

1033 E. Third St., Sycamore Hall 026, Bloomington, IN 47405  
blakes@indiana.edu  
217-419-6860

**AOS:** epistemology; philosophy of perception; Chinese philosophy.

**AOC:** philosophy of language; philosophy of mind; history of analytic philosophy.

### **Education**

Indiana University, Philosophy PhD program, 2006—present.

Dissertation: *Mental Content and Epistemic Foundations*.

Director: Gary Ebbs; Committee members: Fred Schmitt, Mark Kaplan, and Adam Leite.

Minor: Chinese (with a focus on Classical Chinese language and philosophy).

Expected degree date: Summer 2015.

University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign, Philosophy PhD program, 2000—2006.

MA conferred May 2003.

International Chinese Language Program, National Taiwan University, 2003-2005.

Full-time language study supported by Fulbright Fellowship and Taiwan MOE grant.

Bryn Mawr College, B.A. in philosophy (at Haverford College), May 1999, with honors.

### **Fellowships and Awards**

#### **Major Research and Teaching Awards**

Nelson Dissertation Year Fellowship,

Indiana University Philosophy Department, 2011-2012.

Bo and Lynn Clark Memorial Prize for excellent graduate student teaching,

Indiana University Philosophy Department, May 2010.

Ewing Graduate Student Essay Prize for “Metaphor and Radical Interpretation,”

Indiana University Philosophy Department, May 2008.

Taiwan Ministry of Education, grant for language study, 2004-2005.

Fulbright Fellowship, Taiwan, 2003-2004.

#### **Other awards**

American Philosophical Association Graduate Student Travel Stipend, December 2013.

College of Arts and Sciences Travel Grant to Pacific APA, March 2013.

East Asian Studies Center Travel Grant to Eastern APA, December 2012.

Summer Fellowship,

University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign Philosophy Department, 2003.

Teaching reduction fellowship,

University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign Philosophy Department, 2000-2001.

The central goal of my dissertation is to show that attention to ordinary conversational exchanges illuminates the connection between (1) conditions on the possession of contentful mental states—such as the perception or belief *this is a birch*—and (2) the role of perception in justifying perceptual beliefs. In particular, I argue that our behavior in ordinary exchanges like the following manifests an ability to evaluate perceptual states as reasons for belief.

Imagine someone—call her Sylvia—strolling along the streets of Philadelphia with a friend when she comes upon a row of trees and exclaims, “Those poor birches! Their bark is peeling off because of pollution!” Sylvia is familiar with birches from summers spent in upstate New York, where she developed a fondness for birches and their distinctive white bark. However, Sylvia’s friend tells her that the trees she sees are in fact perfectly healthy sycamores. Because of this exchange, Sylvia comes to believe that the trees are not birches but sycamores, and with practice comes to reliably distinguish sycamores from birches.

To focus discussion, let us assume that Sylvia’s assertions about the world manifest her beliefs, and that she initially believes as she does because she perceives the trees to be birches. Thus, I assume that belief and perception can share content, and that such contents represent the world as being a certain way—and further, that perceptions and beliefs with such content are sometimes false, as Sylvia takes hers to have been.

Sylvia’s motivation to change her attitude to the content *this is a birch*, I argue, comes from her recognizing conflicts between the content of certain mental states and desiring to resolve them—she recognizes that *this is a birch* is incompatible with *this is a sycamore*. To resolve the tension and come to make correct identifications in the future, she must identify her grounds for belief and acknowledge the content of her initial perception to be false. Her capacity to evaluate her reasons in this way requires not only identifying the content of the perceptual state, shared with the belief it purports to support, but also identifying it as a perceptual state. Such evaluation and the modifications it produces manifest what I call second-order evaluative control.

Recognizing second-order evaluative control gives us resources needed to explain how perceptual states, which causally connect us to the world, can serve as reasons. Further, it allows us to situate insights that motivate some versions of foundationalism, including the idea that in some instances, nothing more than perception alone might be needed to justify belief, and the idea that reliability has a place in epistemic evaluation.

If second-order evaluative control involves assessment of one’s belief and perceptual states using second-order concepts, as I argue it does, then we must reject any view that holds that such concepts and abilities are not relevant to or required for justification. Among the views we must reject are the access externalisms of Tyler Burge and James Pryor, for instance, which imply that our assessment of and modifications to our perceptual states is irrelevant to the justification they provide. Rather, since evaluating evidence is part and parcel of our ability to express beliefs with social content, we cannot have such mental content without the ability to evaluate our perceptual evidence.

In short, engaging with others is not only necessary to our gaining proficiency with a range of concepts, but in enabling us to grasp and master these concepts, also thereby affects our attitudes towards perceptual states involving those concepts, and thus the justification we might obtain from such perceptual states.

## Publications

- “Agency, Non-action, and Desire in the *Laozi*”.  
*Journal of Chinese Philosophy*, forthcoming, September 2014.
- “*Mengzi* and its Philosophical Commitments, a Response to Van Norden’s *Mengzi*.”  
*Journal of Chinese Philosophy*. Vol. 37, Issue 4. Dec. 2010.
- Book review: WANG, Xiaobo 王曉波 *Dao and Fa: Analysis of Legalist Thought and Huang-Lao Philosophy* <道與法：法家思想和黃老哲學解析>.  
*Dao: A Journal of Comparative Philosophy*. Vol. 8, No. 3, September 2009.
- Book Review: *Mencius on Becoming Human* by James Behuniak (invited)  
*Journal of the Institute of Chinese Lit. and Phil.*, Taipei: Academica Sinica. Sept. 2005.

## Presentations

### Talks

- “Disputation and Names in the *Zhuangzi*” (refereed).  
Eastern APA, Society for Asian and Comparative Philosophy, December 2014.
- “Perceptual Content and Epistemic Foundations” (invited).  
Davidson College, April 14, 2014.
- “Knowledge and Disputation in the *Zhuangzi*” (invited).  
Colorado State University, January 30, 2014.
- “Perceptual Content and Epistemic Foundations” (refereed).  
Eastern APA, main program, December 2013.
- “Knowledge and Second-Order Skepticism in the *Zhuangzi*” (refereed).  
Eastern APA, ISCWP, December 2013.
- “Knowledge and Non-Action in the *Laozi*” (refereed).  
Pacific APA, International Society for Chinese Philosophy. March 2013.
- “A Problem of the Senses in Chinese Thought” (refereed).  
Eastern APA, Society for Asian and Comparative Philosophy. December 2012.
- “A New Myth of the Given?” (invited).  
James B. Nelson Lecture, Indiana University Department of Philosophy. April 2012.
- “A Problem of the Senses in Chinese Thought” (refereed).  
Midwest Conference in Chinese Thought, Indiana University. April 2012.
- “Comments on Van Norden’s *Mengzi: With Selections from Traditional Commentaries*.”  
Eastern APA, Int’l Society for Chinese Philosophy. December 2009.
- “Is and Ought: Zhuangzi on Rectifying Names” (refereed).  
Midwest Conference in Chinese Thought, Southern Illinois University. April 2009.
- “Metaethics and the Value of Humanity in the Mencius” (refereed).  
Intermountain West Student Philosophy Conference, University of Utah. March 2007.
- “The *Zhuangzi* as Philosophical Therapy” (refereed).  
Graduate Student Philosophy Conference, Southern Illinois University. November 2005.

## **Presentations, continued**

### **Comments**

Comments on “On Naturalism and Feminism in Moral Epistemology: Resolving the Challenges to an Alliance”, Daniel Beck. Indiana Philosophical Association, October 2014.

Comments on “An Evolutionary Interpretation of Confucian Moral Thought”, Ryan Nichols. Central APA, International Society of Comparative Philosophy. April 2008.

## **Papers in Preparation**

“Perceptual Content and Epistemic Foundations”

“Metaphor and Radical Interpretation”

“Flying Transcendence: Uses of the *Zhuangzi* in later Daoism”

“Metaethics and the value of humanity in the *Mencius*”

## **Teaching Experience**

**Lead Instructorships:** Duties include course design; supervision of graduate-student discussion leaders; lecturing and leading classroom discussion; creation of assignments, paper topics, and exams; design of grading rubrics; holding office hours; responses to and assessment of some student work; grade entry.

Spring 2011: Introduction to Ethics P140

Spring 2010: Introduction to Philosophy P100

Spring 2008: Introduction to Philosophy P100

**Instructorships:** Duties include course design; lecturing and leading discussion; creation of assignments, paper topics, and exams; design of grading rubrics; holding office hours; responses to and assessment of all student work; grade entry.

Spring 2012: Introduction to Ethics P140

Fall 2012: Thinking and Reasoning P105

Spring 2009: Introduction to Philosophy P100

Fall 2008: Introduction to Chinese Philosophy P100

Fall 2007: Introduction to Chinese Philosophy P100

Spring 2007: Introduction to Ethics P140

Spring 2006: Introduction to Philosophy 101 (at UIUC)

**Teaching Assistantships:** Duties include leading discussion; responses to and assessment of student work; holding office hours.

Fall 2014: Introduction to Symbolic Logic (Kaplan)

Fall 2013: Thinking and Reasoning P105 (Savion)

Fall 2009: Introduction to Existentialism P135 (Spade)

## Teaching Experience, continued

### Teaching Assistantships:

- Fall 2006: Introduction to Philosophy P100 (Leite)
- Fall 2005: Introduction to Philosophy 101 (Ebbs) (at UIUC)
- Spring 2003: Introduction to Ethics 105 (Abramson) (at UIUC)
- Spring 2002: Introduction to Logic 102 (Maher) (at UIUC)
- Fall 2001: Introduction to Logic 102 (McCarthy) (at UIUC)
- Fall 2000: Introduction to Philosophy 101, Composition II (Schacht) (at UIUC)

### Graderships: Duties include responses to and assessment of student work.

- Spring 2014: Symbolic Logic P250 (Savion)
- Fall 2002: Symbolic Logic 202 (Wengert) (at UIUC)
- Spring 2001: Ancient Philosophy 203 (Mohr) (at UIUC)

## Courses

I am prepared to teach the following courses.

At the Introductory Level:

- Introduction to Chinese Thought
- Introduction to Ethics
- Introduction to Philosophy
- Introduction to Critical Thinking (Introductory Logic)
- Philosophy of Human Nature

At the Intermediate Level:

- History of Analytic Philosophy
- Philosophy of Mind
- Philosophy of Language

At the Graduate or Advanced Undergraduate Level:

- Externalism and Internalism in Epistemology
- Self-Knowledge
- Chinese Thought
- Philosophy of Mind: State and Content
- Quine and Davidson
- Philosophy of Perception
- Social Epistemology
- Independent studies in philosophical or religious texts in classical Chinese

I would like to develop the following courses in the future:

- History of Daoist Religious and Philosophical Thought
- Feminist Epistemology
- Philosophy of Religion
- Wittgenstein and Zhuangzi

## **Departmental and Professional Service**

Referee for *Journal of Chinese Philosophy*.

Referee for *Philosophy East and West*.

Organizer and chair, "Philosophy of language in Early China", Eastern APA, December 2014.

Organizer, "Philosophy of Mind in Early China", Eastern APA, December 2012.

Planning committee member, Midwest Conference in Chinese Thought, 2007-2008.

Graduate student representative to hiring committee, IU Philosophy Department, 2007-2008.

Graduate student representative to the faculty, UIUC Department of Philosophy, 2001-2003.

Graduate student morale officer, IU Philosophy Department, 2007-2010.

Graduate Student Colloquium Series Co-chair, UIUC, 2001-2002.

Graduate Student Conference Committee Member, UIUC, 2000-2001.

Presenter to the IU undergraduate Philosophy Club, topic: Chinese epistemology, March 2013.

Panelist, Workshop on applying for Fulbright Fellowships, UIUC, Graduate College Fellowship Office, May 1, 2003.

Lead presenter, Seminar on graduate study in philosophy in the United States, Foundation for Scholarly Exchange (Fulbright Foundation), Taiwan, Dec. 3, 2004.

## **Languages**

Contemporary Mandarin: reading and listening: fluent; speaking and writing: good.

Classical (Literary) Chinese: reading: fluent.

## **Professional Memberships**

American Philosophical Association, 2009-present.

International Society for Comparative Studies of Chinese and Western Philosophy, 2007-present.

## **Recommenders**

**Steve Angle**, Professor of Philosophy, Wesleyan University, [sangle@wesleyan.edu](mailto:sangle@wesleyan.edu)

**Gary Ebbs**, Professor of Philosophy, Indiana University, [gebbs@indiana.edu](mailto:gebbs@indiana.edu)

**Manyul Im**, Dean, University of Bridgeport, [manyulim@bridgeport.edu](mailto:manyulim@bridgeport.edu)

**Mark Kaplan**, Professor of Philosophy, Indiana University, [kaplanm@indiana.edu](mailto:kaplanm@indiana.edu)

**Adam Leite**, Professor of Philosophy, Indiana University, [aleite@indiana.edu](mailto:aleite@indiana.edu)

**Fred Schmitt**, Professor of Philosophy, Indiana University, [fschmitt@indiana.edu](mailto:fschmitt@indiana.edu)

**Aaron Stalnaker**, Professor of Religious Studies, Indiana University, [astalnak@indiana.edu](mailto:astalnak@indiana.edu)