

DARBY VICKERS, PH.D.

AI Ethicist & Researcher

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darbyvickers.wordpress.com

darby-vickers

OVERVIEW

- Expertise in working on cross-functional, cross-disciplinary teams with engineers, computer scientists, cognitive scientists, & humanists
- Expertise in text analysis & semiotic analysis
- PhD qualification; expertise in applied ethics (esp. AI & ML ethics)
- Experience with both qualitative & quantitative social science methods
- Expertise in cross-disciplinary & scientific communication & writing
- 6+ years experience teaching engineering & computer science students
- Expertise in ethical frameworks in AI research & development

EXPERIENCE

Applied Ethicist (Assistant Professor)

Department of Philosophy, University of San Diego

2021 – present

San Diego, CA

- **Technology Ethics Curriculum Design** Designed the curriculum and learning objectives for AI Ethics (as of Fall 2024, Philosophy 348: Ethics of AI & Robotics) & Computer Ethics (Philosophy 345). Both courses officially added to the curriculum & all computer science majors required to take one (as of 2024-2025 academic year).
- **University Policy on AI** Served on the Dean's Advisory Council on AI & the Future of Higher Education. Our report will be presented to the Academic Assembly of the College of Arts & Sciences (Spring 2024).
- **Positions Held** Element Chair of Technology and Humanities (Humanities Center) (2024-present). Assistant Professor of philosophy (2022-present), Visiting Assistant Professor of philosophy (2021-2022)

AI Working Group Researcher & Consultant

CEO Leadership Alliance of Orange County (CLAOC)

June 2021 – Present

Newport Beach, CA

- Hired as a researcher, using qualitative methods to craft educational programming, equipment, & strategic vision for AI Talent Lab
- Proposed a cascading mentorship program to structure CLAOC's plan for an AI Center of Excellence. Reporting directly to Jasmine Pachnanda (Senior Vice President, AI SoCal Initiative); working closely with Mark Percy (President), Doug Wilson (Chair) & Keith Steier (VP, NVIDIA)
- Guest lectures on AI ethics through CLAOC's education programs

Researcher, Quantitative Randomized Controlled Trial

Sarnecka Lab, Cognitive Sciences, UC Irvine

June 2019-January 2022

Irvine, CA

- Co-investigator on a quantitative study to determine the effect writing groups on doctoral students' well-being, writing productivity & quality
- Co-created the curriculum for the humanities & arts group in the study
- Co-created a qualitative rubric for evaluating humanities writing samples
- Analyzed quantitative survey data using Google Sheets
- Lead revision efforts on article to address reviewer comments
- Co-lead doctoral writing workshops (2019 – 2022), which drew students from more than ten disciplines and more than seven universities

EDUCATION

Ph.D. Philosophy

University of California, Irvine

2015 – 2021; M.A. awarded 2018

- **Research Awards & Fellowships:** Kavka Award (UCI Philosophy graduate student award for meritorious research, 2018); Graduate Dean's Dissertation Fellowship (competitively selected for a summer fellowship, School of Humanites, UCI, 2020), McPherson Fellow
- **Research Presentation Awards:** People's Choice Award for Humanities & Social Sciences Presentation (Associated Graduate Students Symposium, UC Irvine, 2018), Grad Slam Finalist, UC Irvine (2020)
- **Select Grants Received:** Humanities Commons Collaborative Graduate Student Conference Grant, \$2000 (UCI, 2018), UCHRI Conference Grant, \$5000 (UC System, 2019), Illuminations Project Grant for Debunking 101, \$3000 (UCI, 2019), Illuminations Project Grants for *Lit & Chill* Podcast, \$5500 (UCI, 2019-2021), Graduate Student Research Grant, \$3000 (UCI, 2021)
- **Dissertation:** No Teachers of Virtue?: The Transmission of *Episteme* and *Doxa* in Plato's *Meno* and *Republic*
- **Coursework** in philosophy, cognitive science, qualitative & quantitative social science methods, scientific communication, education & pedagogy, project management
- **Communication Certifications:** Podcasting the Humanities: Creating Digital Stories for the Public (National Humanities Center, 2021); Academic Communication Certificate (UC Irvine, 2020); Public Speaking Certificate: Activate to Captivate (UC Irvine, 2018).

M.A. Classics

University of California, Irvine

2013-2015

- **MA Thesis:** "Inventing Meta-Epic: Self-Consciousness in *Odyssey* 8-12"
- **Research Fellowships:** National Endowment for the Humanities summer fellowship (2014)
- **Coursework** in logic, philosophy, languages

B.A. Classics

Reed College

2006-2010

- **BA Thesis:** "Plato's Critique of Tragedy"

PROGRAMMING

HTML

LaTeX

Python

EXPERIENCE, CONTINUED

Researcher, \$1.5M Mellon Grant

Humanities Center, UC Irvine

📅 July 2019 – June 2020

📍 Irvine, CA

- **Mellon Grant to Reform Doctoral Education:** Served as a researcher and contributor to a \$1.5 million grant (2019-2020). Reported directly to the director and executive director of the Humanities Center & served on a team of five lead by the Dean of the School of Humanities.
 - Conducted qualitative research on grant funding agencies to compile a list of funding priorities for Mellon & Luce foundations.
 - Reviewed UCI's previous doctoral education reform and qualitative research, coded & synthesized qualitative data, crafted recommendations based on data & presented to the dean
- **Humanities & Engineering Collaboration:** Served as a researcher and contributor to engineering school curriculum design & research opportunities on a team with the dean & associate dean of the School of Engineering and the director & executive director of the Humanities Center
 - Collected, created a database, & analyzed data on engineering-humanities collaborations at colleges & universities over the last 30 years
 - Created a series of recommended programming options, vetted by the director & executive director of the Humanities Center and used as a basis for discussions with the Dean of the School of Engineering

MEDIA & PUBLIC-FACING WORK

- Panelist for "Then How Shall We Live When AI Takes Over", Compelling Preaching Events, Center for Religion and Civic Culture, University of Southern California. Jul 15, 2024. First Lutheran, Venice, CA. <https://crcc.usc.edu/how-then/>
- Interviewed on "How Artificial Intelligence is Changing Our World & What Role Ethics Will Play When Regulating the Industry," *At the Edge of It All* Podcast, Dec 27, 2023, https://www.sandiego.edu/news/detail.php?_focus=91132
- Interviewed on "One year in, California leads advances in AI," *KPBS Mid-day Edition*, Nov 7, 2023, <https://www.kpbs.org/podcasts/kpbs-midday-edition/one-year-in-california-leads-advances-in-ai>
- Profiled in "Darby Vickers: Uniting academia with the unicorn dream job", by Munyao Kilolo, *UCI School of Humanities News*, Nov 14, 2023, <http://tinyurl.com/darby-vickers-profile>
- Profiled in "USD Philosophy Professor Connects AI Ethics and Philosophy to the Lives of Her Students", *USD News Center*, Mar 13, 2023, https://www.sandiego.edu/news/detail.php?_focus=88303
- Dec 12, 2022, "'The Writing Workshop': Increasing Representation in Philosophy," R. Goldstein & D.Vickers, *American Philosophical Association Blog*, <https://tinyurl.com/2p95twbd>
- Featured in "A Toast to All the Rejects" by Rhaina Cohen, *The Atlantic*, Jan 21, 2022. <https://www.theatlantic.com/family/archive/2022/01/celebrate-your-rejections-failures/621327/>
- Discussion Leader, *In Our Image: Artificial Intelligence and the Humanities*, National Humanities Center, April 7–22, 2021; Competitively selected to facilitate an online discussion amongst members of the public on issues raise during *In Our Image*, <https://nationalhumanitiescenter.org/in-our-image-ai-humanities/>
- Featured throughout *The Writing Workshop* by Barbara Sarnecka (2019); mentioned 16 times by name (Book PDF: <https://osf.io/tzaeh/>)
- Talk featured in "MAP Eastern APA Session: Skill-Building & Improving the Profession," by C. Flores, et al. <https://blog.apaonline.org/2019/04/08/map-eastern-apa-session-skill-building-improving-the-profession/>
- Co-creator of *Lit & Chill* podcast, <https://soundcloud.com/litandchill>
- Interviewed on "Episode 6: Epistemology, Post-Truth, and Speculoos Cookies," *This Grad Life Podcast*, Dec 3, 2019, <https://www.thisgradlife.com/podcast/darbyvickers>

PUBLICATIONS

Google Scholar Profile

- Link: <https://scholar.google.com/citations?hl=en&user=-yUzOuAAAAAJ>

Published Research

- February 16, 2024 "Living Well with AI: Virtue, Education, and Artificial Intelligence", N. Smith & D. Vickers, *Theory & Research in Education* Article: <https://doi.org/10.1177/14778785241231561>
- January 19, 2022, "Doctoral Writing Workshops: A preregistered, randomized controlled trial", B.W. Sarnecka, P.N. Silva, J. Coon, D.C. Vickers, R.B. Goldstein, & J.N. Rouder, *Innovative Higher Education*. Article: <https://rdcu.be/cFkVh> Study Materials: <https://osf.io/ftuhp/>
- Apr 9, 2021, "Statistically Responsible Artificial Intelligences", N. Smith & D. Vickers, *Ethics and Information Technology*. Article: <https://link.springer.com/article/10.1007/s10676-021-09591-1#Ack1>

Under Review & In Prep.

- *under review*, "Narrowing the Philosophy Gender Gap by Building Skills and Community", D. Vickers & R. Goldstein, *Teaching Ethics*
- *under review* "Tiresias Among the Shades: Teaching Virtue in Plato's *Meno*," D. Vickers
- *in prep.*, "AI Tutoring Cannot Solve The Two Sigma Problem", D. Vickers
- *in prep.*, "Algorithmic Decency: Why Algorithmic Fairness is Insufficient", D. Vickers
- *in prep.*, "Eudaimonia, Makaria, and The Two Best Lives", D. Vickers

SKILLS

Cross-disciplinary research & teaching

AI Ethics Research

Critical Thinking

Scientific communication & writing

SELECTED TEACHING

- AI Ethics, University of San Diego; Spring 2022, Spring 2023 (in person, 2 sections), Spring 2024 (in person)
- ChatGPT & AI Ethics, University of San Diego; Spring 2023 (in person, co-taught)
- Computer Ethics, University of San Diego; Fall 2021 (in person)
- Ethics & Education, University of San Diego; Fall 2021, Fall 2022, Fall 2023 (in person)
- Aristotle's *Nicomachean Ethics* (titled "Virtues & Vices"); Spring 2022, Spring 2023 (in person, 2 sections)
- Morality & Justice, University of San Diego; Fall 2021, Fall 2022 (in person), Fall 2023 (2 sections, in person)
- TA Professional Development Program for Engineers, UC Irvine; Fall 2019, Winter 2020 (in person), Fall 2020 (remote, co-taught)