Alisabeth Ayars

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Research Interests

Areas of Specialization: Metaethics, Normative Ethics, Moral Psychology
Areas of Competence: Metaphysics, Philosophy of Mind

Academic Appointments

Assistant Professor, University of British Columbia (2021–present)

Education

PhD in Philosophy, Princeton University (2021)
  Thesis: "The Publicity of Practical Reasons".
  Advisors: Gideon Rosen, Johann Frick, Michael Smith.
MA in Psychology, University of Arizona (2016)
BA in Psychology, New College of Florida (2012)

Publications (Philosophy)

Responsibility for Desire
  Routledge Handbook on the Philosophy of Desire, ed. by Alex Gregory, provisionally forthcoming.

Grounding as Essence-Mediated Explanation
  (Co-authored with Gideon Rosen.)
  The Epistemology of Ground, ed., ed. Damian Aleksiev & Yannic Kappes, provisionally forthcoming.

Two Kinds of Desire and the Ground of Moral Worth
  Oxford Studies in Metaethics Vol. 21, provisionally forthcoming.

Attraction, Aversion, and Meaning in Life
  Journal of Ethics and Social Philosophy, forthcoming.

An Explanation of the Essential Publicity of Practical Reasons
  Oxford Studies in Metaethics Vol. 19, 2024: 80-104.

Deciding for Others: An Expressivist Theory of Normative Judgment
  Philosophy and Phenomenological Research, 105(1), 2022: 42-61.

Non-Cognitivism and Agent-Centered Norms
  (Co-authored with Gideon Rosen.)
  Philosophical Studies, 179, 2022: 1-20.

Blaming for Unreasonableness: Accountability without Ill Will
Journal of Ethics and Social Philosophy, 19(1), 2021: 56-79.

Rational Learners and Metaethics: Universalism, Relativism, and Evidence from Consensus
(Co-authored with Shaun Nichols.)
Mind and Language, 35(1), 2020: 67-89.

Learnability and Moral Nativism: Exploring Wilde Rules
(Co-authored with Tyler Millhouse and Shaun Nichols.)
Methodology and Moral Philosophy, Routledge, 2018: 73-89.

Note on Definition and Impossibility
Analytic Philosophy, 58(4), 2017: 413-417.

Moral Empiricism and the Bias for Act-based Rules
(Co-authored with Shaun Nichols.)
Cognition, 167, 2017: 11-24.

Can Model-free Reinforcement Learning Explain Deontological Moral Judgments?
Cognition, 150, 2016: 232-242.

Rational Learners and Moral Rules
(Co-authored with Shaun Nichols, Shikhar Kumar, Theresa Lopez, and Hoi-Yee Chan.)
Mind and Language, 31(5), 2016: 530-554.

Publications (Psychology)

Spatially Rearranged Object Parts Can Facilitate Perception of Intact Whole Objects
(Co-authored with Laura Cacciamani and Mary Peterson.)
Frontiers in Psychology, 5, 2014.

Terror Management Theory
(Co-authored with Uri Lifshin.)
Emerging Trends in the Social and Behavioral Sciences, 2015: 1-16.

Can Skeletomotor Action Integration Occur Without Consciousness? Evidence from Unconscious Action Inhibition
Behavioral and Brain Sciences, 39, 2016: 169.

A Terror Management Analysis of Films from Four Genres: The Matrix, Life is Beautiful, Iron Man 2, and Ikiru
(Co-authored with Jeff Greenberg.)
Death in Classic and Contemporary Film, Palgrave Macmillan, 2013.

Presentations   (†: selected by blind review. *: invited.)

"Two Kinds of Desire and the Ground of Moral Worth"*
University of Victoria, upcoming Spring 2025.

"Two Kinds of Desire and the Ground of Moral Worth"†
21st Annual Madison Metaethics Workshop, UW-Madison, upcoming Fall 2024.

"Affect and Moral Worth"*****
> Value of Consciousness Series (online), upcoming Fall 2024.

"Consent and Dyadic Wrongings"*****
> Conference on Philosophy of Sex and Love, UPenn, upcoming Fall 2024.

"Sex, Preference, and Consent"*****
> Centre for Ethics, University of Toronto, Spring 2024.

"Attraction, Aversion, and Meaning in Life""*****
> University of Birmingham (over Zoom), Fall 2023.

"Reason, Inclination, and the Ground of Moral Worth"**†**
> 59th Annual Western Canadian Philosophical Association Meeting, University of British Columbia

"When Consensual Sex is Wrong"*****
> Columbia River Ethics Workshop (CREW), Astoria, Oregon, Summer 2023.

"Attraction, Aversion, and Meaning in Life"**†**
> Vancouver Summer Philosophy Conference, University of British Columbia, Summer 2022.

"Affect and Moral Worth"*****
> Workshop on Moral Responsibility (online), Summer 2022.

"An Explanation of the Essential Publicity of Practical Reasons"**†**
> 18th Annual Madison Metaethics Workshop, UW-Madison (over Zoom), Fall 2021.

"Contractualism and the Scope of Morality"**†**
> Society for the Study of Ethics and Animals, University of Colorado, Boulder (over Zoom), Summer 2020.

"Contractualism and the Scope of Morality"**†**
> Rocky Mountain Ethics Congress, University of Colorado, Boulder (over Zoom), Summer 2020.

"Non-Cognitivism and Agent-Centered Norms' (with Gideon Rosen)
> 3rd Annual Chapel Hill Normativity Workshop, UNC Chapel Hill, Spring 2020.

"Normative Judgment as Decision"*****
> Center for Values and Social Policy, University of Colorado, Boulder, Spring 2020.

"Promising Against the Evidence by Changing the Evidence"**†**
> Midsouth Philosophy Conference, Rhodes College, Spring 2017

"Essentialism and the Concept of Mind" (with Shaun Nichols)*****
> Sedona Philosophy Conference, Arizona State University, Spring 2016.

"Looking Beyond the Means: Rapid Learning of Prime-Display Relationship in a Semantic Priming Experiment" (with Andrew Mojica and Mary Peterson)**†**
> Vision Science Society Annual Meeting, St. Pete Beach, Florida, Summer 2014.

Commentaries

Commentary on Tez Clark's "How Analyticity Illuminates Incoherence"
    6th Annual Chapel Hill Normativity Workshop, UNC Chapel Hill, April 2024
        (Commentators selected from among top 14 abstracts submitted to conference.)

Commentary on Ryan Lam's "Realism, Inquiry, and the Two Faces of Morality"
    APA—Pacific Division, Vancouver, Canada, April 2022

Commentary on Margaret Shea's and Rowan Mellor's "What are We to Do: The Ethics and Semantics of the Joint 'Ought"
    5th Annual Chapel Hill Normativity Workshop, UNC Chapel Hill, April 2023
        (Commentators selected from among top 14 abstracts submitted to conference.)

Public Philosophy

An Explanation of the Essential Publicity of Practical Reasons
    New Work in Philosophy Blog: https://newworkinphilosophy.substack.com/p/alisabeth-ayars-university-of-british

Awards

Harold W. Dodds Honorific Fellowship, Princeton University, 2020-2021.
    The Harold W. Dodds fellowship is an award granted by the Graduate School to exceptional students in the later stages of their studies who exhibit the highest level of scholarly achievement in their graduate work. Students are nominated by their department, and the fellowship provides additional financial support beyond the base stipend.

Laurence S. Rockefeller Graduate Prize Fellowship, Princeton University, 2019-2020.
    The GPF program recognizes and supports post-generals graduate students enrolled at Princeton University with distinguished academic records in any discipline whose dissertation research centrally involves the critical study of human values. Fellows engage in a yearlong faculty-led course, Dissertation Seminar, where they present their work in progress and participate in workshops on career development and placement.