**JANNAI SHIELDS**

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**EMPLOYMENT**

Western Kentucky University, Visiting Instructor of Philosophy, 2018-Present

**EDUCATION**

Philosophy, Ph.D., January 2019, University of Rochester

Dissertation: *I’ll Level with You: Emergent Levels Are the Only True Levels*

Committee: Paul Audi (chair), Alyssa Ney, Hayley Clatterbuck

Philosophy, M.A., October 2016, University of Rochester

Philosophy, M.A., May 2012, Texas A&M University

Thesis: *Kitcher’s Problem with Asymmetry*

Committee: Roger Sansom (adviser), Hugh McCann, Kirk Winemiller

B.A. in Philosophy and History, 2009, *summa cum laude*, Mount Vernon Nazarene University

**AREAS OF SPECIALIZATION**

Metaphysics, Philosophy of Science, Philosophy of Mind

**AREAS OF COMPETENCE**

Logic, Philosophy of Biology, Philosophy of Religion, Epistemology, Ancient Philosophy

**PUBLICATIONS**

With Roger Sansom (2018). Asymmetry in the Unificationist Theory of Causal Explanation. *Synthese* 195 (2): 765-783.

**WORKS IN PROGRESS**

Revise and Resubmit, *European Journal for the Philosophy of Religion.*

**BOOK REVIEWS**

Review of Jason Waller, *Cosmological Fine-Tuning Arguments: What (if Anything) Should We Infer from the Fine-Tuning of Our Universe for Life?* (Routledge, 2020). In *Religious Studies Review* 46 (3), September 2020: 393.

**PRESENTATIONS**

Avoiding the Collapse Problem for Substance Emergentism

Mountain Pacific Regional Meeting of the Society of Christian Philosophers,

College of Southern Nevada in Los Vegas 04/2019

Midsouth Philosophy Conference, Memphis Tennessee 03/2019

Teaching Argument Across the Curriculum

Student Success Summit, Western Kentucky University 01/2019

Terminating Fundamental Determinables and Denying Determinable-Based Metaphysical Indeterminacy

APA Eastern Divisional Meeting, New York 01/2019

Eastern Regional Meeting of the Society of Christian Philosophers,

Asbury University, Wilmore Kentucky 09/2017

There Must Be a Fundamental Level

Midsouth Philosophy Conference, Memphis, TN 03/2017

No Fundamental Determinables

APA Central Division Meeting, Chicago, IL 03/2016

Alabama Philosophical Society, Pensacola, FL 10/2015

Clearing the Way: Against Hofweber's Objections to Substantive Metaphysics

With Kyle Blanchette at the First Annual Conference of the Society of the

Metaphysics of Science, Rutgers University, Newark, NJ 09/2015

The Failure of the Ineliminability Argument for Causal Role Functions

APA Central Division Meeting, St. Louis, MO 02/2015

Improving the Parent Analogy

Eastern Regional Meeting of the Society of Christian Philosophers,

Niagara University, Lewiston, NY 11/2014

**COMMENTARY**

Comments on Meghan Masto’s “Knowing-What and Knowing-What-It’s-Like”

Midsouth Philosophy Conference, Memphis TN 03/2019

Comments on Robert Kowalenko’s “Manipulationism, “Scientific Possibility”, and the Bugbear of Scientific Knowledge in Explanation”

Society for the Metaphysics of Science Third Annual Conference,

Fordham University, New York 10/2017

Comments on Matthew Donnelly’s “Children Grow, Water Runs Dry, and Time Runs By: A Defense of A-Series Time”

Midsouth Philosophy Conference, Memphis, TN 4/2017

Comments on Ryan Felder’s “Moral Responsibility and Liability to Defensive Harm”

24th Annual Kent State Philosophy Graduate Student Conference 3/2017

Comments on Brandon Carey’s “Knowledge Requires Counterfactual Evidence”

9th Biennial University of Rochester Graduate Epistemology Conference,

University of Rochester, Rochester NY 10/2016

**HONORS AND AWARDS**

Nominated for WKU CITL Teaching Honor 5/2020

Dudley Doust Writing Associate Fellowship 2017-2018

Dudley Doust Writing Associates teach one writing course in the fall and the same course in the spring and serve as informal mentors to less experienced instructors.

2016 Outstanding Essay Award

Awarded to the best essay in the Department of Philosophy at U. of Rochester. 11/2016

University of Rochester Three Minute Thesis Finalist 5/2016

University-wide competition in which graduate students have three minutes to explain their dissertation.

Twice nominated by students for the E.P. Curtis Award 2018 and 2016

This is an award in undergraduate teaching excellence, given to one faculty or graduate student instructor per year.

APA Central Division Graduate Stipend Award 3/2016 and 2/2015

Graduate Student Association Conference Travel Fund Award 9/2015

Competitive travel grant awarded to University of Rochester graduate students.

Payne 1st Year Outstanding Essay Prize 5/2013

Competitive award chosen by the U. of R. Dept. of Philosophy faculty, given to the best essay written by a first-year student.

University of Rochester University Fellowship 8/2012 – present

Texas A&M University Regents Fellowship 8/2010 – 5/2011

Competitive fellowship awarded by Texas A&M University to graduate students.

**TEACHING**

*As Instructor:*

*Advanced Logic, Western Kentucky University PHIL 425*, Spring 2021

*Logic, Argument, and Reasoning*, *Western Kentucky University PHIL 214*, Fall 2020

*Metaphysics and Epistemology*, *Western Kentucky University PHIL 404*, Fall 2019

*Philosophy of Mind*, *Western Kentucky University PHIL 332*, Fall 2018, Spring 2019, Fall 2019, Fall 2020

In this course, we study theories of the mind and especially focus on the classic mind-body problem, the so-called hard problem of consciousness, and whether AI could have minds.

*Philosophy of Science, Western Kentucky University PHIL 330*, Spring 2019, Spring 2020, Spring 2021

This is a survey course in general philosophy of science, focusing on crucial questions within the history of the philosophy of science.

*Truth and Relativism*, *Western Kentucky University* *PHIL 101*, Fall 2018, Fall 2019, Spring 2020, Fall 2020, Spring 2021

This class begins with classical discussions of truth, including Aristotle, Anselm, Aquinas and Locke. From there we will leap to the turn to pragmatism and relativism in the late nineteenth and early twentieth century, and finish with more contemporary theories. The class ties the topic of truth to “fakenews”, and aims to address how we can be truth detectors in an age of mass media.

*Philosophical Inquiry*, *Nazareth College PHL.Q 101*, Fall 2017

This is Nazareth College’s introductory philosophy course, which introduces students to Aristotelian and Stoic logic with a view to understanding the role of logic in philosophical inquiry. Using Plato’s *Five Dialogues*, this section acquaints students with philosophy and logic by thinking about the nature of the universe, morality, and knowledge.

*Science and Belief*, Fall 2017

Thomas Huxley, known as Darwin’s Bulldog, said, “The man of science has learned to believe in justification, not by faith, but by verification.” Many today agree, adding that assessing claims scientifically precludes faith. Others, however, think they are compatible, or that science is evidence for religious belief. How might we articulate such views? What are their strengths and weaknesses? And, how should we understand science and religious belief in the first place? Interacting with the writings of Darwin, atheist Richard Dawkins, as well as great Christian, Islamic, and Chinese scholars, we will engage these questions with an eye toward developing the skills of argument and writing.

*Science and Theism*, Fall 2014, Spring 2015, Fall 2015, Spring 2016, Spring 2017

This is a freshman level class that I designed especially to teach writing and argument via the examination of philosophical literature about the relationship between science and theism. Students should have a basic understanding of academic writing upon completion of the course.

*Science and Religious Faith*: WRT 105A, Fall 2016, Fall 2017

This is a freshman level class that that I designed, targeting international students and domestic students who are not confident academic writers, teaching argumentative academic writing and critical reading through philosophical engagement with literature on science and religious faith.

*Reasoning and Writing in the College*: WRT 105B, Spring 2017, Spring 2018

The second-half of the WRT 105A-WRT 105B sequence, WRT 105B immerses students in the experience of academic writing, with a particular emphasis on analyzing, using, and documenting scholarly and non-scholarly texts. It provides instruction and practice in constructing cogent and compelling arguments, as students draft and revise a proposal and an 8-10 page argumentative research paper.

*As Teaching Assistant:*

*Introductory Logic*: PHL 110, Spring 2014

*Ethics*: PHL102, Fall 2013

*(At Texas A&M University)*

*Introduction* *to* *Logic*: PHIL240 – led recitations (2x)

Grader for *Introduction to Logic*: PHIL240, Summer session 2, 2011

*Engineering* *Ethics*: PHIL482 – led recitations (2x)

**PROFESSIONAL SOCIETIES**

American Philosophical Association, Society for the Metaphysics of Science

**ADADEMIC SERVICE**

Served on the Potter College Quick Turnaround Grants Committee Spring 2020

Reader for D.J. Price Honors Thesis, “A Description of a Human’s Knowledge Using Artificial Intelligence 7/2020

Department Website Director Fall 2019-Present

Faculty Adviser for the Western Kentucky University Philosophy Club Fall 2018-Present

Co-drafter of the Philosophy Programs report for the Comprehensive Academic Program Assessment of Western Kentucky University Fall 2018

Referee, 9th Biennial University of Rochester Graduate Epistemology Conference 10/2016

Referee, Graduate Student Association Conference Travel Fund Award Spring 2016

Organizer of the *Teaching Argument* workshop,

*Writing, Speaking, and Argument Program*, University of Rochester Fall 2015

Chair, Session on Physicalism, First Annual Meeting of the Society of

the Metaphysics of Science, Rutgers University, Newark, NJ 9/2015

Co-organizer, 8th Biennial University of Rochester Graduate Epistemology Conference 10/2014

**GRADUATE COURSES**

Courses in Metaphysics and Philosophy of Mind:

Seminar, Properties and Predications, Paul Audi and Alison Peterman

Seminar, Fundamentality, Alyssa Ney

Seminar, Properties and Personal Identity, Earl Conee

Metaphysics, Alyssa Ney

Seminar, Trope Theory, Robert Garcia (at Texas A&M)

Seminar, The Free Will Problem, Hugh McCann (at Texas A&M)

Courses in Philosophy of Science:

Writing Seminar, On Science Monism and Pluralism, Alyssa Ney

Seminar, Social Knowledge, Richard Boyd (at Cornell)

Seminar, Causation, Brad Weslake

Directed Readings in Philosophy of Science, Brad Weslake

Philosophy of Science, Brad Weslake

Philosophy of Science, Roger Sansom (at Texas A&M)

Courses in Philosophy of Biology:

Philosophy of Biology, Brad Weslake

Philosophy of Biology, Roger Sansom (at Texas A&M)

Courses in Epistemology:

Epistemic Encroachment and Knowledge, Earl Conee

Seminar, Formal Epistemology (audited), Hayley Clatterbuck

Theory of Knowledge, Earl Conee

Courses in Ancient Philosophy:

Seminar, Plato: From Elenchus to Division (audited), Deborah Modrak

Seminar, Aristotle’s Theory of Definition and Explanation, Deborah Modrak

Selected Topics in Ancient Greek Philosophy: Foundations, Deborah Modrak

Ancient Philosophy, Robin Smith (at Texas A&M)

Reading from the Ancient to the Medievals, Scott Austin (at Texas A&M)

Courses in Logic:

Logical Methods in Philosophy: Nonclassical Logic, Alyssa Ney

Mathematical Logic I, Chris Menzel (at Texas A&M)

Other courses:

Contemporary Debates in the Philosophy of Religion, Ed Wierenga

British Empiricism, Ralf Meerbote

Seminar in Ethics and Value Theory—Metaethics, Linda Radzik (at Texas A&M)

Phil. of Language—Speech Acts and Communication, Ben McMyler at Texas A&M)

Reading Group in Medieval Philosophy, Ed Wierenga

Writing Pedagogy, Dan Helm and Stefanie Sydelnik

Practicum in Teaching Writing, Dan Helm and Stefanie Sydelnik

**REFERENCES\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_**

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**Alyssa Ney**

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**Hayley Clatterbuck**

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**Earl Conee**

Professor

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**Jeffrey Samuels (teaching reference)**

Chair, Department of Philosophy and Religion

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**DISSERTATION PRÉCIS**

Talk of levels is pervasive in today's science and philosophy. People speak of the biological level or the quantum level, but what sorts of things are these levels? It’s commonly thought that basic building blocks form a lowest level; these basic blocks then fit together to compose complex wholes that form a next level. Particles join together to make atoms, which join together to make molecules, which join together to make cells, and so on. Many scientists and philosophers suggest that increasingly complex things exist on increasingly higher levels, and the aim of different sciences is to study the entities at different levels. Physics studies the foundational level and the so-called special sciences—such as biology, psychology, and cognitive science—study the higher ones. My dissertation identifies a problem for this talk: all the accounts of what levels are and what conditions are responsible for them are inadequate.

I argue that there really are levels that are part of the universe’s structure, but there aren’t as many as the picture above seems to suggest. On my view, a level comes to exist if and only if a new and distinct thing emerges from the arrangement of other things—an emergent entity that has properties that are distinct in kind from the properties of the more basic things. Minds, for instance, might be emergent since they seem to have properties (like feeling pain) that are resistant to reduction and are completely different in nature from the properties of the physical-chemical brain. However, many of the things that scientists talk about—for instance, atoms forming molecules and molecules forming cells—are not such things.

I begin by articulating what a level is—a question that is surprisingly taken for granted by many. According to the famous view of Paul Oppenheim and Hilary Putnam, levels come to exist when simpler things compose more complex things. For them, it is the composition relation that is responsible for level generation. However, I argue that composition is not sufficient for level generation. I then argue that constitution – the relation that holds between clay and the statue it forms – is also insufficient for level generation, contrary to the arguments of Lynne Rudder Baker. Having rejected two of the prominent views on what gives rise to levels, I argue that we shouldn’t become level skeptics, like John Heil; not only are his arguments against the reduction of consciousness insufficient, his criticisms of what he calls the Picture Theory of language, according to which we can list off our ontological commitments by examining how we speak about the world, is the only option we have for doing ontology.

Finally, I submit that emergence is necessary for levels. In particular, I argue for a form of strong emergence that is more akin to the views of the British Emergentists, such as J. S. Mill and C. D. Broad. According to the view, genuine emergence requires both novel causal features and novel objects to possess those features. This stands in contrast to nonreductive physicalists’ weak emergence, which either fails to distinguish allegedly emergent objects from their composing base (Wilson), or is motivated by mistaken views of what reductionism is and how to do ontology (Wimsatt). If my view is right, then there aren’t as many levels as the characterization with which I began seems to suggest, for there are too few strongly emergent things. Thus, much of the levels talk in science refers to theoretical levels or compositional levels, but not ontological levels.