

TED SHEAR

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AREAS OF INTEREST

Areas of Specialisation: Philosophical Logic, Epistemology, Philosophy of Mind, Decision Theory, Logic
Areas of Competence: Philosophy of Language, Philosophy of Science, Metaphysics

EMPLOYMENT

Postdoctoral Research Fellow, School of Economics, University of Queensland

Project: Epistemically Feasible Choice: Implications for Sustainable Risk Management

Principal Investigators: John Quiggin and L.A. Paul

EDUCATION

PhD (2017), Philosophy, University of California, Davis

Dissertation: “The Difficult Business of Belief Change”

Advisers: G. Aldo Antonelli (1962-2015), Branden Fitelson, Hanti Lin

Committee: Bernard Molyneux, Adam Sennet, Wesley H. Holliday

Abstract: My dissertation explores a number of philosophical matters relating to qualitative (i.e. full) belief change and rational inquiry. These include (i) the effects of requiring that an agent’s procedure updating their beliefs cohere with their credences, (ii) the relationship between introspective inference and belief revision, and (iii) subtleties associated with resolving inconsistencies in belief sets. In my investigations of (i), I develop a new type of belief revision, called ‘*Lockean revision*’, which relies on a diachronic version of the Lockean thesis requiring that agents revise their beliefs to cohere with their Bayesian-updated credences. This approach is contrasted with the orthodox AGM approach, which is defined in wholly qualitative terms relying only on logical and set theoretic machinery. I establish a number of novel results — the most notable being the derivation of a non-arbitrary context insensitive value for Lockean revision’s free-parameter Lockean threshold at the Golden ratio conjugate ($\phi^{-1} \approx 0.618$). In my work on (ii), I challenge the traditional view that logical validity suffices to adequately capture guaranteed truth-preservation for introspective inference. I then propose a new characterisation that avoids the shortcomings of the traditional one and develop a new approach to modelling introspective inference. Using this apparatus, I provide a proof of concept through the presentation of a new solution to the surprise exam paradox. Finally, in attending to (iii), I present and discuss several interesting cases establishing that sometimes the only path for an agent to resolve an inconsistency in her beliefs is to give up a true belief. This result is *prima facie* surprising because one might expect that, given an inconsistent set of beliefs, there would always be some logically possible way to establish consistency through the removal of only false beliefs.

MA (2015), Philosophy, University of California, Davis

Visiting Fellow (2013), Center for Formal Epistemology, Carnegie Mellon University

BA (2008), Philosophy (Hons.), Linguistics, University of British Columbia

RESEARCH

Publications

1. “Two Approaches to Belief Revision” (with Branden Fitelson), *Erkenntnis* (forthcoming)

Under Review [*Drafts available by request*]

1. “Justification Logic with Confidence” (with John Quiggin)
2. “How to identify things: A formal treatment with application to the mind-body problem” (with Bernard Molyneux)
3. “Getting some closure with justification logic” (with Shawn Standefer and Rohan French)

Selected Presentations [* *Invited*]

“Justification Logic with Confidence” (with John Quiggin)

1. New Zealand Association of Philosophy Conference, 2017 – Dunedin, New Zealand
2. Economics and Philosophy Workshop, 2017 – Canberra, Australia *
3. University of Melbourne Logic Seminar, 2017 – Melbourne, Australia *
4. The Reasoning Club Conference, 2017 – Torino, Italy

“Two Approaches to Belief Revision” (with Branden Fitelson)

5. University of Queensland Philosophy Department Colloquium, 2017 – Brisbane, Australia *
6. FEW: Formal Epistemology Workshop, 2016 – Gröningen, Netherlands
7. Epistemic Utility Theory Conference, 2016 – Bristol, United Kingdom *
8. CSHPM: Canadian Society for the History and Philosophy of Mathematics, 2016 – Calgary, Canada
9. Philologica IV: Colombian Conference on Logic, Epistemology, and Philosophy of Science, 2016 – Bogota, Colombia *
10. CLMPS: Congress on Logic, Methodology, and Philosophy of Science, 2015 – Helsinki, Finland *
11. PROLOGIC: The Seventh Workshop on Combining Probability and Logic, 2015 – Canterbury, United Kingdom
12. UMD Philosophy of Probability Workshop, 2015 – University of Maryland, College Park *
13. Morris Colloquium on Cognitive Values, 2015 – University of Colorado, Boulder *
14. Full and Partial Belief Workshop, 2014 – Tilburg, Netherlands

“How to Identify Things: A formal treatment with application to the mind-body problem” (with Bernard Molyneux)

15. NCC: Northern California Consciousness Conference Poster Presentation, 2016 – UC Davis
16. Philologica IV: Colombian Conference on Logic, Epistemology, and Philosophy of Science, 2016 – Bogota, Colombia

“Lockean Danger Zones and Lossy Inferences”

17. European Summer Meeting of the Association for Symbolic Logic, the Logic Colloquium, 2015 – Helsinki, Finland

“The Cost of Consistency” (with Konstantin Genin)

18. ELISIEM: Epistemic Logic for Individual, Social, and Interactive Epistemology Workshop at ESSLLI, 2014 – Tübingen, Germany
19. CSHPM: Canadian Society for the History and Philosophy of Science Annual Meeting, 2014 – St. Catherines, Ontario *
20. Association of Symbolic Logic North American Meeting, 2014 – University of Colorado, Boulder
21. Berkeley-Stanford-Davis Philosophy Graduate Conference, 2014 – University of California, Davis
22. Philologica III: Colombian Conference on Logic, Epistemology, and Philosophy of Science, 2014 – Bogota, Colombia
23. USC-UCLA Graduate Conference in Philosophy, 2014 – University of Southern California
24. University of Miami Graduate Epistemology Conference, 2014 – University of Miami

“Self-defeating Reasoning and Surprise Exams”

25. Canadian Philosophical Association Annual Congress, 2013 – Victoria, British Columbia
26. Rutgers-Princeton Graduate Philosophy Conference, 2013 – Rutgers University
27. PhDs in Logic V, 2013 – Munich Center for Mathematical Philosophy
28. World Congress on Universal Logic, 2013 – Rio de Janeiro, Brazil
29. South Carolina Society for Philosophy, 2013 – College of Charleston

TEACHING

The teaching activities outlined below took place at UC Davis during the course of my PhD. As the primary instructor,

I have taught each of the following courses:

PHI-001	Introduction to Philosophy	PHI-012	Introduction to Symbolic Logic
PHI-005	Critical Reasoning	PHI-128	Rationality

Additionally, I have served as a teaching assistant (TA) for each of the following courses:

PHI-001	Introduction to Philosophy	PHI-015	Bioethics
PHI-005	Critical Reasoning	PHI-016	Foundations of American Democracy
PHI-012	Introduction to Symbolic Logic	PHI-101	Metaphysics
PHI-013	Minds, Brains and Computers	PHI-102	Theory of Knowledge

Further information about my teaching experience is provided in my [teaching portfolio](#).

SERVICE AND PROFESSIONAL ACTIVITIES

Service

2017	Panel Member, Workshop on Interdisciplinary Engagement, Australian Postgraduate Philosophy Conference, Brisbane, Australia
2013-2016	Organizer and speaker, L ^A T _E X and Beamer for Philosophers Workshop at UC Davis
2011-2016	Graduate Student Mentor
2011-2015	Organizing committee, Berkeley-Stanford-Davis Conference
2012-2015	Organizer, Training & Information in Pedagogical Saliency – UC Davis
2014	Co-founder, Minorities and Philosophy (MAP) UC Davis Chapter
2014	Organizer, Second Annual DEX Conference – Pre-Pacific APA Conference
2013	Organizing committee, First Annual DEX Conference – Pre-Pacific APA Conference
2012	Founder, Weekly Philosophy Department Tea Time

Referee

Analytic Philosophy, Ergo, Erkenntnis, Journal of Philosophical Logic, Philosophia, Philosophical Studies, Res Philosophica, Review of Symbolic Logic, Synthese, Thought

AWARDS

2016	Formal Epistemology Workshop Student Travel Grant – University of Groningen
2016	Epistemic Utility Theory Conference Student Travel Grant – University of Bristol
2015	Student Travel Grant (Logic Colloquium – Helsinki, Finland), Association of Symbolic Logic
2015	Graduate Student Travel Award (PROGIC – Canterbury, UK), UC Davis Graduate Studies
2014	Provost's Dissertation Year Fellowship in the Arts, Humanities and Social Sciences, UC Davis
2013	Visiting Scholar Fellowship Award, UC Davis Department of Philosophy
2008	Outstanding Graduating Student Award, University of British Columbia