

DAVID THORSTAD

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CONTACT INFORMATION	Vanderbilt University 2301 Vanderbilt Place Nashville, TN 37240-6319	Email: david.thorstad@vanderbilt.edu Website: www.dthorstad.com
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
AFFILIATIONS	Vanderbilt Lab for Immersive AI Translation Fellow	December 2024-
	MINT Lab, Australian National University Research Associate	April 2024-
	Global Priorities Institute, Oxford Senior Research Associate	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
BOOK	<i>Inquiry under bounds</i> , Oxford University Press (2024).	
ARTICLES	Exploitative informing , forthcoming in <i>British Journal for the Philosophy of Science</i> .	
	The zetetic turn and the procedural turn , forthcoming in <i>Journal of Philosophy</i> .	
	The scope of longtermism , forthcoming in <i>Australasian Journal of Philosophy</i> .	
	Mistakes in the moral mathematics of existential risk , forthcoming in <i>Ethics</i> .	
	General-purpose institutional decisionmaking heuristics , forthcoming in <i>British Journal for the Philosophy of Science</i> .	
	Norms of inquiry , forthcoming in <i>Philosophical Topics</i> .	
	The accuracy-coherence tradeoff in cognition , <i>British Journal for the Philosophy of Science</i> 75.3 (2024): 695-715.	

Against the singularity hypothesis, *Philosophical Studies* (2024), <https://doi.org/10.1007/s11098-024-02143-5>.

Why bounded rationality (in epistemology)?, *Philosophy and Phenomenological Research* 108 (2024): 396-413

Against the newer evidentialists, *Philosophical Studies* 180 (2023): 3511-32.

High risk, low reward: A challenge to the astronomical value of existential risk mitigation, *Philosophy and Public Affairs* 51.4 (2023): 373-412.

There are no epistemic norms of inquiry, *Synthese* 200, 410 (2022).

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

Exploitative informing: Can you exploit someone by giving them relevant information?, *BJPS Short Reads* (2024).

Review of *Idealization in epistemology* by Dan Greco, *Mind* fzae026, <https://doi.org/10.1093/mind/fzae026>.

Institutional decision-making heuristics: What lies beyond simple rules?, *BJPS Short Reads* (2024).

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

IN PRODUCTION

Essays on longtermism (w/Hilary Greaves and Jacob Barrett), edited volume in production with Oxford University Press (Scheduled release: April 2025).

FELLOWSHIPS AND GRANTS

Survival and Flourishing Fund (\$38,000), S-Process Grant 2024

Robert Penn Warren Center for the Humanities (50% buyout) 2024-2025
Vanderbilt Faculty Fellowship

Effective Altruism Infrastructure Fund (\$24,460) 2023
Grant to support a summer diversity program

Center for Effective Altruism (£20,000) 2023
Event Support Grant (with Bridget Williams)

Manifund (\$2,000) 2023
Grant to support public philosophy connected to effective altruism

John Fell Fund (£10,000), University of Oxford 2022

	Grant to support a workshop on inquiry	
	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 in Extraordinary Times , Harvard University	2020
	Derek C Bok Award for Excellence in Graduate Student Teaching , Harvard University Harvard's highest graduate teaching award. 5 awarded annually university-wide.	2019
	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

“What power-seeking theorems do not show”

Hong Kong Catastrophic Risk Center	(February 2025)
† Central APA, PPE Society Session	(February 2025)
† 15th Oxford Workshop on Global Priorities Research	December 2024
† PPE Society Conference, New Orleans	November 2024
Global Priorities Institute, Oxford	November 2024

“Beyond longtermism”

Global Priorities Institute, Oxford	November 2024
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“Cognitive bias in large language models: Cautious optimism meets anti-Panglossian meliorism”

UC Irvine, Center for Theoretical Behavioral Sciences	October 2024
† <i>Third International Conference on the Ethics of Artificial Intelligence</i> , University of the Azores	September 2024
<i>MINT Lab</i> , ANU	August 2024

“Exploitative informing”

UC Irvine, Department of Logic and Philosophy of Science	October 2024
† <i>Axiology Workshop</i> , McGill University	October 2024

“The zetetic turn and the procedural turn”

<i>Inquiry Workshop</i> , Brown University	April 2024
<i>Southeast Graduate Philosophy Conference</i> (Keynote), University of Florida	April 2024
<i>Workshop on the Nature and Normativity of Inquiry</i> , University of Pavia	January 2024
<i>Southeastern Epistemology Conference</i> , Spartanburg, South Carolina	October 2023
† <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>Australasian Association of Philosophy Online Conference</i>	October 2024
<i>Berkeley Bounded Rationality Conference</i>	May 2024
† <i>Formal Epistemology Workshop</i> , Boston	June 2023
<i>Formal Methods Group</i> , King’s College, London	May 2023

“Against the singularity hypothesis”

<i>Ethics of Increasing AI Capacities</i> , Hannover	August 2024
<i>International Society for Utilitarian Studies Conference</i> University College, London	June 2024
<i>Colloquium on Artificial Intelligence and Catastrophic Risk</i> Australian National University	March 2024
“Mistakes in the moral mathematics of existential risk”	
<i>Moral philosophy working group</i> , Yale	April 2024
<i>Mimir Institute for Long-Term Future Studies</i> , Stockholm	December 2023
<i>7th PPE Society Conference</i> , New Orleans	November 2023
<i>Global Priorities Institute / LSE Joint Workshop</i> , London	May 2023
<i>Workshop on Pluralisms in Existential Risk Studies</i> , Oxford	May 2023
“Why bounded rationality (in epistemology)?”	
<i>7th PPE society Conference</i> , New Orleans	November 2023
“Norms of inquiry”	
† <i>Central APA</i> , Chicago, Illinois	February 2022
<i>Workshop on Inquiry</i> , Southern Normativity Group <i>Aarhus University</i>	September 2021 May 2021
† <i>Southern Society for Philosophy and Psychology</i> <i>Annual Meeting</i> , Louisville, Kentucky	December 2020
<i>Workshop on Bounded Rationality</i> , Harvard	October 2019
“Three paradoxes of bounded rationality”	
† <i>Between Formal and Informal Methods in</i> <i>Philosophy</i> , Warsaw	September 2021
<i>Group for Analytic Metaphysics and Epistemology</i> Texas A&M	July 2020
† <i>British Society for the Philosophy of Science</i> <i>Conference</i> , Kent	July 2020
“There are no epistemic norms of inquiry”	
<i>Episteme group</i> , University of Cambridge	March 2023
“High risk, low reward: A challenge to the astronomical value of existential risk mitigation”	
<i>Ethics of Human Extinction Reading Group</i>	June 2024
† <i>Philadelphia Normativity Conference</i> , UPenn	October 2023
† <i>International Society for Utilitarian Studies 2023</i> , Rome	July 2023
† <i>Ethics After Parfit</i> , LMU Munich	January 2023
† <i>6th PPE Society Conference</i> , New Orleans	November 2022
† <i>Formal Philosophy 2022</i> , Moscow (Hybrid)	October 2022
<i>Tenth Oxford Workshop on Global Priorities Research</i> <i>Center for Population-Level Bioethics</i> , Rutgers	June 2022 April 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”	
† <i>Australasian Association of Philosophy / New Zealand Association of Philosophy Annual Conference, University of Wellington, NZ</i>	July 2018
<i>ANU Modeling Ethical Theories Reading Group</i> Australian National University	July 2018
“Inquiry under bounds”	
<i>LSE Work in Progress Group, London School of Economics</i>	February 2018
“Permissive metaepistemology”	
<i>ANU Epistemology Reading Group, Australian National University</i>	June 2018
† <i>Yale Graduate Philosophy Conference, Yale</i>	April 2017
† <i>UT-Austin Graduate Philosophy Conference, UT-Austin</i>	April 2017
† <i>Northwestern/Notre Dame Graduate Epistemology Conference, Notre Dame</i>	April 2017
† <i>BARSEA Epistemology Workshop, Cambridge University</i>	February 2017

† *UConn Graduate Philosophy Conference*,
University of Connecticut Storrs November 2016

PUBLIC TALKS “Against the singularity hypothesis”
EAGxVirtual November 2024

“Mistakes in the moral mathematics of existential risk”
Effective Altruism Tübingen July 2024

“Against the singularity hypothesis”
AI safety reading group June 2024

“Existential risk pessimism and the time of perils”
ERA Fellowship, Cambridge August 2023
EAGxCambridge March 2023
EAGxSingapore September 2022
EAGxOxford March 2022

“Challenges to effective altruism”
Tarbell Fellowship Program, Oxford March 2023

TEACHING **At Vanderbilt University**

Logic Fall 2024
Ethics of AI Spring 2024
Introduction to philosophy of AI Spring 2024
Introduction to philosophy Fall 2023
Inquiry (graduate seminar) Fall 2023

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

Supervision, etc.

Honors thesis supervisor, Thomas Edman (2025).

Advisor, Global Priorities Institute Early Career Conference Program.

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

Advisor, Oxford UNIQ+ Graduate Access Program, Elsie Lidington (2023).

External examiner, Leonardo Flamini (Zurich/Pavia, 2024).

Other teaching

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

PROFESSIONAL SERVICE Conferences organized

<i>Second Inquiry Network workshop</i> (with Jared Millson), Rhodes College	(2025)
<i>Southeastern epistemology conference</i> , Vanderbilt University	2024
<i>Inquiry Network workshop</i> , Vanderbilt University	2024
<i>Bayesianism and its rivals</i> (with Branden Fitelson, Will Fleisher and Ned Hall), Harvard	2022
<i>Oxford workshops on global priorities research</i>	
<i>Twelfth Oxford workshop on global priorities research</i> (with Loren Fryxell)	2023
<i>Eleventh Oxford workshop on global priorities research</i> (with Loren Fryxell)	2022
<i>Tenth Oxford workshop on global priorities research</i> (with Loren Fryxell)	2022
<i>Ninth Oxford workshop on global priorities research</i> (with Loren Fryxell)	2022
<i>Eighth Oxford workshop on global priorities research</i> (with Loren Fryxell)	2021
<i>Seventh Oxford workshop on global priorities research</i> (with Loren Fryxell, Rossa O’Keeffe-O’Donovan, and Benjamin Tereick)	2021
<i>Sixth Oxford workshop on global priorities research</i>	2021
<i>Fifth Oxford workshop on global priorities research</i> (with Andreas Mogensen and Rossa O’Keeffe-O’Donovan)	2020
<i>Workshop on bounded rationality</i> (with Branden Fitelson and Ned Hall), Harvard	2019
<i>Harvard-MIT graduate philosophy conference</i> (with Kevin Dorst, Jen Nguyen, and Max Siegel), Harvard	2015

Panels organized

<i>The moral and political implications of human extinction</i> Central APA, PPE Society Affiliated Session	2025
<i>Longtermism 1</i> (w/Emma Curran), PPE Society Conference	2024
<i>Longtermism 2</i> (w/Emma Curran), PPE Society Conference	2024
<i>Non-ideal theory</i> , PPE Society Conference	2023

Ethics and the far future, PPE Society Conference 2023
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
 and Christian Tarsney), Global Priorities Institute, Oxford 2021
Social justice and longtermism
 (with Christian Tarsney), Global Priorities Institute, Oxford 2020
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

Departmental service

Search committee, Philosophy of Mind (senior) 2024-2025
Steering Committee, Vanderbilt Grand Challenge on AI 2024-
Colloquium Committee, Vanderbilt Philosophy Department 2024-
Secretary, Vanderbilt Philosophy Department 2023-
Diversity Initiative Chair, Global Priorities Institute 2021-2023
College Advisor, Kellogg College 2020-2023

Refereeing (* denotes multiple): *AI & Society*, **Analysis*, **Australasian Journal of Philosophy*, *British Journal for the Philosophy of Science*, **Canadian Journal of Philosophy*, *Dialectica*, **Episteme*, **Erkenntnis*, *Ethical Theory and Moral Practice*, *Journal of Philosophy*, **Mind*, **Noûs*, *Open Philanthropy, Oxford University Press, *Pacific Philosophical Quarterly*, *Philosophy Compass*, **Philosophy and Phenomenological Research*, *Philosophical Review*, **Philosophical Studies*, *Philosophical Topics*, Rethink Priorities, Routledge, Simon Institute for Longterm Governance, Southwestern Philosophical Society, Swiss National Science Foundation, **Synthese*, *Utilitas*.

REFERENCES

Ned Hall

Norman E. Vuilleumier Professor of Philosophy and Chair, Department of Philosophy, Harvard University
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Susanna Rinard

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Susanna Siegel

Edgar Pierce Professor of Philosophy, Harvard University
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Warren Goldfarb (Teaching Reference)

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