

# DANIEL G. SWAIM

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## EMPLOYMENT

### **Kansas State University**

2023-2024 Visiting Assistant Professor of Philosophy

### **Florida State University**

2022-2023 Dean's Postdoctoral Scholar in Philosophy of Science

## EDUCATION

### **University of Pennsylvania**

2022 Ph.D. in Philosophy

Dissertation: *Time's Deep Rhythms: Models, Mechanisms, and Narratives in Historical Explanation*

Committee: M. Weisberg (adviser), A. Currie (University of Exeter), Q. Spencer, and D. Singer

Awards & Fellowships: Benjamin Franklin Fellowship; Nancy L. Blank Graduate Prize

### **Louisiana State University**

2016 M.A. in Philosophy

Thesis: *Dispositions in Evolutionary Biology: A Metaphysically Realist Account*

Committee: C.H. Pence (adviser), J. Cogburn, and J. Roland

Awards: LSU Graduate Teaching Assistantship

### **Saint Edward's University**

2013 B.A. in Philosophy

Awards: Bill & Pat Munday Scholarship Prize; SEU Endowed Scholarship

## RESEARCH & TEACHING INTERESTS

Areas of Specialization: Philosophy of Science, History & Philosophy of Biology, Philosophy of Social Science, Philosophy of History

Areas of Competency: Biomedical Ethics, Ethics of Just Warfare and Military Technology, Ethics of AI & Technology, Metaphysics, Epistemology, Philosophy of Race, History of Philosophy

Other Teaching Competencies: Introduction to Philosophy, Moral Philosophy, Logic

## PUBLICATIONS

1. Swaim, D.G. Forthcoming. "Geology: The Philosophy of Geology as the History of This and Other Planets," in *The Handbook of Philosophy of the Historical Sciences*. Edited by Avizier Tucker. Under contract with Bloomsbury Press.
2. Swaim, D.G. Forthcoming. "Nailing Down the Essentials: A Review of Michael Devitt's *Biological Essentialism*," in *The Quarterly Review of Biology*.
3. Swaim, D.G. In Press. "Getting from Here to There: The Contingency of Evidence and the Value of Speculation." *Studies in History and Philosophy of Science*.

4. Swaim, D.G. (with A. Currie). 2022. "Minimal Metaphysics vs. Maximal Semantics: A response to Paul Roth and Fons DeWulf." *Journal of Philosophy of History*.
5. Swaim, D.G. (with A. Currie). 2022. "Past Facts and the Nature of History." *Journal of Philosophy of History*, 1: pp. 1-28.
6. Swaim, D.G. 2021. "What Is Narrative Possibility?" *Studies in History and Philosophy of Science* 89: pp. 257-266.
7. Swaim, D.G. 2019. "The Roles of Possibility and Mechanism in Narrative Explanation." *Philosophy of Science* 86 (5): pp. 858-868.
8. Swaim, D.G. (with C.H. Pence). 2018. "The Economy of Nature: The Structure of Evolution in Linnaeus, Darwin, and the Modern Synthesis." *European Journal for Philosophy of Science* 8 (3): pp. 435-454.
9. Swaim, D.G. Under Review (R&R). "Truth and Scientific Understanding(s): A Parting of the Ways?" *International Studies in Philosophy of Science*.
10. Swaim, D.G. Under Review (R&R). "Inference to the Best Explanation: A Material Account." *Journal for General Philosophy of Science*.
11. Swaim, D.G. Under Review. "Representation & Commitment: A Defense of Ontic Explanation." *Philosophy of Science*.

## IN THE WORKS

1. "Keeping Things Distinct: Natural Selection, Sexual Selection, and Epistemic Normativity in Paleobiology." There is some controversy in recent paleobiological work over how to think about natural and sexual selection and their relation to inferences in evolutionary paleobiology. Some argue that it's important to keep them distinct (as Darwin urged), while others, to varying degrees, redefine the concepts in ways that will tend to collapse the distinction. I argue that it is, in fact, important to maintain a bright distinction, and that this is due to certain considerations of epistemic normativity.
2. "Social and Personal Identity in the Age of A.I." I argue here that A.I. and adjacent technologies present a novel set of problems concerning social and personal conceptions of identity. Further, these shifting notions of identity have normative implications that have so far been undertheorized. Insofar, then, as we are to solve various problems of "alignment," we must first get a firm theoretical grip on how these conceptions of identity are shifting, and what this implies for what we should do with respect to alignment.
3. "Human Nature at the Intersection of Science and the Humanities." Here I argue that recent work in the philosophy of science that either eliminates or deflates the concept of "human nature" is too hasty. There is some reason to believe that the concept tracks something real, and I explore the use of the concept both in the history of the human sciences and humanities in order to develop an account that is general, even if it doesn't satisfy a concept of "natural kindhood."
4. "On What We Are (or Take Ourselves to Be)." This article is focused on narrative conceptions of the self. I follow some insights from Galen Strawson in holding that conceiving of oneself in narrative terms is not necessary, but I go a step further and argue that it might be *generally undesirable*.

Recent work in clinical and research psychology perhaps bears out this claim, specifically because narrativizing can have a tendency to lead persons to essentialize aspects of their histories in damaging ways. “Episodic” conceptions of the self, then, can help to preserve a sense of autonomy in lived experience.

## **TEACHING EXPERIENCE**

### **Instructor of Record**

- 2024 Philosophy of Science  
Philosophy and Race  
Ethics in a Global Society  
Ethical Decision Making & Problem Solving  
Biomedical Ethics
- 2023 Introduction to Philosophy (3x)  
Environmental Ethics  
First Year Seminar in Philosophy  
Introduction to Philosophy of Science  
Biomedical Ethics
- 2022 Introduction to Philosophy (2x)
- 2021 Biomedical Ethics

### **Guest Lecturer**

- 2023 “The Nature and Variety of Scientific Models,” Intro to Critical Thinking for C. Davis  
“Materialist Theories of Mind,” Intro to Philosophy for R. Clarke
- 2019 “Observation and Experimentation,” Intro to Philosophy of Science for M. Weisberg  
“Three Kinds of Adaptationism,” Philosophy of Biology for M. Weisberg
- 2018 “Evidence and Confirmation,” Intro to Epistemology and Metaphysics for D. Singer
- 2015 “Locke’s Theory of Substance,” History of Modern Philosophy for J. Cogburn  
“The Problem of Divine Hiddenness,” Philosophy of Religion for J. Cogburn
- 2014 “The Argument from Design,” Philosophy of Religion for J. Cogburn

## **Teaching Assistant**

- 2019 Philosophy of Science for M. Weisberg
- 2018 Intro to Epistemology and Metaphysics for D. Singer
- 2017 Philosophy of Science for Q. Spencer  
The Social Contract for K. Tan
- 2015 Introduction to Logic for C. Blakeley  
Philosophy of Religion for J. Cogburn  
History of Modern Philosophy for J. Cogburn  
Intro to Philosophy for C. Blakeley
- 2014 Logic I for C. Pence  
Philosophy of Religion for J. Cogburn  
History of Ancient Philosophy for R. Parsons  
Intro to Ethics for M. Altamirano

## **CO-ORGANIZED EVENTS**

- 2021 *Methods, Theory & Reality Workshop*, D.G. Swaim, C. Davis, and A. Curtis-Trudel
- 2020 *Zoom Philosophy of History Reading Group*, D.G. Swaim and A. Currie

## **CONFERENCES & WORKSHOPS**

- 2024 “Representation & Commitment: A Fulsome Defense of Ontic Explanation”  
Speaker at *Method, Theory & Reality Workshop*
- “Darwin, Lyellian Uniformitarianism, and Evolutionary Realism”  
Speaker at *Mississippi Academy of Sciences: HPS Division*
- “The Pervasive Appeal of Natural Laws: Orthogenetic Evolution in the Age of Progress”  
Speaker at *Philosophy of the Paleosciences Roadshow*
- 2023 “When Species Concepts Don’t Matter (in Paleobiology)”  
Speaker at *International Society for History, Philosophy, and Social Studies of Biology*

- 2021 “Inference to the Best Explanation: A Material Account”  
Speaker at *Philosophy of Science Association Meeting*
- “Truth and Scientific Understanding(s): A Parting of the Ways?”  
Speaker at *Methods, Theory, and Reality Workshop*
- 2020 “A New Account of Narrative Possibility”  
Speaker at *POBAMz: Philosophy of Biology at the Mountains via Zoom*
- “Archaeological Practice and Explanatory Inference”  
Speaker at *Archaeology Works! - canceled due to COVID*
- Invited participant at *PaleoSchool*
- 2019 “What Is Narrative Possibility?”  
Speaker at *International Society for the History, Philosophy, and Social Studies of Biology*
- 2018 “The Roles of Possibility and Mechanism in Narrative Explanation”  
Speaker at *Philosophy of Science Association Meeting*
- “Explanation in the Historical Sciences: Mechanisms and Possibilities”  
Speaker at *Historical and Scientific Explanation: Reexamining the Connection*
- 2017 Invited participant at *Summer Workshop on Philosophy and Physical Computing*
- 2016 “The Economy of Nature: The Structure of Evolution in Linnaeus, Darwin, and Toward the Extended Synthesis,” Speaker at *Contemporary Scientific Realism and the Challenge from the History of Science*
- 2015 “The Economy of Nature and Structural Realism”  
Speaker at *LSU Philosophy Salon*

## **GRADUATE COURSEWORK**

### **Philosophy of Science**

Confirmation Theory, M. Weisberg

Topics in Philosophy of Science: Values in Science, M. Weisberg

Philosophy of Biology, M. Weisberg

Philosophy of Science, C. Pence

History & Philosophy of Evolution, C. Pence

### **Logic**

Mathematical Logic, S. Weinstein

Modal Logic & Formal Epistemology, Z. Domotor

Advanced Logic, J. Roland

Modal Logic, J. Roland

### **History of Philosophy**

Aristotle's *Physics*, A. Hahmann

Kant: *First Critique & Prolegomena*, G. Hatfield & R. Horstmann

Descartes' *Natural Philosophy*, K. Detlefsen

Marx: *Das Kapital*, J. Rocha

History of *Metaphysics*, J. Cogburn

### **Ethics**

Law & Morality of Warfare, C. Finkelstein

Political Authority & Political Obligation, S. Perry

Topics in Moral Philosophy: Parfit's *On What Matters*, H. Sarkar

### **Science**

Advanced Evolution, J. Plotkin & T. Linksvayer

Macroevolution, D. Homberger

### **REFERENCES**

Michael Weisberg, Weisberg@phil.upenn.edu

Adrian Currie, A.Currie@exeter.ac.uk

Quayshawn Spencer, QSpencer@upenn.edu

Charles H. Pence, Charles@charlespence.net

Daniel Singer, SingerD@phil.upenn.edu (teaching)