

PEKKA VÄYRYNEN

School of Philosophy, Religion and History of Science
University of Leeds
Leeds, LS2 9JT, United Kingdom

W: vayrynen.org
E: p.vayrynen@leeds.ac.uk

ACADEMIC EMPLOYMENT

- Professor of Moral Philosophy, University of Leeds (2013-)
- Senior Lecturer in Philosophy, University of Leeds (2008-13)
- Docent [Adjunct Professor] of Practical Philosophy, University of Helsinki (2008-)
- Assistant Professor of Philosophy, University of California, Davis (2002-08)

AREAS OF SPECIALIZATION

- Moral Philosophy (in particular Metaethics)

AREAS OF COMPETENCE

- Philosophy of Language, Metaphysics

EDUCATION

- Cornell University, PhD in Philosophy (Aug. 2002), MA in Philosophy (May 2000)
PhD thesis: *Ruling Reasons: A Defense of Moral Generalism*
- University of Helsinki, Master of Social Sciences, major: Philosophy (April 1997)

PUBLICATIONS

Book

1. *The Lewd, the Rude and the Nasty: A Study of Thick Concepts in Ethics* (Oxford University Press, 2013; paperback 2015; pp. xi + 271).

Research articles

2. “Explanatory Pluralism in Normative Ethics”, *Oxford Studies in Normative Ethics* 14 (2024): 138-161.
3. “Practical Commitment in Normative Discourse”, *Journal of Ethics and Social Philosophy* 21 (2022): 175-208.
4. “Normative Naturalism on Its Own Terms”, *Organon F* 28 (2021): 505-530. Special Issue: *Value in Language*. [Invited] (A minor erratum: <https://bit.ly/3EcEhMy>.)
5. “Against Moral Contingentism”, *Thought* 10 (2021): 209-17.

6. “Normative Explanation Unchained”, *Philosophy and Phenomenological Research* 103 (2021): 278-97.
7. “Normative Explanation and Justification”, *Noûs* 55 (2021): 3-22.
8. “Reasons Why in Normative Explanation”, *Inquiry* 62 (2019): 607-23.
9. “Normative Commitments in Metanormative Theory”, in *Methodology and Moral Philosophy*, ed. J. Suikkanen & A. Kauppinen (Routledge 2018), 193-213. [Invited]
10. “A Simple Escape from Moral Twin Earth”, *Thought* 7 (2018), 109-18.
11. “Doubts about Moral Perception”, in *Evaluative Perception*, ed. A. Bergqvist and R. Cowan (Oxford University Press, 2018), 109-28. [Invited]
12. “Essential Contestability and Evaluation”, *Australasian Journal of Philosophy* 92 (2014), 471-88.
13. “Shapelessness in Context”, *Noûs* 48 (2014), 573-93.
14. “Grounding and Normative Explanation”, *Aristotelian Society Supplementary Volume* 87 (2013), 155-78. [Invited]
15. “Thick Concepts and Underdetermination”, in *Thick Concepts*, ed. S. Kirchin (Oxford University Press, 2013), 136-60. [Invited]
16. “Thick Concepts: Where’s Evaluation?”, *Oxford Studies in Metaethics* 7 (2012): 235-70.
17. “Thick Concepts and Variability”, *Philosophers’ Imprint* 11.1 (2011).
18. “A Wrong Turn to Reasons?”, in *New Waves in Metaethics*, ed. M. Brady (Palgrave Macmillan, 2011), 185-207. [Invited]
19. “Objectionable Thick Concepts in Denials”, *Philosophical Perspectives* 23 (2009), 439-69. [Invited]
20. “Normative Appeals to the Natural”, *Philosophy and Phenomenological Research* 79 (2009), 279-314.
21. “A Theory of Hedged Moral Principles”, *Oxford Studies in Metaethics* 4 (2009): 91-132.
22. “Slim Epistemology with a Thick Skin”, *Philosophical Papers* 37 (2008), 389-412. Special issue: *Epistemology Through Thick & Thin*.
23. “Some Good and Bad News for Ethical Intuitionism”, *Philosophical Quarterly* 58 (2008), 489-511.
24. “Usable Moral Principles”, in *Challenging Moral Particularism*, ed. M. Lance, M. Potrç, and V. Strahovnik (Routledge, 2008), 75-106. [Invited]
25. “Moral Generalism: Enjoy in Moderation”, *Ethics* 116 (2006), 707-41.
26. “Ethical Theories and Moral Guidance”, *Utilitas* 18 (2006), 291-309.
27. “Resisting the Buck-Passing Account of Value”, *Oxford Studies in Metaethics* 1 (2006): 295-324.
28. “Particularism and Default Reasons”, *Ethical Theory and Moral Practice* 7 (2004), 53-79.

Survey articles

29. “Varieties of Normative Explanation”, forthcoming in *Oxford Handbook of Metaethics*, ed. D. Copp and C. Rosati (Oxford University Press).
30. “Moral Generalism and Moral Particularism”, in *The Bloomsbury Handbook of Ethics*, 2nd edition, ed. C. Miller (Bloomsbury Academic, 2024), 381-396. [A revised and updated version of #34.]

31. “Thick Ethical Concepts”, *Stanford Encyclopedia of Philosophy*, ed. E. N. Zalta. [Refereed. First published 09/2016; substantive revision 02/2021.] URL= <<http://plato.stanford.edu/entries/thick-ethical-concepts/>>
32. “Reasons and Moral Principles”, in *The Oxford Handbook of Reasons and Normativity*, ed. D. Star (Oxford University Press, 2018), 839-61.
33. “The Supervenience Challenge to Non-Naturalism”, in *Routledge Handbook of Metaethics*, ed. T. McPherson and D. Plunkett (Routledge, 2017), 170-84.
34. “Moral Particularism”, in *Continuum Companion to Ethics*, ed. C. Miller (Continuum Press, 2011), 247-60.
35. “Moral Realism”, *Encyclopedia of Philosophy*, 2nd edition, ed. D. Borchert (Macmillan Reference USA, 2006), vol. 6, 379-82.

Book reviews

36. *Ethical Intuitionism: Re-evaluations*, ed. P. Stratton-Lake. *European Journal of Philosophy* 14 (2006), 159-63.
37. Christian Illies, *The Grounds of Ethical Judgement*. *Notre Dame Philosophical Reviews* 2004.03.11. <<http://ndpr.nd.edu/review.cfm?id=1399>>
38. *Moral Particularism*, ed. B. Hooker & M. Little. *Philosophical Review* 111 (2002), 478-83.

AWARDS AND GRANTS

- Faculty of Arts, Humanities and Cultures Study Leave Award, University of Leeds (Autumn 2017)
- AHRC Early Career Fellowship, grant agreement no. H038035. Project: “The Lewd, the Rude, and the Nasty: A Study of Thick Concepts”; total award £64,813 (2010-11)
- Faculty of Arts Study Leave Award, University of Leeds (Spring 2010)
- Marie Curie International Reintegration Grant, European Community FP7/2007-2013; project: “Thick Value Concepts”; total award €100,000 (2009-12)
- Faculty Research Development Award, UC Davis, March-June 2008
- UC Davis Small Grant in Aid of Research (2004-06, 2005-07, 2006-08, 2007-09)
- UC Davis Faculty Research Travel Grant (July 2003, Oct 2004, Aug 2006, July 2007)
- UC Davis New Faculty Research Grant (2002-03)
- Graduate Student Presentation Award, The Creighton Club (Oct 2001)
- Dissertation Grant, Finnish Cultural Foundation (1999-2000)

PRESENTATIONS

Papers

- “TBA”, Joint Session invite symposium (University of Reading. July 2026)
- “What Explains Reasons for Action?”, Defeasible Reasoning workshop, University of York (Nov 2023); Reasons and Explanation workshop, University of Tübingen (Dec 2023).
- “Not Perfectly Good, Not Completely Rational”, Evaluative Language workshop,

- University of Graz (Sept 2023)
- “Normative Explanatory Pluralism”, 2023 Arizona Workshop in Normative Ethics (Jan 2023); Arizona State University (Jan 2023); keynote at the 4th Cyprus Metaethics Workshop (May 2023)
 - “Make It Right”, Virtual Metaethics Colloquium (March 2022, online); Humboldt Normativity Conference 2022 (Sept 2022); Explaining Normativity workshop, University of Sheffield (April 2024)
 - “Normative Naturalism on Its Own Terms”, Value in Language workshop, The Slovak Academy of Sciences (March 2021, online)
 - “Normative Explanation and the Structure of Moral Theories”, Humboldt Normativity Conference 2020 (Dec 2020, online)
 - “Moral Theories, Relevance, and Explanation”, Relevance, Grounding, and Normativity workshop, University of Hamburg (Oct 2020, online)
 - “Thick Terms and Experimental Philosophy: Some Pleas and Complications”, Experimental Philosophy of Language and Metaethics workshop, Ruhr-Universität Bochum (Jan 2020)
 - “Evaluative Properties, Determination, and Realization”, University of Barcelona (March 2019)
 - “Practical Commitment in Normative Discourse”, Normativity and Reasoning VII at NYU Abu Dhabi (Jan 2019); Cambridge Moral Sciences Club (May 2019); ‘What Is Normativity?’ workshop, Frankfurt School of Finance & Management (Sept 2019)
 - “Normative Explanation and Justification”, keynote at the Philosophical Society of Finland Conference (Jan 2018); Normativity and Reasoning VI at NYU Abu Dhabi (Feb 2018); Metaethics seminar, École Normale Supérieure and Institut Jean Nicod (April 2018); University of St. Andrews (April 2018); Bled Philosophical Conference (June 2018); Central European University, Budapest (Nov 2018); Durham University Normativity Seminar (Dec 2018)
 - “Normative Explanation Unchained”, Stockholm University (Oct 2017); University of Virginia (Oct 2017); Moral Philosophy Seminar, University of Oxford (Nov 2017); Explanation in Philosophy conference, Wuhan University (May 2019); Moral Epistemology workshop, University of Helsinki (June 2019); University of Bristol (Oct 2019); keynote at Second Groningen Metaethics Workshop (Nov 2019); Humboldt Normativity Conference (June 2020 – cancelled due to COVID-19).
 - “Evaluative Terms and Normative Role”, University of Geneva (April 2017); Humboldt University, Berlin (June 2017); Uppsala University (Oct 2017); New York Philosophy of Language Workshop (Nov 2017)
 - “Normative Assumptions in the Metasemantics of Evaluatives”, workshop on Evaluatives, San Raffaele University-Milan (Jan 2017)
 - “Normative Challenges within Metaethics”, The New Methods of Ethics, conference 2, University of Birmingham (Jan 2017)
 - “Pejoratives and Evaluatives”, Scuola Normale Superiore di Pisa (April 2016).
 - “Metaethics and Normative Explanation”, Freie Universität Berlin (Oct 2014); Metaethics conference, Federal University of Rio de Janeiro (Jan 2015); Normativity: New Directions conference, Institute of Philosophy, University of London (Feb 2015); University of Glasgow (March 2016); Lund University (May 2016); The Language and Metaphysics of Normativity conference, Uppsala (May 2016)
 - “Normative Dependence and Explanation”, Normative Supervenience/Grounding

- workshop, University of Oslo (Sept 2015)
- “Reduction and Normative Explanation”, Grounding and Fundamentality in Metaphysics and Ethics conference, Bogazici University, Istanbul (Oct 2013)
 - “Essential Contestability and Evaluation”, University of East Anglia (Oct 2013)
 - “Doubts about Moral Perception”, Evaluative Perception conference, Glasgow (Sept 2013); Moral Perception workshop, University of Cardiff (Nov 2014)
 - “Evaluation, Multidimensionality and Context”, Values in Context workshop, Lisbon (May 2013); University of Edinburgh (May 2013); University of Kent (March 2013)
 - “Grounding and Normative Explanation”, Joint Session invited symposium, Exeter (July 2013); University of York (May 2012)
 - “Two Sorts of 'Because' Claims in Ethics”, Ethics and Explanation conference, Nottingham (Nov 2011)
 - “Shapelessness in Context”, Pacific APA, Seattle (April 2012), Kings College London (Jan 2012), University of Nebraska, Lincoln (Sept. 2011), ECAP7, Milan (Sept 2011)
 - “Thick Concepts and Reasons”, Reasons for Action Seminar, London (Feb 2011)
 - “Thick Concepts and Presupposition”, University of Reading (Oct 2010), 7th Wisconsin Metaethics Workshop, University of Wisconsin, Madison (Sept 2010); Knowledge and Agency joint workshop by CMM (Leeds) and CSMN (Oslo), University of Leeds (Sept 2010); 11th Bellingham Summer Philosophy Conference, Western Washington University (Aug 2010); Rocky Mountain Ethics Conference, University of Colorado, Boulder (Aug 2010), University of Stirling (April 2010)
 - “Thick Concepts and Variability”, BSET conference, Nottingham (July 2010); University of Manchester (Dec 2009); University of Sheffield (Dec 2009)
 - “Objectionable Thick Concepts in Denials”, University of Nottingham (April 2009); Thick Concepts conference, Canterbury (July 2009); Boston University (Sept. 2009)
 - “Conditions of Moral Perception”, keynote address at the Varieties of Experience graduate conference, University of Glasgow (July 2009)
 - “A Wrong Turn to Reasons?”, University of Birmingham (Feb 2009); Moral Philosophy Seminar, University of Oxford (March 2009)
 - “Thick Evaluative Terms and Gradability”, Rocky Mountain Ethics Conference, University of Colorado, Boulder (Aug 2008); Leonard Lecture, University of Nevada, Reno (April 2008); University of California, Davis (Feb 2008)
 - “Explaining Exceptions in Ethics”, Ethics Without Principles conference, University of Paris (May 2008); University of Stockholm (Sept 2007); University of Turku (Sept 2007); University of Oxford (Jan 2007)
 - “A Theory of Hedged Moral Principles”, 4th Wisconsin Metaethics Workshop, University of Wisconsin, Madison (Sept 2007)
 - “What Properties Count as Evaluative?”, Joint Session, Bristol (July 2007)
 - “Normative Appeals to the Natural”, 7th Bellingham Summer Philosophy Conference, Western Washington University (Aug 2006); University of Edinburgh (Nov 2005)
 - “Is Goodness Just a Great Pretender?”, SPAWN (Syracuse Philosophy Annual Workshop and Network), Syracuse University (July 2006)
 - “The Buck-Passing Account of Value (Almost) Refuted”, 1st Wisconsin Metaethics Workshop, University of Wisconsin, Madison (Oct 2004); Practical Reason and Moral Motivation meeting, Rome (Sept 2004)
 - “Particularism and Default Reasons”, BSET conference, Queens University, Belfast (July 2003); Lewis & Clark College (April 2003)

- “Correct Reasoning and Normative Force”, Joint Session, Belfast (July 2003)
- “Why Epistemic Norms Are Not Hypothetical Imperatives”, The Creighton Club meeting, Cornell University (Oct 2001)
- “Epistemic Basicness and the Epistemology of Moral Belief”, Epistemology of Basic Belief conference, the Free University of Amsterdam (June 2001)

Invited comments

- “Comments on Louise Hanson”, Companions in Guilt conference, the Rome Centre of Australian Catholic University (Sept 2017)
- “Robert Audi’s ‘Moral Perception and Moral Knowledge’”, Pacific APA (April 2009)
- “Douglas Portmore’s ‘Imperfect Reasons and Rational Options’”, 9th Bellingham Summer Philosophy Conference, Western Washington University (Aug 2008)
- “Comments on R. Jay Wallace’s ‘Reasons, Values, and Agent-Relativity’”, Reason and Value conference, University of California, Santa Barbara (Feb 2008)
- “Heathwood on Reducing Sensory Pleasure to Desire”, 6th Bellingham Summer Philosophy Conference, Western Washington University (Aug 2005)
- “Modest, All Too Modest: McKeever and Ridge on Guiding Moral Principles”, APA Central Division meetings, Chicago, IL (April 2004)
- “Miller on Motivational Internalism and Reliably Connected Agents”, APA Pacific Division meetings, San Francisco, CA (March 2003)
- “Comments on Peacocke’s ‘Moral Rationalism’”, Cornell University (Oct 2001)

TEACHING AND SUPERVISION EXPERIENCE

University of Leeds

Graduate level

- Ethics and Metaethics; Analytic Philosophy A/B (MA seminars)
- Former PhD students: Wouter Kalf (completed 2013), Marc Wilcox (2017), Adina Covaci (2019), Olof Leffler (2019), David Heering (2020), Alexios Stamatiadis-Brehier (2021), Andreas Bruns (2021). Samuel Mason (2023), Rodrigo Valencia (2024)
- Current PhD students: Barton Smith-Johnson (2023-), Tiago Carneiro da Silva (2024-)

Undergraduate level

- Metaethics (Level 3)
- Moral Philosophy (Level 2)
- Introduction to Ethics (Level 1)
- Interpreting Philosophical Texts (Level 1)

University of California, Davis

Graduate level

- Proseminar in Ethics
- Thick Evaluative Concepts
- Ethical Naturalism

- Moral Epistemology
- Practical Reason, Value, and Morality
- PhD supervision: Christian Coons (PhD 2006), Brooke Roberts (PhD 2008)

Undergraduate level

- Introduction to Ethics and Political Philosophy
- Ethical Theories
- Foundations of Ethics
- Rationality
- Topics in Ethics: Reasons and Value in the Natural World

Other institutions

- Moral Epistemology, Central European University, Budapest (July 2014; an invited instructor in a summer seminar for early career researchers)
- Ethical Naturalism, graduate seminar, University of Helsinki (May 2006)

SERVICE ACTIVITY

Service to University of Leeds

- Deputy Head of School (Philosophy/History of Science), School of PRHS (2022-27)
- Director of Research and Innovation, School of PRHS (2014-21)
- Director, Centre for Aesthetic, Moral, and Political Philosophy [formerly: Centre for Ethics and Metaethics] (2009-21, apart from periods of research leave)
- Postgraduate Research Tutor for Philosophy (2014-16)
- Director, MA Philosophy (2019-21)
- Member of Internal Peer Review College, School of PRHS (2016-20)
- Web Liaison Director, School of Philosophy, Religion & History of Science (2011-13)
- Leader, Curricular Stream in Value Philosophy (2008-09; 2012-13)
- Convenor, Philosophy Senior Seminar (2008-09)
- Workshop organization: “Normative Disagreement” (Nov 2012); “Value Concepts” (March 2010); “Naturalism: Ethical and Metaphysical” (Sept 2009)

Service to University of California, Davis

- Chair, Search Committee (2 positions) (2007-08)
- Dean's Recruitment Advisory Committee, Division of Social Sciences (2005-06)
- Member, Search Committee (2003-06)
- Faculty Adviser, Colloquia Committee (2005-07)
- Member, Curriculum Committee (2002-08)
- Department representative, UC Davis Academic Senate (2002-03, 2005-07)
- Department representative, Assembly of the College of Letters & Sciences (2003-07)
- Member, Search Committee (political theory), Dept. of Political Science (2003-04)

Service to profession

Editorial and refereeing activities

- Associate Editor, *Ethics* (March 2016-)
- Area editor (Ethics), *Ergo* (2014-)
- Section co-editor (Ethics), *Philosophy Compass* (2014-17)
- Member of Editorial Panel, *Thought* (2013-2022)
- Journal referee: *American Philosophical Quarterly*, *Analysis*, *Analytic Philosophy*, *Australasian Journal of Philosophy*, *Canadian Journal of Philosophy*, *Cognitive Science*, *dialectica*, *Ergo*, *Erkenntnis*, *Ethical Perspectives*, *Ethical Theory and Moral Practice*, *Ethics*, *European Journal of Philosophy*, *Hume Studies*, *Inquiry*, *Journal of Ethics & Social Philosophy*, *Journal of Moral Philosophy*, *Journal for Philosophical Research*, *Journal of Philosophy*, *Metaphilosophy*, *Mind*, *Noûs*, *Pacific Philosophical Quarterly*, *Philosophers' Imprint*, *Philosophical Papers*, *Philosophical Perspectives*, *Philosophical Psychology*, *Philosophical Quarterly*, *Philosophical Review*, *Philosophical Studies*, *Philosophy*, *Philosophy and Phenomenological Research*, *Philosophy Compass*, *Ratio*, *Southern Journal of Philosophy*, *The Age of Human Rights Journal*, *Thought*, *tiede & edistys*, *Utilitas*
- Monograph referee: Oxford University Press, Cambridge University Press, Routledge
- Book proposal referee: Oxford University Press, Blackwell, Routledge, Bloomsbury

Assessment and advisory activities

- Output Assessor for Sub-Panel 30: Philosophy, Research Excellence Framework (REF) 2021
- Expert evaluator, European Commission Horizon 2020 (2017, 2016, 2014)
- External grant reviewer: Helsinki Collegium of Advanced Studies (2024, 2018); European Research Council (2024); A.G. Leventis Foundation Funding Programme, University of Cyprus (2024, 2021); Leverhulme Trust (2023); Academia Sinica, Taiwan (2020); Early Career Research Fellowship scheme, Cambridge (2017); National Science Center, Poland (2016); Swedish Research Council (2015)
- Mock research assessment evaluator: Lingnan University (2024); University of Hong Kong (2023)
- Tenure/promotion reviews: 8x tenure with promotion, 2x Full Professor
- Member of appointing committee (Professorship in Practical Philosophy), University of Helsinki (Nov 2019-March 2020).
- Member of appointing committee (3-year lectureship in Moral and Political Philosophy), University of Helsinki (Oct-Nov 2018).
- External member of search committee (Assistant Professor in Philosophy), Trinity College Dublin (April-May 2016)
- External member of search committee (Assistant Professor in Philosophy), University of Cyprus (March-May 2015)
- Member of Review Panel, The Sanders Prize in Metaethics (2013; inaugural prize)

- Program Committee Member, Wisconsin Metaethics Workshop (2008, 2011, 2012)
- Member of Advisory Committee, British Society for Ethical Theory (2011-)
- External PhD Examiner: Zürich (Feb 2024); Uppsala (Sept 2018); Warwick (Aug 2017); Scuola Normale Superiore di Pisa (Jan 2017), Reading (Oct 2009)
- External Examiner of Philosophy BA and MA: University of Reading (2011-15)
- Member of Advisory Board, *Practical Reason and Moral Motivation* research project, University of Helsinki (2003-05); funding: Academy of Finland