SHAWN SIMPSON

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EDUCATION

PhD, Philosophy, May 14, 2021
The Graduate Center, the City University of New York
Dissertation: *Essays on Communication*
Advisor: Noël Carroll Committee: John Greenwood, Stephen Neale, Michael Devitt

MPhil, Philosophy, 2017
The Graduate Center, the City University of New York

MA, Philosophy, 2015
The Graduate Center, the City University of New York

BA, Philosophy, 2012
Arizona State University
+ Certificate in History & Philosophy of Science
summa cum laude

RESEARCH

Areas of Specialization: ethics, aesthetics, philosophy of science, philosophy of language

Areas of Competence: American Pragmatism, 20th c. Analytic, decision & game theory, logic, philosophy of mind, social & political philosophy

PROFESSIONAL EXPERIENCE

Postdoctoral Research Fellow – North-West University, South Africa, *2025-present*
Visiting Lecturer – University of Pittsburgh, Department of Philosophy, *2022-2025*
Lecturer – Mississippi State University, Department of Philosophy & Religions, *2021-2022*
Visiting Scholar – Arché Research Centre, University of St. Andrews, UK, *Summer 2024*
Visiting Researcher – University of Puerto Rico, Río Piedras, *Summer 2022*

PUBLICATIONS

Books

- *Art as Communication: Aesthetics, Evolution, and Signaling* [Published Oct 2024, Lexington Books | Bloomsbury Publishing]

Edited works

- Co-editor of a Winter 2024 Special Issue on "Environmental Philosophy" in *Diálogos: Journal of the Department of Philosophy of the University of Puerto Rico, Río Piedras*

Articles

- Pinillos, A. & Simpson, S. (2014). Experimental Evidence in Support of Anti-intellectualism about Knowledge. In J. R. Beebe (Ed.), *Advances in Experimental Epistemology* (pp. 9-44). Bloomsbury Academic: Continuum Books. [Invited]
- James and Carnap on Philosophical Systems and the Role of Temperaments (2023) *Metaphilosophy*, *54*(1), 134-144. (Submitted 2021; accepted 2022).
- Limits of Wilderness (2024), *Diálogos*, 55(114): 81-115.
- Introduction to *Diálogos*: A Special Edition on Environmental Philosophy (2024), *Diálogos*, 55(114): 9-16.
- The Mosquito Problem: Evaluating New Mitigation Technologies and Methods (2026), *Environmental Ethics, 47(*4): 409-433.
- The Sender-receiver Model: Syntax, Semantics, and the Relation Between the Model and the World (2026), *Synthese*, *208*, Article 56.
- William James's 'The Will to Believe': A Decision-Theoretic Analysis (*revised & resubmitted @ William James Studies*).
- Logic and Inference in the Sender-receiver Model (*revise & resubmit @ Erkenntnis*)
- Do Animals Make Art? (*revise & resubmit @ British Journal of Aesthetics*)
- Evil Personhood and Failure of Will (*under review*)

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WORKS IN PROGRESS

The Problem of Progress in Environmental Philosophy (article draft & talk slides available)

On the Case Against Revolution in Hobbes's *Leviathan* (article draft & talk slides available)

Life After 1.5℃ (article in progress/ talk slides available)

Death's Bargain: A Paradox of Life (and Death) (draft available)

The Logical Positivists on the Meaning of Life (draft available)

Interpreting the Diné (Navajo) Concept of Hózhó (in progress)

CONFERENCES, PRESENTATIONS, & EVENTS

"The Problem of Progress in Environmental Philosophy"

- Southern African Society for Environmental Philosophy, ZA – *August 26-28th, 2026*
- National Taiwan University, Taipei City, Taiwan – *June 8th, 2026*

"Logic and Inference in the Sender-Receiver Model"

- Korean Society for Logic, Seoul, South Korea – *May 29th, 2026*
- Invited speaker, Arché Research Centre, University of St. Andrews, UK, *June 26, 2024*
- NY Philosophical Logic Workshop - CUNY, *March 2023*

"AI's Impact on Professional Artists"

- Hanyang University, Seoul, South Korea – *May 28th, 2026*

"Life Without Guarantees: James, Camus, and Existential Commitment Without Metaphysical Foundations"

- Tokyo Forum For Analytic Philosophy (TFAP), Tokyo, Japan – *May 22nd, 2026*

"Life Beyond 1.5°C"

- International Society for Environmental Ethics, Pacific APA, Climate Hub, "Climate Philosophy after 1.5°C", *April 11th, 2026*
- African Centre for Epistemology and Philosophy of Science (ACEPS), University of Johannesburg, *October 21st, 2025*

"On the Case Against Revolution in Hobbes's *Leviathan*"

- Thomas Hobbes of Malmesbury Society (THoMS), England, UK, *March 27–29, 2026*. [*postponed*].
- Institute for Contemporary Ethics (ICE), North-West University. *Nov 6th, 2025*

"Outline of a Pragmatic Existentialism"

- Eighth International Conference on Philosophy and Meaning in Life, U of Oklahoma, March 26–28, 2026. [*withdrawn*].

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"Reviving De-Extinction: A Response to Four Anti-De-Extinction Arguments"

- International Society for Environmental Ethics, APA Central, Chicago, USA. *February 18-21st, 2026*
- Philosophical Society of Southern Africa, U of Cape Town, *January 23-25th, 2026*
- Southern African Society for Environmental Philosophy (SASEP), 2nd Annual Conference, North-West University, South Africa, *August 25-27, 2025*

"The General Will in Kant and Rousseau"

- Second International Congress of Philosophy, University of Cartagena, *November 17-21, 2025*
- Three Centuries of Kant: Knowledge, Science, and Values, University of Belgrade, *Dec 10-11, 2025*

"Do Animals Make Art?"

- American Society for Aesthetics, Pacific Meeting, Berkeley, CA, *March 6-7, 2026.* [*declined due to move to South Africa*].
- Invited speaker, ETH Zürich, Switzerland, *October 9-11, 2025*

"The Mosquito Problem: Evaluating New Mitigation Technologies and Methods"

- 3rd Annual Colloquium on Animal Welfare, Human Rights, …, North-West University, South Africa, *September 15-17, 2025*
- International Society for Environmental Ethics, APA Central, *February 2023*

"Indigenous American Art and Its Interpretation"

- American Society for Aesthetics, Rocky Mountain Division, Santa Fe, New Mexico, *July 12th-14th, 2025* [*withdrawn due to travel conflict*]

"William James's 'The Will to Believe': A Decision-Theoretic Analysis"

- Pittsburgh Formal Epistemology Workshop, Carnegie Mellon University, *Feb 14th, 2025*.

"Revenge, Retribution, and the Law"

- Invited speaker, University of Pittsburgh, Undergraduate Philosophy Club, *Dec 2023*

"Re-generating Wilderness"

- Invited speaker, University of Puerto Rico (Rio Piedras), *March 2022*
- Woods Hole Marine Biology Laboratory Seminar Series on Biology, *summer 2020* [*cancelled*]

"Defining Life"

- Society for Social and Conceptual Issues in Astrobiology, *March 2022*

"Concepts of Wilderness"

- Canadian Society for Environmental Philosophy/ Société Canadienne de Philosophie Environementale, University of Victoria, *Nov 11-14, 2021*
- MSU Works in Progress Seminar, *Dec 3, 2021*
- Mississippi Academy of Sciences, *March 2022*.

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"The Nature of Moral Evil"

- Mississippi State University Undergraduate Philosophy Club, *November 2021*

"Communication Between Groups and Collective Organisms"

- International Society for the History, Philosophy, and Social Studies of Biology, Université du Québec à Montréal, *July 2015*
- Invited talk, Information in Biology Workshop, CUNY Graduate Center, *2014*

"James and Carnap on Philosophical Systems and the Role of Temperaments"

- Southwestern Philosophy Graduate Conference, Arizona State University, *March 2013*

POPULAR MEDIA

Interviews/Op-Eds/Essays/Etc.:

On Art, Animals, and Nature:

- "Sounding the call to protect the Mexican wolves" *Arizona Daily Sun* (Flagstaff, AZ), September 12, 2026.
- "Satellite light could disturb night skies" *Santa Fe New Mexican*, September 12, 2026.
- "Boskop Hippo: To Relocate the Returning Native or Kill It?" *News24* (South Africa), September 5, 2026.
  Original title: "A Hippo in the Boskop"
- "No Nature Without Fear" *Aeon Magazine*, April 23, 2026.
  [additionally featured in NATURE's Anthropocene newsletter as part of its "quote of the day" section, May 1, 2026.]
- "Can an Octopus Really Play the Piano?" *Radio New Zealand*, "Nights" (hosted by Emile Donovan). Live Broadcast Interview. Dec 12, 2025.
- "Can Animals Create Art?" *Radio New Zealand.* Recorded Audio Interview. April 2025
  [Condensed write-up available at *RNZ.com*]
- "Can Animals Make Art?" *The Conversation*. March 19, 2025
  [Also featured in *Rhode Island PBS, Daily Nous, Seattle Post-Intelligencer, Beloit Call, Yahoo News, Caledonian Record, Phys.org, The Star, The Bradenton Times, The Huron Daily Plainsman, Lake Chelan Mirror,* and the *Daily Maverick.*]
- "Artificial Intelligence Threatens Disaster for Artists," *Newsweek*. June 6, 2024

On Politics:

- "Democrats' Hypocrisy Apparent on War in Gaza" *Mississippi Free Press.* November 17, 2025 [Short version published in the *Arizona Daily Star*, Oct 16, 2025]
- "Democrats Won't Save Democracy – They Don't Even Practice It," *The Hill.* October 6, 2025. [Original title: "Can the Democrats Save Democracy? Probably not" Reprinted at *AOL.com* and *Yahoo.com*]

General/Miscellaneous:

- "APA Member Interview," *American Philosophical Association Blog*. July 31, 2020

TEACHING EXPERIENCE

University of Pittsburgh – Visiting Lecturer

Introduction to Ethics (writing intensive)

Fall 2022 [1 lecture (180 students) + 2 recitation writing sections (15 students each) + 3 TAs]

Concepts of Human Nature (writing intensive)

Spring 2023 [1 lecture (121 students) + 1 recitation writing section (16 students) + 3 TAs]

Fall 2023 [1 lecture (180 students) + 1 recitation writing section (16 students) + 3 TAs]

Spring 2025 [1 lecture (120 students) + 1 recitation writing section (20 students) + 2 TAs]

Philosophy & Public Issues (writing intensive)

Fall 2023 [1 lecture (55 students) + 1 recitation writing section (15 students) + 1 TA]

Spring 2024 [1 lecture (61 students) + 1 recitation writing section (16 students) + 1 TA]

Fall 2024 [1 lecture (60 students) + 1 TA]

Social Philosophy

Fall 2024 [1 lecture (60 students) + 1 TA]

Topics in Ethics: Theories of Resistance (advanced seminar)

Spring 2024 [1 lecture (21 students)]

Topics in Ethics: The Nature of Evil (advanced seminar)

Spring 2023 [1 lecture (21 students)]

Topics in Ethics: Meaning and Value of(in) Life (advanced seminar)

Fall 2024 [1 lecture (20 students)]

Philosophy of Art

Spring 2025 [1 lecture (20 students)]

Mississippi State University – Lecturer in Philosophy

Introduction to Philosophy

Fall 2021 [3 lectures (40 students each)]

Spring 2022 [2 lectures (40 students each)]

Introduction to Ethics

Fall 2021 [1 lecture (40 students each)]

Spring 2022 [2 lectures (40 students each)]

Brooklyn College – Graduate Teaching Fellow

Introduction to Philosophy

Spring 2014, Fall 2014, Fall 2015, Spring 2016 [2 lectures, (20 students each)]

Business Ethics

Spring 2014, Fall 2014 [1 lecture (20 students each)]

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History & Philosophy of Science

Spring 2015 [1 lecture (20 students)]

The City College of New York – Adjunct Instructor

Bio-Ethics

Spring 2017, Fall 2017 [1 lecture (20 students)]

Introduction to Philosophy

Fall 2017 [1 lecture (20 students)]

John Jay College – Adjunct Instructor

Philosophy of Law

Fall 2017 [1 lecture (20 students)]

Arizona State University – Teaching Assistant

Introduction to Symbolic Logic

(w/ Dr. N. Ángel Pinillos)

Fall 2010 [90 students]

Philosophy of Science

(w/ Dr. Richard Creath)

Spring 2011 [60 students]

FELLOWSHIPS, SCHOLARSHIPS, AWARDS, & GRANTS

Postdoctoral Research Fellowship	North-West University	2025-2028
Summer Research Grant	University of Pittsburgh	2024
Conference Travel Grant	Mississippi State University	2021, 2022
Presidential Volunteer Service Award	Sierra National Forest	2019
Enhanced Chancellor's Fellowship	Graduate Center, CUNY	2012-2017
Writing-Across-the-Curriculum Fellow	CUNY Law School	2016-2017
Conference Travel Grant	Graduate Center, CUNY	2014
Collaborative Incentives Research Grant	Graduate Center, CUNY	2013-2014
Kripke Center Fellowship	Saul Kripke Center, CUNY	2012-2013
Undergraduate Essay Contest, Winner	Arizona State University	2012
Provost Scholarship	Arizona State University	2008-2012
Pell Grant	Arizona State University	2008-2012
Dean's List	Arizona State University	2008-2012

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ACADEMIC SERVICE

- Postgraduate Philosophy Symposium, North-West University, South Africa – 2026
- Session Chair, 3rd International Spring School, North-West University, South Africa – 2026
- Southern African Society for Environmental Ethics, Co-organizer (North-West Uni) – 2026
- Terminology Development Consultative Workshop for Philosophy – Translating English Language Philosophical Concepts to Setswana [for a new Setswana language dictionary and online app of philosophical concepts] (North-West University, SA) – September 2025
- Reviewer – *Erkenntnis, Analysis, Philosophical Logic, Estetika, Journal for the Hist. of Analyt. Phil.* – 2016-present
- Invited Guest Editor – special issue on environmental philosophy for *Diálogos* – 2023-24
- New Undergraduate Course Syllabus Preparation (University of Pittsburgh) – 2024
- Works-in-Progress Seminar, member (Mississippi State University) – 2021-22
- Research Grant w/ Undergraduate Philosophy Club, co-organizer (Mississippi State University) – 2021-22
- Executive Committee, Philosophy (the Graduate Center, CUNY) – 2015-17
- Graduate Student Council (the Graduate Center, CUNY) – 2016-17
- Peer Mentor (the Graduate Center, CUNY) – 2014-17
- Audio Recording Transcriber, Kripke Center (the Graduate Center, CUNY) – 2015
- Reviewer and commentor – CUNY Annual Graduate Student Philosophy Conference – 2015
- Teaching Fellow Representative (Brooklyn College) – 2014-15
- Research grant (for projects on intentions and meaning) – w/ Drs. Stephen Neale and Rohit Parikh (the Graduate Center, CUNY) – 2014
- Co-organizer – Workshop on Information and Biology (the Graduate Center, CUNY) – 2014
- Re-publication of excerpts from my article in *The Conversation* in textbooks in Japan and the USA. Japanese educational publisher, Kyogakusha, based in Kyoto; Principia Education, a family-owned tutoring company based in McLean, Virginia – 2026
- Southern African Society for Environmental Philosophy – Committee member

NON-ACADEMIC CAREER INFORMATION

Non-Academic Employment and Volunteering:

Voting Member & Secretary – Board of Directors (+ Finance Committee), Red Feather Development Group, Navajo and Hopi Reservations, Flagstaff, Arizona (Nov 2024 – present). Volunteer at RFDG since 2014.

Covid-19 Vaccination Drive Volunteer, Mississippi State University, Longest Student Health Center (August 2021-March 2022)

Assistant Instructor, Aerie Backcountry Medicine, Missoula, Montana (Dec 2019 – 2021). *Full-time*, *contract, paid position*. Courses taught at the University of Montana.

Horse and Mule Packer Apprentice (WG-5), Inyo National Forest, California, 2020 (April 2020 – 2021). *Full-time, paid position.*

Volunteer Horse and Corral Caretaker, Robinson Ranch, Phoenix, Arizona (Dec – Apr 2018)

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EMT and Search & Rescue Technician, Grand Canyon National Park, Arizona, 2019 (Dec 2019 – April 2020). *Full-time, volunteer & AD hire position* (GS-5 level work/position description).

Wilderness Ranger (GS-5), Mount Rainier National Park, Washington, 2019 (Mid-June 2019 to Mid-October 2019). *Full-time, paid position.*

Wilderness Ranger (Forestry Technician – Wilderness/Trails; GS-4), Apache-Sitgreaves National Forest, Alpine Ranger District, Arizona, 2019 (May 2019 – July 2019). *Full-time, paid position.*

Wilderness Ranger (intern), Sierra National Forest, California, 2018 (May 2018 – mid-October 2018). *Full-time*, *paid position*, (GS-4 or GS-5 level work/position description).

Independently Contracted Journalist, *Neues Deutschland* (2019 – 2020)

Volunteer, CUNY DSA – attended meetings and helped gather signatures for the Free CUNY initiative (2017 – 2018)

Writer and Artist, GC CUNY *Advocate*, Graduate Student Newspaper (2016)

Volunteer, Harlem One Stop (non-profit) – collected data, contacted community members, and assisted in developing a local art show and competition (2015 – 2016)

Tutor, Summer Bridge Program, Arizona State University – prepared incoming first-generation college students from underrepresented backgrounds for college courses (Summer 2011)

Supplemental Instructor, Arizona State University – taught supplementary courses *Introduction to Political Science* and *Introduction to Philosophy* (2009 – 2011)

Front Desk, Customer Services, Janitorial, & Child Center, Lifetime Fitness (2006-2008)

Server, Heidi's Catering, Phoenix, Arizona – organized and performed set-up/take-down for weddings and other events; food and drink prep; serving, occasionally lead server (2008-2010)

Greenhouse volunteer, Corona Del Sol High School – helped improve the greenhouse structure and grounds and cared for in-green house plants (2007).

Non-Academic Professional Certifications

American Heart Association certified CPR, AED

Wilderness First Responder (initial certification by NOLS – 2016; re-certified by SOLO – 2018; re-certified by Aerie Backcountry Medicine – 2020).

EMT. Emergency Medical Technician – Basic (Mesa Community College Fire Science Dept, Mesa, AZ; spring 2019 – end May 4th). Nationally Registered EMT-B.

SRT 3 (Search and Rescue Technician) certification. Operational Leadership certification. Aviation member certification: A100 (Basic Aviation Safety), A116, A110, A200. IS-100 Intro to ICS, IS-5.A HAZMAT, IS 700.b Intro to NIMS.

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LANGUAGES

Primary: English (native, fluent)

Secondary: German (intermediate), Spanish (basic), Latin (basic)

In progress: French, Afrikaans, Setswana, Diné bizaad (Navajo)

PROFESSIONAL MEMBERSHIPS

American Philosophical Association, The Philosophy of Science Association, HOPOS, International Society for Environmental Ethics, American Society for Aesthetics, Concerned Philosophers for Peace, International Association of Genocide Scholars, Philosophical Society of Southern Africa, Southern African Society for Environmental Philosophy

REFERENCES

@ The Graduate Center, The City University of New York ----------

Noël Carroll – PhD thesis supervisor
Email: knollcarroll@gmail.com
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John Greenwood – PhD thesis committee
Email: jgreenwood@gc.cuny.edu
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Stephen Neale – PhD thesis committee
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Tom Berry – Teaching reference
Email: tberry@pitt.edu
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@ North-West University ----------

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**Additional references available upon request.*

DISSERTATION ABSTRACT

Essays on Communication (2021)

Advisor: Noël Carroll. Committee: John Greenwood, Stephen Neale, Michael Devitt.

One of the central issues of contemporary philosophy and biology is the nature of communication. Early accounts of communication tended to focus on just one side of the communicative divide – the speaker side or the receiver side – and took as their starting point the case of human language. Animal communication, historically, was largely treated as a special case. Now things are different. Now it appears we might have a model that makes sense of sign use in both the human and animal realms and brings together both sides of the signaling divide. It's still to be seen, however, how much the model actually captures, especially the farther down we go on the animal side, and it's still to be seen how well the model captures the human cases, especially those around the edges. The purpose of this thesis is to explore the foundations of the sender-receiver model and to show that it can cover more than was previously imagined. Topics discussed include the nature of communication and signaling, animal communication, the nature of meaning or content, the communicative nature of objects such as works of art, blueprints, and maps, and the possibility of communication between groups and collective agents.

[Last updated: July 2026]