

Robert Pasnau

Office

Department of Philosophy
University of Colorado
232 UCB
Boulder, CO 80309-0232
303-492-4837

Home

1837 Mapleton Ave.
Boulder, CO 80304
720-298-3960
pasnau@colorado.edu
<http://spot.colorado.edu/~pasnau>

Personal: *Born:* January 26, 1967, in Evanston, Illinois

Academic Positions

College Professor of Distinction, University of Colorado (2019–present)
Professor (2007–18); Associate Professor (2003–7); Assistant Professor (1999–2003)
Department Chair (2004–2006); Director of Graduate Studies (2001–2003, 2009)
Assistant Professor, St. Joseph’s University [Philadelphia] (1995–99)

Education

Cornell University (1989–94) M.A., March 1992; Ph.D., August 1994
Dissertation: “Forms of Knowing: Theories of Cognition in the Later Middle Ages”
(under the supervision of Norman Kretzmann)
University of Pennsylvania (1985–89) B.A. (magna cum laude) in Philosophy & History;
Phi Beta Kappa; Executive Editor of *The Daily Pennsylvanian* (1988)

Principal Research Areas

Medieval philosophy, early modern philosophy, epistemology, classical Islamic philosophy, ancient philosophy, philosophy of religion, medieval literature.

Notable Awards and Fellowships

2024–25	President of the American Philosophical Association, central division
2023	Berlin Human Abilities Centre for Advanced Studies, Visiting Fellow
2023	Pierre Abélard Chair, Sorbonne
2019–20	Paris Institute for Advanced Studies, Visiting Fellow
2016	Hope & Optimism Fellowship (Templeton)
2015	NEH Summer Institute (director)
2014	Isaiah Berlin Visiting Professor in the History of Ideas (Oxford)
2011	NEH Summer Fellowship
2005	APA Book Prize for <i>Thomas Aquinas on Human Nature</i>
2004	NEH Summer Seminar (co-director)
2003	ACLS-Mellon Junior Faculty Fellowship
1994	Scholar in Residence, Catholic University of America
1993	Exchange Scholar, Harvard University

Publications

Monographs

- After Certainty: Historical Reflections on Our Epistemic Ideals and Illusions* (Oxford University Press, 2017), 375 pp.
- Metaphysical Themes 1274-1671* (Oxford University Press, 2011), 796 pp.
- The Philosophy of Aquinas* (Westview, 2003), 264 pp. (2nd ed. Oxford University Press, 2016), co-authored with Christopher Shields.
- Thomas Aquinas on Human Nature. A Philosophical Study of Summa Theologiae 1a 75-89* (Cambridge University Press, 2002), 500 pp.
- Theories of Cognition in the Later Middle Ages* (Cambridge University Press, 1997), 330 pp. (Chinese translation by Hongbo Yu [Peking University Press, 2018].)

Edited Volumes and Translations

- Oxford Studies in Medieval Philosophy*, vols. 1-10 (Oxford University Press, 2013-2022).
- Thomas Aquinas, *Basic Works* (Hackett, 2014), 688 pp., coedited with Jeffrey Hause.
- The Cambridge History of Medieval Philosophy* (Cambridge University Press, 2010), 2 vol., 1220 pp.
- Cambridge Translations of Medieval Philosophical Texts. Volume III: Mind and Knowledge* (Cambridge University Press, 2002), 374 pp.
- Thomas Aquinas, *Treatise on Human Nature: Summa Theologiae I.75-89*, translated with commentary (Hackett, 2002), 427 pp.
- Thomas Aquinas, *Commentary on Aristotle's De anima*, translated (Yale, 1999), 450 pp.

Articles

- “Medieval Engagement with Authorial Intention,” *Journal of Medieval and Early Modern Studies* 53 (2023).
- “Thomas Aquinas,” *The Stanford Encyclopedia of Philosophy* (online, originally published in 2022), 14000 words excluding bibliography.
- “Old Bad Attitudes,” *Philosophers’ Imprint* 22:18 (2022) 1–25.
- “Bias and Interpersonal Skepticism,” *Nous* 56 (2022) 154–75.
- “Voluntarism and the Self in *Piers Plowman*,” in I. Nelson and J. A. Jahner, *Gender, Poetry, and the Form of Thought in Later Medieval Literature: Essays in Honor of Elizabeth A. Robertson* (Lehigh University Press, 2022) 47–66.
- “Enthusiasm,” in J. Gordon-Roth and S. Weinberg (eds.), *The Lockean Mind* (Routledge, 2022), 554–63, coauthored with Mark Boespflug.

- “Ibn Rushd,” *The Stanford Encyclopedia of Philosophy* (online, originally published in 2021), coauthored with Fouad Ben Ahmed, 13400 words excluding bibliography.
- “Where Socratic Akrasia Meets the Platonic Good,” *Journal of the History of Philosophy* 59 (2021) 1–21.
- “Qualitative Change,” in Richard Cross and J. T. Paasch (eds.), *The Routledge Companion to Medieval Philosophy* (Routledge, 2021) 194–201.
- “Medieval Modal Spaces,” *Proceedings of the Aristotelian Society*, sup. vol. 94 (2020) 225–54.
- “Teleology in the Later Middle Ages,” in J. McDonough (ed.), *Teleology: A History* (Oxford University Press, 2020) 90–115.
- “Belief in a Fallen World,” *Res Philosophica* (special issue on the philosophy of religion) 95 (2018) 531-59.
- “On What There Is in Aquinas,” in J. Hause (ed.), *Aquinas’s Summa theologiae: A Critical Guide* (Cambridge University Press, 2018) 10-28.
- “Therapeutic Reflections on Our Bipolar History of Perception,” *Analytic Philosophy* 57 (2016) 253-84.
- “A Lewisian History of Philosophy,” in B. Loewer and J. Schaffer (eds.), *A Companion to David Lewis* (Oxford: Blackwell, 2015) 60-79.
- “Disagreement and the Value of Self-Trust,” *Philosophical Studies* 172 (2015) 2315-39.
- “Snatching Hope from the Jaws of Epistemic Defeat,” *Journal of the American Philosophical Association* 1 (2015) 257-75.
- “Veiled Disagreement,” *Journal of Philosophy* 111 (2014) 608-30.
- “On *Metaphysical Themes*: Replies to Critics,” *Philosophical Studies* 171 (2014) 37-50.
- “Epistemology Idealized,” *Mind* 122 (2013) 987-1021.
- “Divisions of Epistemic Labor: Some Remarks on the History of Fideism and Esotericism,” *Proceedings of the British Academy* 189 (2013) 83-117.
- “The Latin Aristotle,” in C. Shields (ed.) *The Oxford Handbook to Aristotle* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2012) 665-89.
- “Mind and Hylomorphism,” in J. Marenbon (ed.) *The Oxford Handbook of Medieval Philosophy* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2012) 486-504.
- “Philosophy of Mind and Human Nature,” in B. Davies and E. Stump (eds.) *The Oxford Handbook of Aquinas* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2012) 348-68.
- “Scholastic Qualities, Primary and Secondary,” in L. Nolan (ed.) *Primary and Secondary Qualities: The Historical and Ongoing Debate* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2011) 41-61.
- “On Existing All at Once,” in C. Tapp and E. Runggaldier (eds.) *God, Eternity, and Time* (Burlington: Ashgate, 2011) 11-28.
- “Medieval Social Epistemology: *Scientia* for Mere Mortals,” *Episteme* 7 (2010) 23-41.
- “Science and Certainty,” in R. Pasnau (ed.) *Cambridge History of Medieval Philosophy* (Cambridge:

- Cambridge University Press, 2010) 357-68.
- “Form and Matter,” in R. Pasnau (ed.) *Cambridge History of Medieval Philosophy* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2010) 635-46.
- “The Event of Color,” *Philosophical Studies* 142 (2009) 353-69.
- “A Sotyl Thinge withouten Tonge and Teeth: Soul’s Dialogue with Body, and Literature’s Dialogue with Philosophy,” *English Language Notes* 47 (2009) 135-45 (co-authored with Elizabeth Robertson).
- “Id Quo Cognoscimus,” in S. Knuuttila and P. Kärkkäinen (eds.) *Theories of Perception in Medieval and Early Modern Philosophy* (Dordrecht: Springer, 2008) 131-49.
- “Mind and Extension (Descartes, Hobbes, More)” in H. Lagerlund (ed.) *Forming the Mind: Essays on the Internal Senses and the Mind/Body Problem from Avicenna to the Medical Enlightenment* (Dordrecht: Springer, 2007) 283-310.
- “Democritus and Secondary Qualities,” *Archiv für Geschichte der Philosophie* 89 (2007) 99-121.
- “The Mind-Soul Problem,” in P.J.J.M. Bakker and J.M.M.H. Thijssen (eds.), *Mind, Cognition, and Representation: The Tradition of Commentaries on Aristotle’s De anima* (Aldershot: Ashgate, 2007) 3-19.
- “Abstract Truth in Thomas Aquinas,” in H. Lagerlund (ed.), *Representation and Objects of Thought in Medieval Philosophy* (Aldershot: Ashgate, 2007) 33-63.
- “A Theory of Secondary Qualities,” *Philosophy and Phenomenological Research* 73 (2006) 568-91.
- “Form, Substance, and Mechanism,” *Philosophical Review* 113 (2004) 31-88.
- “Human Nature” in A. S. McGrade (ed.) *The Cambridge Companion to Medieval Philosophy* (Cambridge University Press, 2003) 208-30.
- “Souls and the Beginning of Life (A Reply to Haldane and Lee),” *Philosophy* 78 (2003) 509-19.
- “Cognition,” in T. Williams (ed.) *The Cambridge Companion to Duns Scotus* (Cambridge University Press, 2003) 285-311.
- “What is Cognition? A Reply to Some Critics,” *American Catholic Philosophical Quarterly* 76 (2002) 483-90.
- “Intentionality and Final Causes,” in D. Perler (ed.) *Ancient and Medieval Theories of Intentionality* (Brill, 2001) 301-23.
- “Sensible Qualities: The Case of Sound,” *Journal of the History of Philosophy* 38 (2000) 27-40.
- “Plotting Augustine’s *Confessions*,” *Logos* 3 (2000) 77-106.
- “Olivi on Human Freedom” in *Pierre De Jean Olivi (1248-1298)* (Paris: Vrin, 1999) 15-25.
- “What is Sound?” *Philosophical Quarterly* 49 (1999) 309-24.
- “Divine Illumination,” *The Stanford Encyclopedia of Philosophy* (originally published in 1999), 7976 words.
- “Peter John Olivi,” *The Stanford Encyclopedia of Philosophy* (originally published in 1999), 8340 words.
- “Aquinas and the Content Fallacy,” *Modern Schoolman* 75 (1998) 293-314.

- “Aquinas on Thought's Linguistic Nature,” *Monist* 80 (1997) 558-75.
- “Olivi on the Metaphysics of Soul,” *Medieval Philosophy and Theology* 6 (1997) 109-32.
- “Petri Iohannis Olivi Tractatus de verbo” in *Franciscan Studies (Essays in Honor of Fr. Gedeon Gál)* 53 (1993) 121-53 [published in 1997].
- “Who Needs an Answer to Skepticism?” *American Philosophical Quarterly* 33 (1996) 421-32.
- “William Heytesbury on Knowledge: Epistemology Without Necessary and Sufficient Conditions,” *History of Philosophy Quarterly* 12 (1995) 347-66.
- “Henry of Ghent and the Twilight of Divine Illumination,” *Review of Metaphysics* 49 (1995) 49-75.
- “Justified Until Proven Guilty: William Alston's New Epistemology” *Philosophical Studies* 72 (1993) 1-33.

Reviews, Responses, Entries, Ephemera

- “Free Will and Providence,” in R. Newhauser (ed.), *The Chaucer Encyclopedia* (Wiley-Blackwell, forthcoming), coauthored with Elizabeth Robertson.
- Review of Stephen Gaukroger, *The Failures of Philosophy: A Historical Essay*, in *The Australasian Journal of Philosophy* 100 (2022) 842–45.
- Review of Tobias Hoffmann, *Free Will and the Rebel Angels in Medieval Philosophy*, in *The Philosophical Review* 131 (2022) 222–26.
- Review of Dominique Demange, *Puissance, action, mouvement: L'ontologie dynamique de Pierre de Jean Olivi, 1248–1298*, in *Journal of the History of Philosophy* 59 (2021) 679–80.
- “Overview of *After Certainty*” and “Some Thoughts after *After Certainty*,” in A. Hall, G. Klima, and M. Klein (eds.), *Medieval and Early Modern Epistemology: After Certainty* (Cambridge Scholars, 2020) 5-19, 87-104.
- “The Conceivability of Locke’s Image of the World: Some Thoughts on Jacovides,” *Locke Studies* 19 (2019) 1-14.
- “The Commentator,” *Throughlines* (NPR, October 9, 2019), featured guest on podcast <www.npr.org/2019/10/09/768651310/the-commentator>.
- “Mysticism’s Threat to Doctrine,” *English Language Notes* 56 (2018) 213-15.
- Review of Therese Cory, *Aquinas on Human Self-Knowledge*, in *Mind* 124 (2015) 623-26.
- Review of Thomas M. Ward, *John Duns Scotus on Parts, Wholes, and Hylomorphism*, in *Notre Dame Philosophical Reviews* (2015) <<https://ndpr.nd.edu>>.
- “Why Not Just Weigh the Fish,” *New York Times (The Stone)* (June 29, 2014) <<http://opinionator.blogs.nytimes.com/2014/06/29/why-not-just-weigh-the-fish/>>
- Review of Nicole Oresme, *Questiones super Physicam*, in *Journal of the History of Philosophy* 52 (2014) 610-11 (coauthored with Tyler Huismann).
- “Response to Arlig and Symington” [symposium on *Metaphysical Themes*], in Klima and Hall (eds.) *Metaphysical Themes, Medieval and Modern (Proceedings of the Society for Medieval Logic and Metaphysics*, vol.

- 11) (Newcastle: Cambridge Scholars, 2014), 57-72.
- Review of Wallace Matson, *Grand Theories and Everyday Beliefs* in *Notre Dame Philosophical Reviews* (2012) <ndpr.nd.edu/news/32152-grand-theories-and-everyday-beliefs-science-philosophy-and-their-histories> (coauthored with Joseph Stenberg).
- “The Islamic Scholar Who Gave Us Modern Philosophy,” *Humanities* (Nov/Dec 2011) 34-37, 51.
- Review of John Cottingham and Peter Hacker (eds.), *Mind Method, and Morality: Essays in Honour of Anthony Kenny*, in *Notre Dame Philosophical Reviews* (2010) <ndpr.nd.edu/news/24402-mind-method-and-morality-essays-in-honour-of-anthony-kenny>.
- Review of Eleonore Stump, *Aquinas*, in *Mind* 114 (2005) 203-6.
- Review of Thomas Aquinas, *On Evil* (translations by Regan and Oesterle) in *Review of Metaphysics* 57 (2004) 599-601.
- Review of Anthony Kenny, *Aquinas on Being*, in *Notre Dame Philosophical Reviews* (2003) <ndpr.icaap.org/content/archives/2003/12/pasnau-kenny.html>.
- “William Crathorn,” in Gracia and Noone (eds.) *The Blackwell Companion to Medieval Philosophy* (Oxford: Blackwell, 2003) 692-93.
- Review of Stephen J. Pope, *The Ethics of Aquinas*, in *Notre Dame Philosophical Reviews* (2003) <ndpr.icaap.org/content/archives/2003/1/pasnau-pope.html>.
- Review of Dennis Des Chene, *Life’s Form: Late Aristotelian Conceptions of the Soul*, in *The Philosophical Review* 111 (2002) 308-10.
- Review of Richard Cross, *The Physics of Duns Scotus: The Scientific Context of a Theological Vision*, in *Speculum* 77 (2002) 1268-70.
- Review of Armand Maurer, *The Philosophy of William of Ockham in the Light of Its Principles* in *Journal of the History of Philosophy* 38 (2000) 590-91.
- Review of John Finnis, *Aquinas: Moral, Political, and Legal Theory* in *Faith and Philosophy* 17 (2000) 407-13.
- Review of Jerome I. Gellman, *Experience of God and the Rationality of Theistic Belief* in *Philosophical Review* 107 (1998) 624-26.
- The Routledge Encyclopedia of Philosophy* (1998). Entries on Peter Aureol, William Crathorn, Robert Holcot, and Peter John Olivi.
- Review of Roderick Chisholm, *A Realistic Theory of Categories* in *Review of Metaphysics* 51 (1998) 666-67.
- Review of John Wippel, *Mediaeval Reactions to the Encounter Between Faith and Reason* in *Review of Metaphysics* 50 (1997) 179-80.
- Review of Thomas Nagel, *Other Minds: Critical Essays 1969-1994* in *Review of Metaphysics* 50 (1997) 166-68.
- Review of Simon Kemp, *Cognitive Psychology in the Middle Ages* in *Isis* 88 (1997) 703-4.
- Review of Francisco Suárez, *On Efficient Causality. Metaphysical Disputations 17, 18, and 19* (translated by Alfred Freddoso) in *Philosophical Review* 105 (1996) 533-35.

Review of Stephen Everson, *Language (Companions to Ancient Thought 3)* in *Review of Metaphysics* 49 (1996) 650-51.

Review of Robert Fogelin, *Pyrrhonian Reflections on Knowledge and Justification* in *Review of Metaphysics* 49 (1996) 653-54.

Review of Robert Audi, *Action, Intention, and Reason* in *Review of Metaphysics* 49 (1995) 398-400

Review of Anthony Kenny, *Aquinas on Mind* in *Philosophical Review* 103 (1994) 745-48.

Review of Richard Dales, *Medieval Discussions of the Eternity of the World* in *Speculum* (July 1992) 654-656 (coauthored with Norman Kretzmann).

Other Professional Activities and Awards

General editor of the Hackett Aquinas Project, a series of translations with commentary of Aquinas's central philosophical texts.

Founding director (2000-2013) of the Colorado Summer Seminar, an annual three-week course for upper-level undergraduates nationwide who are considering graduate school in philosophy.

Editorial boards of *Archiv für Geschichte der Philosophie*, *Journal of the History of Philosophy*, *Notre Dame Philosophical Reviews*, *History of Philosophy Quarterly*, *Oxford Guides*, *Oxford Philosophical Concepts*, *Philosophy Compass*, *Vivarium*, *Medieval Philosophy: Texts and Studies* (Fordham), *Ancient and Medieval Philosophy* (Leuven), *Journal of Philosophy and Science in Muslim Contexts* (Fez), *Bochumer Philosophisches Jahrbuch für Antike und Mittelalter*.

College Scholar Award, CU/Boulder (2012, 2020)

Kayden Book Prize for *Metaphysical Themes*, CU/Boulder (2014)

Selected Recent and Notable Lectures

“Construire la volonté” Sorbonne (Pierre Abélard lectures), April 2023

“Who Killed Agent Causation?” UNC Chapel Hill colloquium, February 2023

“Who Put the Will in Control?” Vanderbilt colloquium, October 2022

“Was Hume Half Right?” MIT colloquium, May 2021

“Medieval Modal Spaces,” UK Joint Session (symposium), July 2020

“Avant l'épistémologie. La quête prémoderne du savoir parfait,” Société française de phil., Jan. 2020

Authors Meets Critics Session on *After Certainty*, Central APA, March 2019

“Choosing between Faith and Heresy,” Cambridge Moral Sciences Club, October 2019

“Socratic Guises and Epistemic Biases” Mid-Hudson Valley Phil. Conference (keynote) Sept. 2018

“Medieval Modal Spaces” ANU colloquium, July 2018

Chinese Society for Medieval Philosophy (inaugural keynote address), Beijing, May 2018

“Socratic Guises and Epistemic Biases” University of Virginia colloquium, Oct. 2017
“Belief in a Fallen World” University of Victoria, BC (Lansdowne Lecture), Feb. 2017
“How Long Do Arguments Last” Amherst College colloquium, April 2016
“Origins of Epistemic Justification” UConn colloquium, April 2016
“Our Bipolar History of Perception” Texas/Austin (*Analytic Philosophy* Symposium) Dec. 2015
“Before There Was Epistemology” Univ. Nebraska/Lincoln (Evans Lecture) Sept. 2015
“Ideas as Objects of Perception” Uppsala colloquium June 2015
“Our Long Quest for Certainty” Fordham University (Suarez Lecture) April 2015
Week-Long Seminar on *Metaphysical Themes*, Wake Forest, July 2014
“After Certainty: A History of our Epistemic Ideals” Oxford (Isaiah Berlin Lectures) Spring 2014
“Pourquoi les idées sont-elles devenues des objets?” Sorbonne, June 2014
“Ideas as Objects of Perception” Ohio State colloquium October 2013
Author Meets Critics Symposium on *Metaphysical Themes 1274-1671*, Pacific APA, March 2013
“Seeing an Argument All at Once” Cornell colloquium, April 2012
“Philosophical Beauty” Central APA (invited colloquium) February 2012
“Divisions of Epistemic Labor” British Academy (Dawes Hicks Lecture) October 2011