemology,” Seminar, Koç University, Istanbul, Turkey, February 21, 2010 [Invited]
- “Taking Sellarsian Holism Seriously.” Presented at the American Philosophical Association, Central Division, Chicago, IL, April 2007
- “Neglecting Indeterminacy and Behaviorism: Kim’s Critique of Quine’s Naturalized Epistemology.” Presented at the American Philosophical Association, Central Division, Chicago, IL, April 2006
- “The Myth of the Given, or the Myth of the Taken?.” Presented at Concepts workshop, Conference sponsored by the University of Pittsburgh Department of History and Philosophy of Science and the Anthem Foundation, Pittsburgh, PA, Spring 2004 [Invited]

SELECTED ACADEMIC COMMENTARY

- Comments on “The Insufficiency of Explanationism,” by T. Ryan Bylerly. Presented at the American Philosophical Association, Pacific Division, San Diego, CA, April 18th, 2014
- Comments on “A Frankfurt Example to End All Frankfurt Examples, by James Cain. Presented at the American Philosophical Association, Central Division, Chicago, IL, February 28, 2014
- Comments on “The Underdetermination Objection to Bare Difference Arguments.” Presented at the Southwest Philosophy Conference, Tulane University, New Orleans, LA, November 2012
- Comments on “Mentalism and the Rochester Account of Evidential Support,” by Alexander Arnold. Presented at the Northwest Philosophy Conference, Lewis and Clark College, November 2011 (trip cancelled, comments delivered)
- Comments on “Scientific Realism Defended,” by Gerald Doppelt. Presented at the American Philosophical Association, Pacific Division, San Diego, CA, April 23, 2011
- Comments on “Pragmatic Encroachment Penalized,” by Michael Shaffer. Presented at the American Philosophical Association, Central Division, Minneapolis, MN, March 31, 2011
- Comments on “Adaptive Forgetting—Why Naturalistic Epistemology Needs the Social Sciences,” by Clyde Dunton-Gallagher. Presented at the Southern Society for Philosophy and Psychology, Georgia State University, Atlanta, GA, April 16, 2010
- Comments on “The Missing Shade of Blue and the Prospects of Concept Empiricism,” by Par Sundstrom. Presented at the American Philosophical Association, Pacific Division, Pasadena, CA, March 2008

SELECTED GENERAL AUDIENCE PUBLICATIONS

- [“Unjust Mask Mandates Distract from Real Pandemic Priorities.”](#) *The Hill*, December 21, 2020
- [“Be More Selfish: Wear a Mask.”](#) *The Orange County Register*, October 16, 2020
- [“The FDA Mandates Ignorance About Covid-19.”](#) *RealClearPolicy*, October 5, 2020
- [“We Can Maintain a Free Society While Effectively Addressing Pandemics.”](#) *The Orange County Register*, June 21, 2020
- [“There’s Nothing Exploitative about the Gig Economy.”](#) *The Orange County Register*, March 2, 2020
- [“Trump Isn’t Selfish — That’s the Problem.”](#) *Areo*, November 11, 2019
- [“The Destructive Illusion of Moral Authority.”](#) *Quillette*, August 29, 2018

SELECTED PUBLICATIONS IN *NEW IDEAL*

- [“The Unscientific, Un-American Ethics of Vaccine Distribution.”](#) April 14, 2021
- [“Why Scientific Progress in Ethics Is Frozen.”](#) January 13, 2021
- [“Why Today’s Ethics Offers No Real Guidance.”](#) November 18, 2020
- [“The Dishonesty of ‘Real Socialism Has Never Been Tried.’”](#) August 19, 2020
- [“The Guidance We Need to Follow the Coronavirus Science.”](#) June 24, 2020
- [“Analyzing the Conspiracist Firestorm over Notre Dame.”](#) October 14, 2019
- [“Ayn Rand’s Radical Case for Abortion Rights.”](#) September 9, 2019
- [“Meet the New Socialism, Same as the Old.”](#) September 2, 2019
- [“Why Champions of Science and Reason Need Free Will.”](#) June 19, 2019
- [“An Alternative to Conspiracism’s Foolish Illusions.”](#) September 12, 2018
- [“Science without Philosophy Can’t Resolve Abortion Debate.”](#) August 2018

SELECTED GENERAL AUDIENCE TALKS

- Ongoing commentary on ARI’s [New Ideal Live](#) podcast
- “That Radiant Selfishness of Soul: Understanding the Virtue of Pride,” OCON, Austin, August, 2021
- “What For?: How *Atlas Shrugged* Dramatizes the Struggle for the Value of Purpose,” OCON, Austin, August 2021.
- [“Reason vs. Faith and Emotionalism.”](#) Ayn Rand Conference Latin America, Buenos Aires, September 2019; Ayn Rand Conference Brazil, Porto Alegre, 2019; AynRandCon, Atlanta, October 2019
- [“The Evil of Altruism.”](#) Ayn Rand Conference Latin America, Buenos Aires, September 2019; Ayn Rand Conference Brazil, Porto Alegre, 2019; AynRandCon, Atlanta, October 2019
- [“Better Living Through Concepts.”](#) Universidade Federal do Rio Grande do Sul, Porto Alegre, September 2019
- [“Free Will as a Subtheme in *Atlas Shrugged*.”](#) OCON, Cleveland, 2019
- [“The Romanticism of *Atlas Shrugged*.”](#) OCON, Cleveland, 2019
- [“Free Will and Individualism.”](#) Prague, AynRandCon Europe, 2018
- [“Tribalism in Politics.”](#) AynRandCon, Atlanta, 2018
- [“Ayn Rand’s Philosophy for Living on Earth.”](#) OCON, Newport Beach, 2018
- [“Thinking Like an Individualist.”](#) OCON, Newport Beach, 2018
- [“Being Objective about the News.”](#) OCON, Pittsburgh, 2017
- [“Spreading Objectivism by Living It.”](#) OCON, Las Vegas, July 2014
- [“A Brief History of the Concept of Free Will.”](#) OCON, Chicago, July 2013
- “Understanding Twentieth-Century Philosophy: The Case of Quine,” OCON, Boston, July 2006

COURSES TAUGHT

AT THE OBJECTIVIST ACADEMIC CENTER, THE AYN RAND INSTITUTE

Seminar on Objectivism: Fall 2017—Spring 2021

Philosophy, Fundamental Questions: Fall 2017—Spring 2021

The history of the fact/value problem, Spring 2021

The history of the reason/faith question, Spring 2020

Objectivism: Philosophical Practicum: Fall 2017—Spring 2021

The trolley problem, Spring 2021

Recent popular secular ethical theories, Spring 2020

[The Atlas Project](#): A Year-long chapter-by-chapter internet reading group about *Atlas Shrugged*: Fall 2017—Spring 2018

AT LOYOLA NEW ORLEANS

Philosophy 122: Philosophy of the Human Person (Introduction to Philosophy), Fall 2010–Spring 2011, Summer 2012–2015, Fall 2016 (eleven sections total)
Philosophy 282: Free Will and Determinism, Fall 2012–Spring 2013, Fall 2014, 2015, Summer 2016, Fall 2016, Spring 2017 (online) (eleven sections total)
Philosophy 270: Philosophy of Knowledge, Fall 2011–Spring 2012, Fall 2015, Spring 2017 (eight sections total)
Philosophy 201: Practical Logic, Fall 2010, Fall 2011–Spring 2012, Spring 2014–Spring 2015, Summer 2011–15 (online), Spring 2017 (seventeen sections total)
Philosophy 252: Making Moral Decisions, Fall 2013–Spring 2014, Spring 2015, Spring 2016 (nine sections total)
Nursing 905: Ethics and Social Justice, Summer 2014–2016 (online, five sections total)
Philosophy 206: Formal Logic, Spring 2016 (one section total)
Philosophy 294: Philosophic Themes in Ayn Rand, Spring 2016 (two sections total)
Philosophy 294: Free Will in Action and Thought, Fall 2014 (majors course)
Philosophy 220: Epistemology (majors course), Fall 2013
Philosophy 465: Introduction to Analytic Philosophy (majors course), Spring 2011

AT METROPOLITAN STATE COLLEGE OF DENVER

Philosophy 1110: Language, Logic and Persuasion (Introductory Logic/Critical Thinking), Spring 2010 (3 sections)

AT COLORADO COLLEGE

Philosophy 301: Twentieth Century Analytic Philosophy, Fall 2009 (Block 1)
Philosophy 229: Philosophy of Language, Fall 2009 (Block 2)
Philosophy 201: History of Modern Philosophy (Descartes to Kierkegaard), Spring 2009 (Blocks 6 and 7)
Philosophy 102: Philosophical Argumentation and Writing, Spring 2009 (Block 5)
Philosophy 226: Formal Logic, Fall 2008 (Block 4) and Fall 2009 (Block 4)
Philosophy 246: Environmental Ethics, Fall 2008 (Block 2)
Philosophy 227: Epistemology, Fall 2008 (Block 1)

AT LOYOLA UNIVERSITY CHICAGO

Philosophy 175: Theory of Knowledge, Fall 2007–Spring 2008 (two sections total)
Philosophy 174: Introduction to Logic, Fall 2007–Spring 2008 (two sections total)

AT THE UNIVERSITY OF ILLINOIS

Philosophy 102: Logic and Reasoning, Summer 2002 (one section), Fall 2005–Spring 2007 (six sections total)
Philosophy 101: Introduction to Philosophy, Spring 2002–Spring 2003 (four sections total)

OTHER PROFESSIONAL SERVICE

Editor and contributor, www.checkyourpremises.org, the blog of the Ayn Rand Society (a professional society affiliated with the APA Eastern Division)
Indexing work for the following books:
The Blackwell Companion to Ayn Rand, Gotthelf and Salmieri (eds.). Wiley-Blackwell, 2016
Concepts and Their Role in Knowledge: Reflections on Objectivist Epistemology, Gotthelf and Lennox (eds.). University of Pittsburgh Press, 2013
Metaethics, Egoism, and Virtue: Ayn Rand's Normative Theory, Gotthelf and Lennox (eds.). University of Pittsburgh Press, 2011
Referee, *Canadian Journal of Philosophy*, *American Philosophical Quarterly*, *Synthese*, *Acta Analytica*, *Philosophia*, *International Journal of Philosophical Studies*
Reader, Continuum International Publishing Group
Chair of the following conference sessions:
“Practical Necessity and Moral Heroism,” at the New Orleans Workshop on Agency and Responsibility, Murphy Institute, Tulane University, November 2015.
“Risky Predictions,” at Science and Certainty: Historical and Contemporary Perspectives, Department of Philosophy, UC San Diego, May 2015.
Morning program, Philosophy and the Cognitive Sciences, Loyola University New Orleans, April 2015.
“Scientific Cumulativity and Conceptual Change: The Case of ‘Temperature,’” Workshop on Concepts, Induction, and the Growth of Scientific Knowledge, Pittsburgh, PA, September 2010
“Coherentism and Truth,” by William Roche, American Philosophical Association, Central Division, Chicago, IL, April 2008
Senior thesis reader (Jamie Grasse, Matthias Barker), Colorado College, 2008–2009
Conference committee chair, University of Illinois, Urbana-Champaign (UIUC) graduate philosophy conference committee, Spring 2002
Conference committee member, UIUC graduate philosophy conference, Spring 2000
Referee, UIUC graduate philosophy conference, Spring 1999–Spring 2004

DISSERTATION ABSTRACT

Title: *Varieties of Naturalized Epistemology: Criticisms and Alternatives*

“Naturalized epistemology”—the recent attempt to transform the theory of knowledge into a branch of natural science—is often criticized for dispensing with the distinctively philosophical content of epistemology. In this dissertation, I argue that epistemologists are correct to reject naturalism, but that new arguments are needed to show why this is so. I establish my thesis first by evaluating two prominent varieties of naturalism—“optimistic” and “pessimistic”—and then by offering a proposal for how a new version of non-naturalistic epistemology must move forward. “Optimistic naturalism” attempts to use scientific methods to give positive answers to traditional epistemological questions. Epistemologists, for example, are urged to draw on psychology and evolutionary biology in order to show our beliefs are justified. I argue that this project fails. First, the common naturalistic thesis that theory is underdetermined by evidence poses difficulties for the optimist’s attempt to show that our beliefs *are* justified, even according to naturalized standards. Second, while critics usually contest naturalists’ logical right to use the concept of normative *justification*, I suggest that a deeper problem is with the naturalists’ use of the concept of *belief*. Naturalistic philosophy of mind, while perhaps acceptable for other purposes, does not deliver a concept of “belief” consistent with the constraints and needs of naturalized epistemology. “Pessimistic naturalism”—Quine’s project—takes it for granted that “belief” is problematic and logical justification elusive, and instead offers a pragmatic account of the development of our theory of the world. This project, while deeply unsatisfactory to the traditional epistemologist, also faces the challenge of privileging scientific discourse over other pragmatically successful modes of discourse. Whatever its merits, we can undermine its motivation by challenging the underdetermination thesis it rests on. We can do this by appealing to facts about scientific practice that undermine the conception of confirmation driving the thesis, by appealing to other facts about scientific practice, and by challenging some philosophical preconceptions, in order to make room for a new brand of inductivist foundationalism.

ACADEMIC HONORS AND AWARDS

Graduate travel stipend, American Philosophical Association, Central Division conference, Chicago, IL, Spring 2006; Spring 2007
University of Illinois, Urbana-Champaign, Department of Philosophy fellowships, 1998–1999, 2001–2002
Farley Prize in Philosophy for outstanding senior in philosophy at Lawrence University, Spring 1998

MISC. PHILOSOPHICAL EMPLOYMENT

Research assistant to Thomas Beauchamp, Kennedy Institute of Ethics, Georgetown U., Fall 1994–Spring 1995

COURSES ASSISTED AT THE UNIVERSITY OF ILLINOIS

Philosophy 105: Introduction to Ethics (Wright Neely), Spring 2001
Philosophy 101: Introduction to Philosophy (Richard Schacht), Fall 2000
Philosophy 105: Introduction to Ethics (James Wallace), Spring 2000
Philosophy 321: Moral Philosophy (James Wallace), Fall 1999
Philosophy 214: Moral Problems in Medicine and Biology (James Wallace), Fall 1999
Philosophy 321: Moral Philosophy (Marcia Baron), Spring 1999
Philosophy 101: Introduction to Philosophy (Wright Neely), Fall 1998