

Jaleel Fotovat-Ahmadi

Dept. of Philosophy, Boston University
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AOS: Ethics, Early Modern Philosophy, Islamic Philosophy

AOC: Applied Ethics, Social/Political Philosophy, Aesthetics, Critical Thinking

Education

Ph.D., Philosophy (ABD), Boston University, Expected June 2025

Dissertation: *Embracing or Escaping the Passions? Two Paths to Happiness in Early Modern Thought*
Supervisor: Aaron Garrett

M.A., Philosophy, San Francisco State University, 2020

Thesis: *Descartes and La Béatitude: The Cartesian Method for Attaining Happiness*
Committee: Alice Sowaal (Chair), David Landy, Mohammad Azadpur

B.A., Philosophy, Wayne State University, 2016

Dissertation Summary

Descartes' engagement with Stoicism ultimately proves inadequate for capturing the complexities of happiness. This tension, exposed in his correspondence with Princess Elisabeth and further developed in *The Passions of the Soul*, generated two competing traditions. One, exemplified by Mandeville and Du Châtelet, reinterprets happiness in naturalistic terms, reconciling it with pleasure and virtue. The other, taken up by Malebranche, integrates Descartes' theory of the passions into a vision of beatitude that transcends the finite self. Malebranche's approach parallels that of Mullā Sadrā, a Persian contemporary of Descartes, who similarly sought to bridge the extra-worldly dimensions of happiness with its embodied, affective dimensions.

Teaching Experience

Ivy Tech Community College (IvyOnline), Adjunct Faculty (2025–Present)

- PHIL 102: Introduction to Ethics

Southern New Hampshire University, Online Adjunct Faculty (2023–Present)

- PHL 218: Ethics in Global Society
- PHL 260: Ethical Problem-Solving

Boston University, Teaching Fellow (2021–2024)

- PH 100: Introduction to Philosophy (Fall 2021)
- PH 159: Philosophy of Film (Spring 2022, Spring 2023)
- PH 251: Medical Ethics (Fall 2022, Fall 2023)
- PH 160: Reason and Argumentation (Spring 2024)

San Francisco State University, Graduate Teaching Associate (2019–2020)

- PHIL 110: Critical Thinking (Spring 2019, Fall 2019, Spring 2020)
 - PHIL 150: Contemporary Issues in Moral & Political Philosophy (Fall 2019)
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Publications

“Reimagining Self-preservation: Supreme Sacrifice in Spinoza’s *Ethics*”. *Journal of Modern Philosophy*.
(In revision)

Conference Presentations

“The Metaphysics of Happiness in Descartes and Mullā Sadrā”

- TEMPO Conference, Georgetown University (April 2025)

“Happiness and the Lifelong Practice of Care”

- APA Eastern Division Meeting, NYC (January 2024) [Poster Session]
- Feminist Philosophy Graduate Conference, University of Arizona (April 2023)
- 31st Annual APPE International Conference, Cincinnati, OH (February 2022)
- CNU Virtue Ethics Conference, Christopher Newport University (February 2022)

“Individuation and the Role of ‘Interest’ in Descartes’ Method of Happiness”

- TEMPO Conference [Online] (May 2022)

“Individuation in Descartes’ Interest Passage”

- Central States Philosophical Association Conference, University of Nebraska (April 2022)
- New Mexico-Texas Philosophical Society, Baylor University (April 2022)

“The Moral Significance of Race: Understanding Du Bois Through James and Royce”

- Texas A&M University Graduate Student Conference (April 2022)
- Great Lakes Philosophy Conference [Online] (April 2022)
- South Carolina/North Carolina Philosophical Societies Joint Meeting, Converse University (March 2022)

“The Ethics of Happiness: A Resolute Reading of the Early Wittgenstein”

- TiLPS History of Analytic Philosophy Workshop, Tilburg University [Online] (August 2022)
- International Ludwig Wittgenstein Symposium, University of Zagreb [Online] (December 2021)

“Mullā Sadrā, True Felicity, and the Intellect”

- American Society of Islamic Philosophy and Theology, Harvard University (December 2021)

“The Role of ‘Interest’ in the Cartesian Recipe for Happiness”

- Western Michigan University Graduate Conference (November 2019)
- Minnesota Philosophical Society Conference (October 2019)

Workshops & Professional Development

- **International Intensive Academic Course on Islamic Philosophy**, Hikmat Institute [Online] (January 2025)
- **Minnesota Center for Canon Expansion and Change (CCEC) Pilot Summer Program**, University of Minnesota (August 2022)
- **University of Oklahoma Writing Sample Workshop**, University of Oklahoma (November 2019)
- **COMPASS Workshop**, University of North Carolina (August 2019)

Service & Leadership

- **Graduate Mentor**, *Arché*, Boston University’s Undergraduate Philosophy Journal (Spring 2025)
- **Member**, *Minorities and Philosophy (MAP)*, Boston University Chapter (Fall 2021–Present)

Grants, Scholarships, & Fellowships

- **GTA Part-time Tuition Reimbursement**, San Francisco State University (2019–2020)
- **Irvin D. Reid Honors College Presidential Scholarship**, Wayne State University (2012–2016)

Languages & Research Skills

- **Languages:** Farsi (Fluent), Arabic (Reading/Writing), French (Reading/Writing)
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References

Aaron Garrett

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Professor of Philosophy

Advisor and Dissertation Supervisor (2021-Present)

Samia Hesni

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Assistant Professor of Philosophy

Professor and Prospectus Committee Member (2021-2024)

Alice Sowaal

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Associate Professor of Philosophy

Professor and M.A. Thesis Chair (2018-2020)