

DAVID THORSTAD

CONTACT INFORMATION University of Oxford
Faculty of Philosophy
Radcliffe Humanities Building
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EMPLOYMENT **Vanderbilt University**
Assistant Professor of Philosophy (August 2023)-

Global Priorities Institute, Oxford
Postdoctoral Research Fellow July 2020-(August 2023)

Kellogg College, Oxford
Junior Research Fellow (Nonstipendiary) October 2020-(August 2023)

EDUCATION **Harvard University**, PhD in Philosophy May 2020
Haverford College, BA in Philosophy and Mathematics May 2012
Global Priorities Institute, Oxford, Visiting Fellow Summer 2019
Australian National University, Visiting Student Summers 2017, 2018
London School of Economics, Visiting Student Academic Year 2017-18
Pembroke College, Oxford, Visiting Student Academic Year 2010-11

PUBLICATIONS **Why bounded rationality (in epistemology)?**, forthcoming in *Philosophy and Phenomenological Research*.

High risk, low reward: A challenge to the astronomical value of existential risk mitigation, forthcoming in *Philosophy and Public Affairs*.

General-purpose institutional decisionmaking heuristics, forthcoming in *British Journal for the Philosophy of Science*.

There are no epistemic norms of inquiry, forthcoming in *Synthese*.

The accuracy-coherence tradeoff in cognition, forthcoming in *British Journal for the Philosophy of Science*.

Two paradoxes of bounded rationality, *Philosophers' Imprint* 22.15 (2022).

Tough enough? Robust satisficing as a decision norm for long-term policy analysis (w/Andreas Mogensen), *Synthese* 200 (2022): 1-26.

Inquiry and the epistemic, *Philosophical Studies* 178.9 (2021): 2913-28.

Permissive metaepistemology, *Mind* 128.511 (2019): 907-26.

SHORTER PIECES **Accuracy and coherence: Can bounded agents have both?**, *BJPS Short Reads* (2022).

UNDER CONTRACT	<i>Inquiry under bounds</i> , research monograph under contract with Oxford University Press.	
	<i>Essays on longtermism</i> (w/Hilary Greaves and Jacob Barrett), edited volume under contract with Oxford University Press.	
FELLOWSHIPS AND GRANTS	Effective Altruism Infrastructure Fund (\$24,460) Grant to support a summer diversity program	2023
	Center for Effective Altruism (£20,000) Event Support Grant (with Bridget Williams)	2023
	Manifund (\$2,000) Grant to support public philosophy connected to effective altruism	2023
	John Fell Fund (£10,000), University of Oxford Grant to support a workshop on inquiry	2022
	Center for Effective Altruism (\$40,000) Event Support Grant (with Charlotte Siegmann)	2022
	PPE Society (\$250) Travel Grant	2022
	Provostial Fund for the Arts and Humanities (\$4,000) Harvard University, Conference Organization Grant (with Branden Fitelson and Ned Hall)	2020
	Dissertation Completion Fellowship (\$32,000) Harvard University	2019-2020
	GSC Travel Grant (\$750), Harvard University	2019
	Frank Knox Memorial Traveling Fellowship (\$25,000) Harvard University	2017-18
	GSAS Predissertation Summer Fellowship (\$6,000) Harvard University	2015
	Magill-Rhoades Scholarship (full need), Haverford College	2008-12
AWARDS / HONORS (ACADEMIC)	Francis Bowen Prize , Harvard University Recognizes the best essay on a subject in moral or political philosophy.	2020
	Bechtel Prize , Harvard University Recognizes the best essay on a philosophical topic.	2019
	Summa Cum Laude , Haverford College	2012
	Phi Beta Kappa (as junior), Haverford College	2011
	Collection Prizes (all subjects), Pembroke College, Oxford	2010-11
AWARDS / HONORS (TEACHING)	Special Commendation for Extraordinary Teaching	2020

in **Extraordinary Times**, Harvard University

Derek C Bok Award for Excellence in Graduate Student Teaching, Harvard University 2019

Harvard's highest graduate teaching award. 5 awarded annually university-wide.

Certificates of Distinction and Excellence in Teaching (x6), Harvard University: 2016-19

Virtue	Spring 2019
Social epistemology	Fall 2018
Saints, heretics, and atheists	Spring 2017
Fundamentals of logic	Fall 2016
Frege, Russell, and the early Wittgenstein	Fall 2016
Logic and philosophy	Spring 2016

TALKS

(†) Refereed

“The zetetic turn and the procedural turn”

† <i>Duke-UNC Epistemology Workshop</i>	(September 2023)
† <i>Australasian Association of Philosophy Annual Conference</i>	July 2022
<i>Workshop on Norms of Inquiry</i> , Complutense University of Madrid	June 2022
<i>University of Zürich</i>	May 2022
<i>Groupe de Recherche Interuniversitaire Sur la Normativité (GRIN)</i> , Montreal	March 2022
<i>Cologne Center for Contemporary Epistemology and the Kantian Tradition (CONCEPT)</i> , University of Cologne	January 2022
<i>Ideal and Non-Ideal Epistemology Seminar Series</i> (Organized by Robin McKenna and Michael Hannon)	December 2021

“The complexity-coherence tradeoff in cognition”

† <i>Formal Epistemology Workshop</i> , Boston	(June 2023)
<i>Formal Methods Group</i> , King's College, London	(May 2023)

“Mistakes in the moral mathematics of existential risk”

<i>Global Priorities Institute / LSE Joint Workshop</i> , London	May 2023
<i>Workshop on Pluralisms in Existential Risk Studies</i> , Oxford	May 2023

“Norms of inquiry”

† <i>Central APA</i> , Chicago, Illinois	February 2022
<i>Workshop on Inquiry</i> , Southern Normativity Group Aarhus University	September 2021
† <i>Southern Society for Philosophy and Psychology Annual Meeting</i> , Louisville, Kentucky	May 2021
<i>Workshop on Bounded Rationality</i> , Harvard	December 2020
	October 2019

“Three paradoxes of bounded rationality”

† <i>Between Formal and Informal Methods in Philosophy</i> , Warsaw	September 2021
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<i>Group for Analytic Metaphysics and Epistemology</i> Texas A&M	July 2020
† <i>British Society for the Philosophy of Science</i> <i>Conference, Kent</i>	July 2020
“There are no epistemic norms of inquiry”	
<i>Episteme group, University of Cambridge</i>	March 2023
“High risk, low reward: A challenge to the astronomical value of existential risk mitigation”	
† <i>Philadelphia Normativity Conference, UPenn</i>	(October 2023)
† <i>International Society for Utilitarian Studies 2023, Rome</i>	(July 2023)
† <i>Ethics after Parfit, LMU Munich</i>	January 2023
† <i>6th PPE Society Conference, New Orleans</i>	November 2022
† <i>Formal Philosophy 2022, Moscow (Hybrid)</i>	October 2022
<i>Tenth Oxford Workshop on Global Priorities Research</i> <i>Center for Population-Level Bioethics, Rutgers</i>	June 2022
<i>Ninth Oxford Workshop on Global Priorities Research</i>	March 2022
“General-purpose institutional decisionmaking heuristics: The case of decisionmaking under deep uncertainty”	
<i>17th International Congress on Logic, Methodology, and Philosophy of Science and Technology, Buenos Aires</i>	(July 2023)
“The scope of longtermism”	
<i>Legal Priorities Project, Harvard</i>	February 2022
<i>Seventh Oxford Workshop on Global Priorities Research</i>	June 2021
“Inquiry and the epistemic”	
<i>Oxford Epistemology Group, Oxford</i>	November 2020
<i>Inquiry Network, Online</i>	November 2020
“The dual deontic role of unpossessed evidence”	
† <i>Great Lakes Philosophy Conference</i> Siena Heights University	April 2021
“Satisficing reclaimed”	
† <i>PLM Network Conference, St. Andrews</i>	August 2019
<i>Bounded Rationality Reading Group, Oxford</i>	July 2019
“Heuristics and longtermism”	
<i>Second Oxford Workshop on Global Priorities Research, Oxford</i>	July 2019
<i>Global Priorities Institute, Oxford</i>	June 2019
<i>Future of Humanity Institute, Oxford</i>	June 2019
“Pure time-preference: some error-theoretic remarks”	
<i>Workshop on Longtermism, Oxford</i>	March 2019

“Omission bias revisited”

† *Australasian Association of Philosophy / New Zealand Association of Philosophy Annual Conference*,
University of Wellington, NZ July 2018
ANU Modeling Ethical Theories Reading Group July 2018
Australian National University

“Inquiry under bounds”

LSE Work in Progress Group, London School of Economics February 2018

“Permissive metaepistemology”

ANU Epistemology Reading Group, June 2018
Australian National University
† *Yale Graduate Philosophy Conference*, Yale April 2017
† *UT-Austin Graduate Philosophy Conference*, UT-Austin April 2017
† *Northwestern/Notre Dame Graduate Epistemology Conference*, April 2017
Notre Dame
† *BARSEA Epistemology Workshop*, Cambridge University February 2017
† *UConn Graduate Philosophy Conference*, November 2016
University of Connecticut Storrs

PUBLIC TALKS “Existential risk pessimism and the time of perils”

EAGxCambridge March 2023
EAGxSingapore September 2022
EAGxOxford March 2022

“Challenges to effective altruism”

Tarbell Fellowship Program, Oxford March 2023

TEACHING

As primary instructor at Harvard University

Rationality Spring 2020
Virtue Spring 2019
Social epistemology Fall 2018
Introduction to logic (Harvard Summer School) Summers 2018, 2019

As teaching fellow at Harvard University

Saints, heretics, and atheists Spring 2017
Fundamentals of logic Fall 2016
Frege, Russell, and the early Wittgenstein Fall 2016
Logic and philosophy Spring 2016

As grader at Harvard University

Topics in logic Spring 2017

Other teaching

Advisor, Global Priorities Institute Early Career Conference Program.

Thomas Rowe (2021), Paul Forrester (2022), Leah Pierson (2021 and 2023), Tena Thau (2023).

Harvard edX, Content developer 2018-2020
Harvard Precollege Passport Program, Instructor 2019
Lawrence International High School, Mathematics teacher 2012-13

PROFESSIONAL SERVICE Conferences organized

Bayesianism and its rivals 2022
(with Branden Fitelson, Will Fleisher and Ned Hall), Harvard
Oxford workshops on global priorities research
Twelfth Oxford workshop on global priorities research 2023
(with Loren Fryxell)
Eleventh Oxford workshop on global priorities research 2022
(with Loren Fryxell)
Tenth Oxford workshop on global priorities research 2022
(with Loren Fryxell)
Ninth Oxford workshop on global priorities research 2022
(with Loren Fryxell)
Eighth Oxford workshop on global priorities research 2021
(with Loren Fryxell)
Seventh Oxford workshop on global priorities research 2021
(with Loren Fryxell, Rossa O’Keeffe-O’Donovan, and Benjamin Tereick)
Sixth Oxford workshop on global priorities research 2021
Fifth Oxford workshop on global priorities research 2020
(with Andreas Mogensen and Rossa O’Keeffe-O’Donovan)
Workshop on bounded rationality 2019
(with Branden Fitelson and Ned Hall), Harvard
Harvard-MIT graduate philosophy conference 2015
(with Kevin Dorst, Jen Nguyen, and Max Siegel), Harvard

Panels organized

Inquiry, Southern Society for Philosophy and Psychology 2020

Reading groups organized

Critiques of effective altruism (with Jacob Barrett) 2023
Global Priorities Institute, Oxford
The scope of longtermism (with Hilary Greaves 2021
and Christian Tarsney), Global Priorities Institute, Oxford
Social justice and longtermism 2020
(with Christian Tarsney), Global Priorities Institute, Oxford
Bounded rationality reading group 2019
(with Sven Neth), Global Priorities Institute, Oxford
Epistemology reading group 2018
(Four sessions. Unit on epistemic permissivism), ANU
Formal philosophy reading group, Harvard 2016

Accuracy-first reading group, Harvard 2016
Ethics and mathematics reading group 2013-14
(with Zeynep Soysal), Harvard

Other organizing

Inquiry Network, Founder and co-organizer (w/Dennis Whitcomb and Arianna Falbo) 2020-
Second Open Student Workshop on Global Priorities Research 2023
(w/Bridget Williams), for members of traditionally underrepresented groups in global priorities research
First Open Student Workshop on Global Priorities Research 2022
(w/Charlotte Siegmann)
GPI + WANBAM (Women and Non-Binary Altruism Mentorship) workshop (w/Charlotte Siegmann) 2021

Administrative responsibilities

Diversity Initiative Chair, Global Priorities Institute 2021-
College Advisor, Kellogg College 2020-

Refereeing (* denotes multiple): *Analysis*, **Australasian Journal of Philosophy*, *British Journal for the Philosophy of Science*, *Canadian Journal of Philosophy*, *Dialectica*, **Episteme*, **Erkenntnis*, **Mind*, **Noûs*, *Open Philanthropy, Oxford University Press, *Pacific Philosophical Quarterly*, **Philosophy and Phenomenological Research*, **Philosophical Studies*, *Philosophical Topics*, Simon Institute for Longterm Governance, Southwestern Philosophical Society, **Synthese*, *Utilitas*.

REFERENCES

Ned Hall

Norman E. Vuilleumier Professor of Philosophy and Chair, Department of Philosophy, Harvard University
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Hilary Greaves

Professor of Philosophy and Director, Global Priorities Institute, Oxford University
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Susanna Rinard

Professor of Philosophy, Harvard University
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Susanna Siegel

Edgar Pierce Professor of Philosophy, Harvard University
ssiegel@fas.harvard.edu

Warren Goldfarb (Teaching Reference)

Walter Beverly Pearson Professor of Modern Mathematics and Mathematical Logic, Harvard University
goldfarb@fas.harvard.edu