

KELLAN D. L. HEAD

[585]737.7424

kdhead@syr.edu

www.KellanDLHead.com

(as of: June 2026)

Areas of Specialization

Ethics (especially axiology, well-being), Epistemology (especially epistemic normativity)

Areas of Competence

Philosophy of Language, Logic, Media Ethics, Business Ethics

Academic Employment

Visiting Assistant Professor

Fall 2026-

Old Dominion University, Norfolk VA

Department of Philosophy and Religious Studies

Education

Syracuse University

Ph.D. - Philosophy

2018-2020, 2021-Summer 2026 (*expected*)

Ph.D. Dissertation: 'An Epistemic Axiology'

Adviser: Hille Paakkunainen

Committee: Richard Feldman (Rochester), Catherine Z. Elgin (Harvard), Mark Heller

Brandeis University

M.A. - Philosophy

Fall 2017

Master's Thesis: 'Kripke on Speaker's Reference

and Proper Names: An Explication and Defense'

Adviser: Eli Hirsch

University of Rochester

B.A. - i) English; ii) Linguistics (*Honors in Research*)

Spring 2012

Honors in Research Thesis: 'The Binding Theory as an Initial

Processing Constraint and Visual World Eye-tracking Data'

Adviser: Jeff Runner

Publications

2026 - 'Resonance, Alienation, and Cognitive Subjectivism about Well-being' - *The Journal of Ethics*

Papers - under review

'Lucky Doxastic Justification'

currently under review

(I argue that it's possible for a belief to be doxastically justified only luckily. I then examine whether merely lucky doxastic justification is consistent with knowledge - I argue it is.)

'Epistemic Axiology and a Case Against Veritism'

currently under review

(I argue that veritism - the idea that epistemic value is rooted only in the importance of truth - is false. Something in addition to truth serves as a fundamental epistemic value and grounds epistemic evaluative facts. I examine and reject plausible veritist replies.)

Papers - in progress

'Sacrificing Epistemic Goods'

e-mail for draft

(I argue that we can be distinctly morally praiseworthy for the good will we exhibit in our epistemic behavior. I then introduce the concept of *epistemic sacrifice*: the forgoing of an epistemic good for a moral good. Similar to how prudential sacrifice works, agents can be *more* morally praiseworthy if believing/behaving morally well comes at an epistemic cost.)

'Internalist Perspectives on Encroachment'

e-mail for draft

(I propose an internalist variant of encroachment views of epistemic justification. My view maintains that relevant pragmatic features related to a belief only encroach on the belief's justificatory status if the agent's evidence indicates that they obtain.)

'Etiology and Epistemic Evaluation'

e-mail for draft

(Restrictivism says that only doxastic attitudes that were formed as an expression of an agent's epistemic agency (e.g. not implanted or spontaneous) can serve as fundamentally valuable epistemic goods. I argue against this view.)

'Vividity Dualism: A Dualist Account of Epistemic Goods'

(I propose an account of epistemic evaluation according to which there are two species of fundamental epistemic values: veridicality (truth) and vividity (richness and coherence).)

'Epistemic Pluralism and The Allure of Misinformation'

(I claim that species of epistemic pluralism which recognize a sort of coherence as a fundamental epistemic value (rather than *just* truth) can better make sense of the allure of misinformation. Propaganda and misinformation thrive because they offer victims cohesive, though false, representations of the world.)

Refereed Presentations

'Nonconsequentialism about Prudential Normativity'	2027
(upcoming) at <i>APA: Eastern - Colloquium</i>	
'Radical Welfare Subjectivism'	2026
(upcoming) at <i>Philadelphia Normativity Conference</i>	
'Etiology and Epistemic Evaluation'	2026
poster at <i>APA: Central - Poster Session</i>	
'Moral Praiseworthiness and Epistemic Sacrifice'	2026
at <i>APA: Eastern - Symposium</i>	
poster at <i>Rocky Mountain Ethics (RoME) congress</i>	2025
'Lucky Doxastic Justification'	2024
at <i>Workshop on Luck and Achievement, Simon Fraser University</i>	
'Against Veritism'	2024
at <i>APA: Central - Colloquium</i>	
at <i>168th Meeting of the Creighton Club, NYS Philosophical Society</i>	2023
(Co-winner of the Graduate Student Presentation Award)	
at <i>Edgington Lectures Workshop, Birkbeck, University of London</i>	2023
'Internalist Perspectives on Moral Encroachment'	2024
at <i>APA: Eastern - Colloquium</i>	
at <i>Understanding Value Conference XI, University of Sheffield</i>	2023
at <i>Mark L. Shapiro Graduate Philosophy Conference, Brown University</i>	2023
'Alienation, Idealization, and Judgment Subjectivism'	2023
at <i>APA: Pacific - Colloquium</i>	
'Sacrificing Epistemic Goods: A New Argument Against Moral Encroachment'	2023
poster at <i>APA: Eastern - Poster Session</i>	
at <i>Responsibility for Belief Conference, University of Helsinki</i>	2022
at <i>Central States Philosophy Association Conference</i>	2022
at <i>Graduate Epistemology Conference, University of Rochester</i>	2022
at <i>Graduate Philosophy Society Conference, University of Iowa</i>	2022

In-house Presentations

'Sacrifice and Epistemic Goods'	2025
<i>Early Career Well-being Working Group</i>	
'A Case Against Epistemic Etiological Restrictivism'	2025
<i>Syracuse Faculty & Grad Talk Series</i>	
'Cognitive Representation and Epistemic Teleology'	2024
<i>Syracuse ABD Workshop</i>	
'Pretty to Think So: Aesthetic Epistemic Norms'	2023
<i>Syracuse Graduate Working Papers Conference</i>	
'Vividness Dualism: A Dualist Account of Epistemic Value'	2023
<i>Syracuse ABD Workshop</i>	
'Alienation, Idealization, and Judgment Subjectivism'	2022
<i>Early Career Well-being Working Group</i>	
'Internalist Perspectives on Moral Encroachment'	2022

<i>Syracuse ABD Workshop</i>	
'The (In)Significance of Singular Thought'	2021
<i>Syracuse Graduate Working Papers Conference</i>	
'Understanding and Epistemic Value: Amending Elgin'	2020
<i>Syracuse Graduate Working Papers Conference</i>	
'Varieties of Speaker's Reference'	2018
<i>Syracuse Graduate Working Papers Conference</i>	
'Kripke and Speaker's Reference'	2017
<i>Brandeis Graduate Philosophy Workshop</i>	
'Personal Identity: Defending Lewis against Parfit'	2016
<i>Brandeis Graduate Philosophy Workshop</i>	

Papers and Presentations - Linguistics

Refereed Publications

'What Can Visual World Eye-tracking Tell Us About the Binding Theory?' (with Jeffrey T. Runner)
2014 - *Empirical Issues in Syntax and Semantics 10*

Refereed Presentations

'What can visual world eye-tracking tell us about the binding theory?' (with Jeffrey T. Runner) at <i>Colloque de Syntaxe et Sémantique à Paris</i>	2013
'Assessing the on-line application of binding constraints without gender stereotype' (with Jeffrey T. Runner) poster at <i>CUNY Conference for Human Sentence Processing 26</i>	2013

Awards

Syracuse University Humanities Dissertation Fellowship (highly selective, two-semester fellowship with full funding + additional research grant)	2025-26
Mary Hatch Marshall Essay Award (funded award from Syracuse University, for 'Alienation and Cognitive Subjectivism about Well-being')	2025
Syracuse University Graduate Dean's Award for Excellence in Research	2024
Syracuse University Outstanding T.A. Award (<i>as instructor of record</i>)	2024
APA: Central Graduate Funding Award	2024, '26
APA: Eastern Graduate Funding Award	2023, '24, '26
Graduate Student Presentation Award (Creighton Club, NYS Philosophical Association, for 'Against Veritism')	2023
Syracuse University Dissertation Summer Funding Fellowship	2023
Birkbeck, University of London Travel Grant	2023
APA: Pacific Graduate Funding Award	2023
University of Helsinki Travel Grant	2022
Syracuse University Pre-Dissertation Summer Funding Fellowship	2022

Syracuse University Philosophy Department Travel Grant	2022, '23, '24, '25, '26
Syracuse University Graduate Student Organization Travel Grant	2021, '22, '23, '24, '25, '26
Syracuse University Philosophy Department Summer Research Grant	2021
Brandeis University Graduate Merit Scholarship	2016, '17

Comments

on Dan Pallies and James Fanciullo's 'The Heterogeneity of Pleasure'	2026
<i>The Dorsey Workshop on Well-being: Rome</i>	
selected to serve as 'Commentator-at-large'	2024
<i>Inquiry Workshop at Brown University</i>	
on Cristina Ballarini's 'Uncertainty in Credence and Belief'	2024
<i>APA: Pacific - Colloquium</i>	
on Seungtaek Lee's 'Varieties of Referential Intentions'	2024
<i>Syracuse Graduate Philosophy Conference</i>	
on Brandon Williams' 'Choose Error Theory or Realism'	2022
<i>Central States Philosophy Association Conference</i>	
on Edvard Aviles Mesa's 'The Neurotic and the Dogmatist'	2022
<i>Syracuse Graduate Philosophy Conference</i>	
on Michael Sechman's 'Attitudes: States Not Traits'	2022
<i>APA: Central - Colloquium</i>	
on Huzeyfe Demirtas' 'Wrong, but Praiseworthy, Right, but Blameworthy'	2022
<i>Syracuse Graduate ABD Workshop</i>	

Academic Service

President, Syracuse University Philosophy Graduate Student Organization	2023-24
Organizer, Syracuse University Graduate Working Papers Conference	2021-22, '22-23
Member, Excellence in Graduate Education Faculty	2022
Award Selection Committee, Syracuse University	
Instructor, Philosophy Lab	2021-22
<i>Philosophy Lab is an organization made up of members of the SU philosophy department that engages in instructional philosophy outreach to the local K-12 community in Syracuse, NY</i>	
Teaching Mentor, Syracuse University TA Orientation Program	2020, '21
<i>The Teaching Mentor position is a selective, paid position that helps to facilitate, run, and organize the week-long summer All-University TA Orientation Program. Duties include: curriculum development, small-group mentoring, and instructional coaching</i>	
Co-organizer, Syracuse University Graduate Philosophy Conference	2019-20
Chair	

'The Epistemology of Attention: Norms, Modes, and Virtues' <i>APA Eastern</i>	2025
Anna Binkerhoof's 'Moral Testimony, Moral Understanding, and Prejudiced Beliefs' <i>Philadelphia Normativity Conference</i>	2025

Collegiate Teaching Experience

as **Primary Instructor of Record**

at Old Dominion University

P303E Business Ethics	Summer 2026
P230E Introduction to Ethics	Fall 2026

at Syracuse University

P197 Human Nature	Summer '26
P192 Introduction to Moral Theory	Spring 2023, '24, '25
P251 Logic	Fall 2022, '23, '24
P293 Ethics and the Media Professions	Summer 2021, '24, '25
P107 Theories of Knowledge and Reality	Spring 2022
P109 (Honors) Introduction to Philosophy	Fall 2021

as **Teaching Assistant**

at Syracuse University

2018-21

Ethics and the Media Professions
Theories of Knowledge and Reality
Logic
Human Nature
Introduction to Moral Theory

at Brandeis University

2016-17

Philosophy of Religion
Critical Reading in the Humanities and Social Sciences

*part of the Gateway Scholars Program designed for international, non-native
speakers of English*

Introduction to Philosophy
Business Ethics

at Harvard University

2017

Introduction to Philosophy

Other Professional Experience

Phoenix House of New England RISE - Burlington, VT	2015-16
<i>Interim Supervisor, Lead Substance-abuse Counselor</i>	
<i>RISE is a full-residency substance-abuse recovery program for men supervised by the Vermont Department of Corrections</i>	

Teach For America - Henry Ford High School, Detroit, MI	2012-14
<i>Chemistry Teacher, Varsity Golf Coach (boys, girls), 12th Grade Teacher Leader</i>	

Teach For America is a highly-selective, non-profit organization which recruits college graduates to serve as public high school teachers in severely disadvantaged communities

Graduate Coursework in Philosophy (* denotes audited course)

at the University of Rochester

Epistemology

Epistemic Value* (Richard Feldman)

at Syracuse University

Ethics &c.

Moral and Political Proseminar (David Sobel and Ben Bradley)

The Metaphysics of Ethics (Ben Bradley and Kris McDaniel)

Prudence (Ben Bradley)

Society, Language, and Interpretation (*independent study with* Luvell Anderson)

German Political Philosophy 1780-1830 (Frederick Beiser)

Epistemology

Epistemology, Mind, and Metaphysics Proseminar (Kevan Edwards)

Reasons For Belief (*independent study with* Hille Paakkunainen)

Epistemic Consequentialism, Virtue Theory, and Deontology (Hille Paakkunainen)

Language

Logic and Language Proseminar (Michael Rieppel)

Opacity (Michael Rieppel)

Social Philosophy of Language (Luvell Anderson)

Frege, Russell, Wittgenstein* (Michael Rieppel)

Misc

History of Philosophy Proseminar (Kara Richardson)

Ontology: Ordinary Objects (Kris McDaniel)

Kant's Critique of Pure Reason (Frederick Beiser)

Methodology* (Janice Dowell)

at Brandeis University

Graduate Proseminar (Beri Marušić)

Graduate Seminar in Epistemology: Epistemology of Modality (Jennifer Marušić)

Graduate Seminar in Mind/CogSci: Origins of Objectivity (Jerry Samet)

Master's Project - Kripke: An Explication and Defense (Eli Hirsch)

Mathematical Logic (Jennifer Marušić)

References

Hille Paakkunainen

Professor, Syracuse University
hpaakkun {at} syr {dot} edu

Richard Feldman

Professor Emeritus, University of Rochester
richard {dot} feldman {at} rochester {dot} edu

Mark Heller

Professor, Syracuse University
heller {at} syr {dot} edu

Catherine Elgin

Professor, Harvard University
catherine {underscore} elgin {at} harvard {dot} edu