

ERGO MILLER

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EDUCATION

UNIVERSITY OF MASSACHUSETTS

Amherst, MA | Expected 2024

PHD PHILOSOPHY IN ETHICS, PHILOSOPHY OF SCIENCE, AND PHILOSOPHICAL METHODOLOGY

WESTERN MICHIGAN UNIVERSITY

Kalamazoo, MI | 2014

MA PHILOSOPHY IN ETHICAL THEORY

SOUTHEAST MISSOURI STATE UNIVERSITY

Cape Girardeau, MO | 2012

BA PHILOSOPHY, BIOLOGY MINOR

DOCTORAL DISSERTATION | WELL-BEING AS A COMPLEX SYSTEM

Hilary Kornblith | Chair

- My dissertation builds theoretical connections between the philosophy of well-being and the sciences of well-being as practiced by psychologists, economists, health scientists, and others. I argue that the well-being of individuals and super-individuals (e.g. institutions, organizations, ecosystems) should be construed as extended and complex causal networks rather than as intrinsic properties. In support of this view, I examine the methods and assumptions of both traditional philosophical theories of well-being and the many fields of well-being science, which seem to be in insoluble tension both within themselves and with each other. Drawing on developments in naturalistic philosophy, I outline an alternative methodology that avoids those tensions and reveals that well-being scientists generally treat well-being as a causal network. I go on to refine this view and apply it to debates about childhood well-being, the use of culturally-laden assumptions in well-being science, the relation between well-being theory and policy, and the semantics of well-being terms.

PUBLICATION | WELL-BEING MONISM DEFENDED

Journal of Happiness Studies | 2022

- Some philosophers argue that there is no one thing called "well-being" and thus no one thing that scientists and philosophers study under that term. I draw out the assumptions of this argument, reject them, and provide a methodology that yields a theory of well-being as a complex causal network. This view explains the diversity of research programs, background theories, and measurement practices in well-being philosophy and science and is supported by a wide range of evidence from recent scientific publications.

PUBLICATION | LIARS, TIGERS, AND BEARERS OF BAD NEWS, OH MY!Philosophical Quarterly | 2019

EMPLOYMENT

GRADUATE EMPLOYEE ORGANIZATION | MEMBERSHIP ORGANIZER

Amherst, MA | Ongoing

- Organized for a contract campaign · Recruited and supported organizers from diverse backgrounds and fields across campus · Facilitated staff and membership meetings · Created training programs for organizers · Supported members in understanding and enforcing the contract · Helped create proposals and cost-effective strategies for bargaining · Supported groups with distinct workplace needs in developing proposals to meet their needs.

AMHERST COLLEGE, SPIRITUAL LIFE | HUMANIST CHAPLAIN

Amherst, MA | 2021 – 2022

- Created humanist programming for the Center for Religious and Spiritual Life and other campus cultural centers focused on the well-being of marginalized groups of students · Co-organized programming for mixed faith/secular events focused on social justice and well-being.

UNIVERSITY OF MASSACHUSETTS | TEACHING ASSOCIATE

Amherst, MA | 2015 – 2023

- Created courses in philosophy of art, ethical theory, biomedical ethics, and social/political philosophy · Discussed complex ideas with diverse groups of students and mentored them in office hours via compassionate listening and careful problem-solving · Assisted in introduction to philosophy, ethics, and biomedical ethics courses · Responsible for 20-60 students per semester.

WESTERN MICHIGAN UNIVERSITY | TEACHING ASSOCIATE

Kalamazoo, MI | 2012 – 2014

- Created courses in biomedical ethics and environmental ethics · Assisted in critical thinking courses · Responsible for 55-75 students per semester · Served as liaison between philosophy graduate students and faculty.

OTHER EXPERIENCE

RESEARCH ASSISTANT | SUPERVISOR PROF. FRITZ ALLHOFF

Kalamazoo, MI | 2013

- Research Assistant for U.S. National Science Foundation Award # 1242087 NUE: NanoTRA: Texas Regional Alliance to Foster 'Nanotechnology Environment, Health, and Safety Awareness' in Tomorrow's Engineering and Technology Leaders.
- Read materials collected or written by Prof. Allhoff and the Principal Investigators regarding nanotechnology, its risks, and its potential impact on healthcare, war, climate change, pollution, and other critical global issues · Produced chapter summaries, extracted key information, themes, and data · Used that information to produce first drafts of educational modules with slides, notes, and questions for discussion.

SELECTED GRADUATE COURSEWORK

- **Causal Theories of Reference:** Prof. Hilary Kornblith, Audit Spring 2023.
- **Metaphysics of Quantity and Measurement:** Prof. Maya Eddon, Spring 2015.
- **Conditionals:** Prof. Alejandro Pérez Carballo, Fall 2014.
- **Philosophy and Probability:** Prof. Timothy McGrew, Spring 2014.
- **Advanced Philosophy of Science:** Prof. Marc Alspector-Kelly, Fall 2013.
- **Philosophical Applications of Logic:** Prof. Arthur Falk, Fall 2013.

SELECTED TEACHING As SOLE INSTRUCTOR

- **Hacking Happiness:** Two First-Year Seminars, Fall 2022 · Covered issues of definition and measurement in the study of happiness and well-being · Topics included definitions of and approaches to measurement for happiness and well-being and issues in reporting and interpreting quantitative claims about subjects like happiness, life satisfaction, and well-being · Students were assigned evidence-backed well-being interventions and tracked their effects over the semester.
- **Biomedical Ethics:** Fall 2022 and Spring 2023 · Both courses included units on the nature of health, disease, and disability and their relations to value and well-being as well as the nature of mental illness categories and whether they are either real or predicatively useful · F22 included units on the testing and approval of pharmaceuticals and medical technologies, the ethics of vaccine mandates, and triage principles for pandemic vaccine distribution · S23 had units on transgender healthcare and well-being as well as questions of impact, agency, and responsibility in public health.
- **Environmental Ethics:** Summer 2013, Fall 2013, Spring 2013 · Included readings and discussion related to the difficulty of predicting the success of environmental interventions, the complexity of environmental interactions, the common ideas we have about climate change vs statistical models, and the need to consider ecology at various levels of organization in addressing climate change, pollution, and animal welfare.

SKILLS

Analytic: Academic Research, Close Reading, Expository Writing, Argumentative Writing, Philosophical Analysis, Formal Logic, Probability Theory, Bayesian Reasoning, Methodological Analysis, Baseball Analytics

Educational: Public Speaking, Course Design, University Teaching, Discussion Facilitation, Grading, Learning Management Systems

Organizational: Written and Verbal Communication, Labor Organizing, Contract Enforcement, University Event Funding, Conference Planning, Meeting Facilitation