

Frankie Knuckles

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AOS

Social epistemology, social and political philosophy, philosophy of the internet

AOC

Applied ethics, philosophy of disability, feminist and queer philosophy

Education

2021 BA, Philosophy, English, and Queer Studies, Vassar College

2026 MA, Philosophy, Purdue University

2027 PhD, Philosophy, Purdue University

Presentations and Workshops

- 2027 Knuckles, F. "Sticky Agencies: How Gamification and Enshittification Trap and Exploit Us"
American Philosophical Association Central Division Meeting
Poster Session, Feb 26, 2027
- 2026 Knuckles, F. "Moral Ableism: The Ableist Conflation in Ethical Theories"
Purdue Women in Philosophy Society, April 22, 2026
Knuckles, F. "Sticky Agencies: How Gamification and Enshittification Trap and Exploit Us"
Midwest Ethics Symposium, April 7, 2023
- 2025 Knuckles, F. "Norms and News: A Norms-Based Account of the American Local Journalism Crisis"
American Philosophical Association Eastern Division Meeting
Poster Session, Jan 10, 2025
- 2023 Kelly, D. and Knuckles, F. "The Ethics of Attention and the Structuralist Turn: Norms, Institutions, and the Machinery of Collective Attention"
University of Oslo Good Attention Project, April 21, 2023
Knuckles, F. "Queer Theory in Animated Media"
Purdue University Undergraduate Philosophy Society, March 2, 2023
Knuckles, F. "Repetitive Stress (Or: Field Notes from a Disabled Academic)"
Purdue University Literary, Interdisciplinary, Theory, and Culture
Organization Symposium *Power, Performance, and Play*, March 3, 2023

Teaching

As Instructor of Record

2026 (FA) The Big Questions: Introduction to Philosophy

2026 (SU) The Big Questions: Introduction to Philosophy

2024 (SP) Global Moral Issues

2022 (SU) Global Moral Issues

As Teaching Assistant

2026 (SP) Space Ethics Research (Prof. Dana Tulodziecki)

2025 (FA) Space Ethics Research (Prof. Dana Tulodziecki)

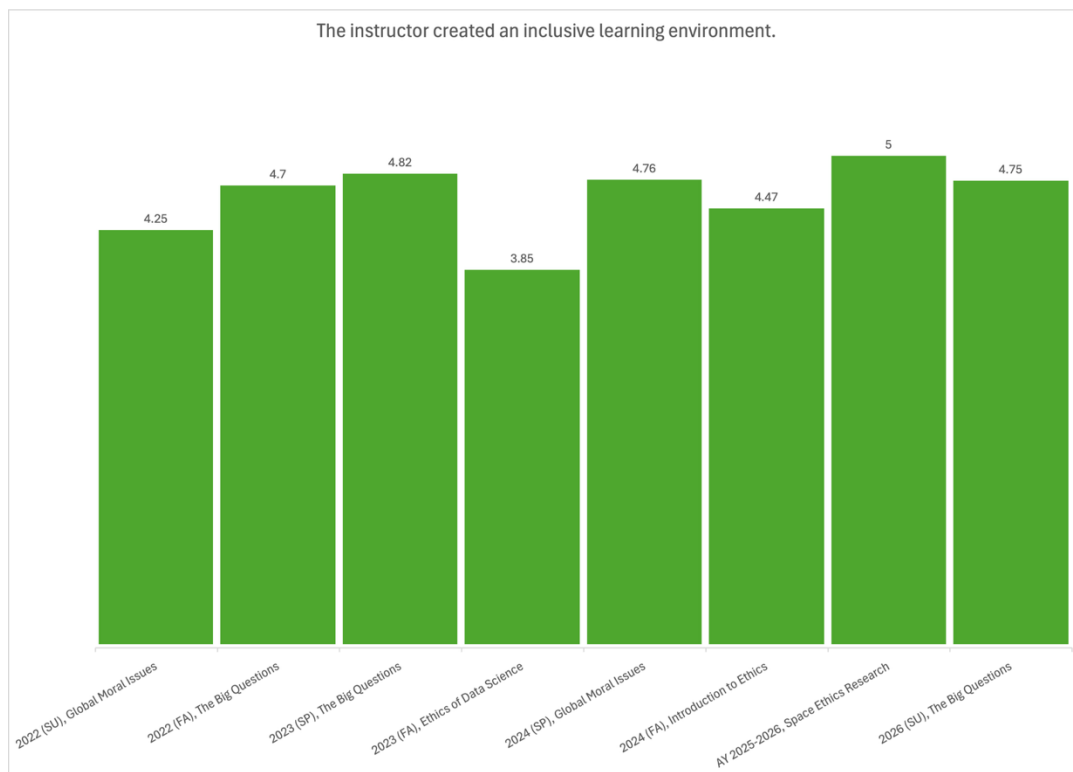
2024 (FA) Introduction to Ethics (Prof. Eric Sampson)

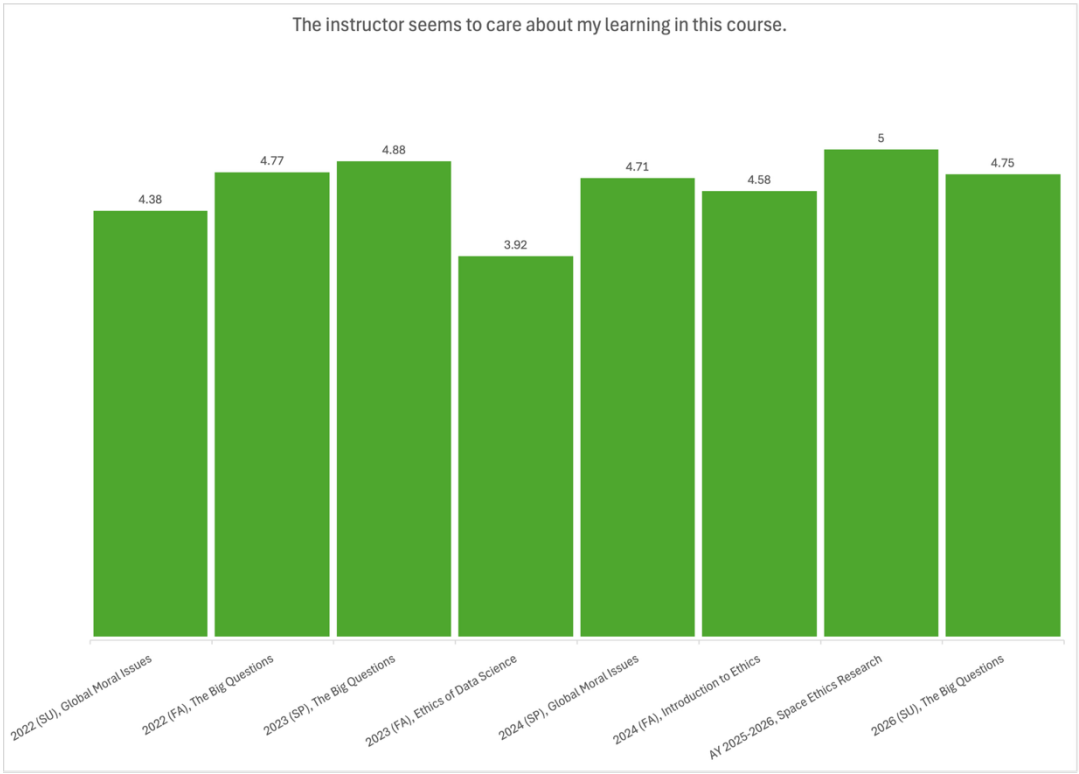
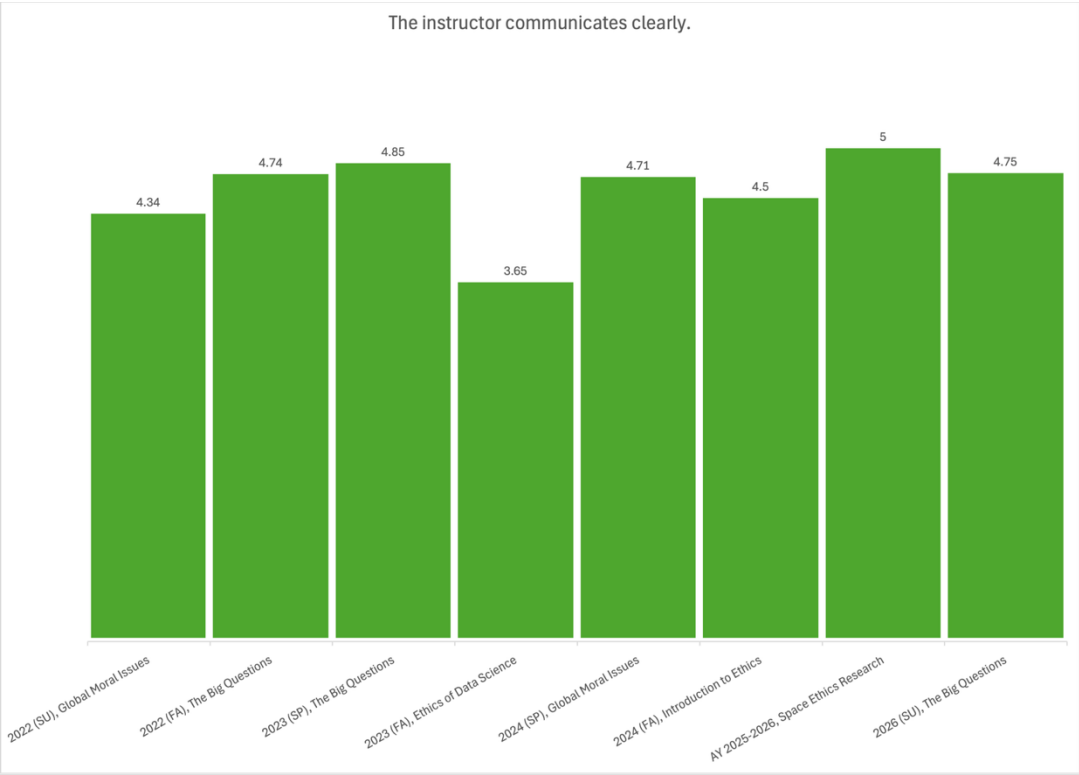
2023 (FA) Ethics of Data Science (Prof. J.P. Messina)

2022 (SP) The Big Questions: Introduction to Philosophy (Prof. Jacqueline Marina)

2021 (FA) The Big Questions: Introduction to Philosophy (Prof. Daniel Kelly)

Overview of Course Evaluations





Service, Affiliations, and Professional Positions

2025	Research Assistant, Leading Women Toward Space Careers Space Ethics Curriculum Development
	Assistant Conference Coordinator, Purdue Undergraduate Philosophy Conference
2024 - Present	Member, American Philosophy Association
2024	Reviewer, <i>Topoi</i>
	Reviewer, <i>Midwest Journal of Undergraduate Research</i>
	Commentator, Southern Society for Philosophy and Psychology Meeting
	Commentator, Midwest Ethics Symposium
	Organizer, Purdue University Undergraduate Conference in Philosophy
2025 - Present	Student Member, Purdue Cognition, Agency, and Intelligence Center (CAIC)
2024 - Present	Member, American Philosophical Association
2023 - 2025	Communications Officer, Minorities and Philosophy at Purdue
2022 - 2025	Elected Graduate Student Representative of Philosophy Department

Awards

2024	First Place Disability Studies Award, Purdue Literary Awards
2021	Jamie Nisse Greenberg Philosophy Prize, Vassar College Department of Philosophy
2021	Anne E. Imbrie Prize for Fiction, Vassar College Department of English
2020	Society of Professional Journalists Mark of Excellence Regional Editorial Writing Award

Courses Taken and Audited

Political Communication	Prof. J.P. Messina and Molly Scudder	2024 (FA)
Political Epistemology	Prof. Brian Kogelmann	2025 (SP)
Studies in Theory of Knowledge	Prof. Michael Bergmann	2023 (SP)
Reason and Cognition	Prof. Javier Gomez-Lavin	2023 (FA)
Rationality	Prof. Brett Karlan	2025 (FA)
Norms as Natural Phenomena	Prof. Daniel Kelly and Taylor Davis	2021 (FA)
The Seminar of Norms	Prof. Daniel Kelly and Evan Westra	2026 (SP)
Contemporary Ethical Theory	Prof. Patrick Kain	2021 (FA)
Seminar in Ethics	Prof. Leonard Harris	2024 (FA)
Philosophy of Technology	Prof. Daniel Smith	2021 (FA)
Philosophy of AI	Prof. Corey Maley	2023 (FA)
Feminist Theory	Prof. Marlo David	2022 (SP)

Phenomenology	Prof. Jacqueline Marina	2022 (FA)
Existentialism	Prof. William McBride	2023 (SP)
The Nature of Philosophy	Prof. Leonard Harris	2023 (SP)
The Social Ontology of Money	Prof. Chris Yeomans	2022 (FA)
Early Modern Philosophy	Prof. Jan Cover	2022 (SP)
Metaphysics	Prof. Jan Cover	2022 (FA)
Ancient Greek Philosophy	Prof. Lea Schroeder	2023 (FA)
Mathematical Logic	Prof. Dana Tulodziecki	2022 (SP)
Higher Education and the State	Prof. J.P. Messina	2026 (FA)
Pedagogy Seminar	Prof. Lynn Parrish	2026 (SP)
Imagination and Literature	Prof. Morgana Lambeth	2022 (SP)
Creative Nonfiction Writing	Prof. Melissa Ann Fraterigo	2023 (SP)

Dissertation Abstract

My dissertation, *Chronically Online Social Epistemology*, defends a philosophical account of online life focused on online communities, the online environment they inhabit, and the problems they face. The account centralizes online sociality as a generator of online political and epistemic dynamics.

The first chapter, “On the Impact of Chronically Online Communities,” defends an account of my central concept, the Chronically Online Community. These are social groups which exist primarily, though not exclusively, online, and which share a cluster of social-epistemic properties (some of which we see represented in typical offline communities, and some of which we do not). The class of Chronically Online Communities includes groups as seemingly disparate as die-hard Taylor Swift fans and QAnon true believers. I argue that Chronically Online Communities merit study as an emerging type of social group not only because of their distinctive characteristics, but because of their ever-growing impact on life beyond the internet. Even those who are not especially online cannot escape their marked influence, whether in the form of neologisms, social norm shift, or political upheaval. Giving a plausible account of our social, political, and epistemic lives now demands considering online life.

The second chapter, “The Internet Is a Place,” provides an account of social platforms as online environments structured by gamified choice architecture. Gamification, the inclusion of elements of game-design in non-game contexts, affects behaviors and motivations. Choice architecture describes the array of options presented to an agent. So, gamified choice architecture is a built-in array of options which uses game-like elements to influence the agent’s behaviors and motivations. Treating platforms as places allows for an ecological view of on-platform dynamics. This account allows us to view commonly identified ills of the social internet (such as echo chambers, filter bubbles, and harsh peer-to-peer social sanctioning) as interrelated environmental hazards, rather than discrete phenomena best understood in isolation. After developing a view of these hazards, I ask: How can a non-ideal agents and groups of agents operate well in such a hostile epistemic environment? Cases of community social and epistemic norms demonstrate how Chronically Online Communities provide a blueprint for answering this question.

Finally, the third chapter, “Touching Grass Won’t Fix This: Enshittification as an Everything Problem” operationalizes the established conceptual tools to analyze the problem of enshittification (sometimes called “platform decay”). “Enshittification” describes a specific pattern through which platforms are made not only phenomenally worse, but more exploitative. I argue that zeitgeist-furnished understandings of enshittification (namely, that we ought respond by disconnecting from the social internet) mischaracterize the problem and serve as the foundation for mistaken solutions. In particular, the suggestion to simply disconnect from online life in response to enshittification does nothing to ameliorate the severest harm from enshittification: The loss of the goods that online life (and only online life) can provide. Instead, I argue that enshittification is better conceptualized as a noxious form of guided social change—as an “everything problem” in the same category as climate change, public health, and structural oppression. As such, I argue for what Brownstein, Madva, and Kelly (2025) call a “both/and” approach to creating positive social change, emphasizing the role Chronically Online Communities can play in resisting enshittification.