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CURRENT POSITION

Associate Professor, Department of Philosophy, University of Nevada, Las Vegas, 2012-

PREVIOUS POSITIONS

University of Nevada, Las Vegas, Department of Philosophy, 2006-2012 (Assistant Professor)

Yale University, Department of Philosophy, 2005-2006 (Visiting Position)

The University of Michigan, Ann Arbor, Department of Philosophy, 2004-2005 (Visiting Position)

The College of William and Mary, Department of Philosophy, 2001-2004 (Visiting Position)

AREAS OF SPECIALIZATION

Philosophy of Language, Philosophical Logic, Metaphysics

AREAS OF COMPETENCE

Philosophy of Mind, Philosophy of Science, Logic, Epistemology, History of Analytic Philosophy

EDUCATION

Ph.D., The University of Michigan (Philosophy), 2001; M.A., The University of Michigan, 1994

B.A., Amherst College (Philosophy, Physics), 1987 (*Magna cum laude*, Honors in Philosophy)

PUBLICATIONS

The Deflationary Approach to Truth: A Guide, (w/ B. Armour-Garb) (Oxford: Oxford University Press, forthcoming).

“Revenge for Alethic Nihilism,” (w/ B. Armour-Garb) *The Journal of Philosophy* (forthcoming).

“Time to Get SPIFfy: Why Azzouni Should Embrace Semantic Pretense-Involving Fictionalism,” (w/ B. Armour-Garb) in *Festschrift in Honor of Jody Azzouni*, eds. O. Bueno and J. Brown, (Dordrecht: Springer, forthcoming).

“Answering the Conceptual Challenge: Three Strategies for Deflationists,” (w/ B. Armour-Garb) *Synthese* 201(3): Article 98 (online at <https://doi.org/10.1007/s11229-023-04071-z>).

“The Alethic Platitudes, Deflationism, and Adverbial Quantification,” (w/ B. Armour-Garb) *The Philosophical Quarterly* 73(2): 323-345.

“Deflationism About Truth,” (w/ B. Armour-Garb) [major revisions to “The Deflationary Theory of Truth,” by D. Stoljar] *Stanford Encyclopedia of Philosophy*, ed. E. Zalta, (Winter 2021 Edition).

“Deflationism as Alethic Fictionalism via a SPIF Account of Truth-Talk,” (w/ B. Armour-Garb) in *The Nature of Truth*, 2nd Edition, eds. M. Lynch, J. Wyatt, N. Kellen, and J. Kim, pp. 429-453, (Cambridge: MIT Press, 2021).

“Book Symposium on *Pretense and Pathology: Philosophical Fictionalism and its Applications*,” (w/ B. Armour-Garb) *Analysis Reviews* 78(4): 687-692, 718-736.

“Alethic Fictionalism, Alethic Nihilism, and the Liar Paradox,” (w/ B. Armour-Garb) *Philosophical Studies* 174(12): 3083–3096.

PUBLICATIONS (continued)

- Pretense and Pathology: Philosophical Fictionalism and its Applications*, (w/ B. Armour-Garb) (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2015).
- “Truth, Pretense and the Liar,” (w/ B. Armour-Garb) in *Unifying the Philosophy of Truth*, eds. T. Achourioti, K. Fujimoto, H. Galinon, J. Martinez, pp. 339-354, (Dordrecht: Springer, 2015).
- “Semantic Defectiveness: A Dissolution of Semantic Pathology,” (w/ B. Armour-Garb) in *Recent Trends in Philosophical Logic (Trends in Logic, Vol. 41)*, eds. R. Ciuni, H. Wansing, and C. Willkommen, pp. 1-12, (Cham: Springer International Publishing Switzerland, 2014).
- “From Mathematical Fictionalism to Truth-Theoretic Fictionalism,” (w/ B. Armour-Garb) *Philosophy and Phenomenological Research* 88(1): 93-118.
- “Semantic Defectiveness and the Liar,” (w/ B. Armour-Garb) *Philosophical Studies* 164(3): 845-863.
- “The Story about Propositions,” (w/ B. Armour-Garb) *Noûs* 46(4): 635-674.
- “Truthmakers, Paradox and Plausibility,” (w/ B. Armour-Garb) *Analysis* 70(1): 11-23.
- “Sellars and Pretense on “Truth & ‘Correspondence’” (with a Detour through Meaning Attribution),” (w/ B. Armour-Garb) *Discusiones Filosóficas* Year 13, Issue 21: 33-63.
- “Liars, Truth-tellers, and Naysayers: A Broader View of Semantic Pathology I,” (w/ B. Armour-Garb) *Language & Communication* 32: 293-311.
- “Why Deflationists Should be Pretense Theorists (and Perhaps Already are),” (w/ B. Armour-Garb) in *New Waves in Truth*, eds. N. Pedersen and C. Wright, pp. 59-77, (Basingstoke/New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2010).
- “Linguistic Puzzles and Semantic Pretense,” (w/ B. Armour-Garb) in *New Waves in Philosophy of Language*, ed. S. Sawyer, pp. 250-284, (Basingstoke/New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2009).
- “The Pathology of Validity,” (w/ B. Armour-Garb) *Synthese* 160(1): 63-74.
- “Dialetheism, Semantic Pathology, and the Open Pair,” (w/ B. Armour-Garb) *Australasian Journal of Philosophy* 84(3): 395-416.
- “Propositions as Semantic Pretense,” *Language & Communication* 26: 343-355.
- “Semantic Pathology and the Open Pair,” (w/ B. Armour-Garb) *Philosophy and Phenomenological Research* 71(3): 695-703.
- “Truth as a Pretense,” in *Fictionalism in Metaphysics*, ed. Mark Kalderon, pp. 134-177, (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2005).
- “F.J.E. Woodbridge,” in *Dictionary of Modern American Philosophers, 1860-1960, 4 vols.*, ed. John R. Shook, *et al.*, vol. 4, pp. 2641-2646, (Bristol: Thoemmes Press, 2005).
- “A Neglected Dimension of Semantic Pathology,” *Logica Yearbook 2004*, pp. 277-292, (Prague: Filosofia, Institute of Philosophy, Academy of Sciences of the Czech Republic).
- “Deflationism and the Generalization Problem,” *Logica Yearbook 2003*, pp. 285-297, (Prague: Filosofia, Institute of Philosophy, Academy of Sciences of the Czech Republic).
- “Curried Katz with Epimenidean Dilemma,” (w/ B. Armour-Garb) *Philosophical Forum* 34: 351-366.

CONFERENCES

- “That’s Just How it Is: Properties, Deflationism, and Non-Nominal Quantification.” (w/ B. Armour-Garb) SALOME1 (1st South American Logic Meeting), UNSAAC, Cusco, Peru, January 2024.
- “That’s Just How it Is: A Pretense Account of Property-Talk.” (With Bradley Armour-Garb) Ontology Workshop / Atelier Ontologie, Sorbonne Université and CNRS, Institut Mémoires de l’Édition Contemporaine, Abbaye d’Ardenne, Normandie, France, September 2023.

CONFERENCES (continued)

- “A Grim Situation for New Theories of Propositions.” (With Jesse Fitts)
American Philosophical Association, Eastern Division Meeting, Baltimore, MD, January 2022.
- “The Role of Fiction in Fictionalism.” (With Bradley Armour-Garb)
Keynote Address for the 75th Annual Mountain-Plains Philosophy Conference, Utah State University, Logan, UT, October 2021.
- “Defending Deflationism against a Forceful Objection.” (With Bradley Armour-Garb)
New Perspectives on Truth and Deflationism, University of Salzburg, Austria, January 2018.
- “Fictionalism and the Semantics of Fictional Discourse.” (With Bradley Armour-Garb)
Philosophy of Language (1): Semantics of Fictional Discourse, Institute of Philosophy, Slovak Academy of Science, Bratislava, Slovakia, October 2016.
- “Alethic Fictionalism, Alethic Nihilism, and the Liar Paradox.” (With Bradley Armour-Garb)
Truth: Deflationism and Beyond, University of Sassari, in partnership with the Italian 2012 PRIN Project “Models and Inferences in Science”, Alghero, Italy, September 2016.
- “Sellars and Pretense on Truth and Meaning.” (With Bradley Armour-Garb)
Sellars Centenary Conference and Workshop 2012, Department of Philosophy, University College Dublin and the Andrew W. Mellon Foundation, Dublin, Ireland, June 2012.
- “Semantic Defectiveness and the Liar Paradox.” (With Bradley Armour-Garb)
Trends in Logic XI: Advances in Philosophical Logic, Department of Philosophy II, Ruhr-Universität Bochum, in co-operation with *Studia Logica*, Bochum, Germany, June 2012.
- “Revisiting Truth as a Pretense.”
Truth at Work Conference, IHPST: Institut d’Histoire et de Philosophie des Sciences et Techniques, Université Paris-1, et Ecole Normale Supérieure, Paris, France, June 2011.
- “Semantic Defectiveness and the Liar.” (With Bradley Armour-Garb)
BW7 | Seventh Barcelona Workshop on Issues in the Theory of Reference: Paradoxes of Truth and Denotation, LOGOS: Logic, Language, and Cognition Research Group, Universitat de Barcelona, Barcelona, Spain, June 2011.
- “Meaning Attribution, Normativity, and Pretense.”
Normativity of Meaning: Sellarsian Perspectives, Department of Logic, Institute of Philosophy, Czech Academy of Sciences, Prague, Czech Republic, May 2011.
- “The Fiction of What’s Known in Understanding.”
Meaning, Understanding and Knowledge: 5th International Symposium for Cognition, Logic and Communication, University of Latvia, Riga, Latvia, August 2009.
- “Negation and Non-Assertoric Denial.” (With Bradley Armour-Garb)
Workshop on Negation and Denial, Universidade de Lisboa, Lisbon, Portugal, July 2008.
- “Why Propositions Cannot Be (Anything More Than Pretense).” (With Bradley Armour-Garb)
Joint Session of The Aristotelian Society and The Mind Association
University of Bristol, Bristol, England, July 2007.
- “The Story about Propositions.” (With Bradley Armour-Garb)
Mimesis, Metaphysics, and Make-Believe: A Conference in Honour of Kendall Walton, University of Leeds, Leeds, England, June 2007.
- Comments on Glen Hoffmann’s “The Semantic Theory of Truth: Field’s Incompleteness Objection.”
American Philosophical Association, Central Division, 104th Meeting, Chicago, IL, April 2007.
- “The Pathology of Validity.” (With Bradley Armour-Garb)
Society for Exact Philosophy, 33rd Annual Meeting, Toronto, ON, Canada, May 2005.

CONFERENCES (continued)

- “How (and Why) Not to Take Semantics Seriously.”
Young Scholars Summer Institute, Wissenschaftskolleg zu Berlin, Germany, August 2004.
- “A Neglected Dimension of Semantic Pathology.”
18th International Symposium Logica, Hejnice Monastery, Czech Republic, June 2004.
- “Deflationism and the Generalization Problem.”
17th International Symposium Logica, Kravsko Chateau, Czech Republic, June 2003.
- “Truth as a Pretense.”
56th Annual Mountain-Plains Philosophy Conference, Las Vegas, NV, October 2002.
Virginia Philosophical Association, 63rd Annual Meeting, Richmond, VA, October 2002.

INVITED TALKS

- “That’s Just How it Is: A Pretense Account of Property-Talk.”
University of Las Vegas, NV, September 2023.
University of Minnesota, Twin Cities, MN, September 2023.
- “Deflationism: How it Started; How it’s Going.”
University of Nevada Las Vegas, NV, April 2021.
- “Propositions and Paradox.” (With Jesse Fitts)
University of Nevada Las Vegas, NV, December 2019.
- “Book Symposium on *Pretense and Pathology: Philosophical Fictionalism and its Applications.*”
(w/ B. Armour-Garb), American Philosophical Association, Pacific Division Meeting,
Seattle, WA, April 2017.
- “Fictionalism and the Semantics of Fictional Discourse.”
Institute of Philosophy, Czech Academy of Science, October 2016.
- “Identity Claims are Not about Identity.”
University of Nevada Las Vegas, NV, October 2015.
- “Revisiting Truth as a Pretense.”
University of Nevada Las Vegas, NV, May 2012.
University of Amsterdam, Amsterdam, The Netherlands, November 2011.
University of Groningen, Groningen, The Netherlands, November 2011.
Georgia State University, Atlanta, GA, October 2011.
University of Connecticut, Storrs, CT, April 2011.
- “The Fiction of What’s Known in Understanding.”
University of Nevada Las Vegas, NV, September 2009.
- “Linguistic Puzzles and Semantic Pretense.”
Northern Arizona University, Flagstaff, AZ, October 2008.
University of Nevada Las Vegas, NV, October 2008.
- “The Story about Propositions.”
University of Nevada Las Vegas, NV, April 2007.
- “From Semantic Pathology to Semantic Pretense.”
University of Victoria, Victoria, BC, February 2006.
Texas Tech University, Lubbock, TX, January 2006.
University of Nevada Las Vegas, NV, January 2006.
Concordia University, Montreal, QC, January 2006.
- “Liars, Truth-tellers, and Naysayers: A New View of Semantic Pathology.”
The University of Kansas, Lawrence, KS, March 2005.
Wayne State University, Detroit, MI, January 2005.

INVITED TALKS (continued)

- “Truth, Pathology, and Pretense.”
Universiteit Leiden, The Netherlands, August 2004.
- “Liars and Truth-tellers: Semantic Pathology and Semantic Pretense.”
The College of William and Mary, Williamsburg, VA, November 2003.
- “Propositions as Semantic Pretense.”
The College of William and Mary, Williamsburg, VA, October 2002.
University of Virginia, Charlottesville, VA, September 2002.
- “Truth as a Pretense.”
The University at Albany/SUNY, Albany, NY, February 2002.
The College of William and Mary, Williamsburg, VA, October 2001.
Haverford College, Haverford, PA, February 2001.

TEACHING EXPERIENCE

- University of Nevada, Las Vegas (2006-present)
- Theories of Truth (Spring 2024, 2021, 2012, Fall 2018, 2015, 2007)
 - Metaphysics (Fall 2023, 2017, Spring 2014, Fall 2011, Spring 2010)
 - Philosophy of Science (Spring 2023, 2019, 2016, Fall 2013, Spring 2011)
 - Senior Seminar: Fiction and Fictionalism (Fall 2022, Spring 2017)
 - Philosophy of Language (Spring 2022, 2013, Fall 2019, 2014, 2010, 2008)
 - Great Philosophers: Wittgenstein (Fall 2021, Spring 2018, 2015)
 - Philosophy of Mathematics (Fall 2016, 2012)
 - Advanced Logic (Fall 2020, 2016, 2013, 2012, 2009, Spring 2016, 2007-9)
 - Introduction to Philosophy (Fall 2021-23, 2014, 2008-12, Spring 2021-24, 2017-19, 2015)
 - Freshman Seminar: Science Fiction & Philosophy (Fall 2015-19)
 - Introduction to Symbolic Logic (Spring 2007-14, Fall 2006)
 - Critical Thinking (Fall 2007)
- Yale University (2005-2006)
- Philosophy of Mind (Spring 2006)
 - Directed Studies II (Spring 2006)
 - Seminar: Theories of Truth (Fall 2005)
 - Philosophy of Science (Fall 2005)
- The University of Michigan, Ann Arbor (2004-2005)
- Seminar: Theories of Truth (Winter 2005)
 - Language and Mind (Winter 2005)
 - Problems of Philosophy (Fall 2004)
 - First-Year Seminar: Relativism (Fall 2004)
- The College of William and Mary (2001-2004)
- Philosophy of Language (Spring 2004, 2002)
 - Introduction to Philosophy (Spring 2004, Fall 2003, 2002, 2001)
 - Philosophy of Science (Fall 2003)
 - Freshman Seminar: Relativism (Spring 2003)
 - Symbolic Logic (Spring 2003, Fall 2001)
 - Contemporary Metaphysics (Fall 2002)

ACADEMIC SERVICE

Referee for *Synthese*, *Australasian Journal of Philosophy*, *Philosophical Studies*, *Res Philosophica*, *Philosophy and Phenomenological Research*, *Erkenntnis*, *Philosophical Quarterly*, *Philosophers' Imprint*, *Language & Communication*, and *Pacific Philosophical Quarterly*.

ACADEMIC SERVICE (continued)

Invited Co-organizer for 5th *International Symposium for Cognition, Logic and Communication: Meaning, Understanding and Knowledge*, University of Latvia, Riga, Latvia, August 2009.

University of Nevada Las Vegas: Nationally Competitive Awards Review Committee (2019), University Faculty Travel Committee (2023-24, 2018-19), Academic Standards Committee (2017-19).

University of Nevada Las Vegas, College of Liberal Arts: Financial Aid Committee (2009-11, 2022-24), University Forum Lecture Committee (2022-24, 2018-19), James Frey Excellence in Scholarship Committee (2019), Curriculum Committee (2012-14), Bylaws Committee (2011-13).

University of Nevada Las Vegas, Honors College: Honors Thesis Chair for *Encountering Art: A Dialectical Approach to the Ontology of Art-Objects*, by Nima Abkenar (2023-24); Honors Thesis Chair for *Deflating Laws*, by J.D. Wagner (2017-18); Honors Thesis Committee for *A Quasi-Classical Logic for Classical Mathematics*, by Henry Nikogosyan (2014-15).

University of Nevada Las Vegas, Department of Philosophy: Diversity, Equity, Inclusion Committee (Chair 2022-), Search Committee (FIR Hire 2021-22, Junior Hire 2018-19, Senior Hire 2007-8), Colloquium Committee (2006- , Chair 2008-14, 2022-), Webpage Committee (2006- , Chair 2008-), Personnel Committee (2010-), Ad Hoc Bylaws Committee (2015-18), Student Awards Committee (2012-14), Merit Committee (2006-8, Chair 2007-8), Phi Sigma Tau (Honors Society) and Neon Stoa (Philosophy Club) Advisor (2006-8).

The College of William and Mary, Department of Philosophy: Colloquium/Philosophy Club Committee, Freshman Advising, Honors Thesis Committee (Physics Department) (2002-4).

PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT

Offices for Faculty Affairs, Human Resources, and Compliance, University of Nevada Las Vegas, Workshops on Best Practices in Faculty Recruitment and Hiring, October 2018.

Office of Academic Assessment Faculty Workshop. University of Nevada Las Vegas, January 2013.

Teaching and Learning Center Workshops: Learning & Teaching Styles, Course Assessment Techniques. University of Nevada Las Vegas, June 2008.

2007 Regents' Academy. The Nevada System of Higher Education, May-June 2007.

Faculty Seminar: Teaching Freshman Seminars. The College of William and Mary, May 2002.

FELLOWSHIPS, HONORS AND AWARDS

University of Nevada Las Vegas, College of Liberal Arts: Philosophy Dept. Nominee for the William Morris Award for Excellence in Scholarship, 2017.

University of Nevada Las Vegas, College of Liberal Arts: Philosophy Dept. Nominee for the Rita Deanin Abbey Teacher of the Year Award, 2017.

University of Nevada Las Vegas: University Faculty Travel Committee Award, 2022, 2017, 2012, 2009.

University of Nevada Las Vegas, College of Liberal Arts: CLA Travel Stipend, 2016, 2012; Summer Research Stipend, 2011, 2010; Summer Term Fellowship, 2007.

National Humanities Center / Wissenschaftskolleg zu Berlin: European-American Young Scholars Summer Institute, 2003 and 2004.

Andrew W. Mellon Dissertation Fellowship, 1996-7.

Charles L. Stevenson Prize, for excellence in the Graduate Program in Philosophy, 1995-6. (Awarded by the University of Michigan Philosophy Department)

Forris Jewett Moore Fellowship in Philosophy, 1991-3. (Awarded by Amherst College)

Jacob K. Javits Fellowship, 1990-4. (Awarded by the United States Department of Education)

Sterling P. Lamprecht Fellowship in Philosophy, 1990. (Awarded by Amherst College)

Phi Beta Kappa Honors Society, 1986. (Awarded by Amherst College)

CURRENT RESEARCH PROGRAMS

Metaphysics, philosophical logic, philosophy of language, and philosophy of mind investigate a collection of issues that I see as connected on two different levels. The first pertains to the ways that some of their central questions intersect. Recent deflationary analyses prompt metaphysical questions about truth and the other semantic notions. Related concerns arise from philosophical logic's examination of the semantic paradoxes, such as the Liar, and their resistance to solution. Similar paradoxes of non-existence bolster traditional metaphysical worries about abstracta, in current debates about the ontological status of fictional characters and other objects of imagination. These issues connect with philosophy of language's concerns about reference failure in discourse about fiction, and about the general problem that empty names pose for a causal, or any direct or non-descriptivist, theory of reference. The foregoing issues in metaphysics and philosophical logic also bear on the status of truth-conditional / referential theories of meaning versus use-based alternatives. They further intersect with debates about the robustness of meaning, including whether there are meaning entities, such as propositions. In philosophy of mind, these questions about the nature or even existence of propositions generate concerns about the nature of belief and the other intentional attitudes, and about mental content and psychological explanation.

The second level of connection I see between the various issues that I pursue in my research is the focus of *Pretense and Pathology*, the monograph I wrote with Bradley Armour-Garb, published in 2015 by Cambridge University Press. We argue that a particular fictionalist strategy offers significant advances throughout our theorizing about these different issues. The specific strategy we apply extends the analysis from my earlier paper, "Truth as a Pretense," where I explain truth-talk as an instance of *semantic pretense*. This non-error-theoretic, fictionalist approach accounts for fragments of discourse in terms of games of make-believe. For truth-talk, the relevant game involves pretend attributions of a pretend property (truth) to pretend objects (propositions); the game's rules make truth-talk an indirect means of making certain serious (non-semantic) claims we cannot make directly. The overall result is a new way of understanding deflationism, one that retains the advantages of that approach while avoiding various logical problems that confront its standard formulations.

This fictionalist strategy has been extended and refined in my collaborative research with Armour-Garb. In "The Story about Propositions" we apply it to an account of talk that appears to implicate propositions. Our other main application of the strategy takes off from concerns about the semantic paradoxes. We see these putative paradoxes as only one aspect of *semantic pathology*, a broader apparent phenomenon that seems to manifest in two different symptoms: inconsistency (as in liar sentences) and indeterminacy (as in truth-teller sentences). Our current work expands on the diagnosis of truth's pathology that I had developed in my pretense account of truth-talk. Unlike most standard approaches to semantic pathology, this fictionalist strategy diagnoses and allows treatment for both of its symptoms. It explains them both as arising only in *purely pretend* claims, which turn out to lack any content about the world outside the pretense behind truth-talk. This motivates our current consistentist treatment, involving a new revenge-immune appeal to the meaningless strategy. But the isolation of the apparent pathology entirely within a fiction opens up the range of permissible treatment strategies, allowing anything from a dialethic appeal to paraconsistent logic, to an *ad hoc* stipulation of a Tarski-style hierarchy. Moreover, the pretense view provides treatment for the neglected symptom of indeterminacy, either in terms of meaninglessness or an arbitrary, stipulative resolution. While a stipulative resolution is *ad hoc*, within fictionalism, as opposed to realism, the *ad hoc* is benign. Here, stipulation just amounts to extending a fiction one way, rather than another.

In our current research, Armour-Garb and I are re-examining deflationists' use of sentential variables and quantifiers in explaining the logical function of truth-talk, rejecting the standard approach that treats this substitutionally in favor of a non-nominal, adverbial account. This solves certain long-standing challenges to deflationism in general. It will also lead to a strengthening of our semantic pretense-involving fictionalist (or SPIF) account of truth-talk in particular, replacing our use of substitutional quantification there with the adverbial view of sentential variables and quantifiers.