

Samuel Z. Elgin

Curriculum Vitae

Employment

University of California, San Diego 2018-Present
Postdoctoral Fellow in Philosophy

Education

Yale University 2018
Ph.D. in Philosophy

University of California, Berkeley 2016-18
Exchange Scholar

Reed College 2011
B.A. in Philosophy

Contact Information

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Publications

Physicalism and the Identity of Identity Theories 2019
Erkenntnis, forthcoming.

Merely Partial Definition and the Analysis of Knowledge 2018
Synthese, forthcoming.

On Question-Begging and Analytic Content 2018
Synthese, forthcoming.

The Unreliability of Foreseeable Consequences: 2015
A Return to the Epistemic Objection
Ethical Theory and Moral Practice, 18: 759-66.

Works Under Review

There Are no Metaphysical Primitives

The Semantic Foundations of Philosophical Analysis

The Opacity of Definition

Knowledge is Closed Under Analytic Content

Dissertation

Essence, Definition and the Semantic Foundations of Analysis

Committee: Michael Della Rocca (Chair), David Charles, Shamik Dasgupta

My dissertation concerns pervasive misunderstandings in foundational metaphysics. In the first chapter, I undermine the notion of a metaphysical primitive. I argue that, if there were primitives, they would be essentially primitive. This requires them to have essences, which contradicts the assumption that they are primitive. In the second chapter, I demonstrate how recent metaphysical developments shed light on the analysis of knowledge. I argue that knowledge may have a real definition that is not uniquely individuating. This explains the persistence of Gettier cases as well as knowledge-first epistemology does, but allows knowledge to be ontologically dependent on justification, truth and belief. In the third chapter, I provide an analysis of question-begging in terms of analyticity; an argument begs the question just in case its conclusion is an analytic part of the conjunction of its premises. This explains how question-begging arguments are circular, and allows for valid arguments that do not beg the question. In the final chapter, I provide an analysis of generalized identities (sentences of the form 'To be *F* is to be *G*') in terms of exact truth-maker semantics; these sentences are true just in case that which makes something *F* is that which makes it *G*.

Area of Specialization

Metaphysics

Areas of Competence

Epistemology, Logic,
Normative Ethics

Presentations and Commentaries

Presentations

Does Definition Admit of Substitution? <i>Eastern Division American Philosophical Association</i>	Upcoming, 2020
Physicalism and the Identity of Identity Theories <i>Department Colloquium, University of California, San Diego</i>	Upcoming, 2019
Physicalism and the Identity of Identity Theories <i>Society for the Metaphysics of Science at the University of Toronto</i>	Upcoming, 2019
The Semantic Foundations of Philosophical Analysis <i>International Congress on Logic, Methodology and Philosophy of Science and Technology</i>	2019
The Semantic Foundations of Philosophical Analysis <i>Truthmaker Semantics: Applications in Philosophy and Linguistics at Hamburg University</i>	2019
Knowledge is Closed under Analytic Content <i>Semantics Babble at the University of California, San Diego</i>	2019
The Semantic Foundations of Philosophical Analysis <i>Northern New England Philosophical Association</i>	2018
The Semantic Foundations of Philosophical Analysis <i>Semantics Babble at the University of California, San Diego</i>	2018
The Semantic Foundations of Philosophical Analysis <i>Conference on Essence and Language, Canadian Metaphysics Collaborative</i>	2018
Verifying Physicalism <i>Workshop on the History and Metaphysics of the Concept of Laws of Nature, Central European University</i>	2018
The Semantic Foundations of Philosophical Analysis <i>Invited Colloquium, Reed College</i>	2018
Question-Begging and Analytic Content <i>IIFs-UNAM Philosophy Graduate Conference, Mexico City</i>	2018
Question-Begging and Analytic Content <i>Central Division American Philosophical Association</i>	2018
Truthmakers, Predicates and the Semantic Foundations of Analysis <i>Berkeley Wolheim Soceity</i>	2017
Merely Partial Definition and the Analysis of Knowledge <i>Philosopher's Cocoon, University of Tampa</i>	2017
Merely Partial Definition and the Analysis of Knowledge <i>Epistemic Virtues and Epistemic Skills, Bled Epistemology Conference, Slovenia</i>	2017
Computability and Conceivability <i>Conference on Evidence and Imagination, Graz University</i>	2016
Merely Partial Definition and the Analysis of Knowledge <i>Northern New England Philosophical Association</i>	2016
Dewey, Confucius and the Aims of Education <i>Conference on Educational Reform, Hangzhou Normal University</i>	2016
Concerning the Nature of Definition <i>Northern New England Philosophical Association</i>	2015
Ethical Atomism and the Immorality of Hypocrisy <i>Conference for Young Analytic Philosophers, Salzburg</i>	2015
Hypocrisy: The Tribute Vice Pays to Virtue <i>Syracuse Graduate Conference</i>	2015
The Myth of Balanced Consequences <i>British Society for Ethical Theory, Cambridge University</i>	2014

Epistemic Contextualism 2009
Pacific University Undergraduate Philosophy Conference

Commentaries

Compliance and Command, by Kit Fine 2016
Yale Graduate Philosophy Conference

Diamonds are Forever, by Cian Dorr 2015
Yale Graduate Philosophy Conference

Natural Kinds Light, by Ásta Kristjana Sveinsdóttir 2012
American Philosophical Association, Eastern Division

Explanatory Kinds: A Definition of Normality for Generics, by Bernard Nickel 2012
American Philosophical Association, Eastern Division

Teaching Experience

As the Primary Instructor

Symbolic Logic Spring 2019
University of California, San Diego

As a Teaching Assistant

Philosophical Methods Fall 2017
Primary Instructor: Geoffrey Lee
University of California, Berkeley

Philosophical Methods Spring, 2017
Primary Instructor: Lara Buchak
University of California, Berkeley

Philosophical Methods Fall, 2016
Primary Instructor: Daniel Warren
University of California, Berkeley

Perspectives on Human Nature Spring, 2015
Primary Instructor: Joshua Knobe
Yale University

First Order Logic Fall 2013 & Fall 2014
Primary Instructor: Bruno Whittle
Yale University

Life Spring, 2014
Primary Instructor: Shelly Kagan
Yale University

Honors and Fellowships

2018 Graduate Student Travel Stipend Prize, Central Division APA
2016 Robert M. Leylan Fellowship
2015 Edgar H. Stone Fellowship
2014 Edgar H. Stone Fellowship
2012 Frank Patterson Fellowship
2011 Commendation for Excellence in Academic Performance
2009 Commendation for Excellence in Academic Performance

Graduate Coursework

Mathematical Logic	Sun-Joo Shin
Topics in Epistemology	Keith DeRose
First-Year Seminar	George Bealer and Bruno Whittle
Frege's Philosophy of Logic and Language	Susanne Bobzein
Computability and Logic	Sun-Joo Shin
Monism	Michael Della Rocca
Metaethics*	Matthew Smith
Belief	Keith DeRose and Bruno Whittle
Philosophy of Philosophy	George Bealer
Logical Foundations of Metaphysics	George Bealer
Normative Ethics	Shelly Kagan
History of Early Modern Ethics	Stephen Darwall
Leibniz	Michael Della Rocca
Topics in the Philosophy of Mathematics*	Bruno Whittle
Works in Progress	Zoltan Szabo and Jason Stanley
Definition, Essence, and Ground*	George Bealer
Works in Progress	Sun-Joo Shin
Theories of the Good*	Shelly Kagan
Reductionism*	Elizabeth Miller
Seminar on Teaching Philosophy	Lara Buchak
Truth-Maker Semantics*	Kit Fine
Why is there Anything Except Physics?*	Shamik Dasgupta and Geoffrey Lee
Truth as a Human Value*	Gila Sher
* audit	

Summer Programs

The History and Metaphysics of the Concept of Laws of Nature <i>Central European University</i>	2018
Metaphysical Mayhem <i>Rutgers University</i>	2014

Academic and Professional Service

2019	Reviewer: Analysis
2018	Reviewer: Philosophical Quarterly
2018	Reviewer: Synthese
2018	Reviewer: Erkenntnis
2018	Reviewer: Journal of the American Philosophical Association
2016	Reviewer: Journal of Philosophical Research
2015-16	Organizer: Yale Epistemology, Logic, Language & Metaphysics Working Group
2015	Organizer: Yale Graduate Student Philosophy Conference
2015	Teacher: Splash! Outreach Program for Local Middle/High School Students
2013-15	Volunteer Tutor: New Haven Reads

References

Michael Della Rocca
Andrew Downey Orrick Professor of Philosophy
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University of California, Berkeley
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David Charles
Howard H. Newman Professor of Philosophy
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Judith Thomson
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