

Michael J. Hegarty

Department of Philosophy | Applied Ethics Center
University of Massachusetts Boston
100 Morrissey Blvd.
Boston, MA 02125

michael.hegarty@umb.edu |860-465-6783
https://mjhegarty-philosophy.owlstown.net
https://orcid.org/0000-0002-8884-9652

Academic Appointments

September 2025 – present	**Postdoctoral Research Fellow** Applied Ethics Center, University of Massachusetts, Boston Project: "AI & Cognition"

Research Areas

Areas of Specialisation	Philosophy of Mind, Philosophy of Animal Minds
Areas of Competence	Philosophy of Language, Philosophy of AI, Philosophy of Action, Logic, Philosophy of Cognitive Science

Education

2018 – 2025	**PhD, Philosophy**, University of Connecticut Dissertation: *Practically Rational Animals: Self-Representation and Agency in Humans and Non-Humans* Committee: Dorit Bar-On (chair) Lionel Shapiro, William Lycan, Donald Baxter, Rick Grush (external, University of California, San Diego Philosophy) **Graduate Certificate in Cognitive Science**, University of Connecticut
2016 – 2018	**MA, History and Philosophy of Science** (cum Laude), Leiden University Thesis: *Minds, Materialism, and Mental Representation* Advisor: Victor Gijsbers **Pre-Master, Philosophy**, Leiden University
2009 – 2013	**MChem, Chemistry**, including BSc equivalent (2.i), University of Oxford. Thesis: *Investigation of Modified Nanocarbon Materials for Supercapacitor Applications*

Publications

Peer-Reviewed Journal Articles

2025 Practically Rational Animals. *Res Philosophica 102*, 321-350.

-- Transformative Rationality and the Problem of 'Creeping Rationalism'. *Erkenntnis 90*, 3145-3168. (Online version published 2024)

2021 A Dilemma for Naturalistic Theories of Intentionality. *Filosofia Unisinos 22*(1), 59-68.

Under Review/R&R

-- A paper on animal cognition (R&R at *Phenomenology and the Cognitive Sciences*).

In Progress

-- A paper on the temporal-difference algorithm and reinforcement (machine) learning models in animals and AI systems.

-- A paper on the 'alignment problem' in AI.

-- A paper on models of natural continuity between animal and human minds.

-- A paper on LLM intelligence and the phenomenon of 'hallucination'.

Invited Presentations

2026 TBC, 14th Annual Conference of the Society for the Study of the History of Analytic Philosophy (SSHAP).

2025 Sellars, Reid, and 'Direct' Perception, 13th Annual Conference of the Society for the Study of the History of Analytic Philosophy (SSHAP), 6/24/25.

Conference Presentations and Talks

2025 Cocka-Tooling Around: Self-Representation and Individual Innovation in Animal Agency, Second Annual Meeting of the Philosophy of Animal Minds and Behaviour Association (PAMBA), 4/25/25.

2024 An Argument for Animal Self-Representation, UConn Psychology, 12/3/24.

-- Is Sellars' Early Theory of Perception Doxastic?, 12th Annual Conference of the Society for the Study of the History of Analytic Philosophy (SSHAP), 6/28/24.

-- The Problem of 'Creeping Rationalism', ECOM 'Spotlight Series', University of Connecticut, 1/29/24

2023 Pre-Reflective Self-Consciousness and Origins of Agency, ECOM 'Spotlight Series',

	University of Connecticut, 9/28/23
2022	Pre-Reflective Self-Consciousness and Origins of Agency, Salzburg Conference for Young Analytic Philosophy, University of Salzburg, 9/9/22
--	Pre-Reflective Self-Consciousness and Origins of Agency, Sixth Philosophy of Language and Mind Network Conference 2022, University of Warsaw, 9/17/22
2019	Plural Reference to Vague Objects, Northwest Philosophy Conference, Pacific University, 10/25/19
--	Plural Reference to Vague Objects, Annual Conference of the Dutch Research School of Philosophy (OZSW), University of Amsterdam, 11/16/19
--	Intentional Chauvinism?, 2nd Meeting on Cognition and Language, Universidade Federal de Uberlândia, 11/7/2019

Other Academic Achievements, Honours, and Awards

2025	Philosophy of Animal Minds and Behaviour Association (PAMBA) Essay Prize finalist ('Cocka-Tooling Around')
--	*Res Philosophica* Essay Prize finalist ('Practically Rational Animals')
2022	ECOM Summer Fellowship, Project Title: 'Pre-Reflective Self-Consciousness and Origins Of Agency'
--	Pre-Doctoral Fellowship, UConn Philosophy Department
2020	Dean's Commendation for Excellence in Teaching, UConn (1104: Philosophy and Social Ethics)
--	ECOM Summer Fellowship, Project Title: 'Self-Consciousness and the Justification of Basic Perceptual Beliefs'
--	Dean's Commendation for Excellence in Teaching, UConn (1102: Philosophy and Logic)

Professional Service

2025-present	Lead Organiser, UMass Boston Applied Ethics Center Conference on Brain-Computer Interfaces (June 2026)
--	Referee, *Crítica*, Special Issue on Animal Minds
--	Chair of Book Symposium on *Expression and Self-Knowledge*, American Philosophical Association (APA) Pacific Division Meeting, 4/17/25

2024	Volunteer, 12th Annual Conference of the Society for the Study of the History of Analytic Philosophy (SSHAP)
--	Volunteer, ECOM: 2nd Conference on Expression, Language & Music Conference
2023	Referee, ECOM Graduate Conference 'Kinds of Action'
--	Volunteer, UConn Hartford First-Generation Student Faculty Outreach Event
2022	Referee, ECOM Graduate Conference 'Kinds of Expression'
--	Volunteer, ECOM: 1st Conference on Expression, Language & Music
2021	UConn Philosophy Graduate Conference
--	Co-organiser, ECOM: Conference on Expression, Language & Music (cancelled)
--	Lead Organiser, UConn Philosophy Graduate Conference
2020-2021	President, UConn Philosophy Graduate Student Association
2020	Referee, UConn Philosophy Graduate Conference (cancelled)
--	Co-organiser, UConn Philosophy Graduate Conference (cancelled)
2019-2020	Vice-President, UConn Philosophy Graduate Student Association
--	Organiser, UConn Grue Bag series
2019	Referee, UConn Philosophy Graduate Conference
--	Commentator, 'Stages in Spacetime: The Language of Persistence', UConn Philosophy Graduate Conference
--	Commentator, 'How Do Contingent Conventions Ground Necessary Truths?', Northwest Philosophy Conference

Teaching Experience

As Instructor-of-Record or Guest Lecturer

2024 (Fall)	PHIL 1108E: Environmental Philosophy, UConn Hartford
--	PHIL 1102: Philosophy and Logic, UConn Hartford
2024 (Spring)	PSYC 2501: Cognitive Psychology, Topic: Comparative Cognition (guest lecturer), UConn Storrs

--	PSYC 2501: Cognitive Psychology, Topic: Consciousness (guest lecturer), UConn Storrs
--	PHIL 1104: Philosophy and Social Ethics (2 classes), UConn Hartford
2023 (Fall)	PHIL 1104: Philosophy and Social Ethics (2 classes), UConn Hartford
2023 (Spring)	PHIL 1104: Philosophy and Social Ethics (2 classes), UConn Hartford
2022 (Fall)	PHIL 1104: Philosophy and Social Ethics (2 classes), UConn Hartford
2022 (Spring)	PHIL 1104: Philosophy and Social Ethics (2 classes), UConn Hartford
2021 (Fall)	PHIL 1104: Philosophy and Social Ethics (2 classes), UConn Hartford
2021 (Spring)	PHIL 1104: Philosophy and Social Ethics, UConn Hartford
2020 (Fall)	PHIL 1104: Philosophy and Social Ethics (2 classes), UConn Avery Point

As Teaching Assistant

2021 (Spring)	PHIL 1104: Philosophy and Social Ethics (2 discussion sections), UConn (Instructor: Heather Battaly)
2020 (Spring)	PHIL 1102: Philosophy and Logic (4 discussion sections), UConn (Instructor: Marcus Rossberg)
2019 (Fall)	PHIL 1104: Philosophy and Social Ethics (4 discussion sections), UConn (Instructor: Paul Bloomfield)
2019 (Spring)	PHIL 1102: Philosophy and Logic (4 discussion sections), UConn (Instructor: Marcus Rossberg)
2018 (Fall)	PHIL 1104: Philosophy and Social Ethics (4 discussion sections), UConn (Instructor: Paul Bloomfield)
2017 (Fall)	Introduction to Philosophy of Science (for graduate chemistry students), Leiden University (Instructor: Victor Gijsbers)

Languages

English	native
Spanish	professional working proficiency

Referee Contact Details

Dorit Bar-On
Manchester Hall, 234
Department of Philosophy, University of Connecticut

Storrs, CT 06269
dorit.bar-on@uconn.edu

Rick Grush
Department of Philosophy, University of California, San Diego
9500 Gilman Drive
La Jolla, CA 92093
rgrush@ucsd.edu

William G. Lycan
Manchester Hall, 302
Department of Philosophy, University of Connecticut
Storrs, CT 06269
william.lycan@uconn.edu