

# LISA THOMAS-SMITH

5768 E 127<sup>th</sup> Ave

Thornton, CO 80602

Phone: 678-467-2347

Website: <https://lisasmith51.wixsite.com/website>

[lisat.smith95@gmail.com](mailto:lisat.smith95@gmail.com)

## EDUCATION

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**PhD** Dual PhD in Philosophy and Cognitive Science  
University of Colorado at Boulder, PhD granted 05/2021  
Dissertation Title: “In Praise of Habit: The Necessity of Habit for Consistent Moral Practice”

Committee: Iskra Fileva (Chair), Tamara Sumner, Robert Rupert, Leanne Hirshfield  
Ajume Wingo

Abstract: In this interdisciplinary dissertation, I make and support the strong claim that habituation is necessary for consistent moral behavior due to human cognitive limitations which do not allow for constancy or consistency with regard to moral matters. The moral consistency we experience requires an explanation beyond knowledge, reflection, and a dedication to doing and being good. Habituation provides that explanation.

**MA** University of Colorado at Boulder 2018  
Philosophy

**BA** University of Illinois 2010  
Philosophy, Magna cum Laude

**AA** Georgia Perimeter College 2002  
Mathematics

**Areas of Specialization:** Ethics, Moral Psychology

**Areas of Competence:** Philosophy of Religion, Political Philosophy, Philosophy of Mind, Philosophy of Race, Philosophy of Gender, Philosophy and Psychology

## HONORS AND AWARDS

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**University of Colorado at Boulder Teaching Excellence Award** **Spring 2019**

Nominations provided by department faculty to the Graduate School. Under ten awardees are chosen from all graduate part time instructors teaching on campus.

**Research Assistantship** **Spring 2015**

Assistantship awarded with the offer to enter the PhD program at the University of Colorado at Boulder. Research in: well-being, desire and motivation theory, responsibility and identity.

**Research Assistantship** **Summer 2015**

Awarded for the Summer Philosophy Seminar. The seminar gathered fifteen undergraduate philosophy majors for daily faculty lectures and discussions led by the research assistants.

## **WORKS IN PROGRESS**

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Dissertation chapters planned for publication:

- “Habits of Morality” - The case for habit’s importance in moral decision making will be made based on current psychological research. Recent studies indicate that we are often unaware of the reasons for our own decisions. Therefore, the role of habit in our in-the-moment choices may be much greater than expected.
- “The Habits We Need” - In the service of definition and explanation of habitual moral practice, I will illustrate the methods and conditions in which habits are best formed and broken. Habit as a moral skill, the epistemic environment needed for moral habituation, and the contextual and environmental limitations of habit will be discussed.
- “The Habits We Practice” - Culture, habit, and morality are inextricably intertwined. Societies hold many truths to be obvious, and those attitudes become defining characteristics of the culture and personal habits of the populace. People are therefore quite likely to consistently practice the morality of the culture.
- “Habitual Attitudes” - Attitudes and emotional responses are often habitual, just as actions often are. Our political responses are often related to our habituated relationships with in-groups. Those responses are habituated as well, and unless the response habits are broken, no new ideas will be received.

“Enlightened Empathy” – Despite empathy being a normal human capability, empathy also requires learning. I posit that empathy requires experience, and given that some experiences are impossible to share, the limits of empathetic ability must be understood beyond the normal human capacity to empathize.

“The Necessity and Badness of Othering” – Categories are very important to mental functioning and part of that function is to separate ourselves as different and separate from that which is not ourselves. The moral imperative is not to refrain from categories and separations (othering), but to refrain from equating “other” and “badness.”

“Standard English: Oppression or Liberty” – A standing question among linguists and educators in the United States is the morality of demanding that Standard English be learned by students who speak other dialects or non-standard forms of English. My contention is that within the bounds of an Ethics of Care and a preparation requirement for schools, students Standard English should remain a requirement.

## **CONFERENCE PARTICIPATION**

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- Commentator: Rocky Mountain Ethics Congress (RoME), University of Colorado at Boulder, August, 2017. Commented on Amanda Askeff’s and Tyler John’s paper, “Moral Offsetting”
- Commentator: Rocky Mountain Ethics Congress (RoME), University of Colorado at Boulder, August 2018. Commented on Matthias Barker’s paper: “Practical Perception: New and Improved(!)”

## PROFESSIONAL TRAINING

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### **Seminar: Exploring Diversity and Inclusion in College Classrooms – Summer, 2014**

University of Colorado at Boulder, Center for Teaching and Learning

### **Certificate in College Teaching – Awarded 05/2021**

University of Colorado at Boulder, Center for Teaching and Learning

## TEACHING EXPERIENCE

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### **Clemson University**

Lecturer, August 2021 to Present

#### **Courses**

*Introduction to Logic (Fall 2021)*

*Ethics (Fall 2021)*

### **University of Colorado at Boulder**

Lecturer, January 2021 to July 2021

#### **Courses:**

*Philosophy and Psychology (Spring 2021)*

*Philosophy and Race (Spring 2021; Summer 2021)*

### **University of Colorado at Boulder**

Graduate Part Time Instructor (2015 to present), Instructor of Record

#### **Courses:**

*Philosophy and Race (Fall 2020)*

*Philosophy and Gender (Summer 2020; Fall 2020)*

*Critical Thinking (Fall 2019)*

*Ethics (Spring 2019)*

*Introduction to Philosophy (Fall 2018; Fall 2017)*

*Contemporary Social Problems (Spring 2018)*

*Reading Writing and Reasoning (Spring 2017)*

### **University of Colorado, Boulder**

Teaching Assistant

#### **Courses:**

*War and Morality (Fall 2016)*

*Introduction to Philosophy (Spring 2016, Fall 2014)*

*Philosophy and Society (Fall 2015)*

*Environmental Ethics (Spring 2014)*

*Philosophy of Religion (Fall 2013)*

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## PROFESSIONAL AFFILIATIONS

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American Philosophical Association

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## PROFESSIONAL SERVICE

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### **ICS Awards Committee, 2018-2021**

Student run governing board which allocates travel and research funding for graduate students  
University of Colorado at Boulder, Institute of Cognitive Science

### **ICS/PSYC Faculty Search Committee (Graduate participant), 2019**

University of Colorado at Boulder, Institute of Cognitive Science

### **Conference Co-Organizer**

Rocky Mountain Philosophy Conference, April 2016  
University of Colorado at Boulder

### **Philosophy Outreach Program of Colorado**

Outreach teaching volunteer for local high-school students, August 2012 to May 2014

### **Climate Committee**

Philosophy Department graduate member of Committee for Climate, August 2015 to May 2016

### **Mentoring**

Undergraduate Philosophy major mentor, 2012 and 2013

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## PRIOR WORK EXPERIENCE

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### **Software Product Manager/Business Analyst (2003-2012) - ISGN**

My responsibilities for multiple mortgage software products included:

- ◆ Managing a team of writers, developers, and QA specialists in the U.S. and India for three software offerings
- ◆ Analyzing customer needs and compliance requirements and determine the best method for accommodating the requirements.
- ◆ Analyzing market trends and prioritize changes
- ◆ Writing/Editing functional specifications, help, and readme files for software changes and enhancements
- ◆ Organizing, prioritizing, and managing product changes through the software development life cycle.