

David Gottlieb

Research Interests

Areas of Specialization

Philosophy of Mind, Philosophy of Language

Areas of Competence

Cognitive Science, Ethics, AI

Education

2015–2026 **Ph.D.**, *Stanford University*, Stanford, CA, Philosophy and Symbolic Systems

Dissertation: *The Discursive Construction of Objectivity*

Committee: Thomas Icard (chair), Michael Bratman, Ethan Nowak, Cleo Condoravdi

Abstract: Each of us seems to inhabit a private subjective world, but we also manage to share that world with others. We do this with the tools of language. I focus on intuitively subjective language like the “predicates of personal taste.” I show that, when we assert and disagree, we treat these subjective matters as objective. We use the frictions generated by disagreement to make our subjective worlds permeable and sharable with each other.

2013–2015 **M.A.**, *Tufts University*, Medford, MA, Philosophy

2006–2009 **J.D.**, *Harvard Law School*, Cambridge, MA, *cum laude*

2002–2006 **B.A.**, *Amherst College*, Amherst, MA, *magna cum laude*, with distinction in Mathematics and Economics

Papers

Publications

Rosa Cao, David Gottlieb, and Jared Moore. “Consciousness Requires Having Your Own Good.” Open Peer Commentary on Anil Seth, “Conscious Artificial Intelligence and Biological Naturalism.” *Behavioral and Brain Sciences*, in press.

Under Review

“Assertion Can’t Be Relativized”

Talks

2026 “When do minds matter? Consciousness and the problem of suffering,” Stanford Minds and Machines guest lecture

2021 “A Pragmatic Account of the Fact-Opinion Distinction,” Cogtweeto workshop

- 2021 “Rational Choice for Incomplete Preferences Depends on Why They’re Incomplete,” American Philosophical Association Pacific Meeting.
- 2019 “Commentary: Inductive Risk, Machine Learning, and Hand-Tying Arguments,” American Philosophical Association Pacific Meeting.
- 2016 “Does ‘must’ imply ‘can’?” 5th CSLI Workshop.

Teaching

As Primary Instructor

- 2025–2026 How to Make a Moral Agent, CS 186/PHIL 86 (new course, co-designed and co-taught with Jared Moore)
- 2024 Introduction to Philosophy, PHIL 1 (designed)
- 2019–2022 Minds and Machines, SYMSYS 1 (four summer sessions)
- 2019 Current Ethical Issues in AI, PHIL 24D (designed)
- 2019 Environmental Ethics, PHIL 24S (co-designed and co-taught with Meica Magnani)

As Teaching Assistant / Section Leader

Stanford

Ethics Introduction to Moral Philosophy; Ethical Theory; Ethics in a Human Life; Computers, Ethics, and Public Policy; Ethics, Public Policy, and Technological Change

Phil. of Mind Mind, Matter, and Meaning; Philosophy of Neuroscience; Philosophy of Action

Other Introduction to Philosophy; Metalogic; Film and Philosophy

Tufts Rational Choice; Philosophy of Law

Other Experience

- 2009–2012 Associate Attorney, Sullivan & Cromwell LLP, New York, NY

Service

Departmental

- 2017–2018 Graduate Student Representative to Faculty, Stanford Philosophy Department
- 2016–2017 Graduate Student Workshop Coordinator, Stanford Philosophy Department

Reading and Working Groups

- 2022–2023 Co-organizer, Pragmatics and Pragmatism Reading Group (with Julian Davis)
- 2022–2023 Member, Stanford Working Action Group (SWAG)
- 2020–2022 Member, Race in America Reading Group
- 2016–2020 Member, Moral Philosophy Reading Group (MPRG)

Professional

- 2016–2017 Organizing Committee, CSLI Workshop on Logic, Rationality, and Intelligent Interaction (5th and 6th workshops)

- 2016 Mentor, CSLI Summer Internship Program
2016–2017 Referee, Berkeley-Stanford-Davis Graduate Conference in Philosophy

Honors and Awards

Stanford University

- 2023 Symbolic Systems Distinguished Teaching Award
2017–2018 McCoy Ethics in Society Center Graduate Fellow

Harvard Law School

- 2009 Summer Academic Fellowship

Amherst College

- 2006 James R. Nelson Memorial Award in Economics
2005 The Gilbert Prize (public speaking)

Grants

- 2026 Longview Philanthropy, Applied Work on Potential Digital Sentience and Society (with Jared Moore). Supports offering How to Make a Moral Agent (CS 186/PHIL 86).