

## **Brett A. Yardley**

Curriculum Vitae

07/09/2021

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Department of Philosophy  
Marquette Hall 115  
1217 W. Wisconsin Ave.  
Milwaukee, WI 53233  
United States of America

### **AREA OF SPECIALIZATION**

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HISTORICAL: Abrahamic Medieval Philosophy

- Emphasis on Arabic and Latin traditions

SYSTEMATIC: Metaphysics and Epistemology

- Social Epistemology
- Virtue Epistemology

### **AREA OF COMPETENCY**

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THEORY OF ETHICS

BIOETHICS

PHILOSOPHY OF HUMAN NATURE

PHILOSOPHY OF RELIGION

LOGIC

### **EMPLOYMENT HISTORY, GRANTS, & FELLOWSHIPS**

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Assistant Professor of Philosophy, DeSales University, August 2021 - present

Book Editor, Richard C. Taylor's *Thomas Aquinas and the Arabic Philosophical Tradition*,  
Marquette University, Spring 2021

[Visiting Predoctoral Fellow – Max Planck Institute for the History of Science \(MPIWG\)](#), August  
2020-December 2020

Fulbright U.S. Student Program – Grant Recipient to Belgium, 2018-2019

Graduate Course Assistant, *Aquinas in Context*, KU Leuven & Marquette University, Fall 2018

Lecturer, Marquette University, Fall 2015-Spring 2018

Donald J. Schuenke Chair Research Assistant; Margaret Urban Walker. Marquette University, Fall 2015-Spring 2016

Research Assistant; James South. Marquette University, Spring 2016

Research Assistant; Mike Barnett. Columbia International University, Summer 2013

Marketing & Communications; MAU (Management, Analysis and Utilization, Inc.), 2007-2010

Marketing Analyst; SunTrust Banks, Inc. / SunTrust Investment Services, Inc., 2006-2007

Resident Assistant; University of Georgia Housing Dept., Creswell Hall, 2003-2005

## EDUCATION

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PHD – Katholieke Universiteit Leuven, Institute of Philosophy, double degree, 2018-2021, dissertation defense: 7 May 2021

PHD – Marquette University; Graduate School of Philosophy, double degree, 2014-2021  
Coursework GPA 3.92

THESIS: "When to Trust Authoritative Testimony: Generation and Transmission of Knowledge in Saadya Gaon, al-Ghazali, and Thomas Aquinas,"

Committee Members:

- Andrea Robiglio, Co-Chair, KU Leuven
- Richard C. Taylor, Co-Chair, Marquette University
- Michael J. Wreen, Marquette University
- Sarah Pessin, University of Denver
- Owen Goldin, Marquette University

## TEACHER TRAINING

- American Association of Philosophy Teachers (AAPT) *Inclusive Pedagogy in Philosophy Chicago*, Summer 2019
- *Facilitating Your Online Course*, Marquette University Center for Teaching & Learning, Summer 2017
- Shadow Teaching; *Philosophy of Human Nature*. Marquette University, Spring 2015
- *Teaching Philosophy Seminar*; Marquette University, Fall 2014

NON-DEGREE – University of South Carolina; Graduate School of Philosophy, 2014, GPA 4.0

MDIV – Columbia International University; Seminary & School of Ministry, 2013, *summa cum laude*, GPA 3.94

CERTIFICATE – Vineyard Leadership Institute; Christian Ministry, 2010

BA – University of Georgia; Terry College of Business, 2006, *cum laude*, GPA 3.59

- Major: Marketing
- Minor: Sociology

## **INSTRUCTOR OF RECORD**

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PL109: Philosophical Thinking, DeSales University, Fall 2021

PL225: Logic, DeSales University, Fall 2021

PL475: Friendship, Love and Sexuality: Values Seminar, DeSales University, Fall 2021

PHIL4335: Bio-Medical Ethics, Marquette University, Spring 2018

PHIL2310: Theory of Ethics, Marquette University, Spring/Fall 2017

PHIL1001: Philosophy of Human Nature, Marquette University, Fall 2015/2016

## **AWARDS, HONORS, & RECOGNITIONS**

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Marquette Philosophy Department's nominee, *Graduate Student Teaching Award*, Spring 2020

Award for *Inclusive Pedagogy in Philosophy Chicago* Workshop – American Association of Philosophy Teachers (AAPT), August 2019

Web development specialist for La Société Internationale d'Histoire des Sciences et de la Philosophie Arabes et Islamiques (SIHSPAI) 2019-present

Aquinas and the Arabs: Graduate Student Intl. Working Group

- Organized annual international graduate student conference, 2016-present
- Co-Chair; 2019-present
- Chair; 2017-2019
- Co-Chair; 2016-2017
- Secretary; 2015-2016

Award recipient for travel to Italy – Cyril Smith Trust Scholarship Fund, May 2019

Coordinator, Monthly Biblical Studies Luncheon – CIU Biblical Studies Department, 2012-2013

CIU Preview Scholarship recipient – Columbia International University – 2009-2013

## **PEER-REVIEWED JOURNAL ARTICLES**

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Brett Yardley, "Trust and Perspectivalism in the History of Epistemology: Testimony and After Certainty," *Rivista Di Filosofia Neo-Scolastica*, no. 1 (2020): 95–109.

Brett Yardley, "Biblical Inspiration & Islamic Instrumental Causality: Thomas Aquinas on Prophecy and the Two Authors of Sacred Scripture," *The Muslim World* 109, no. 3 (2019): 431–49. <https://onlinelibrary.wiley.com/doi/10.1111/muwo.12303>

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## BOOK REVIEWS

Brett Yardley, "María Jesús Soto-Bruna (Ed.), *Causality and Resemblance. Medieval Approaches to the Explanation of Nature*," Georg Olms Verlag, Hildesheim–Zürich–New York 2018 (Europaea Memoria, Reihe I: Studien, 127), 182 PP., ISBN 9783487156866," in: *Mediterranea. International Journal on the Transfer of Knowledge* 4, no. 0 (March 31, 2019): 289–96.

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## PAPERS IN PROGRESS

"The Importance of Testimony in Saadya Gaon's Philosophy and Rational Methodology"

"Can God be certain? A Cartesian Response to Robert Pasnau's Doubtful God in *After Certainty*", editing draft

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## PRESENTATIONS

"Be Wary of Contemporary Testimonial Theories applied to Pre-Enlightenment Thinkers", Society for Medieval and Renaissance Philosophy Inaugural Conference, University of Notre Dame, South Bend, USA –October 2021

"Medieval and Renaissance Testimony on When to Trust Authority," Philosophy in the Abrahamic Traditions: Structures of Being, World and Mind at The Institute of Ismaeli Studies, London, England – June 2021

"Al-Ghazali's Theory of Testimony," [56<sup>th</sup> International Congress on Medieval Studies](#), Western Michigan University Medieval Institute, Kalamazoo, USA – May 2021

"To 'Like' a Racist Comment is to Say a Racist Comment: Social Media and Appropriated Discourse", Philosophy Department Weekly Series, Marquette University, Milwaukee, USA February 2021

"Instrumental Causality and the Metaphysics of Primary and Secondary Causality," [12<sup>th</sup> Annual Philosophy in the Abrahamic Traditions - Neoplatonism & Aristotelianism in Early Arabic Philosophy](#), Marquette University, Milwaukee, USA - June 2019

“Saadya Gaon’s Metaphysics of Revelation,” [7<sup>th</sup> Annual Symposium on Medieval & Renaissance Studies](#), St. Louis University, St. Louis, USA - June 2019

“Revealed Testimony in Abrahamic Faiths,” [2019 AAIWG International Meeting: Philosophy in the Abrahamic Traditions: Intellect, Experience and More](#), University of Pisa, Pisa, Italy - May 2019

“Trust and Perspectivalism in the History of Epistemology: Testimony and *After Certainty*” [De Wulf – Mansion Centre for Ancient, Medieval, and Renaissance Philosophy - Philosophical Review Club](#), KU Leuven, Leuven, Belgium - May 2019

“Revelation & Testimony in al-Ghazali,” [9<sup>th</sup> Annual Graduate Student Conference 2018-2019](#), KU Leuven, Belgium - April 2019.

“ ‘Epistemological wall’ as selection criterion: An Alternative Abrahamic trio to Averroes, Maimonides, and Aquinas,” [Cordoba Near Eastern Research Unit \(CNERU\)](#), Universidad de Cordoba, Cordoba, Spain - January 2019

“The Role of Testimony in Moses Maimonides’s Critique of Saadya Gaon,” [Fall 2018 Annual Fall Workshop of Aquinas and the Arabs](#), Universidad Panamericana, Mexico City, Mexico - August 2018

“A Testimonial Defense of Saadya Gaon’s “Tradition” to Maimonides’s *Guide of the Perplexed*,” [11<sup>th</sup> Annual Philosophy in the Abrahamic Traditions - Rabbi Moses Maimonides](#), University of Denver, Denver, USA - June 2018

“Biblical Inspiration & Islamic “Instrumental Causality: Aquinas on the two authors of Sacred Scripture”, [53<sup>rd</sup> International Congress on Medieval studies](#), Western Michigan University Medieval Institute, Kalamazoo, USA - May 2018

“Aquinas on Biblical Inspiration: God Moving the Human Will via Instrumental Causality”, [International Congress: Intelligence and Will in Thomas Aquinas](#), University of Navarra, Navarra, Spain - April 2018

“Biblical Inspiration & Islamic “Instrumental Causality: Aquinas on the two authors of Sacred Scripture”, [The Aquinas and ‘the Arabs’ Graduate Student Workshop](#), Marquette University, Milwaukee, USA - March 2018.

“al-Ghazali, the Anachronistic Analytic Philosopher of Religion”, [52<sup>nd</sup> International Congress on Medieval studies](#), Western Michigan University Medieval Institute, Kalamazoo, USA - May 2017

A response to Celia Byrne’s “Rethinking the Relationship between Essence and Existence in Ibn Sina’s Metaphysics”, [Marquette Graduate Philosophy Conference 2017: Forgotten Philosophers \(and why we should remember them\)](#), Marquette University, Milwaukee, USA - April 2017

“What does Baghdad have to do with Paris?”, [Christian-Muslim Relations in America Today: An Interdisciplinary Symposium](#), Mellon Grant and Simmons Religious Commitment Fund, Marquette University, Milwaukee, USA - March 2017.

“Al-Ghazali the Anachronistic Philosopher”, [Fall 2016 North American Workshop on Aquinas and ‘the Arabs’](#), Marquette University, Milwaukee, USA - September 2016.

“Al-Ghazālī the Anachronistic Philosopher: Medieval Analytic Philosophy of Religion Introduction”, [The Aquinas and ‘the Arabs’ Graduate Student Workshop](#), Marquette University, Milwaukee, USA - February 2016.

“Why We Should Use Dialogue Today: A Dialogue on Dialogue”, Marquette Philosophy Department Brown Bag, Marquette University, Milwaukee, USA - September 2015.

“Social Epistemology & Communities of Faith: Is Aquinas’s Epistemic Division of Labor ‘Elitist Fideism’?”, [The Aquinas and ‘the Arabs’ Graduate Student Workshop](#), Marquette University, Milwaukee, USA - February 2015.

“Dodging Situationism: Can Virtue Ethics and Situationism Coexist?”, University of South Carolina course presentation, Columbia, USA - December 2013.

“Illocutionary Logos as Link Between Epistemology and Ontology (Christology)”, Columbia International University course presentation, Columbia, USA - June 2013.

## THESIS ABSTRACT

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"When to Trust Authoritative Testimony: Generation and Transmission of Knowledge in Saadya Gaon, al-Ghazali, and Thomas Aquinas"

People have become suspicious of authority, including epistemic authorities, i.e. knowledge experts, even on matters individuals are unqualified to adjudicate (e.g. climate change, vaccines, or the shape or age of the earth). This is problematic since most of our knowledge comes from trusting a speaker—whether scholars reading experts, students listening to teachers, children obeying their parents, or pedestrians inquiring of strangers—such that the knowledge transmitted is never personally verified. Despite the recent development of social epistemology, this is not a new problem.

Ancient and Medieval philosophers largely took it for granted that most human knowledge primarily comes from listening to a trustworthy speaker whose virtuous character serves to mitigate against the twin concerns of inaccuracy and dishonesty. Thus, unlike contemporary Social Epistemology, few testimonial theories were explicitly laid out despite evidence of them interspersed throughout a thinker’s writings. To date, the working theory of testimony underpinning the works of medieval philosophers has not been codified (with few exceptions). Thus, there is a large gap in the recorded epistemologies of most medieval scholars. This is particularly relevant for the Abrahamic faiths since they originate with testimony from God

himself. The goal of this dissertation is to explore how the generation and transmission of religious knowledge appears in an exemplary thinker from each faith: Saadya (Saadiyah) Gaon of Judaism (882-942AD), al-Ghazali of Islam (1058-1111AD), and Thomas Aquinas of Christianity (1225-1274AD). While not contemporaries, these exemplars are theological philosophers who are like-minded in their desire to maintain an orthodox faith while possessing philosophical approaches to truth. Thus, they maintained sophisticated epistemological theories of transmission within their own religious contexts.

The current *status quaestionis* concerning theories of testimony in medieval systems of thought consists of a handful of studies pertaining to Aquinas on testimony conducted within only the past few years and a complete lack of comparable studies of this type in the current literature for Saadya and al-Ghazali. The research on Saadya and al-Ghazali is innovative and insightful while the section on Aquinas builds on and contribute to this burgeoning conversation in Thomistic and medieval studies. Based on testimonial theories of these three thinkers, I further argue for a "transhistorical" concept of testimony that does not presume an evidentialist framework to account for pre-modern theories of testimony which predominantly rely on virtue theoretic frameworks. To test the proposed neutral framework, I offer a virtue epistemological account of testimony in which trust is not an intellectual virtue, but the intellectual aspect of the historic virtue autonomy. I argue that intellectual autonomy and trust are inversely related in one's interactions with authority (both practical and theoretical).

## REFERENCES

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Richard C. Taylor – Professor of Philosophy (Dissertation Co-Chair)  
Marquette University, Marquette Hall 437, Milwaukee, WI 53201-1881  
(414) 288-5649 | richard.taylor@marquette.edu

Andrea Robiglio – Associate Professor of Philosophy (Dissertation Co-Chair)  
KU Leuven, Kardinaal Mercierplein 2 - box 3200, Belgium 3000 Leuven  
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Michael J. Wreen – Professor of Philosophy (Dissertation 2<sup>nd</sup> Reader)  
Marquette University, Marquette Hall 432, Milwaukee, WI 53201-1881  
(414) 288-5613 | michael.wreen@marquette.edu

David Twetten – Associate Professor (Teaching Evaluation Reference)  
Marquette University, Marquette Hall 425, Milwaukee, WI 53201-1881  
(414) 288-5651 | david.twetten@marquette.edu

Don N. Howell, Jr. – Professor Emeritus of New Testament and Greek  
Columbia International University, 7435 Monticello Rd., Columbia, SC 29203  
(803) 807-5343 | dhowell@ciu.edu

## PROFESSIONAL MEMBERSHIPS/AFFILIATIONS

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American Philosophical Association (APA)

American Catholic Philosophical Association (ACPA)

La Société Internationale d'Histoire des Sciences et de la Philosophie Arabes et Islamiques (SIHSPAI)

Aquinas and the Arabs International Working Group (AAIWG)

Société Internationale pour l'Étude de la Philosophie Médiévale (SIEPM)

## COMPLETED COURSES

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### MARQUETTE UNIVERSITY – Philosophy PHD

- PHIL5000 - Modern Logic, Dr. Noel Adams
- PHIL6480 - Recent Christian Metaphysics, Dr. Noel Adams
- PHIL6510 - Philosophy of Religion, Dr. Michael J. Wreen
- PHIL6605 - Plato, Rev. John D. Jones
- PHIL6610 - Aristotle, Dr. Owen Goldin
- PHIL6640 - St. Thomas Aquinas, Dr. Richard C. Taylor
- PHIL6959 - Philosophy of Cognitive Science, Dr. Corinne Bloch-Mullins
- PHIL6959 - The Underside of Modernity: Conquest, Colonialism and Cartography in the Modern/Enlightenment Era, Dr. Grant J. Silva
- PHIL6995 - Philosophy in the Lands of Islam, Dr. Richard C. Taylor
- PHIL6995 - Metaphysics and Philosophy of Language, Dr. David Tween
- GRMN6204 - German for Reading Knowledge
- LATN6204 - Latin for Reading Knowledge

### UNIVERSITY OF SOUTH CAROLINA – Philosophy Non-Degree

- PHIL509 Kant, Dr. Konstantin Pollok
- PHIL760 The Empirical in Moral and Political Philosophy, Dr. Justin Weinberg

### COLUMBIA INTERNATIONAL UNIVERSITY - MDIV

- BIB5112 – Genesis to Song of Solomon, Dr. Brian Beyer
- BIB5113 – Prophets, Dr. Brian Beyer
- BIB5132 – Gospels, Dr. Don Howell
- BIB5133 – Acts to Revelation, Dr. William Larkin
- BIB5410 – Hermeneutics, Dr. John Harvey
- BIB6320 – Old Testament Theology, Dr. Alex Luc
- BIB6330 – New Testament Theology, Dr. Don Howell
- BIB6410 – History of Bible Interpretation, Dr. Igou Hodges
- HEB5100 – Hebrew 1, Dr. Brian Gault
- HEB5111 – Hebrew 2, Dr. Brian Gault
- GRE5110 – NT Greek 1, Dr. Don Howell
- GRE5111 – NT Greek 2, Dr. Don Howell
- GRE6210 – NT Greek 3, Dr. William Larkin
- GRE6307 – NT Greek 4, Dr. William Larkin
- HIS6221 – History of Global Christianity 1, Dr. Michael Barnett
- HIS6231 – History of Global Christianity 2, Dr. Michael Barnett
- ICS5031 – The Mission of God, Dr. Michael Barnett
- ICS6024 – Understanding Cultures and Worldviews, Dr. David Cashin & Dr. William Larkin
- MIN5300 – Foundations of Spiritual Development, Dr. Roy King
- MIN5310 – Biblical Foundation for Leadership, Dr. Larry Dixon



- MIN6344 – Transformational Bible Teaching, Dr. Shirl Schiffman
- HOM6300 – Homiletics, Dr. Donald Hamilton
- THE6310 – Systematic Theology 1, Dr. Larry Dixon
- THE6320 – Systematic Theology 2, Dr. Igou Hodges
- THE6341 – Theological Methods & Issues, Dr. Larry Dixon
- THE6700 – Apologetics, Dr. Igou Hodges
- CNC5400 – Ministry of Counsel, Dr. Allan McKechnie
- RES7961 – Biblical/Theological Integrative Seminar, Dr. Igou Hodges & Dr. William Larkin

## **ADDITIONAL SKILLS & SERVICES**

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### **LANGUAGES**

- Latin (reading proficiency) studied 2016-2018 under [Fr. Reginald Foster](#)
- Classical Arabic (reading proficiency)
- German (reading proficiency)
- Koine Greek (reading proficiency)
- Biblical Hebrew

### **BUSINESS**

- Administration and supervisor over employees
- Marketing & Public Relations
- Website direction/creation

### **NON-ACADEMIC TEACHING & SERVICE**

- Adult Bible Fellowship teacher; Redeemer E.V. Free Church, 2014-present
- Usher & Missions team; Riverbend Community Church, 2013-2014
- Network leadership team; RiverCity House Church Network, 2010-2014
- Finance team; Vineyard Community Church of Augusta, 2007-2010
- Preaching team, Small Group teacher; Vineyard Community Church of Augusta, 2007-2010