

# Selim Berker

**Mailing Address:**

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**Employment:**

Alford Professor of Natural Theology, Moral Philosophy, and Civil Polity, Department of Philosophy, Harvard University, 2017–present  
Professor of Philosophy, Harvard University, 2015–2017  
John L. Loeb Associate Professor of the Humanities, Department of Philosophy, Harvard University, 2013–2015  
Fellow, Radcliffe Institute for Advanced Study, Harvard University, 2013–2014  
Assistant Professor of Philosophy, Harvard University, 2007–2013  
Laurance S. Rockefeller Visiting Faculty Fellow, University Center for Human Values, Princeton University, 2009–2010  
Instructor in Philosophy, Harvard University, 2006–2007

**Education:**

Ph.D. in philosophy, Massachusetts Institute of Technology, 2007  
M.A. in physics, Harvard University, 2000 (*admitted as Ph.D. candidate but left to pursue philosophy*)  
A.B. *summa cum laude* in physics, Harvard College, 1998

**Areas of Specialization:**

Ethics, Epistemology

**Areas of Competence:**

Metaphysics, Logic, Philosophy of Mind, Philosophy of Language

**Publications:**

- “A Combinatorial Argument against Practical Reasons for Belief,” to appear in *Analytic Philosophy*.
- “The Explanatory Ambitions of Moral Principles,” to appear in *Noûs*.
- “The Unity of Grounding,” to appear in *Mind*.
- “Coherentism via Graphs,” *Philosophical Issues* 25 (2015): 322–52.
- “Reply to Goldman: Cutting Up the One to Save the Five in Epistemology,” *Episteme* 12 (2015): 145–53.
- “Does Evolutionary Psychology Show That Normativity Is Mind-Dependent?” in Justin D’Arms and Daniel Jacobson (eds.), *Moral Psychology and Human Agency: Philosophical Essays on the Science of Ethics* (Oxford University Press, 2014), 215–52.
- “The Rejection of Epistemic Consequentialism,” *Philosophical Issues* 23 (2013): 363–87.

- “Epistemic Teleology and the Separateness of Propositions,” *Philosophical Review* 122 (2013): 337–93.
- “Gupta’s Gambit,” *Philosophical Studies* 152 (2011): 17–39.
- “The Normative Insignificance of Neuroscience,” *Philosophy and Public Affairs* 37 (2009): 293–329. [Selected by *The Philosopher’s Annual* as one of the ten best philosophy papers published in 2009.]
- “Luminosity Regained,” *Philosophers’ Imprint* 8, no. 2 (2008): 1–22.
- “Particular Reasons,” *Ethics* 118 (2007): 109–39.

### **Presentations:**

- TBD, Conference on Grounding and Its Applications, North Carolina State University, September 2019 (*expected*)
- “Quasi-Dependence,” Philosophical Methodology and Metametaphysics Conference, Dartmouth University, May 2019 (*expected*)
- “Practical Reasons to Suspend Judgment?” Central APA, February 2019 (*expected*)
- TBD, NYC–China Epistemology Conference, Fordham University, October 2018 (*expected*)
- “Quasi-Dependence,” Madison Metaethics Workshop, University of Wisconsin, Madison, September 2018 (*expected*)
- “Mackie Was Not an Error Theorist,” Keynote at Chapel Hill Normativity Workshop, University of North Carolina, Chapel Hill, March 2018
- “The Explanatory Character of Moral Principles,” University of Southampton, September 2017
- “A Combinatorial Argument against Practical Reasons for Belief,” Northern New England Workshop in Ethics and Epistemology, University of Vermont, August 2017
- “A Combinatorial Argument against Practical Reasons for Belief,” CUNY Graduate Center, May 2017
- “A Combinatorial Argument against Practical Reasons for Belief,” University of Miami, February 2017
- “Comments on Rosen’s ‘Normative Grounding,’” SOFIA Conference on Grounding, Huatulco, Mexico, January 2017
- “The Explanatory Ambitions of Moral Principles,” Chapel Hill Metaethics Workshop, University of North Carolina, Chapel Hill, December 2016
- “The Explanatory Role of Moral Principles,” Workshop on Ground, University of Texas, Austin, May 2016
- “A Combinatorial Argument against Practical Reasons for Belief,” Keynote at Northwestern–Notre Dame Graduate Epistemology Conference, April 2016
- “The Unity of Grounding,” University of Vermont, March 2016
- “A Combinatorial Argument against Practical Reasons for Belief,” University of Michigan, February 2016
- “The Unity of Grounding,” Yale University, December 2015
- “A Combinatorial Argument against Practical Reasons for Belief,” Penn Reasons and Foundations in Epistemology Conference (PeRFECT), University of Pennsylvania, November 2015
- “The Unity of Grounding,” Princeton University, October 2015
- “The Unity of Grounding,” Columbia University, March 2015
- “Smith’s Super-Humean Theory of Reasons for Action,” Central APA, February 2015
- “The Unity of Grounding,” University of California, Berkeley, January 2015
- “The Unity of Grounding,” Normativity and Reasoning Workshop, NYU Abu Dhabi,

- January 2015
- “The Unity of Grounding,” University of Wisconsin, Madison, December 2014
- “A Graph-Theoretic Approach to Coherentism about Epistemic Justification,” Sabanci University, Turkey, May 2014
- “Coherentism via Graphs,” *Harvard Review of Philosophy* Lecture, Harvard University, May 2014
- “Graphic Coherence,” Epistemology and Ethics Workshop, Fordham University, April 2014
- “Graphic Coherence,” Brown University, March 2014
- “Rethinking the Regress Argument,” Radcliffe Fellows Presentation, Radcliffe Institute for Advanced Study, Harvard University, February 2014
- “Reply to Goldman: Cutting Up the One to Save the Five in Epistemology,” *Episteme* 10th Anniversary Conference, Costa Rica, January 2014
- “Graphing the Coherentist Response to the Regress Problem,” Workshop on Infinite Regress, Vanderbilt University, October 2013
- “The Rejection of Epistemic Consequentialism,” Workshop on Aims and Norms: Judgment, University of Southampton, April 2013
- “Does Evolutionary Psychology Show That Reasons for Action Are Mind-Dependent?” CRÉUM, Université de Montréal, March 2013
- “Does Evolutionary Psychology Show That Reasons for Action Are Mind-Dependent?” University of Toronto, February 2013
- “The Rejection of Epistemic Consequentialism,” MIT-ing of the Minds Conference, MIT, January 2013
- “Epistemic Teleology and the Separateness of Propositions,” Ohio State University, September 2012
- “The Metaethical Irrelevance of Evolutionary Theory,” Workshop on Moral Psychology and Human Agency, Michigan University, June 2012
- “Epistemic Teleology and the Separateness of Propositions,” Brandeis University, March 2012
- “Epistemic Teleology and the Separateness of Propositions,” Cornell University, March 2012
- “Epistemic Teleology and the Separateness of Propositions,” University of Pittsburgh, February 2012
- “The Rejection of Epistemic Consequentialism,” SOFIA Conference on Epistemic Agency, Huatulco, Mexico, January 2012
- “Epistemic Teleology and the Separateness of Propositions,” Boston University, December 2011
- “Epistemic Teleology and the Separateness of Propositions,” New York University, November 2011
- “Epistemic Teleology and the Separateness of Propositions,” University of California, Berkeley, September 2011
- “The Normative Insignificance of Neuroscience,” Center for Neuroscience & Society, University of Pennsylvania, April 2011
- “Paul Ziff’s Contributions to Epistemology,” Memorial Session on the Philosophy of Paul Ziff, Central APA, April 2011
- “Epistemic Teleology and the Separateness of Propositions,” University of Rochester, March 2011
- “Epistemic Teleology and the Separateness of Propositions,” Workshop on the Rationality of Belief and Desire, University of North Carolina, Chapel Hill, February 2011
- “Using the Evolved Mind as a Moral Divining Rod: the Dual-Process Strategy,” Amherst

- College, December 2010
- “The Normative Insignificance of Neuroscience,” Origins of Morality Workshop, Arizona State University, November 2010
- “Using Our Neural Machinery as a Normative Divining Rod: the Dual-Process Strategy,” Conference on Intuitions in Ethics, Humboldt University, Berlin, September 2010
- “Epistemic Teleology and the Separateness of Propositions,” Workshop on Theoretical and Practical Reasons, Leeds University, June 2010
- “Epistemic Teleology and the Separateness of Propositions,” Fellows Seminar, Princeton’s University Center for Human Values, April 2010
- “The Normative Insignificance of Neuroscience,” Human Values Forum, Princeton University, February 2010
- “Can Brain Scans Teach Us about the Nature of Right and Wrong?” Trajectories and Friends Symposium, MIT, October 2009
- Commentary on Elizabeth Harman’s “Is It Reasonable to ‘Rely on Intuitions’ in Ethics?” Fellows Seminar, Princeton’s University Center for Human Values, October 2009
- “The Normative Insignificance of Neuroscience,” Fellows Seminar, Princeton’s University Center for Human Values, September 2009
- “Can Normative Conclusions Be Wrung from Neural Bases?” Rocky Mountain Ethics Congress, University of Colorado, Boulder, August 2009
- “Can Normative Conclusions Be Wrung from Neural Bases?” Cognitive Theory and the Arts Seminar, Harvard Humanities Center, February 2009
- “Comments on Gupta’s *Empiricism and Experience*,” Authors Meets Critics Session, Eastern APA, December 2008
- “Can Normative Conclusions Be Wrung from Neural Bases?” Faculty Workshop in Ethics, Harvard’s Safra Center for Ethics, December 2008
- “Neuroscientific Challenges to the Probative Force of Moral Intuitions,” Arché Philosophical Research Center, St. Andrews, October 2008
- “Against Williamson Against Luminosity,” Annual Conference of the Australasian Association for Philosophy (AAP), July 2005
- “Do Particularists Have a Coherent Notion of a Reason for Action?” Australian National University, June 2005
- “Against Williamson Against Luminosity,” Princeton–Rutgers Graduate Student Philosophy Conference, February 2005
- Commentary on Hille Paakkunainen’s “Judgment, Rightness, and Reasons,” Harvard–MIT Graduate Student Philosophy Conference, March 2004
- “Does It Really Matter If I’m a Brain in a Vat?” Independent Activities Period (IAP) Lecture, MIT, January 2002

### **Honors and Fellowships:**

- Grant from Harvard’s Provostial Fund for the Arts and Humanities (for a Workshop on the Ethics of Belief co-organized with Susanna Rinard at Harvard in March 2018)
- Phi Beta Kappa Prize for Excellence in Teaching, 2015
- John L. Loeb Associate Professorship in the Humanities, Harvard University, 2013–2015
- Roslyn Abramson Award (for excellence in undergraduate teaching), Harvard University, 2013
- ACLS Fellowship, 2013–2014
- Radcliffe Institute for Advanced Study Fellowship, 2013–2014
- Center for Advanced Study in the Behavioral Sciences Fellowship, 2013–2014 (*declined*)

National Humanities Center Fellowship, 2013–2014 (*declined*)  
 Donald D. Harrington Faculty Fellowship, University of Texas at Austin, 2010–2011 (*forced to decline because Harvard does not allow two years of leave in a row*)  
 “The Normative Insignificance of Neuroscience” selected by *The Philosopher’s Annual* as one of the ten best philosophy papers published in 2009  
 Laurance S. Rockefeller Visiting Faculty Fellowship, Princeton’s University Center for Human Values, 2009–2010  
 Edmond J. Safra Center for Ethics Faculty Fellowship, 2009–2010 (*declined*)  
 Graduate Fellowship, Massachusetts Institute of Technology, 2000–2005  
 Hertz Fellowship, 1998–2000 (*turned down final three years of funding to pursue philosophy*)  
 Phi Beta Kappa, Harvard College, 1997 (*selected as a junior*)  
 John Harvard Scholarship, Harvard College, 1995–1997  
 Detur Book Award, Harvard College, 1995

**Teaching Experience:**

Philosophy 159: Epistemology	Fall 2018 ( <i>expected</i> )
Philosophy 311: Moral and Political Workshop	Fall 2018 ( <i>expected</i> )
Philosophy 173: Metaethics	Spring 2018
Philosophy 301b: First-Year Colloquium	Spring 2018
Philosophy 252: Norms of Belief (co-taught with Susanna Rinard)	Fall 2017
Philosophy 311: Moral and Political Workshop	Fall 2017
Philosophy 159: Epistemology	Spring 2016
Philosophy 301b: First-Year Colloquium	Spring 2016
Freshman Seminar 38i: Morality, That Peculiar Institution	Fall 2015
Philosophy 311: Moral and Political Workshop	Fall 2015
Philosophy 268y: Normative and Meta-Normative Questions (co-taught with Derek Parfit)	Spring 2015
Philosophy 301b: First-Year Colloquium	Spring 2015
Philosophy 173: Metaethics	Fall 2014
Philosophy 311: Moral and Political Workshop	Fall 2014
Philosophy 250z: Metaphysical Grounding: Seminar	Spring 2013
Philosophy 301b: First-Year Colloquium	Spring 2013
Philosophy 159: Epistemology	Fall 2012
Philosophy 311: Moral and Political Workshop	Fall 2012
Freshman Seminar 38i: Morality, That Peculiar Institution	Spring 2012
Philosophy 301b: First-Year Colloquium	Spring 2012
Philosophy 173: Metaethics	Fall 2011
Philosophy 311: Moral and Political Workshop	Fall 2011
Philosophy 244: Epistemic Normativity: Seminar	Spring 2011
Philosophy 301b: First-Year Colloquium	Spring 2011
Freshman Seminar 38i: Morality, That Peculiar Institution	Spring 2009
Philosophy 159: Epistemology	Spring 2009
Philosophy 311: Moral and Political Workshop	Spring 2009
Philosophy 173: Metaethics	Fall 2008
Philosophy 311: Moral and Political Workshop	Fall 2008
Freshman Seminar 38i: Morality, That Peculiar Institution	Spring 2008
Philosophy 301b: First-Year Colloquium	Spring 2008
Philosophy 98hf: Tutorial on Sellars’ <i>Empiricism and the Phil. of Mind</i>	Fall 2007

Philosophy 262: Intuitions and Philosophical Methodology: Seminar	Fall 2007
Philosophy 159: Epistemology	Spring 2007
Philosophy 311: Moral and Political Workshop	Spring 2007
Philosophy 173: Metaethics	Fall 2006
Philosophy 311: Moral and Political Workshop	Fall 2006

### **Student Supervision:**

#### Ph.D. supervision:

Rachel Achs, in progress  
 Javier Caride, in progress  
 Ryan Davis, in progress  
 Samuel Dishaw, in progress  
 Noel Dominguez, in progress  
 Zoe Jenkin, in progress  
 Douglas Kremm, in progress  
 Paul Marcucilli, in progress  
 Heather Spradley, in progress  
 Michael Rabenberg, "Matters of Life and Death," Spring 2018  
 Aleksy Tarasenko-Struc, "The Authority of Morality and the Recognition of Persons,"  
 Summer 2017  
 Paul Julian, "Objectivity and Intersubjectivity in Moral Philosophy," Winter 2017  
 Micha Glaeser, "Command and Counsel: An Address-Dependent Account of Authority,"  
 Summer 2016  
 Alex Prescott-Couch, "Rational Reconstruction and the Construction of an Interlocutor,"  
 Fall 2015  
 Oded Na'aman, "Loving, Valuing, Regretting, and Being Oneself," Summer 2015  
 David Langlois, "The Normativity of Structural Rationality," Fall 2014  
 Craig Nishimoto, "Rescue Duties: A Moderate Account," Fall 2013  
 Ryan Doerfler, "Matters of Taste: Personal and Otherwise," Fall 2010  
 S. Andrew Schroeder, "Divorcing the Good and the Right," Fall 2009  
 Carlos Soto, "Extending and Ending Life in Health Care and Beyond," Spring 2009

#### Second-year paper supervision:

Becca Rothfeld, "The Good, the Bad, and the Ugly: Aesthetic Value as a Grounds of the  
 Ethical," 2017–2018  
 Sanford Diehl, "Wrongness, Recognition, and the Foundations of Contractualism,"  
 2014–2015  
 Shantia Rahimian, "Epistemic Reasons for Action and Two-Dimensional Epistemology,"  
 2011–2012  
 Aleksy Tarasenko-Struc, "The Constitutivist and the Dogmatist: In Search of the  
 Foundations of Ethics," 2010–2011  
 David Langlois, "The Instrumental Principle and Practical Rationality," 2008–2009  
 Colin Chamberlain, "The Significance of Projects," 2007–2008  
 Craig Nishimoto, "Does the Justification of Action Require Morality?" 2006–2007

#### Senior thesis supervision:

Gabriel Karger, "Is Cognitive Science Needed to Debunk Moral Intuitions?" 2017–2018  
 Gregory Kristof, "Can One Derive 'Ought' from 'Is'?" 2014–2015 (*winner of Hoopes Prize*)

Adam Kern, “From the Ground Up: A Contractualist Theory of Moral Inquiry,” 2012–2013 (*winner of Hoopes Prize*)  
Alexander Loomis, “The Epistemic Status of Basic Empirical Beliefs in Classical Foundationalism,” 2011–2012  
Jeff Overall, “Moral Justification,” 2010–2011  
Zander Li, “Property in Virtual Worlds: A Labor-Based Justification,” 2007–2008  
Kelly Heuer, “The Scope of Morality: An Evolutionary Approach,” 2006–2007

**Professional Service:**

Article referee for:

*Analysis* (multiple times)  
*Analytic Philosophy*  
*Australasian Journal of Philosophy* (multiple times)  
*Dialectica* (multiple times)  
*Ethics* (multiple times)  
*European Journal of Analytic Philosophy*  
*European Journal of Philosophy* (multiple times)  
*Inquiry*  
*Journal of the American Philosophical Association*  
*Journal of Moral Philosophy*  
*Journal of Philosophical Research*  
*Mind* (multiple times)  
*Noûs* (multiple times)  
*Pacific Philosophical Quarterly* (multiple times)  
*Philosophical Explorations*  
*Philosophical Psychology*  
*Philosophical Quarterly* (multiple times)  
*Philosophical Review* (multiple times)  
*Philosophical Studies* (multiple times)  
*Philosophy and Phenomenological Research*  
*Synthese* (multiple times)

Manuscript/book-proposal referee for:

Acumen Publishing  
MIT Press  
Polity  
Routledge

**Non-Philosophy Publications:**

Selim Berker, Adam L. Epstein, and Kevin M. Pilgrim, “Remarks on the Period Three Cycles of Quadratic Rational Maps,” *Nonlinearity* 16 (2003): 93–100.