

# Marvin Backes

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## Areas of Specialization

Epistemology (traditional and social), Metaphysics

## Areas of Competence

Ethics, Metaethics, Aesthetics, Philosophy of Language, Philosophy of Mind

## Employment

- 2020 - present    **Uppsala University**, *Department of Philosophy*  
Wenner-Gren Research Fellow
- 2020 (Spring)    **University of St Andrews**, *Department of Philosophy*  
Associate Lecturer

## Education

- 2015 - 2019    **University of St Andrews/Stirling**  
PhD Philosophy  
Dissertation: *What Justifies Belief? Probability, Normalcy, and the Functional Theory*  
Supervisors: Patrick Greenough and Crispin Wright
- 2014 - 2015    **University of St Andrews/Stirling**  
MLitt Philosophy (with distinction in the dissertation), 2015  
Dissertation: *Epistemic Justification: A Case for a Plurality of Concepts*  
Supervisor: Jessica Brown
- 2009 - 2013    **Westminster College**, *Salt Lake City, USA*  
BA Philosophy and Economics (with honours), 2013

## Publications

- 2020            “Epistemology and the Law: Why There is No Epistemic Mileage in Legal Cases”, *Philosophical Studies* 177: 2759-2778
- 2019            “Normalcy, Justification, and the Easy-Defeat Problem”, *Philosophical Studies* 176: 2877-2895.
- 2019            “A Bitter Pill for Closure”, *Synthese* 196: 3773-3787.

## In Progress

- Under Review*    Epistemic Justification: Probability, Normalcy, and the Functional Theory
- Under Review*    Can Groups be Genuine Believers? The Prospects of Interpretationism

## Selected Talks

### **Epistemic Justification: Monism, Pluralism, and the Functional Theory**

June 2020            Higher Seminar for Theoretical Philosophy, *Uppsala University*

### **Epistemology and the Law: Why There is No Epistemic Mileage in Legal Cases**

November 2019    Epistemology Research Group, *University of Edinburgh*

April 2019 Evidence in Law and Ethics, *Jagiellonian University (Kraków)*

**Normalcy Views of Justification and the Easy-Defeat Problem**

September 2018 GAP.10 (German Society for Analytic Philosophy), *University of Cologne*

June 2018 European Epistemology Network, *University of Amsterdam*

April 2018 XIX Taller d'Investigació en Filosofia, *University of Barcelona*

**Justification from Statistical Evidence: A Defense**

May 2018 Arché Epistemology Group, *University of St Andrews*

**Justification as Multiply Realizable (invited talk)**

December 2017 The Metaphysics of Knowledge Workshop II, *University of St Andrews*

**A Dilemma for Non-Probabilistic Accounts of Justification**

May 2016 Flash Epistemology Workshop, *University of St Andrews*

**Finding Value in Verbal Disputes**

July 2015 Understanding Value IV, *University of Sheffield*

Awards & Grants

2020 - present **Wenner-Gren Postdoctoral Research Fellowship**

Competitive stipend for postdoctoral research

2020 **University of St Andrews Outstanding Teacher Award Nomination**

Nominated by students for the annual Outstanding Teacher Award

2015 - 2018 **AD Links Foundation Postgraduate Scholarship**

Competitive three-year scholarship for doctoral studies, awarded by the *University of St Andrews*

2014 - 2015 **Formula Santander Postgraduate Scholarship**

Competitive scholarship for graduate studies, awarded by the *University of St Andrews*

2013 **Westminster College Outstanding Student Award (Philosophy)**

Awarded annually to final-year philosophy students in recognition of outstanding academic achievement

2009 - 2013 **Westminster College Merit Scholarship**

Merit based four-year scholarship for undergraduate studies

Teaching

**Lecturing**, *University of St Andrews*

Spring 2020 PY4606 Contemporary Epistemology (Social and Political Epistemology)

PY1901 Morality and Human Nature (Moral Theory)

Spring 2019 PY2903 Matters of Life and Death (Ethics)

**Tutoring**, *University of St Andrews*

Spring 2020 PY2012 Meaning and Knowing (Epistemology and Philosophy of Language)

Spring 2019 PY1013 The Enlightenment (History of Philosophy/Political Philosophy)

Autumn 2018 PY2011 Foundations of Western Philosophy (Ancient Philosophy)

Spring 2018 PY1012 Reasoning (Elementary Propositional and Predicate Logic)

Spring 2017 PY2013 Moral and Aesthetic Values (Metaethics and Aesthetics)

Autumn 2016 PY1010 Mind and World (Metaphysics and Philosophy of Mind)

Spring 2016 PY2012 Meaning and Knowing (Epistemology and Philosophy of Language)

Autumn 2015 PY1010 Mind and World (Metaphysics and Philosophy of Mind)

**Instructor on the Philosophy Academic Skills Project**, *University of St Andrews*

I designed and delivered two workshops aimed at making analytic philosophy more accessible to undergraduate students new to the subject and to help students develop some of the key skills required to succeed in philosophy.

Spring 2016      Philosophy Academic Skills Workshop, 'Essay Writing in Philosophy'  
Autumn 2015    Philosophy Academic Skills Workshop, 'Thinking Like a Philosopher'

### Professional Experience & Service

#### **Collaborative Research**

As an active member of the *Arché Philosophical Research Centre for Logic, Language, Metaphysics and Epistemology* at the *University of St Andrews*, I was affiliated with the following research groups.

- 2015 - 2019    **Epistemology: Current Themes**  
                  *Principal investigator: Jessica Brown*
- 2017 - 2019    **Conceptual Engineering**  
                  *Principal investigator: Kevin Sharp*
- 2016 - 2017    **Metaphysics: Identity, Existence & Structure**  
                  *Principal investigator: Aaron Cotnoir*
- 2015 - 2016    **Language and Mind**  
                  *Principal investigator: Derek Ball & Simon Prosser*

#### **Conference Organising**

- 2017            Organiser of the 10<sup>th</sup> Arché Graduate Conference  
                  External funding won from the *Scots Philosophical Association* and *Analysis*.
- 2016            Organiser of the 9<sup>th</sup> Arché Graduate Conference  
                  External funding won from the *Mind Association*, the *Scots Philosophical Association*, and through the *CAPOD Innovation Grant*.

#### **Refereeing**

Invited Referee: *Analysis*, *Journal of Philosophy*, *Philosophical Studies*, *Inquiry*, *Australasian Journal of Philosophy*

Referee for the Arché Graduate Conference 2016, 2017 & 2018

#### **Student Welfare Support**

- 2015 - 2018    Assistant Warden at University Hall, *St Andrews*  
                  As a member of a diverse hall community, one of my central responsibilities was to offer pastoral care to residents of the Hall and to mentor students in their transition into university life.
- 2015            To better support students, I completed a Mental Health First Aid training

### References

**Patrick Greenough**  
Senior Lecturer in Logic and  
Metaphysics  
University of St Andrews  
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**Crispin Wright**  
Professor of Philosophy  
NYU/University of Stirling  
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**Jessica Brown**  
Arché Professor of  
Philosophy  
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**Matt McGrath**  
Distinguished Professor of  
Philosophy  
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**Martin Smith**  
Reader in Philosophy  
University of Edinburgh  
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