

# STEVEN SWARTZER

207-H Caldwell Hall  
Department of Philosophy  
University of North Carolina  
Chapel Hill, NC 27599-3125

sswartz@ gmail.com  
Office: 919-962-3329

---

## EDUCATION

University of Nebraska-Lincoln  
Ph.D. in Philosophy, August 2011

Dissertation: *DOING WITHOUT DESIRING* (see attached abstract)  
Committee: Mark van Roojen (chair), John Gibbons, Joseph Mendola,  
David Sobel

University of Minnesota-Twin Cities  
B.A. in Philosophy and Political Science, May 2003

## AREAS OF SPECIALIZATION

Ethics (including Meta-Ethics & Moral  
Psychology), Social/Political Philosophy

## AREAS OF TEACHING COMPETENCE

Philosophy of Law, Epistemology,  
Symbolic Logic

## EMPLOYMENT

Visiting Lecturer & Parr Center Outreach Fellow (Philosophy Department &  
Parr Center for Ethics - University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill, July 2013  
– Present)

Assistant Director, Robert J. Kutak Center for the Teaching and Study of  
Applied Ethics (University of Nebraska-Lincoln, February 2009 – June 2013)

Lecturer (University of Nebraska-Lincoln, Philosophy Department, August  
2011 – May 2013)

Graduate Assistant (University of Nebraska-Lincoln, Philosophy Department,  
August 2004 – July 2009)

## PUBLICATIONS

### REFEREED ARTICLES

Appetitive Desires and the Fuss about Fit.

*Philosophical Studies* (Forthcoming, Expected Print Publication Date: 2013)

DOI: 10.1007/s11098-012-0006-5

Published Online: <http://www.springerlink.com/content/66720wjlt507082j/>

## FELLOWSHIPS & HONORS

American Philosophical Assoc. Grad Student Travel Award (2010; 2011)  
Conference Travel Award (UNL, 2009 (x2), 2008)  
Hinman Fellowship (UNL, 2007-2008)  
Othmer Fellowship (UNL, 2004-2007)

**REFEREED CONFERENCE PRESENTATIONS***Appetitive Desires and the Fuss about Fit*

- American Philosophical Association–Central Division (main program), February 2012
- Minnesota Philosophical Society, November 2011

*Unmanifested Desires Unmasked*

- American Philosophical Association–Central Division (main program), April 2011 (Received APA Student Travel Award)

*Promoting Ethics in Academic Advising*

- National Academic Advising Association – North Central Conference, May 2010 (Co-presented with Brooke Glenn & Kelly Paine)

*Humeanism and Amoralism*

- American Philosophical Association–Central Division (main program), February 2010 (Received APA Student Travel Award)
- Central States Philosophical Association, October 2009

*Skepticism about Desert*

- Iowa Philosophical Society, November 2009
- Northwestern University Society for Ethical Theory and Political Philosophy, April 2009

*The Practical Reasoning Argument for Pragmatic Encroachment*

- Central States Philosophical Association, September 2008

**CONFERENCE COMMENTS**Comments on Jason Swartwood's '*Wisdom as a Skill*'

- Minnesota Philosophical Society, November 2011

**PHILOSOPHY TEACHING EXPERIENCE****UNIVERSITY OF NORTH CAROLINA (INSTRUCTOR)**

- *Phil 292 – Pre-College Philosophy* (scheduled Fall 2013)
- *Phil 592 – Pre-College Philosophy* (scheduled Spring 2014)

**UNIVERSITY OF NEBRASKA (INSTRUCTOR)**

- *Phil 325 - Advanced Social and Political Philosophy* (1 section)
- *Phil 230 – Philosophy of Law* (1 section)
- *Phil 225 – Environmental Ethics*, Spring 2012 (1 section for William H. Thompson Learning Community)

- *Phil 213 – Medical Ethics* (1 section)
- *Phil 211 – Introduction to Modern Logic* (2 sections)
- *Phil 106 – Philosophy and Current Issues* (1 large lecture section; 2 section for William H. Thompson Learning Community; 3 additional sections)
- *Phil 101 – Introduction to Philosophy* (2 large lecture sections; 1 additional section)

#### UNIVERSITY OF NEBRASKA (TEACHING ASSISTANT/GRADER)

- *Phil 211 – Introduction to Modern Logic*
  - Grader for Reina Hayaki (several times)
- *Phil 110 – Introduction to Logic and Critical Thinking*
  - Assistant to Al Casullo
- *Phil 106 – Philosophy and Current Issues,*
  - Assistant to Charles Sayward (twice)
  - Assistant to Mark van Roojen

#### ROBERT J. KUTAK CENTER FOR THE TEACHING AND STUDY OF APPLIED ETHICS ACTIVITIES Guest Ethics Lectures/Discussions at University of Nebraska

- *Ethics in Research*  
Summer Research Program for Undergraduates, Summer 2013
- *Academic Integrity Training Session*  
Academic Affairs Judicial Board Training Session , Spring 2013
- *Computer Ethics and Moral Decision Making*  
Computer Science & Computer Engineering Professional Development Courses  
(Advanced Undergraduate), Fall 2009; Spring 2010; Spring 2011; Fall 2011; Fall 2012
- *Ethical Dilemmas in Academic Integrity*  
Brown Bag lunch discussion for university-wide *Academic Integrity Week*, Fall 2012
- *Overview of Ethics and Moral Decision Making*  
Veterinary Medicine Professional Development Seminar (Veterinary Medicine  
Professional Students), Fall 2011; Fall 2012
- *Mentorship & Grad Student Well-Being: Ph.D. Comics Movie Discussion*  
Graduate Student Appreciation Week, Spring 2012
- *Political Speech on Campus*  
Ethics across the Disciplines Brown Bag Lunch, Spring 2012
- *Research Ethics and Ethical Decision Making*  
Mechanical and Materials Engineering Pierson Graduate Seminar, Spring 2012

- *Research Ethics, Professional Ethics, and Ethical Decision Making*  
Durham School of Architectural Engineering and Construction Graduate Seminar, Spring 2012
- *Ethics Discussion Cases for Arts & Sciences Assistant/Associate Deans*  
CIC Arts & Sciences Associate and Assistant Deans Meeting, Fall 2011
- *Research Ethics and Moral Decision Making*  
Entomology Department Colloquium (Graduate Students and Faculty), Fall 2011
- *Professional Ethics for Computer Science and Computer Engineering Faculty*  
Computer Science and Computer Engineering Department's ProFF (Professors For the Future) Program (Graduate Students), Spring 2011
- *Student Privacy and Instructor/Advisor Gossip*  
(co-presented with Brooke Glenn and Kelly Payne) Ethics across the Disciplines Brown Bag Lunch, Fall 2010
- *Research Ethics and Research Misconduct*  
Microbiology & Molecular Biology Graduate Professional Development Seminar, Spring 2010
- *Professional Ethics and Moral Decision Making*  
Computer Science Computer Organization Course (Intermediate Undergraduate), Fall 2009
- *Research Ethics*  
Physics Senior Seminar (Advanced Undergraduate), Fall 2009

#### Other Kutak Center Responsibilities

- Organizer & Head Coach, UNL Ethics Bowl team  
Extracurricular competition for undergraduates, 2010-Present
- *UNL Grad Student Ethics Forum*  
Created and coordinate a monthly discussion for UNL graduate students & post-docs about issues of professional ethics in teaching and research (partnership between UNL's Ethics Center and Graduate Student Association), 2010-Present
- *Ethics across the Disciplines Brownbag Lunches*  
Coordinate a monthly discussion for UNL faculty, staff, and students, 2009-Present
- Created and maintain online interdisciplinary ethics resource  
Available at <[http://ethics.unl.edu/ethics\\_resources](http://ethics.unl.edu/ethics_resources)>; designed to help faculty and students across disciplines incorporate discussions of general and discipline-specific ethical issues into their teaching and research
- *Responsible Conduct of Research (RCR) Online Training Course*

Assisted in creation of Blackboard-based RCR training program for all graduate students, undergraduates, and post-doctoral researchers involved in federally-sponsored research at UNL. (Collaboration between Ethics Center, Office of Graduate Studies and Research Compliance Services Office)

#### SERVICE

- Invited Panelist for New Faculty Orientation, William H. Thompson Learning Community, University of Nebraska, Fall 2012
- Search Committee Member (search for three Assistant Program Coordinators for the William H. Thompson Learning Community), University of Nebraska, Summer 2012
- Coordinator, UNL Philosophy Department Graduate Student Colloquium, 2007-2009
- Led UNL Philosophy Department's New Teaching Assistant Orientation, Fall 2007 &, Fall 2008

#### DISSERTATION ABSTRACT: *DOING WITHOUT DESIRING*

The Humean belief-desire theory of motivation remains the orthodoxy in philosophical psychology. My dissertation defends a novel alternative to the belief-desire theory that departs in crucial ways from the common attempts by motivational cognitivists to upset this standard view.

Everyone accepts that moral judgments have effects—that our thoughts about morality are capable of shaping how we act. An agent might volunteer to organize a charity gala or to help build housing for the needy because she thinks successful people have a duty to give back to their community. Or, maybe she holds that it is wrong to stand idly by when she could bring about some good result instead. Or, she might help out simply because “It’s the right thing to do.” According to the belief-desire picture, we must point to some further state of our agent—some passionate state like desire—in order to explain how these judgments shape her action. The Humean is not suggesting that our agent is necessarily selfish or narcissistic. She may sincerely *want* to give back, to help those in need, or to do the right thing. Yet there must be something she wants, the Humean insists, because only states like desire are capable of moving us. Belief—even moral judgment—is no more than desire’s slave.

This Humean insistence to the contrary notwithstanding, it is not wild to think that moral judgments are capable of playing a directly motivational role. It is plausible that the reason we can explain an agent’s behavior by referring to her moral assessments is that these attitudes are capable of directly moving her to act. My defense of this anti-Humean hypothesis is distinctive in that it does not proceed from the lofty assumptions about rationality, morality, and agency that often drive motivational cognitivists (those who reject the Humean orthodoxy). The picture I develop is built largely out of Humean materials. I try to show that cognitivism is actually compatible with—and in some ways even supported by—the very considerations that have made the Humean picture seem so attractive.

As a case in point, many philosophers are attracted to Humeanism because of the fact that severely depressed and amoral agents are unmoved by their moral judgments. I agree with most Humeans that our moral judgments don’t always move us as they should. However the methodological principles that drive us to this conclusion also suggest that our desires don’t

always move us either. Rather than posing a problem for cognitivism, depressed agents and amoralists illustrate that moral judgments are more closely analogous to typical motivational states than most philosophers acknowledge.

By developing and deploying a standard (Humean friendly) account of desire in a novel way, I offer a possible cognitivist explanation of these close analogies between moral beliefs and desires. This explanation claims that there are “besires” – cognitive states with features that are thought to be distinctive of desires. Humeans and cognitivists alike are skeptical of this account because besires are thought to be extravagant or even *a priori* incoherent posits. I argue that, properly understood, besires are not as bizarre as everyone takes them to be. I argue that on all of the extant attempts to distinguish the cognitive and the motivational “sides” of the mind, there are good reasons for thinking that moral judgments really are besires in the relevant sense. Moreover, I argue, the existence of besires is a plausible *empirical* hypothesis that we should not try to rule out from the armchair in the first place.

## REFERENCES

MARK VAN ROOJEN  
Professor of Philosophy  
University of Nebraska-Lincoln

DAVID SOBEL  
Professor of Philosophy  
Syracuse University

JOSEPH MENDOLA  
Professor of Philosophy  
University of Nebraska-Lincoln

REINA HAYAKI (*teaching reference*)  
Associate Professor of Philosophy  
University of Nebraska-Lincoln

ALBERT CASULLO  
Professor of Philosophy  
University of Nebraska-Lincoln

SUSAN POSER  
Dean, College of Law;  
Director, Center for the Teaching and  
Study of Applied Ethics  
University of Nebraska-Lincoln