

**COLE MITCHELL**  
*Curriculum Vitae*

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**AREAS OF SPECIALIZATION**

Metaethics, Ethical Theory, Early Modern

**AREAS OF COMPETENCE**

History of Ethics, Applied Ethics, Philosophy of Mind, Philosophy of Religion

**EMPLOYMENT**

University of North Carolina 08/2012–08/2014

Visiting Assistant Professor, Philosophy / Philosophy, Politics, and Economics

Northern Arizona University 09/2011–05/2012

Instructor, Philosophy

**EDUCATION**

University of Arizona 2003–2011 Ph.D. Philosophy

*Dissertation:* “Against Metaethical Descriptivism: The Semantic Problem”

*Committee:* Mark Timmons (advisor), Michael Gill, Terry Horgan

University of Alabama 1997–2002 B.A. Philosophy (minor: Economics)

**FELLOWSHIPS AND AWARDS**

- *Graduate College Fellowship*, University of Arizona, Spring 2011 [merit-based]
- *The Iredell Jenkins Memorial Endowed Scholarship*, University of Alabama, 2000, 2001, 2002 [best philosophy student]
- *The Martin and Marie ten Hoor Prize*, University of Alabama, 2000, 2001 [best paper by a philosophy student]

**PUBLICATIONS**

“Mixed-Up About Mixed Worlds? Understanding Blackburn’s Supervenience Argument.” *Philosophical Studies*. December 2017, Volume 174, Issue 12, pp. 2903–2925.

**SELECTED WORKS IN PROGRESS (available upon request)**

“Why Not Metaethical Non-Naturalism? A Problem in Moral Semantics”

“Bayle and the Atheist-Friendly *Euthyphro*”

“Motivation and the Direct Passions in Hume’s *Treatise*”

“A Supervenience Argument against Error-Theory”

“Does Metaethical Quietism Have Anything to Say?”

**TEACHING POSITIONS (at the University of Arizona unless otherwise noted)**

**As Instructor**

*History*

- Early Modern Philosophy (Fall 2006, Summer 2009)
- History of Moral and Political Philosophy (Spring 2008)

### *Value Theory*

- Social Justice (Spring 2014 [UNC])
- Social Ethics and Political Thought (Spring 2013, Fall 2013, Spring 2014 [UNC])
- Ethics and Economics (Fall 2012, Spring 2013, Fall 2013 [UNC])
- Introduction to Ethics (Fall 2012, Spring 2014 [UNC])
- Health Care Ethics (Fall 2011 [NAU])
- Introduction to Moral and Social Philosophy (Fall 2010)
- Metaethics (Fall 2009)
- Law and Morality (Spring 2007)
- Medical Ethics (Summer 2006)

### *M&E*

- Philosophy of Mind (Spring 2012 [NAU])
- Introduction to Philosophy (Fall 2011 and Spring 2012 [NAU])
- Introduction to Symbolic Logic (Fall 2008)
- Philosophy of Religion (Summer 2007, Fall 2007)
- Mind, Matter, and God (Summer 2004, Summer 2005)
- Logic and Critical Thinking (Fall 2004)

### **As Teaching Assistant**

- Personal Morality (Issues in Applied Ethics), with Mark Timmons (Fall 2010)
- Introduction to Symbolic Logic, with Martin Fricke (Fall 2008)
- Mind, Matter, and God, with J. Christopher Maloney (Spring 2004, Spring 2006)
- Justice and Virtue, with Houston Smit (Spring 2005)
- Personal Morality (Issues in Applied Ethics), with Michael Gill (Fall 2003)

### **As Grader**

- Metaethics, with Mark Timmons (Fall 2010)
- Metaethics, with Mark Timmons (Fall 2007)
- Introduction to Symbolic Logic, with Martin Fricke (Fall 2007)
- Introduction to Symbolic Logic, with Martin Fricke (Fall 2006)

### **SERVICE**

#### *To the Profession:*

Chapter abstracts for Oxford Scholarship Online, *Rationality and the Good*, Timmons, Greco, & Mele (eds.), Oxford University Press

Referee, *The Journal of Philosophical Research*

Referee, *The Southern Journal of Philosophy*

### **GRADUATE COURSEWORK**

#### *History*

Plato's Psychology (seminar), Rachana Kamtekar, Spring 2006

Hume's *Treatise* (seminar), David Owen, Spring 2005

History of Social Contract Theory, Michael Gill, Spring 2004

#### *Value Theory*

Moral Phenomenology (seminar), Mark Timmons, Fall 2006

Ethical Intuitionism (seminar), Mark Timmons, Spring 2005

The Purpose of Moral Theory (seminar), Dave Schmidtz, Fall 2004

The British Moralists (seminar), Michael Gill, Fall 2003  
Political Philosophy, Eric Cavallero, Fall 2003

### *M&E*

Philosophy of Mind, Terry Horgan, Spring 2007  
Philosophy of Mind (independent study), Terry Horgan, Fall 2006  
Philosophy of Science, Shaughan Lavine, Spring 2006  
Metaphysics of Experience, Houston Smit, Spring 2006  
Philosophy of Language, Marga Reimer, Spring 2005  
Truth (seminar), Joseph Tolliver, Fall 2004

### *Other*

Research and Professionalization Seminar, Tom Christiano & Terry Horgan, Fall 2007  
Mathematical Logic, Shaughan Lavine, Fall 2004  
Pro-Seminar, Marga Reimer, Fall 2003

## **LANGUAGE COMPETENCIES**

French, Czech

## **DISSERTATION ABSTRACT**

Descriptivist metaethical views face a serious semantic problem. Moral thought and discourse, descriptivists hold, purports to describe moral properties and/or relations: e.g., the term ‘good’ purports to refer to some property or cluster of properties. Central to any such theory, then, is the recognition of certain items of ontology which, should they actually exist, would count as the referents of moral terms and concepts. And since moral thought and discourse operates under a supervenience constraint, descriptivists hold that any ontology suitable for morality would have to supervene upon non-moral ontology. But this lands descriptivists with the task of providing a semantic account capable of relating this ontology to moral terms and concepts. That is, they must explain why it is that certain items of ontology and not others would count as the referents of moral terms and concepts, in a way that is consistent with the supervenience constraint. I argue that this important explanatory task cannot be carried out, as well-known semantic concerns—the open question argument, the is-ought gap, and Moral Twin Earth—return in unfamiliar guises to bedevil extant descriptivist accounts. And because the problem generalizes from metaethics to all normativity, we are left with good reason to pursue alternatives to descriptivist accounts of moral, and indeed generally normative, semantics.

## **LIST OF REFERENCES**

Simon Blackburn	Professor of Philosophy, UNC Chapel Hill, swb24@cam.ac.uk
Mark Timmons	Professor of Philosophy, University of Arizona, mtimmons@u.arizona.edu
Terry Horgan	Professor of Philosophy, University of Arizona, thorgan@u.arizona.edu
Michael Gill	Professor of Philosophy, University of Arizona, gillm@u.arizona.edu
David Owen	Professor of Philosophy, University of Arizona, dwo@u.arizona.edu
Houston Smit	Professor of Philosophy, University of Arizona, smit@u.arizona.edu
Shaun Nichols	Professor of Philosophy, University of Arizona, sbn@u.arizona.edu