

# KATE NICOLE HOFFMAN

## CURRICULUM VITAE

### Contact

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### Areas of Specialization and Competence

Specializations: Environmental Philosophy, Philosophy of Science (esp. Biology and Ecology), Animal Minds/Ethics

Competence: Bioethics, Feminist Philosophy, Epistemology, Aesthetics

### Education

Doctor of Philosophy, Philosophy (started August 2018) University of Pennsylvania - Philadelphia, PA. ABD, expected completion May 2024.

Dissertation: *Defining Nature: An Ameliorative Conception of Nature as Reciprocal Relations*

Master of Arts, Philosophy (August 2018) York University- Toronto, Canada

Bachelor of Arts, Philosophy and Music Double Major (May 2017) State University of New York at Potsdam - Potsdam, NY

Studied Abroad at University of Glasgow- Glasgow, Scotland (Fall 2016)

### References

Dr. Michael Weisberg, University of Pennsylvania - [weisberg@phil.upenn.edu](mailto:weisberg@phil.upenn.edu)

Dr. Quayshawn Spencer, University of Pennsylvania – [qspencer@upenn.edu](mailto:qspencer@upenn.edu)

Dr. Carlos Santana, University of Pennsylvania – [csantana@sas.upenn.edu](mailto:csantana@sas.upenn.edu)

Dr. Lisa Titus, University of Denver - [Lisa.Titus@du.edu](mailto:Lisa.Titus@du.edu)

Dr. Kristin Andrews, York University - [andrewsk@yorku.ca](mailto:andrewsk@yorku.ca)

Dr. Carlos Pereira Di Salvo, University of Pennsylvania (teaching) – [cjpbs@sas.upenn.edu](mailto:cjpbs@sas.upenn.edu)

### Publications

Hoffman, Kate Nicole, and Karen Kovaka. *Forthcoming*. “A New Heuristic for Climate Adaptation.” *Philosophy of Science Special Issue*.

Hoffman, Kate Nicole. 2023. “Justifying Nature-based Solutions.” *Biology and Philosophy* (38).

Hoffman, Kate Nicole. 2020. “Subjective Experience in Explanations of Animal PTSD Behavior.” *Philosophical Topics*, 48(1), 155–176. (Winner of the Marjorie Grene Prize)

Vaynberg, Eugene, Hoffman, Kate Nicole, Wallis, Jaqueline, and Michael Weisberg. *Forthcoming*. "Dimensional versus Conceptual Incommensurability in the Social and Behavioral Sciences." *Behavioral and Brain Sciences* (commentary).

## **Presentations**

"Climate and Local Engagement" – invited speaker to Philosophers for Sustainability's virtual conference on Philosophy and the Climate Crisis (Spring 2023)

"Applying Mental Disorder Categories to Animals" (poster) – Inaugural Meeting of the Philosophy of Animal Minds and Behavior Association, Madrid, Spain (Spring 2023)

"Climate Adaptation and Privileging the Natural" (paper, co-presented with Karen Kovaka) – Philosophy of Science Association conference, Pittsburgh (Fall 2022)

"Nature from Whose Perspective? Nature-based Solutions and Artificial Analogs" (paper) – Philosophy in the Wild, hosted by the University of Pennsylvania (Summer 2022)

"Animal PTSD and the Mental Health Perspective" – invited speaker to a virtual workshop on non-human consciousness hosted by The University of Cambridge (Spring 2022)

"Defining Nature" – invited speaker to the SUNY Potsdam Philosophy department (Spring 2021)

"Investigating Animal Minds from the Perspective of Mental Health" (paper) – International Society for the History, Philosophy and Social Studies of Biology, Oslo, Norway (Summer 2019)

"Investigating Animal Minds from the Perspective of Mental Health" (poster) – Philosophy of Science Association conference, Seattle (Fall 2019)

"Moral Improvement: The Significance of Cultural Practices on Care Ethics" – Canadian Philosophical Association conference, Montreal (Summer 2018)

## **Honors and Awards**

University of Pennsylvania Dissertation Completion Fellowship (Fall 2023-Spring 2024)

Penn Arts and Sciences Dean's Scholar Award, awarded for "exceptional academic performance and intellectual promise." (Spring 2022)

Marjorie Grene Prize from the International Society for the History, Philosophy, and Social Studies of Biology (ISHPSSB) (Summer 2021)

Mellon Humanities Fellowship Endowment (Fall 2020)

Fishman Fellowship Endowment (Fall 2019)

York Graduate Scholarship (Fall 2017)

Graduate Entrance Scholarship in Philosophy (Fall 2017)

Chancellor's Award for Student Excellence (Spring 2017)

Philosophy Distinguished Achievement Award (Spring 2017)

James Berriman Scholarship for passion and aptitude in the study of philosophy (Spring 2016)

Canfield Scholarship recipient for excellence and promise in philosophy (Spring 2015)

### **Grants**

Presidential Scholars award (Fall 2015)

"Descartes and Animal PTSD" - I argued that research in animal mental health challenges Descartes' view of animals as machines. In particular, evidence of PTSD in elephants and chimpanzees puts pressure on his claim that animals are not capable of experiencing pain (beyond mere stimulus reaction).

### **Relevant Experience**

Working with the United Nations' Resilience Frontiers Initiative to design a pavilion on arts and environmentalism for COP28 (Fall 2023)

Designed and piloted a street theatre project in the Galapagos Islands, which helped local kids write and perform their own short plays based on stories of environmental and cultural importance to the Galapagos community (Summer 2022)

Designed and piloted a "creative methods lab" which used creative methods to support future-oriented thinking about climate change solutions (Fall 2021)

Research Assistant for Zeid Ra'ad Al Hussein and Michael Weisberg – drafted a document on geoengineering for the UN Security Council (2020)

Climate Change Project Manager for the Galapagos Education and Research Alliance (Fall 2020-Fall 2022)

Member of the Galapagos Education and Research Alliance (GERA) (Fall 2019-current)

Member of the Climate Action Research Group (Fall 2019- Fall 2021)

Research Assistant for Dr. Kristin Andrews - project on deception in animals (Spring 2018)

Intern at The Kerulos Center with Dr. Gay Bradshaw (Summer 2016-Summer 2017)

### **Teaching Experience**

Environmental Ethics, Instructor (Fall 2022)

Environmental Ethics, Guest Lecturer (Fall 2023)

Repairing the Planet: Tools for the Climate Emergency, Guest Lecturer (Spring 2022, Spring 2023)

Philosophy of Biology, Guest Lecturer (Fall 2021)

Intro to Philosophy, Teaching Assistant, University of Pennsylvania (Spring 2021)

Bioethics, Teaching Assistant, University of Pennsylvania (Fall 2020)

Eye, Mind, and Image, Teaching Assistant, University of Pennsylvania (Spring 2020)

Philosophy of Space and Time, Teaching Assistant, University of Pennsylvania (Fall 2019)

Intro to Philosophy Honors, Teaching Assistant, SUNY Potsdam (Fall 2014)

### **Departmental and University Service**

Organized Minorities and Philosophy (MAP) conference on Climate Justice (Fall 2022)

Organized Minorities and Philosophy (MAP) summer colloquium on the Philosophy of Disability and Illness (Summer 2022)

Organized Minorities and Philosophy (MAP) conference on the Philosophy of Disability and Illness (Spring 2022)

Co-designed a new course on the philosophy of climate change with Michael Weisberg (Fall 2021)

Grad colloquium organizer (Fall 2021-current)

School of Arts and Sciences government representative (Fall 2021- Fall 2022)

“Library czar” for philosophy department library (Spring 2019- Spring 2021)

Student Representative on the Center for Creative Instruction Board (Spring 2017)

Planning Committee for SUNY Potsdam's first Philosophy Conference (Spring 2017)

Intern at the President's office in Potsdam (Fall 2015-Spring 2016, Spring 2017)

Student Representative on the Honors Advisory Council (Fall 2015- Spring 2017)

Vice President of Philosophy Forum (Fall 2015- Spring 2016)

Vice President and Founder of Writers' Cafe (Fall 2014- Spring 2016)

Resident Assistant (Fall 2014- Spring 2016)

### **Activities**

Weekly volunteer at the Open Hearts Café, which gives out food and clothing to the homeless and housing-insecure in Philadelphia (Fall 2019-current)

Salsa student at Urban Movement Arts (Fall 2022- current)

Member of the Philadelphia Chorale (Fall 2021-current)

Ballet student at Symmetry Dance (Fall 2021-current)

Member of Choral Arts Philadelphia (Fall 2023- Spring 2024)

### **Dissertation Abstract**

*Defining Nature: An Ameliorative Conception of Nature as Reciprocal Relations*

My dissertation is an ameliorative project aimed at reconceptualizing the terms “nature” and “natural” in a way that promotes a healthier relationship between humans and the nonhuman world. Drawing on feminist and indigenous philosophies, as well as work in ecology and conservation science, I argue in favor of giving up the currently dominating conception of nature in Western conservation and environmentalism, a view which conceives of nature in terms of its independence from humans.

In its place, I propose a novel account called Nature as Reciprocal Relations, where to be nature/to be natural is to stand in or foster reciprocal relations with other entities. On this account, a bird, tree, or whole ecosystem counts as nature not because it is separate from humans, but because it participates in reciprocal relationships. In contrast to Nature as Independence, certain non-native species, human-influenced ecosystems (i.e. New York subway cars dumped at the bottom of the ocean and now teaming with life), and even genetically-modified organisms may be considered just as natural as their “wild” counterparts, depending on the quality of their relationships. Insofar as humans engage in reciprocal relations with the entities around us, we are part of nature too. The account allows for an interactive relationship between humans and other parts of nature, while still being action-guiding by distinguishing between those things which are more and less natural. By connecting the presence and cultivation of reciprocal relations with planetary health, I argue that an understanding of nature which centers relationships, rather than independence, can help us to better structure and meet our modern environmental goals.

The final part of the dissertation explores the practical effects of NaRR, including its implications for conservation, climate change policy, animal ethics, and its connection with important and influential environmental movements like ecofeminism.