

Max DuBoff

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maxduboff.com

Areas of Specialization

Greco-Roman philosophy; practical ethics

Areas of Competence

Applied ethics (incl. biomedical ethics, AI ethics, and philosophy of death); feminist philosophy; philosophy of religion

Employment

Bowdoin College (2025-present)

Visiting Assistant Professor of Philosophy

Education

Yale University (2019-2025)

PhD in Philosophy and Classics, 2025

Dissertation: *Epicurus's Ethics: Pleasure, Deliberation, and the Goal of Life*

Committee: Brad Inwood (supervisor), Phillip Mitsis (external), Verity Harte, Timothy Clarke

MA in Philosophy, 2023

MPhil in Philosophy and Classics, 2023

Rutgers, The State University of New Jersey – New Brunswick (2015-2019)

BA in Classics and Philosophy, 2019, *summa cum laude*

ΦBK; Henry Rutgers Scholarship; Trustee Scholarship; departmental honors in Classics and Philosophy

Peer-Reviewed Publication

Forthcoming, *Ancient Philosophy*, “Death of an Egoist: An Epicurean Approach to Fatal Self Sacrifice”

Invited Contributions

2023, lead author, “B’rit shalom: a Jewish ritual alternative to newborn male circumcision,” with

Dena Davis, *International Journal of Impotence Research* 35, no. 3, Child Genital Cutting and Surgery special issue, 324-327

Papers In Progress

“Epicurean Pleasure: *Pathos* as a Criterion of Truth and Action”

“Perfection and Pleasure: Why Epicurus Was a Hedonist”

“*Antiparatattesthai*: Why Some Pain Is Consistent with a Perfect Epicurean Life” (accepted for presentation, 2026 Central APA)

“Reasons-Responsiveness and Fear of Death: Epicurus vs. Lucretius” (presented, 2024 Pacific APA)

“Epicurean Sex” (**under review**; presented, 2025 Eastern APA)

“Sexual Attraction” (participated in Papers in Progress Workshop, 2026 Eastern APA)

Chapter on Epicureanism as a way of life for *A Companion to Living from Philosophy: Philosophy as a Way of Life*, Wiley-Blackwell, edited by Lydia Amir

University Teaching Experience

Bowdoin:

Spring 2026, PHIL 1442 / REL 1142 Philosophy of Religion

Spring 2026, PHIL 2357 / GSWS 2357 Reproductive Ethics

Fall 2025, PHIL 2111 Ancient Philosophy

Fall 2025, PHIL 2223 Logic

Yale, Instructor of Record:

Spring 2025 and Spring 2022, HUMS 411 Life Worth Living

Spring 2023, PHIL 432 / WGSS 433 Reproductive Ethics

Fall 2022, GREK 110 Introductory Ancient Greek

Summer 2022, PHIL S183 Philosophy of Technology: Internet Ethics

Yale, Teaching Assistant:

Fall 2024, PHIL 256 Philosophy of Religion (instructor: John Pittard)

Fall 2021, PHIL 125 Introduction to Ancient Philosophy (instructor: Brad Inwood)

Summer 2020, PHIL S161 Philosophy and Cognitive Science of Consciousness (instructor: Joanna Lawson)

Guest Instructor:

Spring 2026 and Spring 2025, The Good Death: A History, Yale University, lecture on the development of modern bioethics and its impact on how we die (instructor: Deborah Strehle)

Fall 2025, Latin Didactic Poetry, Harvard University, seminar on Epicurean philosophy of sex (instructor: Peter Osorio)

Fall 2025, The RNA World, Bowdoin College, co-designed a seminar on the ethics of clinical trials, focusing on risk, consent, and autonomy (instructor: Maria Sterrett)

Fall 2025, Lucretius’s *De Rerum Natura*, Bowdoin College, seminar on Epicurean and Stoic Philosophy (instructor: Barbara Weiden Boyd)

Spring 2025 and Spring 2022, Life Worth Living, Yale University, plenary lecture on the good life as portrayed in Disney films (convener: Matthew Croasmun)

Fall 2024, Philosophy of Religion, Yale University, lecture on religious pluralism (instructor: John Pittard)

Fall 2023, Directed Studies, Yale University, seminar on Lucretius’s *On the Nature of Things* 1 and 3 (instructor: Mordechai Levy-Eichel)

Spring 2021, Introduction to Early Modern Philosophy, Brown University, lecture on Anne Conway (instructor: Justin Broackes)

Spring 2021, Life Worth Living, Yale University, introduction to Jewish texts and Jewish philosophy (instructor: Joanna Lawson)

Presentations

“*Antiparatattesthai*: Why Some Pain Is Consistent with a Perfect Epicurean Life,” APA Central Division Meeting, February 2026, comments by Emily Fletcher and Clerk Shaw

“Sexual Attraction,” APA Eastern Division Meeting Papers in Progress Workshop, January 2026
Yale *Meno* Seminar, June 2025 (co-presentation with Brad Inwood)

“Epicurean Sexuality,” APA Eastern Division Meeting, January 2025, comments by Tim O’Keefe
“Epicurean Sexuality,” Yale Classics Works in Progress Series, December 2024

Yale *Charmides* Seminar, June 2024 (co-presentation with Raphael Woolf)

Comments on Phillip Mitsis, “Why Do Fools Fall into Hate?” Conference on Later Stoicism, Yale University, April 2024

“Why Our Matter Matters: Innovation on Epicurean Philosophy of Death in *DRN* 3.964-971,”
Hellenistic Philosophy Society panel at APA Pacific Division Meeting, March 2024

“Reevaluating Epicurus’s Ethics: The Goal and the Limit of Pleasure,” NYU Ancient Philosophy Works in Progress Series, February 2024

Yale *Parva Naturalia* Seminar, June 2023 (co-presentation with Christopher Shields)

“Vasectomy and the Right Not to Reproduce,” Reproductive Justice Graduate Conference, Yale University, March 2023

“Philosophy of Suicide: Two Approaches” (co-presentation with Moya Mapps), Filling in the Blanks: A Workshop on Interdisciplinarity, Yale University, April 2022

“Suicide in Epicureanism,” Working Group in Ancient Philosophy, Yale University, February 2022

“Suicide in Epicureanism,” Greco-Roman Lunch, Yale University, December 2021

Yale *Protagoras* Workshop, June 2021 (co-presentation with Rachel Barney)

Pedagogy Development

Reading group on *Distracted* by James Lang, Baldwin Center for Learning and Teaching, Bowdoin College, February 2026

Teaching Triangle peer observation program, Baldwin Center for Learning and Teaching, Bowdoin College, November 2025

Pedagogy Matters Conference, Bates College, August 2025

Course (re)Design Institute, Bowdoin College, August 2025

Life Worth Living Network Course Development Fellowship, Summer 2025

Yale Life Worth Living Pedagogy Seminar, Fall 2024 and Fall 2021

Life Worth Living Network Pedagogy Workshop, University of British Columbia, June 2024

Yale Center for Teaching and Learning Workshops, including: Antiracist Pedagogy, Classroom Teaching Observation, Equitable Assessment and Alternative Grading, Gender in the Classroom, How We Learn, Mental Health in the Classroom

Public-Facing Work

“[Asexuality and Epicureanism](#),” *Blog of the APA*, November 2024

Co-host, *Bruchim Podcast* (on Jewish bioethics, especially circumcision), 2023-present (two seasons)

Director of Education, Bruchim (Jewish bioethics non-profit), 2021-present

Refereeing

Journal of Medical Ethics; *International Journal of Impotence Research*; Georgetown University Press

Professional and Departmental Service

Program Committee, American Association of Philosophy Teachers 2026 Conference

(Communications and Marketing Subcommittee)

Chair, “The Motive of Duty, Emotional Motives, and the Kantian Criterion of Summonability” and
“An Impossibility Result for Value Superiority,” APA Eastern Division Meeting, January 2026

Organizer for visiting speaker, Bowdoin Philosophy, Fall 2025

Graduate Teaching Representative, Yale Philosophy, Spring 2025

Chair, “What We Owe to the Dead,” APA Eastern Division Meeting, January 2025

Chair, “Predicating vs. Predicating Accidentally” (in Aristotle’s *Categories*), APA Pacific Division
Meeting, March 2024

Co-Organizer, Yale Working Group in Ancient Philosophy, 2021-2024

Graduate Elected Speaker Organizer, Yale Classics, 2022-2023

Admissions and Recruitment Co-Coordinator, Yale Classics, 2020-22

Undergraduate Liaison, Yale Classics, 2021-2022

Graduate Prospectives Committee, Yale Philosophy, 2020-22

Organizer of Yale reading groups on philosophy of suicide (Spring-Fall 2022) and feminist
philosophy (Summer 2023)

Language Competencies (Reading)

Ancient Greek, Latin, French, German, Italian, Hebrew

Mentorship

Independent study on Logic, Spring 2026

Supervisor for three undergraduate Learning Assistants for Logic, Fall 2025

Reader and secondary advisor for a Yale undergraduate thesis on animal ethics, Spring 2023

Mentor, Yale Philosophy Grad-Undergrad Mentorship Program, 2021-2023

Mentor, Ethics Bowl team, Wolcott High School, Connecticut, Fall 2019

Supervisor for a student’s expanded paper to fulfill Yale’s Senior Requirement in Philosophy

Letters of recommendation for a Fulbright Scholarship, law school, medical school, a study abroad
fellowship, secondary school teaching, various summer internships, and return from medical
leave

Manuscript Preparation Research Assistantships

Paul Franks, *Oxford Handbook of Jewish Philosophy*, Fall 2023

Brad Inwood, *Later Stoicism 155 BC to AD 200: An Introduction and Collection of Sources in Translation*,
Fall 2020-Winter 2021

References

Brad Inwood

William Lampson Professor of
Philosophy and Classics
Yale University
brad.inwood@yale.edu

Phillip Mitsis

Alexander S. Onassis Professor of Hellenic
Culture and Civilization and Professor of
Classics and Hellenic Studies
New York University
phillip.mitsis@nyu.edu

Daniel Greco (Teaching Reference)

Professor of Philosophy
Yale University
daniel.greco@yale.edu

Short Dissertation Abstract

Although Epicurus was a highly systematic thinker, most discussion of his ethics has had too narrow a focus. To address this problem, I propose a unified account of pleasure, the absence of pain, and deliberation in Epicurus's ethics. I explain three puzzles which have plagued Epicureanism since Cicero and even before: why the absence of pain is called pleasure; why the absence of pain is the greatest good; and how the absence of pain governs deliberation, including about death. I develop a new view of Epicurean pleasure, and I argue against the standard framing of Epicurus's ethics as a "hedonistic calculus" that relies on the comparison of pleasures. Rather, Epicurus focuses on the goal of life as the standard for ethical reasoning; my view innovatively integrates this claim into his ethical system, while applying insights from Epicurus's epistemology and physics to his ethics. With this view of Epicurus's ethics, we can resolve long-standing problems in Epicurus's philosophy of death which arise from faulty assumptions about how pleasures are to be compared in deliberation.

Graduate Coursework

Special Field Exams:

Ancient philosophy of death, with Brad Inwood
Greco-Roman medicine (especially gynecology), with Jessica Lamont

Ancient Philosophy:

Choice and the Voluntary in Aristotle; Plato's *Gorgias*; Seneca: *Letters on Ethics*; Plato's *Protagoras*; *Nicomachean Ethics* 9*; Later Greek Stoicism*; Plato's *Sophist**; Early Greek Philosophers*; Lucretius*

Philosophy:

Philosophy Proseminar; Philosophy of Law: Normative Jurisprudence; Causation in Early Modern Philosophy; Moral Emotions; Feminist Philosophy

Classics:

Classics Proseminar; Latin Survey (two terms); Greek Survey (two terms); Horace's *Odes*: Poetics and Meaning; Judaism in the Roman Empire: Philo of Alexandria and Jewish Apologetics*; Greco-Roman Medicine*

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