

# CURRICULUM VITAE

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## Education

University of California, Santa Barbara, Ph.D., Philosophy	2021
University of California, Santa Barbara, M.A., Philosophy	2016
University of California, Santa Barbara, B.A., Philosophy (Physics Minor)	2013

**Areas of Specialization:** Metaphysics, Ethics

**Areas of Competence:** Logic, Critical Thinking, Epistemology

## Publications

“Conciliatory Metaontology, Permissive Ontology, and Nature’s Joints,” *Synthese* (2020)

“The Methodological Implications of Reference Magnetism on Moral Twin Earth,”  
*Metaphilosophy* (2020)

“The Eligibility of Rule Utilitarianism,” *Journal of Ethics and Social Philosophy* (2020)

## Dissertation

*Title:* “On the Appeal to Naturalness in Metaphilosophy”

*Committee:* Dan Korman (Chair), Teresa Robertson Ishii, Nathan Salmon, Aaron Zimmerman

### *Abstract*

I explore and defend the appeal to metaphysical naturalness, the distinction between natural and unnatural properties (e.g. *green* vs. *grue*), in metaphilosophy. I defend connections between naturalness and several metaphilosophical issues, including philosophical methodology, objectivity, verbal disputes, reduction, and conceptual reform. I then defend some applications of these connections, showing how the appeal to naturalness makes trouble for vague and pluralistic philosophical theories—ones that are otherwise very plausible and worthy of the label ‘common sense’. (See below for a more detailed abstract.)

## **Teaching Experience**

### *As Instructor of Record*

Metaontology: UCSB, Spring 2022 (30 students; no TA)  
Moral Psychology: UCSB, Winter 2022 (35 students; no TA)  
Introduction to Ethics: UCSB, Winter 2022 (300 students; supervised 5 TAs)  
Metaphilosophy: UCSB, Fall 2021 (35 students; no TA)  
Metaethics: UCSB, Spring 2021, Spring 2022 (35 students; no TA)  
Introduction to Philosophy: UCSB, Winter 2020 (240 students; supervised 4 TAs)  
Critical Thinking: UCSB, Winter 2018 (240 students; 4 TAs), Summer '18 (90 st; 1 TA)  
Formal Logic: UCSB, Winter 2017, Summer 2017 (60 students; 1 TA)

### *As Teaching Assistant*

Introduction to Ethics: UCSB, 2014, 2020 (two sections – 30 students each)  
Critical Thinking: UCSB, 2015, 2016, 2019, 2021 (two sections)  
Introduction to Philosophy: UCSB, 2016, 2018, 2020 (two sections)  
Formal Logic: UCSB, 2015, 2018 (three sections)  
Ethics: UCSB, 2016 (two sections)  
Philosophy of Mind: UCSB, 2015 (two sections)  
Epistemology: UCSB, 2015 (two sections)

### *As Grader*

Philosophy of Space and Time: UCSB, Winter 2014

## **Honors, Awards, and Fellowships**

The Paul Wienpahl Award (UCSB) for teaching excellence by a graduate student: 2018-2019

The Charlotte Stough Memorial Prize (UCSB) for best graduate student paper in Ethics: 2013-2014

The Regent's Special Fellowship (UCSB) for showing promise of productive scholarship: 2013-2014

The Harry K. Girvetz Memorial Award (UCSB) for outstanding excellence by a graduating senior: 2012-2013

## **Presentations**

“The Eligibility of Rule Utilitarianism”

- Cal Poly Philosophy Research Workshop: Spring 2019
- UCSB Graduate Student Colloquium: Winter 2019

“Vagueness, Naturalness, and Substantivity”

- UCSB Graduate Student Colloquium: Fall 2017

**Professional Service**

Director of Undergraduate Outreach, Minorities and Philosophy (MAP), UCSB: 2016-20

Founder and Director, MAP Philosophy Undergraduate Reading Group, UCSB: 2017-21

Co-Coach, Ethics Bowl Team, UCSB: 2014-17 (Made Nationals in 2016 and 2017)

Referee at *Philosophia*: 2017

**Courses Taken and Audited** (\* indicates audited course)

*Metaphysics, Mind, and Epistemology*

Freedom and Determinism (Brueckner), Metaphysics of Truth (Rescorla), Philosophy of Perception (Falvey), Philosophy of Space and Time (Humphrey), *A Priori* Knowledge (Anderson), Metaphilosophy (Zimmerman), Modal Metaphysics (Robertson Ishii), Debunking Arguments (Korman)\*, Material Objects (Korman)\*

*Language and Logic*

First-Order Logic (Robertson Ishii), Metalogic (Robertson Ishii), Mathematical Logic (Anderson), Modal Logic (Anderson), Contingent *A Priori* (Salmon)\*

*Ethics*

Metaethics (McMahon), Normative Ethics (Hanser), Practical Reason (Hanser), Korsgaard’s Metaethics (Elizondo), Moral Psychology (Zimmerman)\*

*History*

Pre-Socratics (McKirahan), Kant (Winterbottom), British Moralists (Zimmerman), Hobbes (Holden), Hume (Holden)

**References**

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# ON THE APPEAL TO NATURALNESS IN METAPHILOSOPHY

## Dissertation Abstract

My dissertation explores and defends the appeal to naturalness in metaphilosophy. Metaphysical naturalness is the gradable distinction between properties such as *being green* and *being grue* (i.e. *green-and-discovered-before-3000-AD-or-blue-and-not-so-discovered*), whereby one property seems like a “gerrymandered construction” relative to the other. This phenomenon is connected to other philosophically interesting phenomena, such as fundamentality, similarity, simplicity, reference, and rationality, and these connections give naturalness a role to play in metaphilosophy, the philosophical subfield that investigates philosophy itself (methodological issues, the status of its disputes, etc.).

In this dissertation, I defend first an account of naturalness, then some connections between naturalness and metaphilosophical issues, and finally some applications of these connections. I’ve organized the dissertation into three parts. Part I consists of two introductory chapters that introduce the reader to the two central topics of this dissertation, metaphilosophy and naturalness. In Chapter 1, I give a brief introduction to the field of metaphilosophy as I understand it, including some of its branches and the sorts of issues that arise in them. In Chapter 2, I give a thorough introduction to and defense of the notion of metaphysical naturalness, including its connection to fundamentality, similarity, simplicity, reference, and rationality.

Part II consists of four chapters that lay out and defend the connections between naturalness and metaphilosophical issues. In Chapter 3, I connect naturalness to issues in the metaphysics of philosophy, including questions about the existence, reducibility, and objectivity of philosophical facts and properties. In Chapter 4, I connect naturalness to issues in the semantics of philosophy, including the questions of when philosophical terms are semantically indeterminate and when philosophical disputes are merely verbal. In Chapter 5, I connect naturalness to issues in the epistemology of philosophy, including the appropriate epistemic weight of theoretical virtues, the strength of analogical and arbitrariness arguments, and the threat of certain forms of skepticism about philosophy. In Chapter 6, I connect naturalness to issues in the conceptual ethics of philosophy (which consists of normative and evaluative questions about linguistic and conceptual choices), including the questions of when we should take a philosophical term as primitive, when philosophical disputes are substantive, and when we should change the meaning of a philosophical term.

Part III consists of three chapters that defend some applications of the above connections. In Chapter 7, I defend two theses about naturalness and semantic vagueness and discuss some implications for philosophical theories whose central theoretical terms are semantically vague. In Chapter 8, I defend two theses about naturalness and first-order pluralistic theories (that give an account of some phenomenon in terms of a complex, irreducible plurality of factors), and discuss some implications for such theories in philosophy. Finally, in Chapter 9, I defend myself against concerns of incoherence or self-defeat.

The primary aim of this dissertation is to show how the appeal to naturalness can make a difference when addressing methodological and other foundational issues about philosophy. A secondary aim is to show how such an appeal tends to cause trouble for (semantically) vague and pluralistic philosophical theories—ones that are often otherwise very plausible and worthy of the label ‘common sense’.