# Selim Berker

**Mailing Address:**
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Harvard University, Department of Philosophy
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**Website:** *https://scholar.harvard.edu/sberker*

## Employment:

Alford Professor of Natural Religion, 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, Metaphysics

## Areas of Competence:

Action Theory, Logic, Philosophy of Language, Philosophy of Mind

## Publications:

"Quasi-Dependence," *Oxford Studies in Metaethics* 15 (2020): 195–218.

"The Explanatory Ambitions of Moral Principles," *Noûs* 53 (2019): 904–36.

"Mackie Was Not an Error Theorist," *Philosophical Perspectives* 33 (2019): 5–25.

"A Combinatorial Argument against Practical Reasons for Belief," *Analytic Philosophy* 59 (2018): 427–70.

"The Unity of Grounding," *Mind* 127 (2018): 729–77. [Selected by *The Philosopher's Annual* as one of the ten best philosophy papers published in 2018.]

"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. Reprinted and translated into German in Norbert Paulo and Jan Christoph Bublitz (eds.), *Empirische Ethik: Grundlagentexte aus Psychologie und Philosophie* (Berlin: Suhrkamp Verlag, 2020).]

"Luminosity Regained," *Philosophers' Imprint* 8, no. 2 (2008): 1–22.

"Particular Reasons," *Ethics* 118 (2007): 109–39.

**Talks:**

TBD, Uppsala University, May 2021 (*expected*)

"The Deontic, the Evaluative, and the Fitting," Zoom Conference on Fittingness, May 2021 (*expected*)

"The Deontic, the Evaluative, and the Fitting," Tel-Hai Academic College, Israel, March 2021 (*expected*)

"The Deontic, the Evaluative, and the Fitting," University of Oxford Moral Philosophy Seminar, February 2021 (*expected*)

"The Deontic, the Evaluative, and the Fitting," Northeast Normativity Workshop, October 2020

TBD (x 2), Iowa State University, October 2020 (*postponed because of pandemic*)

Masterclass on Fittingness, University of Zurich, September 2020 (*canceled because of pandemic*)

Keynote Address at the Second Annual Explaining Philosophy Conference at Wuhan University, China, May 2020 (*canceled because of pandemic*)

"A Becausal Theory of Knowing," Conference on Grounding and Its Applications, North Caroline State University, September 2019

"Quasi-Dependence," Philosophical Methodology and Metametaphysics Conference, Dartmouth University, May 2019

"Practical Reasons to Suspend Judgment?" Central APA, February 2019

"Comments on Yu's 'Tacit Knowledge; Towards a Pragmatic Turn in Epistemology,'" NYC–China Epistemology Conference, Fordham University, October 2018

"Quasi-Dependence," Madison Metaethics Workshop, University of Wisconsin, Madison, September 2018

"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," Sabancı
    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:

"The Unity of Grounding" selected by *The Philosopher's Annual* as one of the ten best philosophy papers published in 2018

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:

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| Philosophy 267: Normative Categories: Seminar | Spring 2020 |
| Philosophy 301b: First-Year Colloquium | Spring 2020 |
| Philosophy 173: Metaethics | Fall 2019 |
| Philosophy 311: Moral and Political Workshop | Fall 2019 |
| Philosophy 169: Nozick's *Philosophical Explanations*: Proseminar | Spring 2019 |
| Philosophy 301b: First-Year Colloquium | Spring 2019 |
| Philosophy 159: Epistemology | Fall 2018 |
| Philosophy 311: Moral and Political Workshop | Fall 2018 |
| 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 |

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|---|---|
| Philosophy 268y: Normative and Meta-Normative Questions | Spring 2015 |
|     (co-taught with Derek Parfit) | |
| 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' *Empiricism and the Phil. of Mind* | 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
Megan Entwistle, in progress
Caitlin Fitchett, in progress
Elís Miller Larsen, in progress
Becca Rothfeld, in progress
Heather Spradley, in progress
Zoe Jenkin, "Reasons and Percepts," Spring 2020
Paul Marcucilli, "The Appraisal of Belief," Summer 2019
Douglas Kremm, "Practical Cognitivism: An Essay on Normative Judgment," Summer
    2018
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:

Britta Clark, "Duties with Deadlines," 2019–2020
Megan Entwistle, "Knowing by Inference: the Tracking View," 2018–2019
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:

John Hunt, "Can There Be a Truly Autonomous Ethics?" 2018–2019
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:

Executive Committee, Eastern Division of the APA, 2020–2023
Faculty Advisory Committee, Edmund J. Safra Center for Ethics, 2018–2021
Article referee (often multiple times) for *American Philosophical Quarterly*, *Analysis*, *Analytic Philosophy*, *Australasian Journal of Philosophy*, *Dialectica*, *Ethics*, *European Journal of Analytic Philosophy*, *European Journal of Philosophy*, *Inquiry*, *Journal of the American Philosophical Association*, *Journal of Ethics and Social Philosophy*, *Journal of Moral Philosophy*, *Journal of Philosophical Research*, *Mind*, *Noûs*, *Pacific Philosophical Quarterly*, *Philosophical Explorations*, *Philosophical Psychology*, *Philosophical Quarterly*, *Philosophical Review*, *Philosophical Studies*,

*Philosophy and Phenomenological Research*, *Synthese*

Book-proposal/manuscript 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.