

## Rebecca Harrison

PhD Candidate, Philosophy  
University of California, Riverside  
[rebecca.harrison@email.ucr.edu](mailto:rebecca.harrison@email.ucr.edu)

### Education

2012-[2019]	PhD in Philosophy, University of California, Riverside
2012	MA in Philosophy, Georgia State University
2010	BA in Liberal Arts (Philosophy), The New School
2005-2008	Work towards BA, Great Books Program, St. John's College

### Research Interests

- Phenomenology (especially Merleau-Ponty and phenomenological theories of perception; intersections with Philosophy of Mind more generally)
- Post-Kantian European Philosophy; Philosophy of Perception; Feminist Philosophy

### Dissertation

Tentative Title: “Merleau-Pontyan Realism”

**Abstract:** In the secondary literature on mid-20th Century French philosopher Maurice Merleau-Ponty's work on perception, it is sometimes said that his theory of perception is akin to what is known as a "direct realist" view of perception, or the view that perception puts us in direct contact with objects in the world (rather than, e.g., mental representations of those objects). However, this claim is typically never explored further or defended at any length. My dissertation project will investigate whether Merleau-Ponty's view of perception can be thought of as a "direct realist" view, and if so, what features make his version of "realism" highly unique and distinct from the usual conception of "realism" in the philosophy of perception. In the process I will draw out some features of his theory that I believe will be relevant and informative to contemporary theorists. In particular, I will explore the relationship between his perceptual realism and his view that perception is always from a point of view that is particular to the viewer, which includes not only the viewer's geometrical positioning in space but also the viewer's "point of view" in a more socio-cultural sense. I will argue that Merleau-Ponty's view gives us a way to think of perceptual experience as both highly conditioned by subjective factors and yet putting us in contact with the real external world, and that in fact perception can only do that in virtue of the factors that characterize the subject's particular point of view on the world.

### Papers (In Progress)

“Merleau-Ponty and the Problem of Perception”

“The Merleau-Pontyan Perspective”

“Merleau-Ponty and Standpoint Theory”

“Can a Phenomenologist be a Perceptual Realist?”

### Presentations

- ▶ “Merleau-Ponty on Sexuality and Objectification,” The Inhuman Gaze Conference, Paris, France; June 2018.
- ▶ “Merleau-Ponty and The Perceptual Basis for Standpoint Theory,” Horizons of Phenomenology, Merced, CA; April 2018.
- ▶ “Beyond Spatial Orientation: Merleau-Ponty's Account of Perspective,” American Philosophical Association, Pacific Division, San Diego, CA; March 2018.
- ▶ “Beyond Spatial Orientation: Merleau-Ponty's Account of Perspective,” St. Louis University Graduate Conference, St. Louis, MO; March 2018.
- ▶ “The Phenomenological Point of View: A Merleau-Pontyan Perspective.” Philosophy Days, Uppsala University, Uppsala, Sweden; August 2017.
- ▶ “Positive Ambiguity and Merleau-Pontyan Realism.” University of Sussex Graduate Phenomenology Conference, Sussex, England; June 2016.
- ▶ “Merleau-Ponty on Perceptual Error.” Invited colloquium, Loyola Marymount University, Los Angeles, CA; November 2015.
- ▶ “The Problem of Perception and Everyday Illusion in Merleau-Ponty’s Phenomenology of Perception.” American Philosophical Association, Pacific Division, Vancouver, BC; April 2015.
- ▶ “Illusion and World-Responsiveness: Merleau-Ponty’s Account of Perceptual Error.” University of Copenhagen Summer School in Phenomenology and Philosophy of Mind, Copenhagen, Denmark; August 2014.

## Teaching Experience

### California State University, Long Beach

- **Lecturer**

Phil101: The Meaning of Life (Fall 2018)

Phil361: Philosophy of Art (Fall 2018)

### University of California, Riverside

- **Instructor**

Phil151: Existentialism (Summer 2018)

Phil001: Introduction to Philosophy (Summer 2014, 2015, and 2016)

Eng001B: Intermediate Composition (Winter 2018)

Eng001A: Beginning Composition (Fall 2017)

- **Guest Lecturer**

-“Plato’s *Phaedo*,” Phil001: Intro to Philosophy (Wrathall, Spring 2016).

-“Eichmann and the Banality of Evil,” Phil005: Evil (Schwitzgebel, Fall 2015).

-“Descartes’ Sixth Meditation,” Phil001: Introduction to Philosophy (Novakovic, Winter 2015).

-“Horizons and Recognition in Charles Taylor’s *Ethics of Authenticity*” Phil003: Ethics & the Meaning of Life (Wrathall, Spring 2014).

-“Merleau-Ponty and Embodied Perception,” Phil169F: Aesthetics (Wettstein, Winter 2014)

- **TA Mentor**, UCR Philosophy Department (Academic Year 2016-2017)

- **Teaching Assistant**

Phil003W: Ethics & the Meaning of Life, Writing Intensive (Londen, Spr. 2018)

Phil004: Philosophy of Race (Mitchell, Spring 2017)

Phil001: Intro to Philosophy (Novakovic, Winter 2015; Wrathall, Spring 2016)

Phil005: Evil (Wettstein, Winter 2014 and 2016; Schwitzgebel, Fall 2015)

Phil008: Introduction to Logic (Reck, Spring 2015)

Phil030i: Intro to History of Philosophy: Modern Philosophy (Harmer, Fall 2014)

Phil003: Ethics & the Meaning of Life (Wrathall, Spring 2014)

Phil007: Critical Thinking (Hollowell, Fall 2013)

**Georgia State University**

- Instructor

Phil1010: Critical Thinking (Summer 2011, Fall 2011, Spring 2012)

- Supplementary Instruction Leader

Phil1010: Critical Thinking (Spring 2011, Summer 2012)

**St. John's College, Annapolis**

- Senior Essay Writing Assistant (Spring 2008)

**Northwestern University Center for Talent Development** (High School Honors Summer Program)

- Teaching Assistant, Intro Philosophy and Intro Logic (Summer 2007)

**Professional Service**

- President and Co-Founder, Minorities and Philosophy (MAP) UCR chapter (2013 - 2018)
- Colloquium Chair, Central APA: "Blameless Participation in Structural Injustice," David Atenasio, Loyola University Chicago (February 2018)
- Colloquium Chair, UCR Graduate Conference: "The Fine Line Between Agency and Complacency," Marta Dell'Aquila, University of Paris (January 2018)
- Commentator, Eastern APA: "The Phenomenal I and the Phenomenal Contrast Between Affection and Volition," Stefano Vincini, Universidad Nacional Autónoma de México (January 2018)
- Commentator, UCR Graduate Conference: "Gender in Minimal and Narrative Senses of Agency," Nick Brancazio, University of Wollongong (June 2017)
- Organizer for SoCal MAP Regional Workshop at UCR (Spring 2017)
- Workshop Leader, SoCal MAP 2017: "Ethics of Mandated Reporting"
- Colloquium Chair, Pacific APA: "Could Sartre Have Been a Compatibilist?" (April 2017)
- Referee, University of California Riverside Graduate Conference (Spring 2017)

- Referee and Moderator, Georgia State University Phi Sigma Tau Conference (Spring 2012)
- Panelist, Ethics in Film Forum, Georgia State University (Fall 2011)
- Referee, Georgia State University Phi Sigma Tau Conference (Spring 2011)

### Honors & Awards

- UCR Graduate Research Mentorship Program Fellowship (Fall 2016, Winter 2017)
- UCR Philosophy Department International Travel Award (Summer 2016, Summer 2018)
- UCR Graduate Student Association Travel Grant (Summer 2014, Summer 2016, Spring 2018)
- APA Graduate Student Travel Grant (April 2015, March 2018)
- Dean's Distinguished Fellowship, University of California, Riverside (Fall 2012 - Spring 2013)
- Participant, Carnegie Mellon Summer School in Logic and Formal Epistemology (Summer 2008)
- Nomination, Annual Undergraduate Essay Prize, Junior Year essay entitled "The Transcendental Unity of Apperception and the Self in Kant's *Critique of Pure Reason*," St. John's College, Annapolis (Spring 2008)

### Graduate Coursework

#### University of California, Riverside, 2012 - current

Experimental Psychology: Perception (Psychology: Lawrence Rosenblum)

Artificial Intelligence and Ethics (Schwitzgebel)

Hegel's *Phenomenology of Spirit* (Novakovic)

Martin Buber on "I-Thou" and the Phenomenology of Relationship (Wettstein)

Kant's Practical Philosophy (Reath)

Thomas Kuhn (Wright)

Aristotle's *De Anima* (Müller)

Intermediate Logic (Reck)  
Kierkegaard (Wrathall)  
Personal Identity and the Self (Perry)  
Epistemology and Philosophy of Psychology (Graham & Schwitzgebel)  
Directed Studies: Merleau-Ponty's *Phenomenology of Perception* (Wrathall)  
Frege (Reck)  
Wittgenstein's *Philosophical Investigations*, Part II (Wright)  
Ancient Emotions (Müller)  
Proseminar: Free Will (Fischer)  
Scanlon (Reath)  
Nietzsche & Freud (Clark)  
Proseminar: Epistemology (P. Graham)  
Part II of Heidegger's *Being and Time* (Wrathall)  
Kant and the Copernican Revolution (Keller)  
Proseminar: Moral Philosophy (Reath)

**Georgia State University, 2010 - 2012**

Seminar in Continental Philosophy: Logic and Normativity in Hegel (Rand)  
Seminar in Philosophy of Mind: Consciousness and Intentionality (G. Graham)  
Phenomenology (Carr; cross-registered at Emory University)  
Marxism (Berry)  
Philosophy and Cognitive Science (G. Graham)  
Philosophical Perspectives on Women (Hartley)  
Symbolic Logic (Cox)  
Epistemology (Weiskopf)  
Seminar in Modern Philosophy: Enlightenment Moral Philosophy (Wilson)  
Topics in 19th Century Philosophy: Hegel's *Phenomenology of Spirit* (Rand)

**New School for Social Research, 2008 - 2010**

Continental Philosophy and Neuroscience (Malabou)  
Wittgenstein and the Representation of Life (Crary)

### **Reading Groups / Workshops**

- **Merleau-Ponty Reading Group (2018 - current, founder)**
- **Embodied Cognition Reading Group (2018 - current, co-founder)**
- **Feminist Philosophy Reading Group (2016 - 2017)**
- **Phenomenology Reading Group (2014-2015, co-founder)**
- **History of Philosophy Writing Workshop (2013 - 2016)**

### **Languages**

- **Basic reading knowledge: French**
- **Very basic reading & speaking knowledge: Spanish**
- **Very basic reading knowledge: German, Ancient Greek, Latin**