Marvin Backes

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Nationality: German

Research

Areas of Specialization: Epistemology (traditional and social), Metaphysics, Metaethics
Areas of Competence: Ethics, Aesthetics, Philosophy of Language, Philosophy of Mind

Employment

2022 - present	**University of Cologne**, *Department of Philosophy* Assistant Professor (Wissenschaftlicher Mitarbeiter)
2020 - 2022	**Uppsala University**, *Department of Philosophy* Wenner-Gren Research Fellow
2020 (spring)	**University of St Andrews**, *Department of Philosophy* Associate Lecturer

Education

2015 - 2019	**University of St Andrews/Stirling** PhD Philosophy Title: What Justifies Belief? Probability, Normalcy, and the Functional Theory Supervisors: Patrick Greenough and Crispin Wright
2014 - 2015	**University of St Andrews/Stirling** MLitt Philosophy Supervisor: Jessica Brown
2009 - 2013	**Westminster College**, *Salt Lake City, USA* BA Philosophy and Economics (with honours)

Publications

Forthcoming	Can Closure be Saved? The Hardest Paradoxes for Closure Revisited, *Synthese*.
Forthcoming	Against Inferential Moral Knowledge: A Defence of Hume's Law, *The Philosophical Quarterly*.
2023	"Should Moral Intuitionism Go Social?" (with Matti Eklund and Eliot Michaelson), *Noûs* 57: 973-985
2023	"Epistemic Justification: Probability, Normalcy, and the Functional Theory", *Australasian Journal of Philosophy* 101(1): 65-85.
2021	"Can Groups be Genuine Believers? The Argument From Interpretationism", *Synthese* 199: 10311–10329.
2020	"Epistemology and the Law: Why There is No Epistemic Mileage in Legal Cases", *Philosophical Studies* 177: 2759-2778.
2019	"Normalcy, Justification, and the Easy-Defeat Problem", *Philosophical Studies* 176: 2877-2895.
2019	"A Bitter Pill for Closure", *Synthese* 196: 3773-3787.

Selected Talks

Moral Epistemology for Metaethical Expressivists

Oct. 2026 Brown Bag Seminar Series, *University of Cologne*

Between Probability and Normalcy: Epistemic Pluralism and Epistemic Paradoxes

June 2026 Between Probability and Certainty: 10 Years On, *University of Glasgow*

Sept. 2026 Moderne Transzendentalphilosophie 24, *Dubrovnik*

Moral Epistemology and Expressivism's BrokenPromise

Sept. 2025 Moderne Transzendentalphilosophie 23, *Dubrovnik*

Nov 2025 Brown Bag Seminar Series, *University of Cologne*

Normalcy, Justification, and Closure: The Hardest Paradoxes for Closure Revisited

Sept. 2025 GAP.12, *University of Düsseldorf*

June 2023 Rhine-Ruhr Epistemology Meeting, *University of Bonn*

March 2023 CONCEPT Fest, *University of Cologne*

Jan. 2023 Frankfurt-Cologne Epistemology Workshop, *Goethe University of Frankfurt*

Against Inferential Moral Knowledge: A Defence of Hume's Law

April 2025 Research Colloquium, *University of Heidelberg*

Oct. 2024 Tokyo Forum for Analytic Philosophy, *University of Tokyo*

Sept. 2024 FS Philosophy Forum, *Frankfurt School*

Sept. 2024 Moderne Transzendentalphilosophie 22, *Dubrovnik*

May 2024 Brown Bag Seminar Series, *University of Cologne*

The Puzzle of Higher-Order Defeat: A One-Tiered Solution

March 2025 Amsterdam Epistemology Workshop 2025, *VU Amsterdam*

Feb. 2025 Rhein-Main-Neckar Epistemology Meeting 2025, *Goethe University of Frankfurt*

Neta on Epistemic Paradoxes: Lotteries, Prefaces, and the New Hybrid Paradoxes

July 2023 Cologne Summer School in Philosophy with Ram Neta, *University of Cologne*

Moderate Moral Intuitionism and the Confidence Challenge

June 2023 The Role of Intuitions in Philosophy Workhop, *University of Cologne*

Moderate Moral Intuitionism and Arguments From Reliability

Dec. 2022 Brown Bag Seminar Series, *University of Cologne*

Sept. 2022 GAP.11 (German Society for Analytic Philosophy), *Humboldt University Berlin*

Apr. 2021 Stockholm/Uppsala Joint Seminar in Theoretical Philosophy, *Stockholm University*

Alethic Pluralism and Moral Epistemology: The Proxy View

Sept. 2022 Italian Society for Analytic Philosophy Mid-Term Conference on Truth in Evaluation, *University of Sassari (Sardinia)*

On Inferential Moral Knowledge: A Defence of Hume's Law

June 2022 The Swedish Congress of Philosophy, *Lund University*

Apr. 2022 Stockholm/Uppsala Joint Seminar in Practical Philosophy, *Stockholm University*

Justification Pluralism and Epistemic Paradoxes: New Solutions

May. 2022 Brown Bag Seminar Series, *University of Cologne*

Sept. 2021 Epistemic Pluralism Workshop, *Yonsei University/ University of Gothenburg/ Uppsala University*

Epistemic Justification: Monism, Pluralism, and the Functional Theory

June 2020 Higher Seminar for Theoretical Philosophy, *Uppsala University*

Epistemology and the Law: Why There is No Epistemic Mileage in Legal Cases

Nov. 2019 Epistemology Research Group, *University of Edinburgh*
Apr. 2019 Evidence in Law and Ethics, *Jagiellonian University (Kraków)*

Normalcy Views of Justification and the Easy-Defeat Problem
Sept. 2018 GAP.10 (German Society for Analytic Philosophy), *University of Cologne*
June 2018 European Epistemology Network, *University of Amsterdam*
Apr. 2018 XIX Taller d'Investigació en Filosofia, *University of Barcelona*

Justification from Statistical Evidence: A Defence
May 2018 Arché Epistemology Group, *University of St Andrews*

Justification as Multiply Realizable
Dec. 2017 The Metaphysics of Knowledge Workshop II, *University of St Andrews*

A Dilemma for Non-Probabilistic Accounts of Justification
May 2016 Flash Epistemology Workshop, *University of St Andrews*

Finding Value in Verbal Disputes
July 2015 Understanding Value IV, *University of Sheffield*

Awards & Grants

2023 - 2026 **German Research Council (DFG) Research Grant**
Competitive three-year research grant for my project '*Moral Epistemology and Alethic Pluralism: Towards a New Theory of Epistemic Justification for Moral Belief*'

2022 **Italian Society for Analytic Philosophy Young Scholar Prize**
Research prize awarded to early-career researchers

2020 - 2022 **Wenner-Gren Postdoctoral Research Fellowship**
Competitive stipend to conduct postdoctoral research in Sweden

2020 **University of St Andrews Outstanding Teacher Award Nomination**
Nominated by students for the annual Outstanding Teacher Award

2015 - 2018 **AD Links Foundation Postgraduate Scholarship**
Competitive three-year scholarship for doctoral studies, awarded by the University of St Andrews

2014 - 2015 **Formula Santander Postgraduate Scholarship**
Competitive scholarship for graduate studies, awarded by the University of St Andrews

2013 **Westminster College Outstanding Student Award (Philosophy)**
Awarded annually to final-year philosophy students in recognition of outstanding academic achievement

2009 - 2013 **Westminster College Merit Scholarship**
Merit based four-year scholarship for undergraduate studies

Teaching

University of Cologne
Spring 2025 Political Epistemology (in German)
Moral Epistemology
Autumn 2024 Reading and Writing Philosophy (in German)
Introduction to Metaethics
Autumn 2022 Epistemic Paradoxes
Current Themes in Social Epistemology: Epistemic Injustice

University of St Andrews, *(as Lecturer)*

Spring 2020	PY4606 Contemporary Epistemology (Social and Political Epistemology)
	PY1901 Morality and Human Nature (Moral Theory)
Spring 2019	PY2903 Matters of Life and Death (Ethics)

University of St Andrews, *(as Tutor)*

Spring 2020	PY2012 Meaning and Knowing (Epistemology and Philosophy of Language)
Spring 2019	PY1013 The Enlightenment (History of Philosophy/Political Philosophy)
Autumn 2018	PY2011 Foundations of Western Philosophy (Ancient Philosophy)
Spring 2018	PY2011 Foundations of Western Philosophy (Ancient Philosophy)
Spring 2017	PY2013 Moral and Aesthetic Values (Metaethics and Aesthetics)
Autumn 2016	PY1010 Mind and World (Metaphysics and Philosophy of Mind)
Spring 2016	PY2012 Meaning and Knowing (Epistemology and Philosophy of Language)
Autumn 2015	PY1010 Mind and World (Metaphysics and Philosophy of Mind)

Instructor on the Philosophy Academic Skills Project, *University of St Andrews*

I designed and delivered two workshops aimed at making analytic philosophy more accessible to undergraduate students new to the subject and to help students develop some of the key skills required to succeed in philosophy.

Spring 2016	Philosophy Academic Skills Workshop, 'Essay Writing in Philosophy'
Autumn 2015	Philosophy Academic Skills Workshop, 'Thinking Like a Philosopher'

Professional Experience & Service

Collaborative Research

As an active member of the Arché Philosophical Research Centre for Logic, Language, Metaphysics and Epistemology at the University of St Andrews, I was affiliated with the following research groups.

2015 - 2019	**Epistemology: Current Themes** *Principal investigator: Jessica Brown*
2017 - 2019	**Conceptual Engineering** *Principal investigator: Kevin Sharp*
2016 - 2017	**Metaphysics: Identity, Existence & Structure** *Principal investigator: Aaron Cotnoir*
2015 - 2016	**Language and Mind** *Principal investigator: Derek Ball & Simon Prosser*

Conference/Workshop Organising

2023	Organiser of an international workshops on the Role of Intuitions in Philosophy (together with Thomas Grundmann and John Bengson).
2021	Organiser of a workshop series on Epistemic Pluralism (together with Nikolaj Pedersen and Ylwa Wirling).
2017	Organiser of the 10th Arché Graduate Conference *External funding won from the Scots Philosophical Association and Analysis.*
2016	Organiser of the 9th Arché Graduate Conference *External funding won from the Mind Association, the Scots Philosophical Association, and through the CAPOD Innovation Grant.*

Refereeing

Invited Referee: *Philosophical Quarterly, Analysis, Journal of Philosophy, Philosophical Studies, Synthese, Inquiry, Australasian Journal of Philosophy, Philosopher's Imprint, Canadian Journal of Philosophy, Acta Analytica*

References

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