GILLIAN GRAY

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RESEARCH

Areas of Specialization:
Ethics, Feminist Philosophy and Philosophy of Gender, Metaphysics

Areas of Competence:
Early Modern, Kant, Social Philosophy and Philosophy of Race, Bioethics

EDUCATION

University of Michigan, Ann Arbor: PhD in Philosophy, expected August 2025
Dissertation: "Finding Your People, Finding Yourself"
Committee: Maegan Fairchild (co-chair), Sarah Buss (co-chair), Ishani Maitra, Emmalon Davis

Whitman College: BA in Philosophy, 2017
Summa cum laude, with honors in philosophy
Honors thesis: "Kant on the Moral Considerability of Individuals with Mental Disorders"
Advisor: Patrick Frierson

Hertford College, University of Oxford: Visitor in Philosophy, Spring 2016

HONORS AND AWARDS

Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion (DEI) Prize, University of Michigan, 2024
> Awarded to recognize "outstanding work to advance our Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion mission" over the course of a graduate career.

Dewey Prize, University of Michigan, 2024
> Awarded for excellence in undergraduate teaching.

Faculty Prize for Excellence in Teaching, University of Michigan, 2021
> Awarded for excellence in undergraduate teaching.

Special Prize for Leadership in Cocurricular Enrichment, University of Michigan, 2021
> Awarded for "outstanding contributions to cocurricular efforts that benefit the department, the institution, the community, and the discipline."

Rackham Merit Fellowship, University of Michigan, 2018
> "Recognizes entering students who have outstanding academic qualifications, show exceptional potential for scholarly success in their graduate program, and demonstrate promise for contributing to the wider academic, professional, or civic communities."

William W. Soper Prize in Philosophy, Whitman College, 2017
> Awarded to "the most outstanding senior philosophy major as selected by the faculty in the department."

Beinecke Scholarship, 2016
> Intended to "encourage and enable highly motivated students to pursue opportunities available to them and to be courageous in the selection of a graduate course of study in the arts, humanities and social sciences."

PanHellenic Scholarship, 2015
> Intended to "recognize and reward students who have demonstrated exceptional academic performance, as well as to provide meaningful support to those with great financial need."

PRESENTATIONS

"Finding Your People, Finding Yourself"
ISOS Social Ontology 2024, Summer 2024; Duke University

"Social Groups and Identity Ambivalence"
NASSP Annual Conference, Summer 2024; Creighton University

"Ambivalence and Authenticity"
Social Ontology Faces the Future Conference, Summer 2024; Boğaziçi University
W&L Philosophy colloquium talk, Spring 2024; Washington and Lee University

"Ambivalence, Identity, and Social Groups"
Michigan-MIT Social Philosophy Workshop, Spring 2024; MIT

"Social Groups, Identity, and Norms"
Michigan-MIT Social Philosophy Workshop, Spring 2023; University of Michigan

"(Why) Is it Valuable to Be Certain About Our Group Identities? And What Happens When We're Not?"
Michigan Graduate Student Working Group, Spring 2023; University of Michigan

"Misgendering as an Oppressive Barrier to Meaningful Social Interactions"
MANCEPT "What is Gender?" Workshop, Fall 2022; University of Manchester

"A Pragmatic Pluralist Approach to Social Categories of Identity"
ISOS Social Ontology 2021, Summer 2021 (virtual)
Michigan-MIT Social Philosophy Workshop, Summer 2021; University of Michigan

"Not-So-Neutral Counterparts"
Value in Language Workshop, Spring 2021; Slovak Academy of Sciences (virtual)
Munich Graduate Conference in Ethics, Summer 2020; University of Munich (virtual)

COMMENTS

On Alice van't Hoff's "Gender as Interpretation"
Rutgers Social Metaphysics Workshop, Spring 2024; Rutgers University

On Dee Payton's "Ontological Deflationism and Normative Structure"
University of Michigan Spring Colloquium, Winter 2024; University of Michigan

On Alice van't Hoff's "Identifying Gender Identity"
Duke Social Metaphysics Workshop, Summer 2023; Duke University

On Megan Hyska's "What is Social Organizing?"
Duke Social Metaphysics Workshop, Summer 2022; Duke University

On Cat Saint-Croix's "Rumination and Wronging"
UM Philosophy Alumni Conference, Summer 2021; University of Michigan

TEACHING EXPERIENCE

University of Michigan, as Instructor of Record
> PHIL 387: Early Modern Feminist Philosophers, Fall 2023 (in person)
> PHIL 154: Science Fiction and Philosophy (Special topic: Identity, Oppression, and Resistance), Spring 2022 (in person)

University of Michigan, as Graduate Student Instructor
> PHIL 356: Bioethics (for Sarah Buss), Fall 2024 (in person)
> PHIL 110: Introduction to Ethics (for Anna Edmonds), Winter 2021 (virtual)
> PHIL 101: Introduction to Philosophy (for Maegan Fairchild), Fall 2020 (virtual)
> PHIL 355: Contemporary Moral Problems (for Dan Lowe), Winter 2020 (in person, transitioned to virtual)
> PHIL 356: Bioethics (for Sarah Buss), Fall 2019 (in person)

CONSULTING EXPERIENCE

[Graduate Student Instructional Consultant](#)**, University of Michigan Center for Research on Learning and Teaching, 2022-present**
As a "GSIC," I work closely with instructors across the University to provide constructive feedback and guidance on their teaching. I review teaching statements and student evaluations, consult on challenging classroom dynamics, and solicit and communicate student feedback.

Practice Teaching Facilitator, University of Michigan, Winter 2023
As part of their new instructor training, new instructors participate in collaborative sessions where they deliver practice lessons to their peers for feedback. Practice teaching facilitators are experienced instructors who lead these sessions, provide feedback on these practice lessons, and guide new instructors on how to provide actionable feedback to each other as well.

Graduate Student Mentor, University of Michigan, 2021-2022
As a "GSM," I co-facilitated orientation sessions for new graduate student instructors (GSIs)

in Philosophy, developed and conducted departmental pedagogy workshops, consulted with Philosophy GSIs about teaching practices and challenging classroom dynamics, and provided constructive feedback on Philosophy GSIs' discussion sections.

PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT

Graduate Student Teaching Certificate, University of Michigan, May 2022

Diversity and Inclusive Teaching Seminar, University of Michigan; Fall 2022
> An advanced, interactive eight-session seminar on inclusive teaching for graduate students conducted by UM's Center for Research on Learning and Teaching and Program on Intergroup Relations.

SERVICE AND CONFERENCE ORGANIZING

UM Spring Colloquium Co-Organizer (2023-2024)
> Theme: "The Many Flavors of Metaphysics"
> Organizing involves developing a proposal for the theme of the conference, inviting speakers whose work connects with that theme, and organizing conference events.

UM Race, Gender and Feminist Philosophy RIW Co-Organizer (2021-2022)
> Organizing involves facilitating reading group meetings every other week, inviting outside speakers (primarily early-career faculty), and running works-in-progress sessions with graduate students and early-career faculty.

Graduate Employees' Organization 3550 Grievance Chair (2021-2022)
> The Grievance Chair advocates for graduate student workers facing a range of workplace-related issues. This involves filing grievances and meeting with Human Resources when the union contract is violated, as well as facilitating committee meetings to discuss how best to address emerging workplace challenges.

COMPASS Workshop Co-Organizer (2018-2021), Mentor (2018-2023)
> Organizing involves selecting participants, planning and facilitating information sessions and seminar-style discussions during the workshop, and pairing participants with graduate student mentors. Mentoring involves providing one-on-one guidance with a participant during and after the workshop.

Graduate Employees' Organization 3550 Philosophy Department Steward (2020-2021)
> Stewards serve as a liaison between the graduate student union and graduate students.

Philosophy Alumni Conference Co-Organizer (2020-2021)
> Organizing involves inviting speakers and planning conference events.

Philosophy Department Graduate Representative to the Faculty (2019-2020)
> The "grad rep" serves as a liaison between the graduate students and the faculty, often focusing on addressing issues of departmental climate.

Michigan High School Ethics Bowl Coach (2018-19), Co-Organizer (2019-20), Judge (2020-21)
   Coaches work regularly with a school's team to prepare them to critically engage with complex ethical cases. Co-organizers help plan the Ethics Bowl and other related events. Judges evaluate and provide feedback for teams based on their respectful engagement with one another and on their critical philosophical engagement with the ethical questions posed to them during the event.

GRADUATE COURSEWORK

Contemporary Issues in Ontology and Social Ontology (CEU Summer University Course co-taught by Mark Balaguer, Talia Bettcher, Asa Burman, Esa Diaz-Leon, Alex Grzankowski, Ferenc Huoranszki, Michaela McSweeney, and Asya Passinsky) – *not taken for credit*
Independent Study on Ethics of Identity (Sarah Buss)
Independent Study on Social Ontology (Maegan Fairchild)
Plato's *Timaeus* (Laura Ruetsche)
Sex Equality (Catharine MacKinnon)
Moral Communication and Repair (Elizabeth Anderson)
Formal Methods in Philosophy (Sarah Moss)
Transcendental Arguments (Janum Sethi)
Radical Revisionary Ontology (Maegan Fairchild)
Language, Ideology, and Ideologues (Eric Swanson)
Attunement to Reasons (Peter Railton)
Kant's *Critique of Pure Reason* (Janum Sethi)
Consent and Coercion (Scott Hershovitz and Sarah Moss)
Skills and Achievement (Brian Weatherson)
Ethical Analysis (Peter Railton)
Proseminar (Eric Swanson)

REFERENCES

Research:

Maegan Fairchild (Co-Chair)
Assistant Professor of Philosophy
University of Michigan
mmfair@umich.edu

Sarah Buss (Co-Chair)
Professor of Philosophy
University of Michigan
sbuss@umich.edu

Ishani Maitra
Professor of Philosophy
University of Michigan
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Emmalon Davis
Assistant Professor of Philosophy
University of Michigan
davisemm@umich.edu

Teaching:
Brian Weatherson
Professor of Philosophy
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How do we figure out who we are? One way is by looking to groups of people around us—people grouped by religion, culture, gender, and so on—to see which of these groups we identify with. In my dissertation, I offer an approach to understanding social group identification which emphasizes familiar experiences of self-discovery and self-determination.

My first chapter, "Finding Your People, Finding Yourself," has two goals: to provide an account of what it is to identify with a social group and to illuminate the important role this practice plays in the project of self-discovery and self-determination. According to my account, to identify with a social group is to *conceive of oneself as significantly similar to people in that group.* For example, to identify with the group 'women' is to conceive of oneself as significantly similar to other women. This account also provides an explanation as to why identifying with social groups is a central part of "figuring out who we are": identifying with groups involves taking as *significant* some way in which we relate to others. This is itself important to how we conceive of ourselves. According to my approach, our self-conceptions are neither fully independent from nor wholly determined by the social world. Thus, answering the question "Who am I?" is neither a fully introspective nor extrospective project. Rather, it is an ongoing, dynamic project taken up in conjunction with others around us.

My second chapter, "On Identity Ambivalence," focuses on a phenomenon I call "identity ambivalence": ambivalence about whether one identifies with a social group. Descriptions of identity ambivalence are pervasive in narratives about self-discovery and self-determination. Yet familiar accounts of social group identity aren't suited to explain this phenomenon, because they conceive of social group identities as settled, stable, and sometimes innate. I argue that identity ambivalence is better understood as something that arises during a dynamic process of social group identification. According to my account, identity ambivalence occurs when *a person has conflicting attitudes about whether they are significantly similar to people in a social group.* This account helps to explain the pervasiveness of identity ambivalence, as well as two other apparent features of identity ambivalence: that it is not easily resolved by introspection or by turning to publicly accessible social facts, and that it is compatible with authenticity. I close by arguing that we ought to understand identity ambivalence as central to social group identification and the broader project of self-discovery and self-determination.

New social group concepts and corresponding social group identities pop up all the time. For example, only in the past few decades has it become common to talk about non-binary people and non-binary gender identities. Call these "emerging" social group concepts and social group identities. How and why do these emerge? In my third chapter, "Emerging Social Group Identities," I argue that social group concepts and corresponding identities often emerge to make sense of what is going on when people identify with one another in ways that don't yet align with our existing social group concepts. This explanation fills a current gap in the literature on social group identities. Many recent accounts explain social group identities in terms of social norms. On these approaches, which particular group identities a person has—and what makes those identities important—is settled by their relation to norms governing how people in that group are expected to behave and be treated. These accounts can't make sense of emerging social group concepts and social group identities, which can and often do emerge *before* corresponding social norms are established. Because I focus on something more basic than and prior to group norms—the similarities we share with other people and the significance they take on—I can better explain emerging group identities and their importance.