

Jason Timothy Potter
3050 Corona Trail #101
Boulder, CO 80301
303-402-9465 (home) or 303-245-9054 (work)
Jason.Potter@Colorado.EDU

Education:

- B.A. University of Colorado at Boulder, 1977; Major: Distributed Philosophy Major w/
Psychology and Religious Studies
- M.A. University of Colorado at Boulder, 1994
- PhD University of Colorado at Boulder, August, 2000

Dissertation: Kant's Refutation of Idealism (see abstract attached)

Committee: George Bealer (interim chair), Christopher Braider, John Fisher, Robert Hanna (co-chair),
Christopher Shields, Wayne Waxman (co-chair)

Areas of Specialization

Kant (the entire critical project, but with a focus on metaphysics and theory of mind)
History of Modern Philosophy (Descartes-Locke-Leibniz-Hume-Berkeley-Kant)
Aesthetics (theory of aesthetic judgment, appreciation, and the metaphysics of artworks)

Areas of Competence

History of Ancient Philosophy (pre-Socratics, Plato and Aristotle)
Early Analytic Philosophy (Frege, Russell, Wittgenstein, Moore)
Philosophy of Religion/Comparative Philosophy (with an emphasis on Asian traditions)
American Pragmatism (William James and John Dewey)

Teaching Experience

Teaching Assistant, Philosophy Department, CU Boulder: 1994–1995

Phil 3010—History of Modern Philosophy Fall 1994
Phil 3010—History of Modern Philosophy Spring 1995

Part Time Graduate Instructor, Philosophy Department, CU Boulder: 1995–1997

Phil 1010—Introduction to Western Philosophy: Ancient Fall 1995
Phil 1020—Introduction to Western Philosophy: Ancient Spring 1996 (x2)
Phil 1020—Introduction to Western Philosophy: Modern Summer 1996
Phil 1020—Introduction to Western Philosophy: Modern Fall 1996
Phil 1000—Introduction to Philosophy (x2) Spring 1997

Replacement Instructor, Philosophy Department, CU Boulder: 1998

Phil 4010—Single Philosopher: Kant's Critique of Pure Reason Spring 1998

Honorarium Instructor, Philosophy Department, CU Boulder: 2000-2002

Phil 1200—Philosophy and Society Fall 2000
Phil 1020—Introduction to Western Philosophy: Modern Spring 2001 (x2)
Phil 3010—History of Philosophy: Modern Summer 2001
Phil 3010—History of Philosophy: Modern Fall 2001, Spring 2002

Honorarium Instructor, Continuing Education, CU Boulder: 2000

Phil 1010—Introduction to Western Philosophy: Ancient Fall 2000
Phil 1200—Philosophy and Society Fall 2000

Honorarium Instructor, Baker ERAP Program, CU Boulder: 2001

Phil 1200—Philosophy and Society Spring 2001

Lecturer/Senior Instructor, Philosophy Department, CU Boulder: 2002-2012

Phil 1000—Introduction to Philosophy	Fall 2010 (x2) Fall 2012 (5 weeks) Fall 2013 (x2) Fall 2016 (x1) Fall 2017 (x1) Spring 2019 (x1)
Phil 1020—History of Western Philosophy: Modern	Fall 2005 (x2) Fall 2011, Spring 2012 Fall 2014 (x1) Fall 2017 (x1)
Phil 115—Introduction to Philosophy	Summer 2017 (Qingdao China) Summer 2018 (Taipei, Taiwan) Summer 2019 (Taipei, Taiwan)
Phil 1200— Philosophy and Society	Fall 2011
Phil 1500— Reading, Writing and Reasoning	Fall 2015 (x2)
Phil 3000—History of Philosophy: Ancient	Fall 2002, Spring 2004 (x2), Summer 2005, Summer 2006, Spring 2007 (x1) Summer 2007, Summer 2008, Spring 2012 (x1)
Phil 3010—History of Philosophy: Modern	Fall 2002, Spring 2003, Fall 2003, Fall 2004, (x2), Spring 2005 (x2), Fall 2006 (x2), Fall 2007, Spring 2008, Summer 2009, Fall 2009, Summer 2010, Fall 2010, Spring 2011, Summer 2011, Summer 2012 Spring 2013 Spring 2014, Summer 2014, Fall 2014 (x1) Summer 2016 (x1) Fall 2016 (x1) Summer 2017, Fall 2017 (x1) Spring 2018, Fall 2018 (x1) Spring 2019 (x1), Summer 2019, Fall 2019 (x1) Spring 2020 (x1), Fall 2020 (x1)
Phil 3480—Critical Thinking and Writing in Philosophy	Fall 2006, Spring 2007, Fall 2007, Spring 2008, Fall 2008 (x2), Spring 2009 (x2), Fall 2009(x2), Spring 2010 (x2), Fall 2010 Spring 2011, Spring 2012, Fall 2012 (x2) Spring 2013 (x2) Fall 2013 (x1) Spring 2014 (x1) Fall 2015 (x1) Spring 2016 (x2), Fall 2016 (x1) Fall 2017 (x1) Summer 2018 (3480-901), Fall 2018 (x2) Spring 2019 (x1) Fall 2019 (x2) Spring 2020 (x2); Fall 2020 (x2)
Phil 4010—Single Philosopher: Kant (Critique of Pure Reason)	Spring 2003, Fall 2008, Spring 2017
Phil 4010—Single Philosopher: Hume (Treatise & Enquiry)	Fall 2003, Spring 2006,

Phil 4040—20th Phil: Foundations of Analytic Philosophy	Spring 2018 Fall 2009
Psy 100—Introduction to Psychology	Summer 2017 (Qingdao China) Summer 2018 (Taipei, Taiwan) Summer 2019 (Taipei, Taiwan)
Soc 201—Introduction to Sociology	Summer 2017 (Qingdao China) Summer 2018 (Taipei, Taiwan) Summer 2019 (Taipei, Taiwan)

Publications

(1997). "Technology, Appreciation and the Historical View of Art," *Journal of Aesthetics and Art Criticism* 55(2), 169-185 (John Andrew Fisher, co-author).

Abstract: In this paper, Fisher and I note that appreciative practices pose a difficult problem for historical-contextualist (HC) theorists of art (Danto, Levinson, Davies, etc.). Their theories suggest that historical artworks cannot be appropriately appreciated in contexts divorced from information about the artwork's context of creation, yet modern, technological appreciative practices presuppose the opposite. Either HC theories are wrong, or they must reject the idea that artworks are socially constructed in part by how we appreciate them. We rebut both disjuncts of this dilemma. We defend the role of appreciative practices in determining our common conception of the artwork. We defend HC theories by showing that this common conception contains the historical art object as a regulative idea, even in highly abstracted contexts of appreciation.

Conferences

Invited respondent to: James Harald, University of Minnesota-Minneapolis, "Two Kinds of Aesthetic Reasons," *Rocky Mountain Student Philosophy Conference*, March 6, 1999.

Invited respondent to: Bryan Hall, University of Colorado at Boulder, "The Threefold Synthesis in the A Deduction," *Rocky Mountain Student Philosophy Conference*, April 15, 2000.

Invited respondent to: John Bengson, University of Boston, "Perspectives on Moral Phenomenology," *Rocky Mountain Student Philosophy Conference*, February 23, 2002.

Invited chair, APA Convention Pacific Division Meetings, March 26-30, 2003, San Francisco, CA. Session X-F. Speaker: Barbara Montero, "What does the conservation of energy have to do with physicalism?"; Respondent: Robert Pasnau.

Invited chair, Rocky Mountain Ethics Congress, August 5-8, 2010, Boulder, CO. Session 6, Rm-4. Speaker: Jeff Sebo, "Constructivism About the Self"; Respondent: Carl Hammer.

Invited chair, Rocky Mountain Ethics Congress, August 5-8, 2010, Boulder, CO. Session 7, Rm-1. Speaker: Saul Smilansky, "Should We Be Sorry That We Exist?"; Respondent: Melinda Roberts.

Invited chair, Rocky Mountain Ethics Congress, August 4-7, 2011, Boulder, CO. Session 1, Rm-125. Speaker: Peter Fristedt, "Normativity and the Problem of Interpretation"; Respondent: Peter Svoboda.

Invited chair, Rocky Mountain Ethics Congress, August 4-7, 2011, Boulder, CO. Session 5, Rm-135. Speaker: Saul Smilansky, "A Hostage Situation"; Respondent: Darren Domsky.

Presentations (Talks)

"The Ethics of Genetic Engineering," January 6 & 7, 2000, a series of six 90-minute classroom presentations to science classes at Montrose High School, Montrose, Colorado under the auspices of the *Philosophy Outreach Program of Colorado* (a grant-based outreach program organized through the University of Colorado at Boulder Philosophy Department). (Sheralee Brindell, co-presenter)

"Popperian Falsificationism," January 7, 2000, a 2-hour presentation for the Senior Center at Montrose, CO through the *Philosophy Outreach Program of Colorado*. (Sheralee Brindell, co-presenter)

"Ethical Relativism," May 12, 2000, a 2-hour presentation for the Senior Center at Buena Vista, CO, through the *Philosophy Outreach Program of Colorado*. (Sheralee Brindell, co-presenter)

- “Cultural and Moral Relativism,” September 15, 2000, a 2-hour presentation for the Senior Center at Montrose, CO, through the *Philosophy Outreach Program of Colorado*. (Sheralee Brindell, co-presenter)
- “So Moral Relativism Doesn’t Work. What Does? A Debate Between Kant and Mill,” October 20, 2000, a 2-hour presentation for the Senior Center at Montrose, CO, through the *Philosophy Outreach Program of Colorado*. (Ed Hafer, co-presenter)
- “The Origins of Rational Explanation: Thales and the First Philosophers,” October 23, 2000, a 1-hour classroom presentation to an accelerated math/science 7th and 8th grade class at Centennial Middle School, Montrose, Colorado through the *Philosophy Outreach Program of Colorado*. (Ed Hafer, co-presenter)
- "Philosophy, Myth and the Ancient Western World," December 16, 2002, two classroom presentations to honors junior and senior Honors English classes at Manitou Springs, CO, High School through the *Philosophy Outreach Program of Colorado*.
- “Kant’s *Refutation of Idealism*,” Undergraduate Philosophy Club presentation, Fall ’09.
- “Kant’s Moral Philosophy,” Philosophy Retreat, January ’10.
- “Kant’s *Refutation of Idealism*,” Undergraduate Philosophy Club presentation, Fall ’17.
- “Kant’s *Refutation of Idealism*,” Undergraduate Philosophy Club presentation, Spring ’19.
- “Kant’s *Refutation of Idealism*,” Undergraduate Philosophy Club presentation, Spring ’20.

Presentations (“Philosophy & Film”: a series devoted to showing and then discussing films of philosophical interest guided by a faculty member and largely attended by undergraduate philosophy majors.)

- “Paris, Texas”, October 25, 2005, with Harry Dean Stanton and Nastassija Kinski, directed by Wim Wenders (1984).
- “Philosopher Escaped,” February 14, 2006, a documentary about Russian philosopher Alexander Piatagorsky, directed by Uldis Berzins and produced by a Latvian film company (2005).
- “Paris, Texas”, February 22, 2007, with Harry Dean Stanton and Nastassija Kinski, directed by Wim Wenders (1984).
- “Sophie’s Choice”, November 15, 2007, with Merle Streep and Kevin Kline, directed by Alan J. Pakula (1982).
- “Groundhog Day,” September 30, 2008, with Bill Murray and Andie MacDowell, directed by Harold Ramis (1993).
- “Memento”, March 9, 2010, with Guy Pearce and Carrie-Anne Moss, directed by Christopher Nolan (2000).
- “A Clockwork Orange”, November 16, 2010, with Malcolm MacDowell and John Clive, directed by Stanley Kubrick (1971).
- “Rashomon”, April 12, 2011, *Toshirô Mifune & Machiko Kyô*, directed by Akira Kurosawa (1950).
- “Teorema”, November 14, 2012, Silvana Mangano, Terence Stamp, Massimo Girotti, Anne Wiazemsky, directed by Pier Paolo Pasolini (1968).

Service

Web, email, and computer consultant/troubleshooter to the University of Colorado at Boulder Philosophy Department, 1993-ongoing. Created original departmental web page and helped various faculty and graduate students to make classroom use of web- and email-based resources, and to fix various hard- and software-related computer problems. Maintained the department scanner until it was replaced with the new scanner/fax/copier machine. Maintained office computers along with our projectors and the laptop used for classroom presentations by instructors without one of their own. Currently the editor, production manager of the Departmental Newsletter, and technical support for staff and faculty concerning computer hardware and software functioning and purchases. I have served on a dozen or so senior thesis committees for honors theses in philosophy, history, and psychology.

Graduate student member, Faculty Search Committee, 1995-96, University of Colorado at Boulder Philosophy Department.

Helped to create a new 1000-level writing course (PHIL 1500) to be offered by the Philosophy Department (with Eric Chwang). Created the applications for two history-of-philosophy courses (1020 and 3010) to be reconsidered as qualifying for the history core requirement in the College of Arts and Sciences (December 2011-Fall 2012). Am working on an interdisciplinary course in Philosophy and Film with a member of the Film Studies Department at UC-Boulder.

Non-Academic Work Experience

Manager/Owner, Straight Creek Bookmakers (production services for academic publishers): 1985-Present

Co-Owner, IT Manager, Philosophy Editor, Paradigm Publishers: 2003-2016

Related Work Experience

Course Scheduler for CU Philosophy Department, 2016-2018

Co-Owner, Philosophy Editor, Paradigm Publishers, Boulder, CO: 2003-present

Books published include David Miller, *Liberty Reader*; Jennifer Rosner, *The Messy Self*; Alison Jaggar, *Just Methods: A Reader in Feminist Methodology*; Michael A. Peters, Nicholas C. Burbules, Paul Smeyers, *Showing and Doing: Wittgenstein as a Pedagogical Philosophy*; Mark Olssen, *Michel Foucault, Materialism and Education*; Donald Lazere, *Reading for Critical Literacy*; Jane Gordon and Lewis Gordon, *Of Divine Warning: Disaster in a Modern Age*.

References

Professor George Bealer
Department of Philosophy
Yale University
New Haven, CN

george.bealer@yale.edu

Professor Robert Hanna
Department of Philosophy
Campus Box 232
Boulder, CO 80309
303-492-8289

Robert.Hanna@Colorado.EDU

Professor Claudia Mills
Department of Philosophy
Campus Box 232
Boulder, CO 80309
303-492-8355

claudia.mills@spot.colorado.edu

Professor Wayne Waxman
Department of Philosophy
National University of Ireland—Maynooth
Office 30 Arts Building
Maynooth, Maynooth Co. Kildare, Ireland
+353 (1) 7086000

waxmanw@earthlink.net

Professor John Fisher
Department of Philosophy
Campus Box 232
Boulder, CO 80309

jafisher@spot.colorado.edu

Professor Wesley Morrison
Department of Philosophy
Campus Box 232
Boulder, CO 80309
303-492-8297

morristo@stripe.colorado.edu

Professor Forrest Williams (ret.)
Department of Philosophy
Campus Box 232
Boulder, CO 80309
303-443-0544

Forrest.Williams@colorado.edu

Philosophical Education

Graduate Courses

Single Philosopher: John Dewey
Single Philosopher: Plato
Analytic Philosophy: Theory of Truth
Seminar: Thomas Aquinas
Philosophy of Mind
Philosophy of Science
Seminar in Metaphysics
Seminar in Phenomenology
Comparative Philosophy
Symbolic Logic
Ethics
Ethics (Aristotle and Kant)
Philosophy of Science
Symbolic Logic
Epistemology
Philosophy of Hegel
Philosophy of Language
Philosophy of Kant
Philosophy of Religion
Philosophy of Aristotle
Philosophy and Social Policy (Coercion)
Seminar in Phenomenology
Seminar in Ethics (Metaethical Theory)
Seminar in Metaphysics
Aesthetics
Seminar in Epistemology

Audited Graduate Courses:

Philosophy of Kant
Philosophy of Wittgenstein
Seminar in Metaphysics
Philosophy of Kant
Theory of Causation
Philosophy of Language
Philosophy of Descartes

Instructor

Bertram Morris
William Sackstedter
Robert Rogers
Paul Miller
John Visvader
David Hawkins
James Kimble
Wes Morrision
Edward Machle
Steve Leeds
James Kimble
Gary Stahl
George Bealer
George Bealer
George Bealer
Forrest Williams
Robert Hanna
Robert Hanna
Wes Morrision
Naomi Reshotko
Claudia Mills
Wes Morrision
N. Ann Davis
George Bealer
John Fisher
George Bealer

Wayne Waxman
Wayne Waxman
George Bealer
Robert Hanna
Carol Cleland
George Bealer
Robert Pasnau

Kant's Refutation of Idealism: A New Interpretation

Jason Timothy Potter

In his Refutation of Idealism, Kant attempts to show that what Cartesian idealism takes to be most certain (inner perceptions, appearances before the mind) is only possible on the condition of that which Cartesian idealism takes to be least certain (the existence of matter in space causally responsible for the content of sense perception). Despite widespread interest in this argument, most 20th century Anglophone commentators think it unsound. I provide textual and philosophical evidence that these criticisms depend chiefly on either of two common interpretive errors in determining the reference of the pivotal expression "something permanent in perception" employed in the second premise of this argument. Different groups of commentators coalesce around each error:

Group I includes those who think the permanent in perception (PIP) is a perceptual continuant, either permanent (E. Skorpen) or relatively permanent (J. Vogel, Q. Cassam, H. Alison, H.A. Prichard, R. Meerbote), to which the mind has unmediated access through its faculty of sensibility whenever it is aware of its own empirical existence in time. I argue that for Kant, in fact, the mind's access to the PIP is indirect, mediated by outer appearances which are themselves immediate but transitory representations with a necessary, nonimmediate relation to that which is permanent in outer sense.

Group II includes those who think the PIP is either "an enduring framework of space" (P.F. Strawson, P. Guyer), or a pure formal intuition of space (R. Hanna). These interpretations are incompatible with Kant's oft-repeated claim that space is a product of the mind's faculty of sensibility, is no less ideal than time, and cannot be an actual representation (i.e., a given appearance in sensibility). The PIP is needed to provide what the form of inner sense (time) cannot, i.e., an objective representation of time in the field of appearances. But neither a pure formal intuition of space nor an enduring framework of space can do this job because, according to the Transcendental Aesthetic, space is strictly subjective.

These criticisms are byproducts of a new interpretation of the Refutation, the elaboration and defense of which is the central theme of my work. On this new interpretation, Kant's "something permanent in perception" is not any particular empirical object, nor a noumenal object, nor even a pure object of intuition, but rather what Kant means by 'Nature': a qualitative unity of dynamically interrelated material substances which, taken together, yield a real individual which can only be cognized indirectly. In contrast to other interpreters, I claim the PIP is a set of unified, necessary relationships among material substances inferred from sensations which together constitute objective time (and objective space) through acts of mind without which cognition and experience (for a being like that under consideration in the Critique of Pure Reason) would be impossible.

Whether the resulting Refutation of Idealism is sound is not settled in this work. In the last chapter I attempt to consider reasonable challenges and replies, and hope that in any case I have helped to clarify the setting within which this well-known argument is evaluated.