

# Curriculum Vitae — Lewis Powell

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## Education

Ph.D. in Philosophy	University of Southern California	May 2011 ( <i>expected</i> )
B.A. in Philosophy	University of Rochester	May 2005

## Areas of Specialization

History of Early Modern (especially David Hume), Philosophy of Language

## Areas of Teaching Competence

Epistemology, Philosophy of Mind, Metaethics, Free Will/Action Theory

## Dissertation Summary

“Just Imagining Things: Hume’s Conception-Based Account of Cognition”

*Committee: Prof. James Van Cleve (Chair), Prof. Gideon Yaffe, Prof. Scott Paterson (external member)*

Philosophers have routinely taken a pessimistic view of the account of cognition — thinking, judging, and reasoning — offered by David Hume in his *Treatise of Human Nature*, claiming that Hume’s limited explanatory resources cannot capture the rich complexity of our mental lives. I provide a qualified defense of Hume’s attempt to analyze all cognitive activity in terms of what I call *objectual conception* — i.e. conceiving of or imagining an object. I defend Hume from objections offered by his contemporary Thomas Reid (and echoed by more recent scholars), presenting an interpretation of the account that resolves these worries. I investigate both what these objections reveal about the fundamental challenges facing theories of cognition, and what implications my interpretation has for other issues in Hume scholarship.

## Awards and Honors

1. Conference Travel Award (*competitive*) — To present at 2010 Pacific Division APA meeting  
Fall 2009
2. Graduate Student Speaker at the USC Torchbearer Luncheon  
Fall 2009
3. The Gold Family Fellowship (*competitive*) — Administered by the College of Letters, Arts, and Sciences  
Summer 2009
4. Conference Travel Award (*competitive*) — To attend the 2009 International Hume Conference  
Summer 2009
5. The Flewelling Award (*competitive*) — Administered by the USC Philosophy Department  
Summer 2008
6. USC College Merit Fellowship (*non-competitive*)  
2005-2006, 2009-2010



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## Professional Service

Managing Editor for Pacific Philosophical Quarterly	2010-2011
Referee for Journal of Philosophical Research	2010-present
Editor for category “Thomas Reid” (PhilPapers.org)	2009-present
Referee for International Hume Conference (Hume Society)	2009-present
Referee for Pacific Philosophical Quarterly	2009-2010
Graduate Student Organizer, Prospective Student Recruitment Activities	2007-2009
Steering Committee Member, USC/UCLA Graduate Conference in Philosophy	2005-2008
Assistant Content Chair, University of Rochester Epistemology Conference	2004

## Papers Under Review

- “What David Hume Can, Should, and Does Say about Denial”
- “How to Refrain from Responding to Kripke’s Puzzle about Belief”
- “A Collection of Sensible Points: Hume on Space and Extension in the *Treatise*”

## Papers in Progress

- “Thomas Reid’s Assault on the Way of Ideas”
- “Toward A Less Confident Cognitivism”
- “How to Avoid Mis-Reiding Hume’s Maxim of Conceivability”

## Graduate Coursework (*audited courses marked with \**)

### History of Philosophy

- \*PHL 520, Studies in Modern Philosophy (Thomas Reid)  
Fall 2010: Prof. James Van Cleve, Prof. Gideon Yaffe
- \*PHL 520, Studies in Modern Philosophy (Perception)  
Fall 2009: Prof. James Van Cleve
- PHL 790, Research (David Hume’s *Treatise of Human Nature*)  
Spring 2009: Prof. Ed McCann (*supervisor*)
- PHL 520, Studies in Modern Philosophy (John Locke’s *Essay Concerning Human Understanding*)  
Fall 2008: Prof. Edwin McCann
- PHL 790, Research (John Locke’s *Essay Concerning Human Understanding*)  
Fall 2008: Prof. Edwin McCann (*supervisor*)
- PHL 415, Western Philosophy from Aristotle to St. Thomas  
Spring 2008: Prof. Frank Lewis
- PHL 520, Studies in Modern Philosophy (Thomas Reid’s *Essays on the Intellectual Powers*)  
Spring 2008: Prof. James Van Cleve
- PHL 520, Studies in Modern Philosophy (David Hume’s *Treatise on Human Nature*)  
Fall 2007: Prof. John Dreher
- PHL 790, Research (John Locke’s *Essay Concerning Human Understanding*)  
Summer 2007: Prof. Gideon Yaffe (*supervisor*)
- PHL 520, Studies in Modern Philosophy (David Hume’s *Treatise of Human Nature*)  
Fall 2005: Prof. Edwin McCann, James Van Cleve

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## **Language and Logic**

- \*PHL 565, Seminar in Philosophy of Language (Contextualism/Relativism/Expressivism)  
Spring 2010: Prof. Mark Schroeder, Prof. Scott Soames
- \*PHL 565, Seminar in Philosophy of Language (Belief Attributions)  
Fall 2008: Prof. Nathan Salmon
- PHL 501, Seminar in Recent Philosophy (Frege's Puzzle and Kit Fine's *Semantic Relationism*)  
Spring 2008: Prof. Scott Soames
- PHL 565, Seminar in Philosophy of Language (Conditionals, Modal Logic)  
Spring 2007: Prof. James Higginbotham, Prof. Jeff King
- PHL 551, Seminar in Philosophy of Logic (Modal/Tense Logic, A.N. Prior)  
Spring 2007: Prof. James Van Cleve
- PHL 505, Pro-Seminar in Central Topics in Contemporary Philosophy (Analyticity and A Priority)  
Fall 2006: Prof. David Manley, Prof. Scott Soames
- PHL 450, Intermediate Symbolic Logic  
Spring 2006: Prof. Zlatan Damnjanovic
- PHL 501, Seminar in Recent Philosophy (Semantics and Pragmatics)  
Spring 2006: Prof. Jeff King, Scott Soames
- \*PHL 590, Directed Research (Special Pro-Seminar on Singular Thought)  
Spring 2006: Prof. David Manley, Prof. Scott Soames
- PHL 500, Introduction to Contemporary Philosophical Literature  
Fall 2005: Prof. James Higginbotham, Prof. Scott Soames
- PHL 590, Directed Research (Special Pro-Seminar on Truth)  
Fall 2005: Prof. David Manley, Prof. Scott Soames

## **Value Theory**

- \*PHL 540, Seminar in Ethics (Metaethics)  
Fall 2009: Prof. Stephen Finlay
- \*PHL 501, Seminar in Recent Philosophy (Practical Reason)  
Spring 2009: Prof. Jacob Ross
- \*PHL 540, Seminar in Ethics (Deontic Logic)  
Spring 2009: Prof. Mark Schroeder
- PHL 501, Seminar in Recent Philosophy (Realism and Reduction)  
Fall 2007: Prof. Mark Schroeder
- PHL 530, Seminar in Philosophy of Law (Law and Equality)  
Fall 2006: Prof. Andrei Marmor, Prof. Gideon Yaffe
- PHL 540, Seminar in Ethics (Metaethics)  
Spring 2006: Prof. Stephen Finlay

## **Metaphysics and Epistemology**

- \*PHL 560, Seminar in Metaphysics (Dispositions)  
Fall 2008: Prof. Janet Levin, Kadri Vihvelin
- PHL 560, Seminar in Metaphysics (Systematic Metaphysics and Metaphysics of Mind)  
Spring 2007: Prof. Jeff King, Prof. David Manley
- PHL 590, Directed Research (Foundations of Formal Epistemology)  
Fall 2006: Prof. David Manley

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## Reading Groups

### Fall 2010

Topic: Deontic Logic  
Texts: “Deontic Logic” (SEP Entry) — Paul McNamera  
Various Articles (*list of readings still in progress*)

### Fall 2010

Topic: History of Early Modern Philosophy  
Texts: *Women Philosophers of the Early Modern Period* — Margaret Atherton (editor)  
Philosophical Works of Lady Mary Shepherd — Jennifer McRobert (editor)

### Spring 2010

Topic: Alternative Approaches to Probability  
Texts: *The Probable and the Provable* — L. Jonathan Cohen  
“A Survey of Ranking Theory” — Wolfgang Spohn

### Summer 2009

Topic: Contrastivism in Epistemology  
Texts: Various Articles — Jonathan Schaffer  
“Contrastivism and Closure” — John Kvanvig  
“Contrastivism Rather than Something Else?” — Peter Baumann

### Fall 2008

Topic: Alternatives to Truth-Conditional Semantics  
Texts: “‘Ouch’ and ‘Oops’” — David Kaplan  
“Do Conditionals have Truth Values” — Dorothy Edgington  
*Meaning and Speech Acts* (excerpts) — Daniel Vanderveken  
Questions — Jeroen Groenendijk and Martin Stokhof

### Spring 2008

Topic: Empty/Fictional Names  
Texts: *The John Locke Lectures: Reference and Existence* — Saul Kripke  
“Empty Names, Fictional Names, Mythical Names” — David Braun

### Summer 2007

Topic: Linguistics: Syntax  
Texts: *Minimalist Syntax: Exploring the Structure of English* — Andrew Radford  
*Syntax* (excerpts) — Andrew Carnie

## References

Louis Loeb — Department of Philosophy, University of Michigan  
Email: lloeb@umich.edu

Edwin McCann — School of Philosophy, University of Southern California  
Email: mccann@usc.edu

David Owen — Department of Philosophy, University of Arizona  
Email: dwo@u.arizona.edu

Mark Schroeder — School of Philosophy, University of Southern California  
Email: maschroe@usc.edu

Scott Soames — School of Philosophy, University of Southern California  
Email: soames@usc.edu

James Van Cleve — School of Philosophy, University of Southern California  
Email: vancleve@usc.edu

Gideon Yaffe — School of Philosophy, University of Southern California  
Email: yaffe@usc.edu