

Iskra Fileva

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Employment

2023 – present	Univ. of Colorado, Boulder	Associate Professor
2014 – 2023	Univ. of Colorado, Boulder	Assistant Professor
2013 – 2014	Univ. of Michigan, Ann Arbor	Lecturer
2011 – 2013	UNC-Chapel Hill	Visiting Assistant Professor
2010 – 2011	Temple University	Assistant Professor
2008 – 2010	University of Nevada, Reno	Postdoctoral Fellow

Education

2003 – 2008	Boston University, Ph.D. Doctoral Dissertation: <i>Behind Action</i>
2000 – 2002	Saint Louis University, MA (pass with distinction; was a PhD student but transferred) Master's Thesis: <i>Commensurating Ends</i>
1994 – 1999	Sofia University, Magister in Philosophy (pass with highest honors) Thesis: <i>Sartre's Theory of the Imagination</i>

Areas of Specialization

Moral Psychology, Aesthetics, Epistemology

Areas of Competence

Philosophical Issues in Psychiatry, Ethics, Political Economy, Existentialism

Fellowships and Awards

(* = by student nomination)

Marc Sanders Foundation Media Fellowship, 2024

Arts & Sciences Fund for Excellence Travel Award, 2023

*Outstanding Faculty Mentor Award, University of Colorado, Boulder, 2023

IHS Faculty Grant, 2022

APA Public Philosophy Op-Ed Prize, 2021

*Marinus Smith Faculty Award, University of Colorado, Boulder, 2020

Character Essay Prize, The Character Project, Templeton Foundation, 2013

GRS Brightman Fellow, Boston University, Summer 2008

Earhart Fellow, Earhart Foundation, 2007–2008

Presidential Fellow, Boston University, 2003–2007

Research

Books (Authored)

Character and Values. In progress.

Books (Edited)

Questions of Character. Oxford University Press, 2016, pp. 488. This is an interdisciplinary collection of essays by leading scholars from philosophy, psychology, and social science.

Articles

(* = invited)

“Impermissible Altruism: A Reply to Pummer,” forthcoming in *Ethics*.

“Understanding First: A Psychoanalytic Take on Self-Constitution,” *Philosophy, Psychiatry, and Psychology* 30 (2023): 195–204. Co-authored with Linda A.W. Brakel.

“Could Understanding Harm?” *Philosophy, Psychiatry, and Psychology* 30 (2023): 211–214. Co-authored with Linda A.W. Brakel. This is a response to commentaries on “Understanding First” by Marga Reimer and James Phillips.

“My Delicate Taste: Aesthetic Deference Revisited,” forthcoming in *Philosophers’ Imprint*.

“Moral Testimony and Collective Moral Governance,” *Australasian Journal of Philosophy* 101 (2023): 722–735. Nominated for the 2022 edition of *The Philosopher’s Annual*.

“The Optionality of Supererogatory Acts is Just What You Think It Is: A Reply to Benn,” *Philosophical Studies* 179 (2021): 2155–2166. Co-authored with Jon Tresan.

“A State of Besire,” *Philosophia* 49 (2021): 1973–1979.

“The Gender Puzzles,” *European Journal of Philosophy* 29 (2021): 182–198.

“You Disgust Me. Or Do You? On the Very Idea of Moral Disgust,” *Australasian Journal of Philosophy* 99 (2021): 19–33.

*“What Do Experts Know?” *Social Philosophy & Policy* (2021): 72–90.

*“Beyond *I* and *Thou*: Intimacy’s Pronouns,” *Journal of Philosophy of Emotion* 2 (2020): 3–6, Symposium on Aaron Ben-Ze’ev’s *The Arc of Love*.

“Metaethics and Mental Time Travel: A Reply to Gerrans and Kennett,” *Philosophia* 47 (2019): 1457–1474. Co-authored with Jon Tresan.

“Envy’s Non-Innocent Victims,” *Journal of Philosophy of Emotion* 1 (2019): 1–22.

“Historical Inaccuracy in Fiction,” *American Philosophical Quarterly* 56 (2019): 155–169.

“Just Another Article on Moore’s Paradox, But We Don’t Believe That,” *Synthese* 196 (2019): 5153–5167. Co-authored with Linda A.W. Brakel.

“What Does Belief Have to Do with Truth?” *Philosophy* 93 (2018): 557–570.

“Can Character Traits Be Based on Brute Psychological Facts?” *Ratio* 31 (2018): 233–352.

“The Duties of an Artist,” *Film and Philosophy* 21 (2016): 137–159.

“Will Retributivism Die and Will Neuroscience Kill It?” *Cognitive Systems Research* 34–35, Special Issue on Philosophical Approaches to Social Neuroscience (2015): 54–70. Co-authored with Jon Tresan.

“A Puzzle about Knowledge in Action,” *Logique et Analyse* 56 (2013): 287–301.

“Wisdom Beyond Rationality: A Reply to Ryan,” *Acta Analytica* 28 (2013): 229–235. Co-authored with Jon Tresan. Sharon Ryan responds in, “A Deeper Defense of the Deep Rationality Theory: A Reply to Fileva and Tresan,” *Acta Analytica* 32 (2016): 1–9.

“The Neutrality of Rightness and the Indexicality of Goodness: Beyond Objectivity and Back Again,” *Ratio* 21 (2008): 273–285.

Book Chapters

- *“Irrational Virtue, Unnatural Vice” in M. Dale and I. Wiegman, eds., *Evolving Characters* (in progress).
- *“What Does Virtue Have to Do with Consequences?” M. Timmons, ed., *Oxford Studies in Normative Ethics*, Volume 13. Oxford University Press, 2023, pp. 235–252.
- *“Bad Faith and Make-Believe” in E. Di Nucci and S. Storrie, eds., *1984 and Philosophy: Is Resistance Futile?* Open Court, 2018, pp. 175–186.
- *“Two Senses of ‘Why’: Traits and Reasons in the Explanation of Action” in I. Fileva, ed., *Questions of Character*. Oxford University Press, 2016, pp. 182–216.
- Preface and Introductions to Parts I–V in I. Fileva, ed., *Questions of Character*. Oxford University Press, 2016, pp. xxi–xxiv, 1–17, 105–120, 203–213, 311–321, 369–383.
- *“Playing with Fire: Art and the Seductive Power of Pain” in J. Levinson, ed., *Suffering Art Gladly: The Paradox of Negative Emotion in Art*. Palgrave Macmillan, 2013, pp. 171–185.
- *“Communicability of Pleasure and Normativity of Taste in Kant’s Third Critique” in J. M. Torralba, ed., *Doscientos Años Después: Retornos y Relecturas de Kant (Two Hundred Years After: Returns and Reinterpretations of Kant)*, Pamplona, Spain: Publication Services of the University of Navarra, Issue 21 (2005), pp. 21–32. Reprinted in *Postgraduate Journal of Aesthetics* 4 (2007): 11–18.
- *“Can We Know Too Much, Do We Know Too Little, and Does It Make a Difference Either Way?” in H. Ikäheimo, J. Kotkavirta, A. Laitinen, and P. Lyyra, eds., *Personhood*, Jyväskylä: University of Jyväskylä, 2004, pp. 43–53.

Encyclopedia Entries

- *“The Romantic Hero” in Scott Allison et al., eds., *Encyclopedia of Heroism Studies*, Springer, 2024.
- *“Planning” in Virgil Zeigler-Hill and Todd Shackelford, eds., *Encyclopedia of Personality and Individual Differences*. Springer, 2020. Published online first, doi.org/10.1007/978-3-319-28099-8_1882-1.
- *“Ontology” in Virgil Zeigler-Hill and Todd Shackelford, eds., *Encyclopedia of Personality and Individual Differences*. Springer, 2020. Published online first, [doi:10.1007/978-3-319-28099-8_1488-1](https://doi.org/10.1007/978-3-319-28099-8_1488-1).

Reviews (all invited)

- of *George Orwell: The Ethics of Equality* by Peter Brian Barry, forthcoming in *Ethics*.
- of *Character Trouble: Undisciplined Essays on Moral Agency and Personality* by John Doris, *Philosophical Psychology*, published online first: <https://www.tandfonline.com/doi/full/10.1080/09515089.2022.2095258>.
- of *Art and Belief* edited by Ema Sullivan-Bissett, Helen Bradley, and Paul Noordhof, *Journal of Value Inquiry* 54 (2020): 653–661.
- of *Aesthetics, Literature and Life* edited by Carla Carmona and Jerrold Levinson, *Aisthesis* 12 (2019): 199–203.
- of *Art and Authority: Moral Rights and Meaning in Contemporary Visual Art* by K. E. Gover, *Notre Dame Philosophical Reviews*, June 19, 2018.
- of *Inner Virtue* by Nicolas Bommarito, *Mind* 127 (2018): 902–911.
- of *Tolerance among the Virtues* by John R. Bowlin, *Notre Dame Philosophical Reviews*, April 5, 2017.
- of *Strategies of Commitment and Other Essays* by Thomas Schelling, *The Journal of Value Inquiry* 46 (2012): 485–490.
- of *Reasons without Rationalism* by Kieran Setiya, *The Journal of Value Inquiry* 43 (2009): 521–530.

Interviews

- “What Do We Owe the Dead?” on *Philosophers on Culture*, February 15, 2024. Available at: <https://www.kzfr.org/broadcasts/36950>.
- “Do You Have a Character?”, *Brain in a Vat Podcast*, January 16, 2022. Available at: <https://podcasts.apple.com/za/podcast/do-you-have-a-character-iskra-fileva/id1509951964?i=1000548034390>
- “How We All Encourage Inauthenticity,” with Richie Steadman, *The Lisa Show*, June 29, 2021. Available at: <https://www.byuradio.org/LVC-2021-06-29-How-We-Encourage-Unauthentic-Behavior>
- “What is Charisma?” with Anna Curran, *Sunday Sequence*, BBC Radio Ulster, November 15, 2020.
- “Why We Seek Closure,” with Lisa Valentine Clark, *The Lisa Show*, May 22, 2020. Available at: <https://www.byuradio.org/0e3ce25f-cd24-4cf7-b639-bd93181560be>
- “Who’s Got Character?” with Jose Drost-Lopez, *PsychTalk Radio*, May 2, 2012. Available at: http://ibiblio.org/wcom/podcast/mp3s/psychtalk/Character_Iskra_Fileva.mp3

Public Philosophy & Shorter Pieces

- I host *The Philosopher’s Diaries* blog at *Psychology Today*. I have published more than 80 essays on topics including self-sabotage, death, despair, intimacy, parents who envy their children, asymmetrical friendships, and many others. My essays have garnered well over 2 million views thus far and are available here: <https://www.psychologytoday.com/us/blog/the-philosophers-diaries>.
- *“Can Parents Tell Us Who We Are and What to Do?” PEA Soup Blog, November 2023. (This piece is an invited commentary on Sai Ying Ng’s “A Tale of Two Owens.”)
- *“The Big Questions with Iskra Fileva: Ethics of Freedom vs Safety During a Pandemic,” June 4, 2020, *The Scientific Inquirer*. Available at: <https://scientificinquirer.com/2020/06/04/the-big-question-with-iskra-fileva/>
- “What Do We Owe the Dead?” *The New York Times*, January 27, 2020. Available at: <https://www.nytimes.com/2020/01/27/opinion/kobe-bryant-death-tweets.html>. Reprinted in *Question Everything: A Stone Reader* (a collection featuring select essays from NYTimes’s *The Stone*).
- *Summary of “Metaethics and Mental Time Travel: A Reply to Gerrans and Kennett,” *Imperfect Cognitions*, December 24, 2019: <http://imperfectcognitions.blogspot.com/2019/12/metaethics-and-mental-time-travel.html>. Gerrans and Kennett respond in “Autonoesis and Moral Agency,” available at: <http://imperfectcognitions.blogspot.com/2019/12/autonoesis-and-moral-agency.html>.
- *“A Matter of Taste,” *Aesthetics for Birds*, May 13, 2015. Available at: <https://aestheticsforbirds.com/2015/05/13/a-matter-of-taste-by-iskra-fileva/>.
- “Character and Its Discontents,” *The New York Times*, March 25, 2012. Available at: <https://opinionator.blogs.nytimes.com/author/iskra-fileva/>
- “Philosophy and Style, or Who’s Afraid of Beautiful Beasts?” *ASA Newsletter*, Spring, 2006, pp. 1–2. Available at: <https://aesthetics-online.org/page/FilevaStyle>. Reprinted in *Folly*, April 2007, pp. 17–20.

Colloquia, Conferences, and Workshops

(* = invited)

(** = keynote)

*Symposium “Public Philosophy,” APA Central, 2025 (forthcoming)

- *Symposium “Gender and Self-Knowledge,” APA Pacific, Portland, March 2024
- *Character and Freedom, CEU, Vienna, Department Colloquium, March 2024
- **“Truth without Taste,” Florida State University, Department Colloquium, February 2023
- “What Does Virtue Have to Do with Consequences?,” Arizona Workshop in Normative Ethics, University of Arizona, Tucson, January 2022
- *Patience Workshop, San Diego, CA, August 2021 (interdisciplinary, grant-funded workshop)
- *Workshop on my “Seeing Red and Seeing Blue: The Secret Charm of Civil Discord,” University of Arizona, Tucson, Zoom, April 2021
- *Workshop on Steve Wall’s book manuscript *Enforcing Morality*,” Zoom, March 2021
- *Workshop on David Schmidtz’s book manuscript *Reinventing Moral Science*,” Zoom, February 2021
- “The Games We Play with Truth and Beauty”
 - *Department Colloquium, University of Nevada, Las Vegas, February 2021
 - *Center for Value & Social Policy, University of Colorado, Boulder, September 2020
- *Workshop on James Stacey Taylor’s book manuscript *Bloody Morality*, Zoom, April 2020
- **“What Do Experts Know?” workshop on papers for a special journal issue of *Social Philosophy & Policy* titled, “Science, Technology and Value,” Zoom, April 2020
- *Respondent at an Author Meets Critics session on Aaron Ben-Ze’ev’s *The Arc of Love: How Our Romantic Loves Change Over Time*, Society for the Philosophy of Emotion, Eastern APA, Philadelphia, January 2020
- **“Respect before Sympathy: How to Think about the Poor” PPE Society Annual Meeting, New Orleans, March 2019
- **“The Disappearing Agent,” Panel Discussion, Society for Philosophy of Agency, APA Central, Denver, February 2019
- **“You Disgust Me. Or Do You? On the Very Idea of Moral Disgust,” Center for Values & Social Policy, University of Colorado, Boulder, November 2018
- **“The Self-Deceived Artist,” Mike Womack’s graduate seminar, Department of Art & Art History, University of Colorado, Boulder, March 2018
- “I Have a Male Body, but I Am Not a Man: What Is Gender and How Do We Know Our Gender?”
 - **Self, Memory, and the Unconscious Mind Workshop, Ruhr-University Bochum, Germany, February 2018
 - *Philosophy Club, University of Colorado, Boulder, February 2018
- “Just Another Article on Moore’s Paradox, But We Don’t Believe That” (with Linda Brakel), 25th Annual Meeting of the European Society for Philosophy and Psychology, University of Hertfordshire, England, August 2017
- **“Moral Luck and Practical Commitment,” Center for Values & Social Policy, University of Colorado, Boulder, September 2017
- “Reflection without Empathy: The Case of Psychopathy”
 - *Seminar, Center for Ethics and Public Affairs, Murphy Institute, Tulane University, September 2018
 - *Diverse Voices in Philosophy Conference, Stanford University, May 2017
- “Two Senses of ‘why’: Traits and Reasons in the Explanation of Action”
 - *Center for Values & Social Policy, University of Colorado, Boulder, October 2016
 - *University of Florida, Gainesville, January 2014
- **“Mad or Bad: On the Status of Cluster B Personality Disorders,” CHPS Talks Series, CU, Boulder, November 2015

“What Does Belief Have to Do with Truth?”

- *Department Talk, St. Joseph’s College, Philadelphia, March 2015
- Symposium Paper, Central APA, St. Louis, February 2015

“Context without Contextualism,” RoME VII, University of Colorado, Boulder, August 2014

*“Mental Disorder and Patient Consent,” Pharmacology Focus Group, University of Michigan, Ann Arbor, April 2014

“The False, the Bad, and the Beautiful”

- *Aesthetics Discussion Group, University of Michigan, Ann Arbor, March 2014
- *Center for Values & Social Policy, University of Colorado, Boulder, March 2014

“Playing with Fire: Art and the Seductive Power of Pain”

- *Aesthetics Discussion Group, University of Michigan, Ann Arbor, November 2013
- *Center for Values & Social Policy, University of Colorado, Boulder, October 2013
- BSA Annual Meeting, Cambridge University, September 2013

*“Wisdom without Virtue,” 23rd World Congress of Philosophy, Athens, August 2013

“The Sources of Passivity”

- Eastern APA, Main Program, Atlanta, GA, December 2012
- European Society for Philosophy and Psychology, London, August 2012
- *Department Colloquium, University of Maryland, April 2012
- *Moral Psychology Discussion Group, Duke University, March 2012

“Historical Inaccuracy in Art,” BSA Annual Meeting, Queen’s College, Oxford University, September 2012

*“On a Recent Attempt to Combat Skepticism about Virtue with Pragmatism about Virtue Ascription,” Visiting Scholars Workshop, UNC-Chapel Hill, August 2012

*“Traits and Reasons in the Explanation of Action”

- Visiting Scholars Workshop, UNC-Chapel Hill, August 2011
- Penn Philosophers’ Lunch, University of Pennsylvania, April 2011

“A Puzzle about Knowledge in Action”

- Eastern APA, Main Program, Boston, December 2010
- *Temple University Colloquia Series, September 2010

“Thought Experiments in Philosophy and Fiction,” Philosophy and Literature Conference, Vaasa University, Finland, May 2010 (in absentia)

“Can You Act on a Reason That You Don’t Know You Have?” Fourth Conference of the Dutch-Flemish Association for Analytic Philosophy, Higher Institute of Philosophy, Leuven, January 2010

“Beyond Concealment”

- V Inter-University Workshop on Art, Mind and Morals, Universitat Illes Balears, Spain, December 2008
- Center for Applied Ethics and Philosophy, Hokkaido University, Japan, November 2008

“Communicability of Pleasure and Normativity of Taste in Kant’s Third Critique”

- UK Kant Society Graduate Conference, Oxford University, July 2007
- Beauty Looking in the Eyes of the Beholder, Graduate Center at CUNY, November 2004
- Annual ASA Meeting in Houston, November 2004 (winner of an ASA travel stipend)
- 200 Years After: Returns and Re-interpretations of Kant, University of Navarra, March 2004

“The Neutrality of Rightness and the Indexicality of Goodness: Beyond Objectivity and Back Again”

- Eastern APA, New York, December 2005 (winner of an APA travel stipend)

- *Ockham Society, Oxford University, November 2005
- 32nd Conference on Value Inquiry, Baton Rouge, April 2005
- “Vice’s Non-Innocent Victims,” Emotions, Others and the Self, Åbo Akademi, Finland, August 2005
- “Foolish Games: Hobbes and the Safer Strategy of Trustworthiness,” Pacific APA, San Francisco, March 2005
- “Can We Know Too Much, Do We Know Too Little, and Does It Make a Difference Either Way?” Dimensions of Personhood, University of Jyväskylä, Finland, August 2004
- “Might Truth Be Subversive of What We Really Care About?” Special Conference on Values, Rational Choice and the Will, University of Wisconsin–Stevens Point, April 2004

Public Talks

- Discussion leader of “What If Friendship, not Marriage, Were at the Center of Life?” POPCO through Boulder Public Library, May 2022
- “The Limits of Attorney-Client Privilege,” Flatiron Terrace Senior Living, Boulder, CO, January 2020
- “Moral Luck and Practical Commitment,” Flatiron Terrace Senior Living, Boulder, CO, March 2018
- “What Does the Humble Person Know?” Flatiron Terrace Senior Living, Boulder, CO, March 2017
- “Vice’s Non-Innocent Victims,” Flatiron Terrace Senior Living, Boulder, CO, August 2016
- “Talk and Taboo,” Sandbox Symposium, Trident Café, May 2015
- “The Right to Healthcare,” Faculty-Student Panel Discussion, UNC-Chapel Hill, April 2013
- “It Wouldn’t Have Been Worth It If that Island Were Made of Gold,” Panel Discussion on the China-Japan Dispute over the Diaoyu/Senkaku Island, UNC-Chapel Hill, September 2012
- “The Price of Silence,” Center for Human Science, Chapel Hill, NC, May 2012
- “The Psychiatrist and the Marketplace, or the Madness in Treating Madness,” Lunch and Learn Series, Parr Center for Ethics, UNC-Chapel Hill, April 2012

Thesis Supervision & Mentoring

PhD (CU-Boulder)

- Sparrow LoCurto (first-year student; interests in philosophy of character)
- Idowu Odeyemi (second-year student; interests in social epistemology)
- Brita Ager-Hart (prospectus stage; project on aesthetics)
- Evan Froom (prospectus stage; interests in philosophy of character)
- Amanda Loeffelholz (prospectus stage; interests in philosophy of psychiatry)
- Daniel Carr, *Dogmatism and Open-Mindedness*
- Derick Hughes, *Demystifying Modesty and Humility* (defended Spring 2023)
- Lisa Thomas-Smith, *In Praise of Habit* (defended Spring 2021)
- Christopher Dengler, *Virtue Aesthetics* (defended Spring 2021)
- Maggie Taylor, *The Harm Threshold, Parental Duty, and Pediatric Healthcare Decision Making*, co-chaired with David Boonin (defended Spring 2021)

MA (CU-Boulder)

- Joy Webb, interests in aesthetics
- Cole Baisch, interests at the intersection of philosophy and psychology
- Joe Conder, *Aquinas’s Immanent Realism* (defended Spring 2024)
- Richard Alonzo Fyfe, *Manufacturing Reasons* (defended Spring 2020)

Honors

- Emily Stewart (project on the ethical dimensions of love), CU-Boulder
- Rebecca Combest, “The Dark Side of Compassion,” CU-Boulder (defended Spring 2016)
- Joseph Alpert, “The Concept of Happiness in Philosophy and Behavioral Economics,” Temple University (defended Spring 2011)
- Carl Hernandez, “Bergson’s Theory of Laughter,” University of Nevada, Reno (defended Spring 2010)

Professional Service

- *Philosopher’s Annual* Nominating Editor, 2020-present
- APA Central Division Program Committee Member, 2022-2024
- APA Pacific Division Program Committee Member, 2019-2021
- APA Pacific Division Jean Hampton Essay Prize Committee Member, 2020
- Occasional Referee for *Australasian Journal of Philosophy*, *Philosophical Studies*, *Analysis*, *American Philosophical Quarterly*, *Synthese*, *Erkenntnis*, *Philosophical Psychology*, *The British Journal of Aesthetics*, *The Journal of Aesthetics and Art Criticism*, Oxford University Press, Routledge, and others.

Languages

French (good reading skills, fair speaking skills)
Japanese (fair reading and speaking skills)
Russian (very good reading skills, some speaking skills)
Bulgarian (native language)

References

Professor Christian Miller (Wake Forest University); Tel.: +1 (336)758-3564; Email: millerc@wfu.edu
Professor Sarah Buss (University of Michigan, Ann Arbor); Tel.: +1 (919) 549-0668, Ext. 214; Email: sbuss@umich.edu
Professor Geoffrey Sayre-McCord (UNC-Chapel Hill); Tel.: +1 (919) 627-1403; Email: sayre-mccord@unc.edu
Professor Simon Keller (University of Victoria, Wellington); Tel.: +64 (4) 463-9638; Email: Simon.Keller@uvw.ac.nz