

DREW CHASTAIN

Visiting Assistant Professor
Department of Philosophy
Loyola University New Orleans
6363 St. Charles Ave. Box 107
New Orleans, LA 70118

chastain@loyno.edu
drew_chastain@hotmail.com
504.491.8673

EDUCATION

- Ph.D. Philosophy, 2003
Tulane University, New Orleans, Louisiana
Dissertation: "Interpreting Metaphor" (Award of Degree: August 13, 2003;
Committee: Forbes, Brower, Lodge)
- M.A. Philosophy, 1999
Tulane University, New Orleans, Louisiana
- B.A. Philosophy, with minor in Anthropology, 1996
University of Central Florida, Orlando, Florida
Thesis: "A Challenge for Instrumental Theories of Human Ends"

EMPLOYMENT HISTORY

Loyola University, New Orleans, Louisiana (2011-present), Visiting Assistant Professor

Xavier University, New Orleans, Louisiana (2007-2010), Assistant Professor

Tulane University, New Orleans, Louisiana (2004-2007), Visiting Assistant Professor, Adjunct

AREAS OF SPECIALIZATION

Philosophy of Spirituality, Meaning in Life, Humor Theory, Value Theory

AREAS OF COMPETENCE

Philosophy of Religion	Indigenous Philosophies	Applied Ethics
Biomedical Ethics	Race & Identity Politics	Aesthetics
Epistemology	History of Modern Philosophy	Political Philosophy
Philosophy of Language	Continental Philosophy	Metaphysics
Cognitive Science	Analytic Philosophy	Ancient Philosophy

PUBLICATIONS

2026. "Mystical Atheism, Absurdity, and Meaningful Living." In *Topoi*. 2026. Published online.

2025. "Faith, Meaning, and Spirituality without Religion." In *Mind Over Matter: Philosophical Essays on Faith, Self-Confidence, and Achievement*, eds. Rod Nicholls & Heather Salazar (Leiden: Brill | Rodopi). 46-73.

2025. "Rebelling or Revelling?: Humor as a Sisyphean Task in *Mystery Science Theater 3000*." *Philosophy of Film: Blog of the American Philosophical Association*, ed. Sara Bizarro. <https://blog.apaonline.org/2025/02/27/rebelling-or-revelling-humor-as-a-sisyphean-task-in-mystery-science-theater-3000-part-1/>

2024. "'I'm Only Human': A Self-Referential Sense of Humor and Meaningful Living." *The Philosophy of Humor Yearbook*. 5(1). 193-213.

2022. "Meaning" (co-authored with Michael Hauskeller). *The Things That Really Matter: Philosophical Conversations on the Cornerstones of Life*, ed. Michael Hauskeller. London: UCL Press. 7-26.

2022. "Sacredness" (co-authored with Michael Hauskeller). *The Things That Really Matter: Philosophical Conversations on the Cornerstones of Life*, ed. Michael Hauskeller. London: UCL Press. 269-289.

2022. "Sisko's Conversion Experience and the Secularism of William James: Exploring Faith, Religion, and the Visions of the Prophets." *To Boldly Stay: Essays on Star Trek: Deep Space Nine*. Eds. Sherry Ginn and Michael G. Cornelius. McFarland & Company, Inc. 151-164.

2021. "Desirability without Desire: Life Extension, Boredom & Spiritual Experience." *Royal Institute of Philosophy Supplement*. 90. 167-191.

2021. "Deep Personal Meaning: A Subjective Approach to Meaning in Life." *The Journal of Philosophy of Life*. 11 (1). 1-23.

2019. "Can Life be Meaningful without Free Will?" *Philosophia*. 47 (4). 1069-1086.

2018. "Liberating Spirit from Santayana's Spectatorial Spirituality." *Overheard in Seville: Bulletin of the Santayana Society*. No. 36. Fall. 99-114.

2018. "Becoming a Hollow Bone: Lakota Respect for the Sacred." *The Philosophy of Spirituality: Analytic, Continental and Multicultural Approaches to a New Field of Philosophy*. Eds. Rod Nicholls & Heather Salazar. Netherlands: Brill | Rodopi. 164-188.

2017. "Gifts Without Givers: Secular Spirituality and Metaphorical Cognition." *Sophia*. 56 (4): 631-647.

PUBLISHED BOOK REVIEWS

2018. "Leaving Well Enough Alone: A Review of Michael Hauskeller's *Better Humans?*, *Sex and the Posthuman Condition*, and *Mythologies of Transhumanism*." *Ethical Perspectives*. 25 (4). 795-806. (6,000 word book review, with author's reply)

2014. *Money for Everyone: Why We Need a Citizen's Income*. *Basic Income Studies*. 9 (1-2): 137-140.

IN PREPARATION

"Performing Absurdity" (Forthcoming)

"*Slacker* and the Comic Vision of Life's Absurdity" (Forthcoming)

"The Aesthetic Experience of Meaning in Life"

"Twists of Fate, Secular Spirituality, and Narrative Absurdity"

UPCOMING PRESENTATIONS

2026 "The Aesthetic Experience of Meaning in Life," Southern Aesthetics Workshop, University of South Carolina, Columbia, SC, Oct 9-10

PREVIOUS PRESENTATIONS

2026 "Absurd Art and Meaningful Living," 8th International Conference on Philosophy and Meaning in Life, Norman, OK, Mar 26-28

2026 "Rebel or Revel? Responding to Life's Absurdity," 2026 Humor Research Conference, online, Mar 6-8

2025 "Kitsch and the Comic Vision of Life's Absurdity," 19th Annual Lighthearted Philosophers' Society Conference, New Orleans, La, Nov 14-15

2025 "Existential Dilemmas and Existential Residue," American Philosophical Association, Central Division Meeting, International Association for Philosophy of Meaning in Life, online, Feb 20-22, Feb 27-Mar 1 (Invited)

2025 "Mystical Experience, Positive Absurdity and Meaning in Life," American Philosophical Association, Central Division Meeting, Society for the Phenomenology of Religious Experience (SoPHeRE), online, Feb 20-22, Feb 27-Mar 1

2024 "Performing Absurdity, and Play and Humor," 18th Annual Lighthearted Philosophers' Society, Melbourne, FL, Nov 8-9

2024 "Performing Absurdity," American Philosophical Association, Central Division Meeting, International Association for Philosophy of Meaning in Life, New Orleans, LA, Feb 21-24 (Invited)

2024 "Self-Referential Humor, Perfectionism, and Meaningful Living," American Philosophical Association, Central Division Meeting, International Association of the Philosophy of Humor, New Orleans, LA, Feb 21-24

2023 "'I'm Only Human': A Self-Referential Sense of Humor and Meaningful Living," 17th Annual Conference of the Lighthearted Philosophers' Society, Whitefish, MT, Nov 10-11

2023 "Humor, Absurdity and Meaningful Living," 5th International Conference on Philosophy and the Meaning of Life, Tohoku University, Japan, Jun 28-30

2023 "Humor and the Good-Enough Life," The Good-Enough Life: Mississippi Philosophical Association Annual Meeting, Department of Philosophy and Religion, Mississippi State University, Starkville, MS, Mar 24-25

2022 "Sacred Clowns and the Lighter Side of the Sacred," 16th Annual Lighthearted Philosophers' Conference, Greensboro, NC, Oct 7-8

2022 "Destiny Frees the Will: Divination, Free Will, & Spirituality," Beyond Free Will: Variety in Understanding of Choice, Luck, and Necessity, Vilnius University, Vilnius, Lithuania, Jun 21

2022 "What's Sacred to a Sacred Clown?: Distinguishing the Moral Sacred and the Mystic Sacred," Princeton Project in Philosophy and Religion: Second Philosophy of Religion Incubator, Princeton University, Princeton, NJ, May 27

2022 "Wholeheartedness within Ambivalence toward Life," Fourth Annual Conference on Philosophy and Meaning in Life, University of Pretoria, South Africa, Jan 18

2022 "Just As I Am: The Spiritual Significance of Being Forgiven," Forgiveness and Reconciliation: Towards an Exit From Shared Suffering, a panel hosted by the Society for the Phenomenology of Religious Experience (SoPHeRE) at the Eastern Division meeting of the American Philosophical Association, Baltimore, MD, Jan 14

2021 "Desirability without Desire: Life Extension, Boredom & Spiritual Experience," Meaning in Life and the Knowledge of Death, The Royal Institute of Philosophy Annual Conference. University of Liverpool. July 13-15 (invited)

2021 "Faith, Meaning and Spirituality without Religion: Critiquing Robert Solomon and Leo Tolstoy," Society for the Phenomenology of Religious Experience Spirituality and Religion. 2021 APA Central Division Meeting. Feb 25

2020 "Deep Personal Meaning: A Subjective Approach to Meaning in Life," The Third International Conference on Philosophy and Meaning in Life, Birmingham, UK, July 21-23 (online owing to pandemic)

2020 "Making Room for Personal Meaning," Midsouth Philosophy Conference, Memphis, TN, Mar 20-21 (canceled owing to pandemic)

2019 "Learning from Indigenous Peoples: Why Indigenous Studies?" *The Loyola Office of Diversity and Inclusion Seminar Series: "Encountering Heritage and History,"* New Orleans, LA, Nov 15 (invited)

2019 "The Normativity of Spiritual Experience", The Religious Experience & Description Conference, Valparaiso, IN, Oct 10-12

2019 "The Nonreligious Normativity of the Sacred", Philosophy, Politics, Anthropology and Allied Disciplines, Amsterdam, Netherlands, May 15-17

2019 "The Sacred & Morality: Human Life & the Earth," Midsouth Philosophy Conference, Memphis, TN, Mar 22-23

2018 "This Magic Moment: The Experiential Source of Spiritual Normativity." 56th Annual Meeting of the Alabama Philosophical Society, Pensacola, FL, Sep 28-29

2018 "Spiritual Reasons as Public Reasons," Anthrosophia Conference; & Philosophy, Politics & Economics Society, both conferences in New Orleans, LA, March

2018 "Liberating Santayana's Spirit: Naturalized Spirituality without Santayana's Intellectualism," Society for the Advancement of American Philosophy, 2018 APA Eastern Division Meeting, Savannah, GA, January 3

2017 "Repetition, Boredom and the Sacred," Alabama Philosophical Society, Pensacola, FL, September 29-30

2017 "Becoming a Hollow Bone: How Lakota Respect for the Sacred Fosters Morality and Meaning in Life," Anthrosophia, Loyola University, New Orleans, LA, March 8-11

2017 "The Meaningfulness of Attachment," Midsouth Philosophy Conference, Rhodes College, Memphis, TN, March 31–April 1.

2016 "Can Trivial or Immoral Activities Make Life More Meaningful?: What's Missing in Susan Wolf's Approach to Life Meaning," Long Island Philosophical Society, Molloy College, Rockville Centre, NY, April 9; and Midsouth Philosophy Conference, Rhodes College, Memphis, TN, February 19-20

2015 "Internal Meaning and Social Theory," Articulating Political Philosophy and Anthropological Theory, Method, and Evidence, Tulane University, New Orleans, LA, December

2015 "Gifts without Givers: Metaphorical Gift Language and Secular Spirituality," Mississippi Philosophical Association, Millsaps College, Jackson, MS, March; and Midsouth Philosophy Conference, Rhodes College, Memphis, TN, March

2008 "Using a Course Portfolio to Measure and Improve Student Learning," Defining and Promoting Student Success Conference, hosted by the Faculty Resource Network, San Francisco, November, co-presented with Dr. Paul Schafer

2006 "'Thought Work' as Philosophical Practice in the Classroom," The 8th International Conference of Philosophical Practice, Seville, Spain, April

2004 "The New Orleans Lyceum," International Conference of Philosophical Practice, Copenhagen, Denmark, August, co-presented with David O'Donaghue, Director of The Lyceum

COMMENTARY

2024 Reply to George Kassimis' "Trust and Comedy: Unguarded Encounters," Lighthearted Philosophers' Society, Melbourne, FL, November

2019 Reply to Daniel Miller's "Can Morally Ignorant Agents Care Enough?," Midsouth Philosophy Conference, Rhodes College, Memphis, TN, March

2017 Reply to Jack Kwong's "What is Hope?", Midsouth Philosophy Conference, Rhodes College, Memphis, TN, March-April

2016 Reply to Douglas Henry's "The Real Euthyphro Problem," Midsouth Philosophy Conference, Rhodes College, Memphis, TN, February

2015 Reply to Heather Wilburn's "Experience and Contradiction: Thinking the Other of Damaged Life," Midsouth Philosophy Conference, Rhodes College, Memphis, TN, March

CONFERENCE/SEMINAR PARTICIPATION

2022 Book Launch: *The Things That Really Matter: Philosophical Conversations on the Cornerstones of Life*, University of Liverpool, UK, Jun 1

2018 "The Nature of Spirituality: Santayana and Beyond," George Santayana Society, Online Seminar, Feb 16

PEER REVIEWS

2026 For *AI and Philosophy Conference*

2025 For *Journal of Philosophy of Life*

2025 For *Education Philosophy and Theory*

2025 For *Philosophia*

2024 For *Philosophical Quarterly*

2024 For *Journal of Ethics*

2024 For *Routledge*

2023 For *The Southern Journal of Philosophy*

2023 For *The Philosophical Forum*

2023 For *The Journal of Human Values*

2022 For *The European Journal of Political Theory*

2022 For *Ethical Perspectives*

OTHER PROFESSIONAL SERVICES

2025 Site Coordinator for the 19th Annual Lighthearted Philosophers' Society Conference in at the InterContinental Hotel in New Orleans, La, Nov 14-15

2021 Organized Philosophy Department Research Group, Loyola University, 2015-2021

2019 Co-organizer of the 2019 Philosophy, Politics & Anthropology Conference, Amsterdam

2018 Co-organizer of the 2018 Anthrosophia Conference, New Orleans, LA

2017 Co-organizer of the 2018 Anthrosophia Conference, New Orleans, LA

2016 A member of the steering committee for the 2017 Anthrosophia Conference, New Orleans, LA

GRANTS, FELLOWSHIPS & AWARDS

2026 Loyola Carter Fellowship, "Absurd Art and Meaningful Living," 2025-2026, \$1,593.33 awarded for conference travel

2025 Loyola Carter Fellowship, "Kitsch and the Comic Vision of Life's Absurdity," 2025-2026, \$262.53 awarded for conference expenses

2025 Loyola Carter Fellowship, "Absurd Art and Meaningful Living," 2025-2026, \$650.24 awarded for conference travel

2025 Loyola Carter Fellowship, "Existential Dilemmas and Existential Residue," 2024-2025, \$100 awarded for APA conference registration

2024 Loyola Carter Fellowship, "Performing Absurdity, and Play and Humor," 2024-2025, \$1.4K awarded for conference travel

2024 Loyola Carter Fellowship, "Performing Absurdity," 2023-2024, \$372 awarded for conference participation

2023 Loyola Carter Fellowship, "I'm Only Human: A Self-Referential Sense of Humor and Meaningful Living," 2023-2024, \$1.5K awarded for conference travel

2023 Loyola Carter Fellowship, "Humor and the Good-Enough Life," 2022-2023, \$1.04K awarded for conference travel

2022 Loyola Carter Fellowship, "Sacred Clowns and the Lighter Side of the Sacred," 2022-2023, \$1.2K awarded for conference travel

2022 Loyola Carter Fellowship, "Just as I am: The Spiritual Significance of Being Forgiven," 2021-2022, \$100 awarded for online conference registration

2021 Nominated for Faculty Excellence in Teaching Award, 2020-2021

2020 Loyola Carter Fellowship, "Deep Personal Meaning," 2019-2020, \$400 awarded for conference travel (not used owing to the pandemic)

2019 Loyola Carter Fellowship, "The Normativity of Spiritual Experience," 2019-2020, \$1.2K awarded for conference travel

2019 Loyola Carter Fellowship, "Morality & the Sacred: Human Life & the Earth," 2018-2019, \$1K awarded for conference travel

2010 Faculty Communities of Teaching Scholars (FaCTS) grant funded by the Andrew W. Mellon Foundation (for infusion of internationalization themes and service-learning in Health Ethics), Xavier University, New Orleans, LA 2009-2010

RECENTLY DEVELOPED COURSES

2024 (Fall) Meaning in Life (honors)
2023 (Fall) Philosophy of Humor (honors)
2019 (Fall) Indigenous Philosophies
2018 (Fall) The Meaning of Life
2017 (Fall) Aesthetics
2017 (Spr) The Self & the Sacred

COURSES TAUGHT

Loyola University, New Orleans, Louisiana (2011-present)

Meaning in Life (Honors), 2 sections (2024)
Philosophy of Humor (Honors), 2 sections (2023)
Indigenous Philosophies, 3 sections (2019, 2025)
The Meaning of Life, 2 sections (2018)
Aesthetics, 14 sections (2017, 2020–2022, 2024-2026)
Self & the Sacred, 6 sections (2017, 2022, 2023)
Making Moral Decisions, 39 sections (2012–2016, 2018–2022, 2024-2026)
Philosophy of the Human Person, 41 sections (2013–2026)
Introduction to Philosophy, 4 sections (2011, 2012, 2013)

Xavier University, New Orleans, Louisiana (2007-2010)

Health Ethics, 19 sections (2007, 2008, 2010)
Problems in Philosophy, 7 sections (2007, 2008, 2010)
African-American Philosophy, 1 section (2009)
Great Books: Philosophy of Spirituality, 1 section (2009)

Tulane University, New Orleans, Louisiana (2004-2007)

Modern Philosophy, 4 sections (2004, 2005)
Philosophies of Self, 7 sections (1999, 2003, 2004, 2005, 2006, 2007)
Introduction to Philosophy, 5 sections (2000, 2003, 2004, 2007, 2012)
Ethics, 3 sections (2006)
Philosophy of Art, 1 section (2007)
Philosophy of Film, 1 section (2007)

The New Orleans Lyceum, New Orleans, Louisiana

Baseball Ethics: You Make the Call!, 1 section (2005)

Introduction to Metaphor in Language, Art, and Culture, 1 section (2004)

Rollins College, Winter Park, Florida

Philosophy of Art, 1 section (2006)

FELLOWSHIPS

2025 Carter Fellowship, Loyola University, 2018-2025

2001 Freie Universität Exchange Fellowship, Berlin, 2000-2001

2000 Tulane Graduate Fellowship, 1997-2000

GRADUATE QUALIFYING PAPERS

"Hidden Truths: Interpreting Metaphorical Statements Truth-Conditionally," 1999
(Committee: Forbes, Brower)

"Describing Music Metaphorically," 1998 (Committee: Zimmerman, Glenn)

GRADUATE LEVEL CLASSES TAKEN

Philosophy of Language (Forbes)

Philosophy and Gender (Zimmerman)

Advanced Symbolic Logic (Lee)

Mathematical Logic (Forbes)

Metaphysics of Modality (Forbes)

Philosophy of Language (Brower)

Cognitive Science (Bogdan)

Philosophy of Law (Mack)

Plato (Burger)

Heidegger (Zimmerman)

Aristotle (Burger)

Kant (Glenn)

Kierkegaard (Glenn)

Epistemology (Brower)

Rationalism (Lodge)

NEW ORLEANS COMMUNITY INVOLVEMENT

The New Orleans Lyceum, New Orleans, Louisiana, 2003-2005

Administrator and Facilitator. A leader in local initiative for "Building Communities of Inquiry."

ERACE, New Orleans, Louisiana, 2004-2005

Facilitator for discussion groups, which are free and open to the public.

REFERENCES

Karl Widerquist

Georgetown University

Jason Berntsen

Xavier University

Bruce Brower

Tulane University

School of Foreign Service 1 Drexel Drive
Education City New Orleans, LA 70125
PO Box 23689 jberntse@xula.edu
Doha, Qatar 504.520.7624
Karl@Widerquist.com
+974 44578384

Chairperson
6823 St. Charles Avenue
New Orleans, LA 70118
bbrower@tulane.edu
504.862.3383

PLACEMENT CREDENTIALS

Available from
Department of Philosophy
105 Newcomb Hall, Tulane University
6823 St. Charles Avenue
New Orleans, LA 70118-5698