

BETH A. BARKER

Department of Philosophy
Grand Valley State University
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RESEARCH

Areas of specialization Philosophy of mind, action, epistemology

Areas of competence Applied ethics (animal ethics, epistemic injustice), philosophy of language, logic

EMPLOYMENT

Visiting Assistant Professor 2025-present
Department of Philosophy, Grand Valley State University

Lecturer 2024-2025
Liberal Arts Department, School of the Art Institute of Chicago

Lecturer 2021-2023
Department of Philosophy, Loyola University Chicago

EDUCATION

PhD, Philosophy, Northwestern University 2025
Dissertation: *A Practical Guide to Know-How*
Committee: Sandy Goldberg (chair), Jennifer Lackey, Baron Reed, Will Small (external, University of Illinois at Chicago)

MA, Philosophy, University of Missouri 2018

BA, Philosophy, Spanish, Summa Cum Laude, Evangel University 2015

DISSERTATION SUMMARY

I establish a novel perspective on the debate about knowledge-how and confront its core assumption: that knowing how to ϕ , for any activity ϕ , is or requires a *distinctively* practical kind of knowledge. I argue that there's no such thing as 'knowledge-how', or a distinctively practical kind of knowledge, and the reason is that ordinary propositional knowledge is already practical in all the ways we wanted 'knowledge-how' to be. I call this the 'Ordinary Knowledge View'. In a slogan: *ordinary knowledge is practical knowledge*.

PUBLICATIONS

- ‘Knowing how and being able’** 2024
Synthese 204, no. 76: pp. 1–20. <https://doi.org/10.1007/s11229-024-04707-8>
- ‘Epistemic Injustice and Performing Know-How’** 2021
Social Epistemology 35, no. 6: pp. 608–20. <https://doi.org/10.1080/02691728.2021.1882608>

WORKS IN PROGRESS

- ‘Intellectualism and Nonhuman Animal Knowledge’** (‘honorable mention’ for Philosophy of Animal Minds and Behavior Association Prize 2025; under review)
- ‘Must There Be Nonpropositional Knowledge?’** (resubmitted for r&r)
- ‘There’s No Such Thing as Knowledge-How’** (under review)

INVITED TALKS

- ‘Intellectualism and Nonhuman Animal Knowledge’** November 2025
Harper College Speaker Series, Palatine, Illinois

PRESENTATIONS

- (peer reviewed)
- ‘Knowing How to Play a Game’** February 2026
Fourth Annual Philosophy of Video Games Conference, Florida Atlantic University, Boca Raton
- ‘Intellectualism and Nonhuman Animal Knowledge’** April 2025
Philosophy of Animal Minds and Behavior Association, University of California, Santa Barbara
- ‘How Knowledge-How Is Practical: Two Theses’** 2024
Submitted Symposium, American Philosophical Association (APA) Central Division Meeting, New Orleans
- ‘What Should an Account of Knowledge-How Be an Account Of?’** 2024
Submitted Symposium, APA Eastern Division Meeting, New York
- ‘Propositions in Action: The Problem of Over-Intellectualizing Know-How’** 2023
Rule-Following: Between Nature and Culture, University of Hradec Králové
- ‘Propositions in Action: The Problem of Over-Intellectualizing Know-How’** 2023
Concepts in Action: Representation, Language, and Applications, Concordia University
- ‘Ryle’s Regress from Category Mistake’** 2022
Normative Guidance Workshop, Australian National University
- ‘Epistemic Injustice and Intellectualist Know-How’** 2019
Submitted Symposium, APA Central Division Meeting, Denver

INVITED COMMENTARIES

Kyoungmin Cho, 'Against Subjectivism about Final Ends: The Fickleness Argument'	2023
Northwestern Society for the Theory of Ethics and Politics (NUSTEP), Northwestern University	
Ian Dunkle, 'Can an Action be Difficult beyond Compare?'	2023
APA Central Division Meeting, Denver	
Keshav Singh, 'The Paradox of Consequentialism'	2022
NUSTEP, Northwestern University	
Ben Henke, 'Degree Encroachment'	2021
12th Annual NU/ND Graduate Epistemology Conference, University of Notre Dame	
Ofra Magidor, 'Meaning Transfer Revisited'	2018
Kline Workshop on Semantics and Logic, University of Missouri	
Bob Fischer, 'Veganism, Vegetarianism, and the Duty to Signal'	2018
Kline Workshop on Animal Ethics, University of Missouri	

AWARDS

Philosophy of Animal Minds and Behavior Association (PAMBA), travel funding	2025
American Association of Philosophy Teachers (AAPT)	2024
(\$300 to participate in the AAPT Teaching and Learning Seminar and conference)	
Graduate Writing Center Fellowship	2023-2024
Northwestern University	
Normative Guidance Workshop, travel funding	2022
Australian National University	
Scott T. Davey Memorial Prize for Excellence in M.A. Research	2018
Awarded for 'Epistemic Injustice and Intellectualist Know-How', University of Missouri	

TEACHING

(* = upcoming)

Primary Instructor

Grand Valley State University

*Knowledge, Politics, and Media (x2)	2026
*Introduction to Philosophy (x2)	2026
Introduction to Philosophy (x2)	2025
Introduction to Ethics (x2)	2025

School of the Art Institute of Chicago

Theory of Knowledge	2025
Critical Thinking	2024

Loyola University Chicago

Philosophy and Persons (x2)	2022, 2023
Judgment and Decision-Making (intermediate)	2021

University of Missouri

Introduction to Ethics	2018, 2019
Introduction to Bioethics	2019
Introduction to Philosophy	2018

Teaching Assistant

Northwestern University

Introduction to Moral Philosophy	2025
Elementary Logic I	2024
Modern Philosophy (intermediate)	2021, 2023
Introduction to Philosophy	2023
Theory of Knowledge (intermediate)	2023
Elementary Logic II (intermediate)	2022
Bioethics	2021

University of Missouri

Medical Ethics	2018
Logic and Reasoning	2017
Introduction to Philosophy	2017
Introduction to Ethics	2016

Fellow

Northwestern University

Graduate Writing Center (advised graduate student and faculty writing, led writing workshops)	2023-2024
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GRADUATE COURSEWORK

(NU = Northwestern University; MU = University of Missouri)

Language, Epistemology, Mind

Reasoning and representation (audited; L. Rips, NU Department of Psychology); Higher-order evidence (S. Goldberg, NU); Philosophy of inquiry (S. Goldberg, NU); Legal epistemology (J. Lackey, NU); Seminar in language and mind (M. Glanzberg, NU); The modal future (F. Cariani, NU); Epistemic modality (P. Weirich, MU); Self-knowledge (M. McGrath, MU); Knowledge-how (P. Markie, MU); Formal Semantics (A. Radulescu, MU); Semantics (A. Radulescu, MU); Pragmatics (C. Horisk, MU)

History

Belief and doubt in early modern philosophy (B. Reed, NU); Creaturely life before—and against—Descartes (L. Shannon, NU Department of English); Knowledge, persuasion, and power in ancient philosophy (P. Marechal, NU); Understanding and reason in Kant (R. Zuckert, NU); Russell and Wittgenstein (D. Sievert, MU); Locke’s metaphysics (M. Folescu, MU); Aristotle’s ethics (N. Baima, MU)

Social and Political, Ethics, Value

Group-based morality (S. White, NU); Derrida/Agamben (A. Ricciardi & I. Alfandary, NU Comparative Literary Studies); Topics in aesthetics: Sublimity, ugliness, and horror (R. Zuckert, NU); Critical phenomenology of race, gender, sexuality (J. Medina, NU); Ideal and non-ideal theory (K. Ebels-Duggan, NU); Habermas’s theory of communicative rationality (C. Lafont, NU); Political authority and anarchy (P. Vallentyne, MU)

Logic and Metaphysics

The classical limitative results (S. Ebels-Duggan, NU); Seminar in logic (P. Weirich, MU)

SERVICE

Referee, Australasian Journal of Philosophy, Synthese

Co-organizer, Northwestern/Notre Dame Graduate Epistemology Conference 2022-2025

Co-organizer, Graduate Works in Progress 2022-2024
(graduate students present and discuss their developing work)
Northwestern University, Department of Philosophy

President, Philosophy Graduate Student Association (PGSA) 2022-2023
Northwestern University

Climate Committee Member 2021-2022
Northwestern University, Department of Philosophy

Graduate Leadership and Advocacy Council Representative, PGSA 2021-2022
Northwestern University

Tea-Time Coordinator, PGSA 2021
Northwestern University, Department of Philosophy

President, Philosophy Department Graduate Student Organization (GSO) 2018-2019
University of Missouri

Philosophy Department Representative, Graduate Professional Council 2017-2018
University of Missouri

Treasurer, Philosophy Department GSO 2017-2018
University of Missouri

LANGUAGES

English - native

French - intermediate/advanced

Spanish - intermediate/advanced

ASL - beginning

REFERENCES

Sanford Goldberg, Chester D. Tripp Professor in the Humanities
Northwestern University Department of Philosophy
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Jennifer Lackey, Wayne and Elizabeth Jones Professor of Philosophy
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Will Small, Associate Professor
University of Illinois at Chicago Department of Philosophy
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CV updated October 2025