

Victor Kumar

Curriculum vitae

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Areas of Focus

AOS **Ethics, Moral Psychology, Philosophy of Cognitive Science**
AOC **Epistemology, Philosophy of Biology, Feminist Philosophy, Philosophy of Race**

Academic Appointments

2017-present	Boston University	Associate Professor of Philosophy (2024-) Director of Mind and Morality Lab
2015-2017	University of Toronto	Postdoctoral Research Fellow
2013-2015	University of Michigan	Postdoctoral Research Fellow

Education

2013	University of Arizona	Ph.D. Philosophy; minor in Cognitive Science
2007	University of Alberta	M.A. Philosophy
2005	Dalhousie University	B.A. Philosophy; B.Sc. Psychology & Biology

Publications

Book

2022 *A Better Ape: The Evolution of the Moral Mind and How it Made Us Human* (OUP)
w/ Richmond Campbell

Available as kindle e-book; audiobook; translated into Chinese and Persian
Reviewed in *The British Journal of Philosophy of Science Review of Books*,
Teaching Philosophy, *The Quarterly Review of Biology*, *Choice*
Symposium in *Biology and Philosophy*

Edited Collections

2018 *The Moral Psychology of Disgust* (Rowman and Littlefield)
w/ Nina Strohminger

2017 *Cognition* special issue on moral learning
w/ Peter Railton and Fiery Cushman

Journal Articles and Book Chapters

- Forthcoming "A Psychological Account of the Unique Decline in Anti-Gay Attitudes"
(w/ Aditi Kodipady and Liane Young)
Philosophical Psychology
- Forthcoming "Moral Reasoning and Moral Progress" (w/ Joshua May)
The Oxford Handbook of Metaethics (OUP), David Copp & Connie Rosati (Eds.)
- 2023 "Response to critics" (w/ Richmond Campbell)
Biology and Philosophy
- 2023 "Precis of *A Better Ape*" (w/ Richmond Campbell)
Biology and Philosophy
- 2023 "Harnessing Moral Psychology to Reduce Meat Consumption" (w/ Joshua May)
Journal of the American Philosophical Association
- 2020 "The Science of Effective Altruism"
The Oxford Handbook of Consequentialism (OUP), Douglas Portmore (Ed.)
- 2020 "The Ethical Significance of Cognitive Science"
Current Controversies in Philosophy of Cognitive Science (Routledge), Adam Lerner, Simon Cullen & Sarah-Jane Leslie (Eds.)
- 2019 "Empirical Vindication of Moral Luck"
Nous, 53: 987-1007.
- 2018 "How to Debunk Moral Beliefs," (w/ Joshua May)
Methodology and Moral Philosophy (Routledge), Jussi Suikkanen & Antti Kauppinen (Eds.)
- 2018 "Moral Reasoning and Emotion" (w/ Joshua May)
The Routledge Handbook of Moral Epistemology (Routledge), Aaron Zimmerman, Karen Jones, and Mark Timmons (Eds.)
- 2018 "Disgust: A Cross-Pollination" (w/ Nina Strohminger)
The Moral Psychology of Disgust (Rowman and Littlefield), Nina Strohminger and Victor Kumar (Eds.)
- 2017 "Foul Behavior"
Philosophers' Imprint, 17: 1-17.
- 2017 "Moral Vindications"
Cognition, 176: 124-34.
- 2017 "Moral Learning: Current and Future Directions" (w/ Fiery Cushman and Peter Railton)
Cognition, 176: 1-10.
- 2016 "Nudges and Bumps"
Georgetown Journal of Law and Public Policy, 14: 861-76.

- 2016 “The Empirical Identity of Moral Judgment”
The Philosophical Quarterly, 66: 783-804
- 2016 “Psychopathy and Internalism”
Canadian Journal of Philosophy, 46: 318-45
- 2016 “Honor and Moral Revolution” (w/ Richmond Campbell)
Ethical Theory & Moral Practice, 19: 147-59
- 2015 “Moral Judgment as a Natural Kind”
Philosophical Studies, 172: 2887-2910
- 2014 “‘Knowledge’ as a Natural Kind Term”
Synthese, 191: 439-57
- 2014 “How Many of Us Are There?” (w/ Hannah Tierney, Chris Howard, Trevor Kvaran, and Shaun Nichols)
Advances in Experimental Philosophy of Mind (Continuum), Justin Sytsma (Ed.)
- 2013 “Pragmatic Naturalism & Moral Objectivity” (w/ Richmond Campbell)
Analysis, 73: 446-55
- 2012 “On the Normative Significance of Experimental Moral Psychology” (w/ Richmond Campbell)
Philosophical Psychology, 25: 311-30. (Published as winner of the William James Prize from *Society for Philosophy and Psychology*)
- 2012 “Moral Reasoning on the Ground” (w/ Richmond Campbell)
Ethics, 122: 273-312
- 2011 “In Support of Anti-Intellectualism”
Philosophical Studies, 152: 135-54

Fellowships, Grants & Awards (selected)

- 2024-2025 Fellow-In-Residence, Edmond & Lily Safra Center for Ethics, Harvard University
Year-long research fellowship
- 2024 Media Fellow (Op-Ed/Trade Book), Mark Sanders Foundation (\$3,000)
Summer workshop
- 2023-2024 Center for Humanities Junior Faculty Fellowship, Boston University
Research leave in Spring 2024
- 2018-2023 Ethics and Emerging Science Initiative, Boston University (\$100,000)
Research grant co-led with Rachell Powell
- 2018-2022 Peter Paul Career Development Professorship, Boston University (\$130,000)
University award for early career professors
One of five across BU College of Arts and Sciences; first philosopher to win award
- 2018-2021 Templeton Project on Reasoning in Moral Thought and Action (\$60,000)
Sub award; Project Leaders: Liane Young and Fiery Cushman

- 2015 Jean Hampton Prize for “Empirical Vindication of Moral Luck”
Best essay by younger scholar, Pacific APA
- 2015-2017 Postdoctoral Fellowship, Social Sci & Hum Research Council (\$80,000)
- 2007-2011 Ph.D. Scholarship, Social Sci & Hum Research Council (\$80,000)
- 2007-2010 Ph.D. Scholarship, Social Sci & Hum Research Council (\$105,000)—declined

Public Philosophy/Outreach

- 2024 [“Population Growth is an Issue for Everyone, Regardless of Politics”](#) (radio interview)
Inside Sources on KSL with Boyd Matheson, Aug. 5, 2024
- 2024 [“Population Growth Is Not a Progressive Issue. It Should Be”](#)
The New York Times, Aug. 5, 2024
- 2024 [“A Ban on Lab-Grown Meat Would Take a Bite Out of Freedom”](#) (w/ Joshua May)
Alabama.com, Feb. 19, 2024
- 2024 [“The Origins of Morality”](#) (podcast interview)
The Ethical Frontier with Jason Chen, YouTube, Feb. 4, 2024
- 2023 [“Learning from the Decline in Anti-Gay Attitudes”](#) (video)
Expanding Empathy, Rock Ethics Institute, Penn State, Apr. 12, 2023
- 2023 [“The Thing That Could Finally Get Us to Eat Less Meat is – Meat”](#)
The Boston Globe, Mar. 5, 2023
- 2023 [“Why Bother with Political Arguments?”](#) (w/ Joshua May)
The Prindle Post, Jan. 27, 2023
- 2023 [“Why Do People Cheat”](#) (interview)
The Big Question (BU CAS interview series), Jan. 24, 2023
- 2023 [“Going Vegetarian/Vegan in the New Year”](#) (radio panel interview)
Cincinnati Edition on WXVU (NPR) with Lucy May, Jan. 12, 2023
- 2023 [“How Did Human Morality Evolve?”](#) (podcast interview)
Modern Wisdom with Chris Williamson, YouTube, Jan. 7, 2023
- 2022 [“Nature Didn’t Make Us Human, Culture Did”](#) (w/ Richmond Campbell)
Institute of Art and Ideas Magazine, Dec. 15, 2022
- 2022 [“Why Giving Up Meat is Hard”](#) (radio interview)
Here and Now on WBUR (NPR) with Deepa Fernandes, Nov. 17, 2022
- 2022 [“A Better Ape”](#) (video interview)
The Dissenter with Ricardo Lopes, YouTube, Aug. 29, 2022
- 2022 [“Firing Up the Grill? Why It’s So Hard to Give Up Meat”](#) (interview)
The Brink, July 13, 2022 (also at [Medium](#) and [Futurity](#))

- 2022 [“Evolution and Morality”](#) (w/ Richmond Campbell) (podcast interview)
The Side Comment by Oxford University Press, ep. 27, May 25, 2022
- 2022 [“When Moral Reasoning Isn’t Just Rationalization”](#) (w/ Richmond Campbell)
Psychology Today, May 19, 2022
- 2022 [“Humans Aren’t Born Selfish—Just the Opposite—And That’s Reason for Hope”](#) (w/
Richmond Campbell)
The Boston Globe, Apr. 10, 2022
- 2022 [“You Don’t Have to be a Vegan to Save the Earth”](#) (w/ Joshua May),
WBUR Cognoscenti, Feb. 17, 2022
- 2021 [“Moral Progress”](#) (podcast interview)
The UnMute Podcast with Myisha Cherry, ep. 63, June 18, 2021
- 2018 [“The Weight of Empathy”](#) (video)
Rhett talk at Boston University, YouTube, Sept. 19, 2018
- 2015 [“The Problem of Moral Luck”](#) (animated video)
Wireless Philosophy (Wi-Phi) episode, YouTube, June 22, 2015
- 2014 [“Moral Disgust”](#) (w/ Walter Sinnott-Armstrong) (video)
Philosophy TV, Oct. 16, 2014

Presentations (selected since 2021)

- 2024 “Reductarianism and Politicization” (w/ Joshua May)
PPE Society Annual Meeting, New Orleans, LA
- 2024 Reductarianism Summit, Dallas, TX
- 2024 Commentary on Alexandra Plakias’s *Awkwardness*
Canadian Philosophical Association online conference
- 2024 “Moral Progress for Animals”
Philosophy Department Colloquium, CUNY Grad Center
- 2024 Author meets critics session on *A Better Ape*
American Philosophical Association: Pacific Division, Portland, OR
- 2024 “A Defense of Reductarianism” (w/ Joshua May)
American Philosophical Association: Central Division, New Orleans, LA
- 2023 PPE Society Annual Meeting, New Orleans, LA
- 2023 Progress Project Workshop, Utrecht University
- 2023 Southern Society for Philosophy and Psychology, Louisville, KY
- 2023 “The Evolution of LGBTQ Progress”
Moral Reasoning Workshop, Harvard University
- 2023 “Biocultural Morality”
Cognition, Conscience, and Evolution workshop, Oxford University
- 2023 Beyond the Nature/Nurture Divide, University of Sheffield

- 2023 Author meets critics session on *A Better Ape* (w/ Richmond Campbell)
Canadian Philosophical Association conference, York University
- 2023 “Learning from the Decline in Anti-Gay Attitudes”
Moral Psychology symposium, Lake Forest College
- 2023 Expanding Empathy, Pennsylvania State University
- 2023 “Reasoning to Moral Progress” (w/ Joshua May)
Moral Progress conference, Georgia State University
- 2022 “Disgust and Social Identity”
Disgust and Discourse, Sookmyung Women’s University, Korea (keynote)
- 2022 “Moral Nativism and Gene-Culture Co-Evolution”
Mind and Moral Psychology conference, University of Michigan (keynote) (cancelled)
- 2022 Moral Psychology Research Group, Cornell University
- 2022 “Quarantined in an Echo Chamber”
Moral Psychology Research Group, Duke University
- 2022 Philosophy Department Colloquium, Brandeis University
- 2022 Progress Talks, Utrecht University
- 2022 “How Morality Drives Human Evolution”
Group for Empirical Approaches to Morality and Society, CUNY
- 2022 Navajā talk series, India Institute of Technology, Kanpur
- 2022 Author meets critics session on *A Better Ape*
Southern Society for Philosophy and Psychology, Mobile, AL
- 2021 “Evolution and Progress”
MANCEPT Workshop on Moral and Socio-Political Progress (keynote)
- 2021 “LGBTQ Progress”
Emmanuel College Undergraduate Philosophy Conference (keynote)
- 2021 “The Evolution of Tribalism”
Philosophy Department Colloquium, McGill University
- 2021 “Lessons for the Future from the Gay Rights Revolution”
Philosophy Department Colloquium, Cambridge University
- 2021 Philosophy Department Colloquium, University of British Columbia

Teaching Experience

Boston University

- 2019-2023 Evolutionary Cognitive Science and Ethics (graduate/undergraduate)
- 2019-2023 Introduction to Ethics
- 2017-2021 Gender, Race, and Science (graduate/undergraduate)
- 2018 Evolution and Ethics (graduate)
- 2018 Medical Ethics

	University of Toronto
2017	Ethics of Race and Gender
2016	Evolution and Ethics
2016	The Moral Mind
	University of Arizona
2012	Contemporary Moral Problems
2012	Medical Ethics

Academic Service

Reviewer

Ethics; Philosophers' Imprint; Philosophy and Phenomenological Research; Philosophical Studies; Behavioral and Brain Sciences; Philosophy of Science; Australasian Journal of Philosophy; Canadian Journal of Philosophy; Cognition; Synthese; Philosophy Compass; Social Theory & Practice; Philosophical Psychology; Ethical Theory & Moral Practice; Social Philosophy & Policy; European Journal of Philosophy; Erkenntnis; Neuroethics; Review of Philosophy and Psychology; Utilitas; Journal of Experimental Social Psychology; WIREs Cognitive Science

Oxford University Press; Cambridge University Press; Routledge

Society for Philosophy & Psychology; Cognitive Science Society; Canadian Philosophical Association

American Philosophical Association

2017-2020	Committee on Academic Career Opportunities and Placement
2014-2015	Committee on Skype Interviewing

Society for Philosophy and Psychology

2016-2019	Executive Committee
2015-2018	William James Prize Committee

Canadian Philosophical Association

2017-2019	Program Committee: Moral Psychology
2015-2017	Program Committee: Metaethics & Moral Psychology

Departmental

2017-present	Organizer, Mind and Morality Lab Talk Series, BU
2018-present	Member of three dissertation committees, BU
2021-present	Target of Opportunity Search Committee, BU
2021-present	Findlay Search Committee, BU
2021-present	Abner Shimony Award Committee, BU
2022-present	Advisory Committee, Center for Philosophy & History of Science, BU
2024	Organizer, Philosophy and Social Justice Conference, BU
2021-2023	Colloquium Committee, BU
2022-2023	Phil Science and Ethics TT search committee, BU
2023	Organizer, Identity Politics Conference, BU
2022	Organizer, Echo Chambers Conference, BU
2022	VAP Search Committee, BU

2021 Policy Review Committee, BU
2019-2020 Climate and Diversity Committee, BU
2019 Organizer, Public Philosophy Conference, BU
2019 Organizer, Evolution and Ethics Conference, BU
2019 Graduate Admissions Committee, BU
2018-2019 Social/Political TT search committee, BU
2015 Co-organizer, Moral Learning Workshop, University of Michigan
2011-2012 Graduate Representative to Faculty, University of Arizona
2009 Co-organizer, Arizona Workshop in Philosophy, University of Arizona

College

2021-2024 Humanities Curriculum Committee, Boston University
2023 Arts and Sciences Lecture Committee, Boston University
2023 Selection Committee, Director of Center for Philosophy & History of Science, BU
2023 IDEAL Awards Selection Committee, Boston University
2022 Arts and Sciences Lecture Committee, Boston University

References

Shaun Nichols

Professor of Philosophy
Cornell University
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Peter Railton

Distinguished University Professor of Philosophy
University of Michigan
prailton@umich.edu

Joshua Greene

Professor of Psychology
Harvard University
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