

# Rachel Cristy

## Curriculum Vitae

### CONTACT INFORMATION

**Departmental**  
*Address:* Department of Philosophy  
Princeton University  
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### EDUCATION

#### Princeton University

Ph.D. in Philosophy, January 2018  
Dissertation: "The Will to Truth and the Will to Believe: Friedrich Nietzsche and William James Against Scientism"  
Primary Advisor: Alexander Nehamas  
Secondary Advisor: Philip Kitcher (Columbia University)

#### Stanford University

B.A. in Linguistics and in Philosophy with Honors, March 2011  
Honors thesis: "The Evolution of W.E.B. Du Bois's Philosophy of Race"  
Advisor: R. Lanier Anderson

### INTERESTS

#### Areas of Specialization

19<sup>th</sup> Century Philosophy (esp. Nietzsche, American Pragmatism); Kant (metaphysics/epistemology and aesthetics)

#### Areas of Competence

Early Modern Philosophy, Aesthetics, Ethics, Philosophy of Science, Philosophy of Race

### PUBLICATIONS

"Does Wine Have a Place in Kant's Theory of Taste?" *Journal of the American Philosophical Association*, Vol. 2, No. 1 (Spring 2016), pp. 36–54.  
"What Is 'The Meaning of Our Cheerfulness'? Philosophy as a Way of Life in Nietzsche and Montaigne," with R. Lanier Anderson. *European Journal of Philosophy*, Vol. 25, No. 4 (December 2017), pp. 1514–1549.

### FELLOWSHIPS, AWARDS, AND HONORS

Charlotte Elizabeth Procter Fellowship, Princeton University <i>Competitive dissertation writing fellowship awarded by the graduate school</i>	2015–2016
The Bayard Henry Class of 1876 Fellowship, Princeton University <i>Awarded to selected first-year graduate students</i>	2011–2012
Robert M. Golden Medal for Excellence in the Humanities & Creative Arts, Stanford University <i>Recognizes exceptional undergraduate honors theses in the arts and humanities</i>	2011

Rhineland Prize, Stanford University Department of Philosophy <i>"Recognizes outstanding work in philosophy and contributions to the intellectual life of the philosophy department"</i>	2011
J.E. Wallace Sterling Award for Scholastic Achievement, Stanford University <i>Awarded to the students with the 25 highest GPAs in a senior class</i>	2010

### SELECTED PRESENTATIONS

<b>"Teaching On the Genealogy of Morality to First-Year College Students"</b> Presentation to the teaching staff of the Contemporary Civilization Core Curriculum, Columbia University	April 2017
<b>"Nietzsche on the Good of Cultural Change"</b> Conference of the North American Nietzsche Society	October 2016
<b>"Commanders and Scientific Laborers: Nietzsche on the Relationship Between Philosophy and Science"</b> Colloquium at the Western Michigan University Philosophy Department	September 2016
<b>"'Gay Science' as a Conditional Will to Truth"</b> Humboldt-Princeton Graduate Student Philosophy Workshop	June 2016
<b>"Tolstoy's 'Sick Soul': The Significance of a Literary Case Study for William James's Varieties of Religious Experience"</b> Princeton University Department of Slavic Languages and Literatures Graduate Student Conference, "Philosophy and Literature"	October 2015
<b>"The Postulated Author of Art and Nature: Kant on Spinoza in the Third Critique"</b> 12 <sup>th</sup> International Kant Congress, Vienna	September 2015
<b>"What is 'the Meaning of our Cheerfulness'? Philosophy as a Way of Life in Nietzsche and Montaigne" (with R. Lanier Anderson)</b> Boston University Workshop in Late Modern Philosophy Talk for the Philosophy + Literature Initiative at Stanford University	October 2014 October 2014
<b>"Does Wine Have a Place in Kant's Aesthetics?"</b> Hopkins-Penn-Princeton-Columbia Early Modern Philosophy Workshop Humboldt-Princeton Graduate Philosophy Conference	October 2013 August 2013

### TEACHING EXPERIENCE

#### Princeton University

##### Assistant in Instruction

LIN 201: Introduction to Linguistics, for Laura Kalin (2017) and Christiane Fellbaum (2014) <i>Led discussion/practicum sections; graded problem sets and exams.</i>	Spring 2017 Fall 2014
PHI 302: British Empiricism, for Daniel Garber <i>Led discussion section; graded student papers and exams.</i>	Fall 2013
PHI 306: Nietzsche, for Alexander Nehamas <i>Led discussion sections; graded student papers.</i>	Spring 2013
PHI 202: Introduction to Moral Philosophy, for Michael Smith <i>Led discussion sections; graded student papers and exams.</i>	Fall 2012

##### Guest Lectures

"The Eternal Recurrence," for PHI 306: Nietzsche	Fall 2014
"Hume on Personal Identity," for PHI 302: British Empiricism	Fall 2013
"Noble and Slave Morality," for PHI 306: Nietzsche	Spring 2013

## DEPARTMENTAL AND PROFESSIONAL SERVICE

### *Co-Organizer*

Princeton-Penn-Columbia Graduate History of Philosophy Conference May 2015 & 2016

### *Referee*

Princeton-Penn-Columbia Graduate History of Philosophy Conference 2012–2016

### *Chair*

Colloquium on Kantian Ethics, Pacific APA April 2017

Colloquium on Genealogy as Critique of Normativity, Pacific APA April 2016

### *Commentator*

“Kant on Hume and Skepticism” by Bianca Ancillotti,  
Humboldt-Princeton Graduate Philosophy Workshop February 2016

“Self-fulfillment, Self-acknowledgment, and Authenticity” by Michael Rings,  
Colloquium on Authenticity, Pacific APA April 2015

“The Theory of Evolution, Moral Realism, and Warranted Moral Belief” by  
Simon Gaus, Humboldt-Princeton Graduate Philosophy Conference August 2013

### *Other*

Princeton Philosophy Department “Sommelier” Fall 2015–present

*Recommends or purchases wine and beer served at receptions and dinners.*

Interim Graduate Representative for Princeton Philosophy Department Fall 2014

## LANGUAGES

French, German, basic reading in Latin

## DISSERTATION ABSTRACT

### ***The Will to Truth and the Will to Believe: Friedrich Nietzsche and William James Against Scientism***

My dissertation brings into conversation two thinkers who are seldom considered together and highlights previously unnoticed similarities in their critical responses to *scientism*, which was just as prevalent in the late 19<sup>th</sup> century as it is today. I analyze this attitude as consisting of two linked propositions. The first, which Nietzsche calls “the unconditional will to truth,” is that the aims of science, discovering truth and avoiding error, are the highest human aims; and the second is that no practice other than science can achieve them. Both Nietzsche and James criticize the unconditional will to truth for privileging a transcendent ideal over the demands of human life. This unconditional will regards truth as valuable in itself and demands that we pursue it under all circumstances—even if that demand comes into conflict with other values. I lay out the ways in which Nietzsche and James view the value of truth and the imperative to pursue it as *conditional* on its promotion of human flourishing. In response to the second proposition of scientism, both philosophers argue that science can neither tell us what we should value, nor fully account for the value we in fact find in certain objects, activities, and experiences. And crucially, science cannot tell us whether or why its own goal of attaining truth is valuable. Nietzsche and James reach different conclusions about what is ultimately valuable, and whether traditional religious belief is defensible in light of the discoveries of science. Nonetheless, the hitherto unappreciated similarities I have uncovered in their arguments show that principled opposition to scientism need not be associated with any particular moral or religious viewpoint. This analysis is not only of historical interest: those who consider scientism to be ill-founded and intellectually confining can take some cues from our 19<sup>th</sup>-century predecessors’ strategies for combating it.

**Advisors:** Alexander Nehamas (primary), Philip Kitcher (secondary)

**Last updated:** January 25, 2018