

DAVID THORSTAD

- CONTACT INFORMATION** Vanderbilt University Email: david.thorstad@vanderbilt.edu
2301 Vanderbilt Place Website: www.dthorstad.com
Nashville, TN 37240-6319
- EMPLOYMENT** **Vanderbilt University** August 2023-
Assistant Professor of Philosophy
- Global Priorities Institute, Oxford** July 2020-August 2023
Postdoctoral Research Fellow
- Kellogg College, Oxford** October 2020-August 2023
Junior Research Fellow (Nonstipendiary)
- AFFILIATIONS** **MINT Lab, Australian National University** April 2024-
Research Associate
- Global Priorities Institute, Oxford** August 2023-
Senior Research Associate
- 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** **The zetetic turn and the procedural turn**, forthcoming in *Journal of Philosophy*.
- The scope of longtermism**, forthcoming in *Australasian Journal of Philosophy*.
- Mistakes in the moral mathematics of existential risk**, forthcoming in *Ethics*.
- Why bounded rationality (in epistemology)?**, forthcoming in *Philosophy and Phenomenological Research*.
- Against the singularity hypothesis**, forthcoming in *Philosophical Studies*.
- Against the newer evidentialists**, forthcoming in *Philosophical Studies*.
- General-purpose institutional decisionmaking heuristics**, forthcoming in *British Journal for the Philosophy of Science*.
- Norms of inquiry**, forthcoming in *Philosophical Topics*.
- The accuracy-coherence tradeoff in cognition**, forthcoming in *British Journal for the Philosophy of Science*.

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**

Review of *Idealization in epistemology* by Dan Greco, forthcoming in *Mind*.

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).

**UNDER
CONTRACT**

Inquiry under bounds, research monograph under contract with Oxford University Press.

Essays on longtermism (w/Hilary Greaves and Jacob Barrett), edited volume under contract with Oxford University Press.

**FELLOWSHIPS
AND GRANTS**

Robert Penn Warren Center for the Humanities, Vanderbilt Faculty fellowship 2024-2025

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) 2022
Event Support Grant (with Charlotte Siegmann)

PPE Society (\$250) Travel Grant 2022

Provostial Fund for the Arts and Humanities (\$4,000) 2020
Harvard University, Conference Organization Grant (with Branden Fitelson and Ned Hall)

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| | 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 |
| | 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 | “The zetetic turn and the procedural turn” | |
| (†) Refereed | <i>Inquiry Workshop</i> , Brown University | April 2024 |
| | <i>Southeast Graduate Philosophy Conference</i> , 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 |

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| † <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>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>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 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 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 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”

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| <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”

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| <i>17th International Congress on Logic, Methodology, and Philosophy of Science and Technology</i> , Buenos Aires | July 2023 |
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“The scope of longtermism”

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| <i>Legal Priorities Project</i> , Harvard | February 2022 |
| <i>Seventh Oxford Workshop on Global Priorities Research</i> | June 2021 |

“Inquiry and the epistemic”

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| <i>Oxford Epistemology Group</i> , Oxford | November 2020 |
| <i>Inquiry Network</i> , Online | November 2020 |

“The dual deontic role of unpossessed evidence”

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| † <i>Great Lakes Philosophy Conference</i> Siena Heights University | April 2021 |
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“Satisficing reclaimed”

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| † <i>PLM Network Conference</i> , St. Andrews | August 2019 |
| <i>Bounded Rationality Reading Group</i> , Oxford | July 2019 |

“Heuristics and longtermism”

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| <i>Second Oxford Workshop on Global Priorities Research</i> , Oxford | July 2019 |
| <i>Global Priorities Institute</i> , Oxford | June 2019 |
| <i>Future of Humanity Institute</i> , Oxford | June 2019 |

“Pure time-preference: some error-theoretic remarks”

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| <i>Workshop on Longtermism</i> , Oxford | March 2019 |
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“Omission bias revisited”

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

“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”

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

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 Flammini (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

Southeastern Epistemology Congress, Vanderbilt University (2024)

Inquiry Network workshop, Vanderbilt University (2024)

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

Non-ideal theory, PPE Society Conference 2023

Ethics and the far future, PPE Society Conference 2023

Inquiry, Southern Society for Philosophy and Psychology 2020

Reading groups organized

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| <i>Critiques of effective altruism</i> (with Jacob Barrett) Global Priorities Institute, Oxford | 2023 |
| <i>The scope of longtermism</i> (with Hilary Greaves and Christian Tarsney), Global Priorities Institute, Oxford | 2021 |
| <i>Social justice and longtermism</i> (with Christian Tarsney), Global Priorities Institute, Oxford | 2020 |
| <i>Bounded rationality reading group</i> (with Sven Neth), Global Priorities Institute, Oxford | 2019 |
| <i>Epistemology reading group</i> (Four sessions. Unit on epistemic permissivism), ANU | 2018 |
| <i>Formal philosophy reading group</i> , Harvard | 2016 |
| <i>Accuracy-first reading group</i> , Harvard | 2016 |
| <i>Ethics and mathematics reading group</i> (with Zeynep Soysal), Harvard | 2013-14 |

Other organizing

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

Administrative responsibilities

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| <i>Steering Committee</i> , Vanderbilt Grand Challenge on AI | 2024- |
| <i>Colloquium Committee</i> , Vanderbilt Philosophy Department, | 2024- |
| <i>Secretary</i> , Vanderbilt Philosophy Department | 2023- |
| <i>Diversity Initiative Chair</i> , Global Priorities Institute | 2021-2023 |
| <i>College Advisor</i> , 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 Studies, Philosophical Topics, Rethink Priorities, 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
ehall@fas.harvard.edu

Hilary Greaves

Professor of Philosophy and Director, Global Priorities Institute, Oxford University
hilary.greaves@philosophy.ox.ac.uk

Susanna Rinard

Professor of Philosophy, Harvard University
susannarinard@fas.harvard.edu

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