

Curriculum Vitae

Ben Abelson

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EDUCATION

2015 **Ph.D. The City University of New York (CUNY) Graduate Center**
2014 **M.Phil. CUNY Graduate Center**
2006 **B.A. Hunter College, *Summa Cum Laude***

AREAS OF SPECIALIZATION

Metaphysics (Personal Identity, Free Will, Mereology/Metaontology)
Philosophy of Mind (Philosophy of Psychology, Comparative Cognition, Moral and Aesthetic Psychology)
Nietzsche Studies

AREAS OF COMPETENCE

Classical Greek Philosophy
Early Modern Philosophy
Asian Philosophy
Philosophy in Science Fiction

FORTHCOMING PUBLICATIONS

As author: “Shifting Coalitions and the Responsibility of Persons,” in *Free Will and Buddhist Philosophy*, edited by Rick Repetti, forthcoming from Routledge.

WORKS UNDER REVIEW FOR PUBLICATION

As co-editor: *Great Disputes in Philosophy*, with Marie Friquegnon, under consideration by Bloomsbury Press, UK.

- 2013 **Philosophy East and West Roundtable**, Society for Ancient and Medieval Philosophy Conference at Fordham University
- 2012 **“Nietzsche, Madhyamaka, and Classical Greek Skepticism”**
Society for Indian and Tibetan Philosophy at the American Philosophical Association Eastern Division Meeting in Atlanta, GA
- 2012 **“How Troubling is the Concept of the Person?”** Pittsburgh Area Philosophy Colloquium in Washington, PA
- 2011 **“Santaraksita and Cognitive Science”** Society for Indian and Tibetan Philosophy at the American Philosophical Association Eastern Division Meeting in Washington, D.C.
- 2006 **“Who Will Pardon the Pardoners?”** Society for Ancient and Medieval Philosophy Conference at Fordham University

COMMENTARY, ORGANIZATIONAL AND RESEARCH CONTRIBUTIONS

- 2015 Commented on two papers at the International Conference on Persons at Boston University
- 2015 Chaired a session at the Metaphysics of Quantity conference at New York University
- 2014 Chaired a panel at the Society for Ancient and Medieval Philosophy Meeting at Fordham University
- 2011 Organized a session of the CUNY Graduate Center Metaphysics Reading Group, featuring a discussion with David Chalmers (ANU/NYU) about his essay “The Matrix as Metaphysics”
- 2011 Commented on a paper at the CUNY Undergraduate Philosophy Conference at Laguardia Community College.
- 2009 Commented on a paper at the Graduate Student Philosophy Conference at The CUNY Graduate Center

- 2009 Commented on a paper at the Nietzsche in New York conference at Hunter College
- 2008 Chaired a panel at the Nietzsche in New York conference at Hunter College
- 2007 Chaired a panel at the Graduate Student Philosophy Conference at The CUNY Graduate Center
- 2005 Research Assistant to Christa Acampora for her edited collection *Nietzsche's on The Genealogy of Morals: Critical Essays*
- 2005 Organized a lecture by John Richardson (NYU) at Hunter College for a Phi Sigma Tau event
- 2004 Organized a lecture by Noël Carroll (Temple/CUNY GC) at Hunter College for a Phi Sigma Tau event

GRADUATE COURSEWORK

Philosophy of Mind and Metaphysics:

Philosophy of Mind, Professor David Rosenthal
Reasoning, Professor Jonathan Adler
Metaphysics of Free Will, Professor Michael Levin

History of Philosophy (Classical-Modern):

Plato, Professor Gerald Press
Greco-Roman Influence on Christianity, Professor Richard Sorabji
Alternatives to Mimesis, Professor Nickolas Pappas
The Discovery of Metaphysics, Professor Peter Simpson
Nietzsche, Professor Christa Acampora
Value Theory:
Aesthetics, Professor Christa Acampora
Ethics, Professor Stefan Baumrin

Philosophy of Language and Logic:

Quine and Sellars on Thought and Language, Professor David Rosenthal
Quine from a Critical Point of View, Professor Alan Berger
Logic, Professor Alex Ernestine

Courses in departments outside Philosophy:

Aristophanes, Professor Markus Asper (Classics, NYU)

Global Decadence, Professor Richard Kaye (English, CUNY GC)

COMPREHENSIVE EXAMS PASSED

Ethics

Metaphysics

HONORS AND AWARDS

- 2011 **Conference funding from The CUNY Graduate Center**
- 2010-2012 **Graduate Assistant A Fellowship, Hunter College**
- 2009 **Passed CUNY GC Ethics Comprehensive Exam with Honors**
- 2007-2009 **Graduate Assistant B Fellowship, Hunter College**
- 2006 **Award for “Best Philosophy Student,” Hunter College**
- 2005 **President, Hunter College Epsilon Chapter of Phi Sigma Tau**
- 2003-2005 **President, Hunter College Philosophy Club**
- 2002-2006 **Hunter College Honors Scholar**

RESEARCH AND PROFESSIONAL CERTIFICATIONS

- 2014 **Participation in Philosophy Lab at The CUNY Graduate Center**
CITI certification for research with human subjects: HSR for Social and Behavioral Faculty, Graduate Students and Postdoctoral Scholars
- 2006 **Copyediting certification**

PROFESSIONAL MEMBERSHIPS

- American Philosophical Association**
- Phi Sigma Tau (International Philosophy Honors Society)**
- Phi Beta Kappa**
- Society for Indian and Tibetan Buddhist Philosophy**
- Society for Ancient and Medieval Philosophy**

DISSERTATION ABSTRACT**“Persons as Self-Consciously Concerned Beings”****Committee: John Greenwood (Advisor)****Graham Priest****Linda Alcoff****Jesse Prinz****Marya Schechtman**

My dissertation is an analysis of the concept of a person. According to this analysis, persons are beings capable of being responsible for their actions, which requires possession of the capacities for self-consciousness, in the sense of critical awareness of one's first-order desires and beliefs and concern, meaning emotional investment in the satisfaction of one's desires and truth of one's beliefs. The persistence of a person over time requires uninterrupted maintenance of those capacities. This view is in conflict with the more popular account of persistence in terms of the continuity of distinctive psychological states endorsed by Derek Parfit and David Lewis, among others. Furthermore, this account of personhood has the consequence that contrary to most alternative conceptions, the possession of rights to life and good treatment and the concern for others are neither necessary nor sufficient for being a person. In chapter one I explain and argue for my account of personhood in terms of self-consciousness and concern, illustrating that a being lacking either capacity would not be capable of responsible action and therefore would not be a person. In chapter two I argue for the claim that the persistence of a person requires only that those capacities are maintained uninterruptedly. Chapter three concerns the ontology of persons. There I argue for a Reductionist view of persons and defuse the objection that such a view necessarily slides into Eliminativism. In chapter four I draw a distinction between the concepts of 'person' and 'self,' arguing that the latter is not unique to persons and is best understood in neuro-cognitive terms. The fifth and final chapter deals with the implications of my account of personhood for ethics, as regards rights and concern for others.

LANGUAGE COMPETENCE

German reading and translation

NON-ACADEMIC SERVICE ACTIVITIES

- 2014 **Rescuing Stray Cats, TNR Certified**
- 2005 **Volunteered in Bellevue Hospital psychiatric ward**

ARTISTIC ENDEAVORS

- 2013 **Appeared in and contributed music to the short film
“Bound in Change”**
- 2013 **Wrote and starred in the web pilot “Wrestling is Philosophy”**
- 2011 **Acted in, contributed music to, and served as philosophical consultant
for the short film “Freelight”**
- 2010-2012 **Participated in The New York Consciousness Collective, a musical
ensemble of philosophers and cognitive scientists**
- 1999-2011 **Singer and lyricist in various NYC-based rock bands**

REFERENCES

John Greenwood - jgreenwood@gc.cuny.edu, The CUNY Graduate Center

Linda Alcoff - lmartina@hunter.cuny.edu, The CUNY Graduate Center

Jesse Prinz - jesse@subcortex.com, The CUNY Graduate Center

Laura Keating - lkeating@hunter.cuny.edu, Hunter College

Richard Sorabji, richard.sorabji@philosophy.ox.ac.uk, Oxford University

Christa Acampora, christa.acampora@hunter.cuny.edu, Hunter College