

Max DuBoff

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maxduboff.com

Area of Specialization

Greco-Roman philosophy; practical ethics

Areas of Competence

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

Employment

Bowdoin College (2025-present)

Visiting Assistant Professor of Philosophy

Education

Yale University (2019-2025)

PhD in Classics and Philosophy, 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 Classics and Philosophy, 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

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, 2026 Central APA)

“Epicurean Deliberation: Beyond a Hedonistic Calculus”

“Death of an Egoist: An Epicurean Approach to Fatal Self-Sacrifice” (under review)

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

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

“Sexual Attraction”

University Teaching Experience

Bowdoin:

Fall 2025, PHIL 2111 Ancient Philosophy

Fall 2025, PHIL 2223 Logic

Spring 2026, PHIL 1442 / REL 1142 Philosophy of Religion

Spring 2026, PHIL 2357 / GSWS 2357 Reproductive Ethics

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:

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

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)

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 Brookes)

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 (accepted)

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

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)
 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 (Apr. 2023), 324-327
 Director of Education, Bruchim (Jewish bioethics non-profit), 2021-present

Refereeing

Journal of Medical Ethics; *International Journal of Impotence Research*

Professional and Departmental Service

Program Committee, American Association of Philosophy Teachers 2026 Conference (Communications and Marketing Subcommittee)
 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

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 medical school, a study abroad fellowship, a summer internship, and a 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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