

# WILLIAM B. COCHRAN

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## Academic Employment

<b>Wake Forest University</b> Assistant Teaching Professor of Computer Science Affiliate in the Program for Leadership and Character	2023-present
<b>Harvard University</b> Postdoctoral Fellow in Embedded EthiCS	2021-2023
<b>Wake Forest University</b> Postdoctoral Fellow in Computer Science	2020-2021

## Education

<b>Ph.D., Philosophy</b> , Northwestern University Dissertation: "Aristotle's Notion of Teaching and Its Role in His Theory of Moral Education" Committee: Richard Kraut (Chair), Kyla Ebels-Duggan, Stephen White, Patricia Marechal	2013-2020
<b>M.A., Classics</b> , Dalhousie University Thesis: "The Doctrine of Due Measure in Plato's <i>Statesman</i> "	2009-2011
<b>B.A., Classics</b> , University of King's College <i>Magnis cum honoribus</i> & University Medal in Classics King's Foundation Year Program 2004-2005	2004-2009

## Research & Teaching Areas

Ancient Greek Philosophy, Ethics of Emerging Technologies (esp. Ethics of A.I.), Computer Ethics, Computer Science Education, Character Education, Moral Philosophy (esp. Virtue Ethics).

## Publications

- (forthcoming, in a volume on Character by the Naval Institute Press) "Reason in Command: Plato and Aristotle on the Teachability of Virtue for Meno and the Military"
- (2024). "Can We Automate Practical Wisdom? An Annotated Conversation with Claude." In L. Barendsen & W. Cochran (Eds.), *Catalyzing Character* 1 (3): 11-17.
- (2023). "Cultivating Moral Agency in a Technology Ethics Course" with Kate Allman, *Teaching Ethics* 23 (1): 15-34.

4. (2022). Review of *Aristotle on the Concept of Shared Life* by Sara Brill, Oxford University Press, 2020 in *Polis* 39 (2): 422-424.
3. (2019). “Dewey, Aristotle, and Education as Completion.” *Philosophy of Education* 74: 669-682.
2. (2011). “The Doctrine of Due Measure in Plato’s *Statesman*.” *Pseudo-Dionysius XIII*: 57-60.
1. (2010). “The Mysticism of Al-Ghazali and Rumi.” *Pseudo-Dionysius XI*: 38-43.

#### WORKS EDITED

- Co-Editor, *Catalyzing Character 1 (3): Special Edition on Artificial Intelligence*
- Editorial Assistant, *Theory and Practice in Aristotle’s Natural Science*, edited by David Ebrey (Cambridge University Press, 2015).
- Co-Editor, *Pseudo-Dionysius* (2009-2011).

#### **Presentations** (\* = refereed; † = invited)

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| “The Ethics of Emerging Technologies” †<br><i>Human Flourishing Speaker Series</i> , Farmer School of Business<br>Miami University, Oxford OH   | April 2025    |
| “Automated Practical Wisdom: Not a Substitute, Perhaps a Teacher” *<br><i>KPCEL 2024 Convening: Artificial Intelligence   Practical Wisdom</i> , Boston   | March 2024    |
| “Teaching Lab: An Interdisciplinary Collaborative Effort” (with J.L.A. Donohue) †<br><i>Inaugural TeXne Conference</i> , Harvard University   | May 2023      |
| “Philosophical Perspectives on Character Education” (Panelist) †<br><i>22<sup>nd</sup> Annual McCain Conference</i> , Stockdale Center for Ethical Leadership,<br>US Naval Academy  | March 2023    |
| “Teaching Responsible Computing with Value-Sensitive Design” †<br>(with Trystan Goetze) <i>Embedded Ethics Conference</i> , Stanford University   | March 2023    |
| “Educating Character in STEM” (Panelist) †<br><i>Educating Character Across the University</i> , Wake Forest University<br>(in partnership with The Oxford Character Project)   | December 2022 |
| “Social Media and Dignity Violations” (Panelist) †<br><i>Designing AI with Dignity</i> , Harvard Kennedy School   | November 2022 |
| “Developing Moral Agency in an Ethics of Emerging Technologies Course: Measuring Student Growth” (with Kate Allman)*<br><i>48<sup>th</sup> Annual Association for Moral Education Conference: “Moral Development and Moral Education in Global Transition”</i> , Manchester, UK | July 2022     |
| “Creating a Classroom Community with Unfamiliar Students and Limited Time”*<br><i>2022 American Association of Philosophy Teachers Conference</i> (with Trystan Goetze)   | July 2022     |

Otterbein University

- “Educating for Moral Agency in An Ethics of Emerging Technologies Course” June 2022  
*Harvard/MIT Conference on Ethics of Computing & A.I., Harvard University*
- “In Search of a Third Myth about A.I.” (Lightning Round Talk)  
*Harvard/MIT Conference on Ethics of Computing & A.I., Harvard University*
- “Teaching Ethical and Humanistic Thinking in Computer Science” (Panelist)\* May 2022  
*Canadian Philosophical Association Congress 2022*
- “The Problem of First Principles: Aristotle’s Teaching Methodology Recast” March 2022  
*Department of Philosophy Research Talk, Florida Atlantic University*
- “Teaching Responsible Computing, An Interdisciplinary Approach” (Panelist)\* March 2022  
*MozFest 2022*
- “The Autonomous Trolley Problem: A ‘High Impact’ Thought Experiment”\* July 2020\*  
*2020 American Association of Philosophy Teachers Conference* [\*cancelled due to COVID-19]  
Otterbein University
- “Aristotle on Enhancing Human Excellence”\* April 2019  
*Great Lakes Philosophy Conference, Sienna Heights University*
- “Dewey, Aristotle, and Education as Completion”\* April 2018  
*Philosophy of Education Society Conference, Chicago, IL*
- “Plato’s Pedagogical Prologues: The Case of Plato’s Statesman”\* April 2018  
*Ancient Philosophy Society Conference, Emory University*
- “Promising Children”\* April 2018  
*Great Lakes Philosophy Conference, Sienna Heights University*
- “Aristotle’s Teaching”\* March 2017  
*Philosophy & Education Graduate Conference, Catholic University of America*
- “Cooper, Hadot, and Receiving Philosophy as a Way of Life” April 2014  
*University of Michigan-Northwestern Classical Receptions Workshop, Northwestern*
- “Does Plato’s Late Metaphysics Kill Socrates?” \* May 2011  
*Classical Association of Canada Conference, Dalhousie University*
- “The Doctrine of Due Measure in Plato’s Statesman” \* October 2010  
*Atlantic Classical Association Annual Conference, Saint Mary’s University*

COMMENTS

- On Bjorn Wastvedt’s “The Eudemian Ethics on Becoming Virtuous” April 2021  
*APA Pacific Division Meeting, Portland, OR*

- On Kristina Grob’s “Aspiration vs. Moral Luck: A Murdochian Response” February 2020  
*APA Central Division Meeting, Chicago, IL*
- On Paula McAvoy’s “Steering the sex education discussion” December 2017  
*Practical Philosophy Workshop*  
 Northwestern University
- On Max Parish’s “Human Nature, the Normativity Objection and the Practical Reason Response: No Cigar” May 2015  
*Northwestern University Society for the Theory of Ethics and Politics Conference*
- On Tomasz Wysocki’s “Intuitions Aren’t on the Rocks” October 2014  
*Central States Philosophical Association Conference*  
 Northwestern University

#### CAMPUS TALKS

- “Using AI in Documentary Storytelling” (with Chris Sheridan)  
*Documentary Film Program, Wake Forest University*
- “Value-Sensitive Design: Embedded EthiCS Module Demo” (with Trystan Goetze) October 2022  
*Design Studio Lab, Lily & Edmond Safra Center for Ethics, Harvard*
- “Leadership, Character, and Ethics in Computer Science” May 2021  
*Special Joint Meeting of the Computer Science and Engineering Departments, WFU*
- “Learning from *AlphaGo*: To Partner With A.I., Cultivate Character First” April 2021  
*Program for Leadership and Character Postdoctoral Research Series, WFU*
- “Algorithmic Justice: What Future Lawyers Need to Know about A.I.” (Panelist) October 2020\*  
*Wake Forest Law School* [\*Cancelled due to COVID-19]
- “Discussion-Based Teaching: Eliciting Conversation and Navigating Controversy” Nov. 2018  
*Searle Center for Teaching and Learning, Northwestern (with Lorien Elleman)*
- “Privacy & Technology” February 2017  
*Brady Tea, Brady Scholars Program in Ethics & Civic Life, Northwestern*
- “Well-Being, Wilt Chamberlain, and Welfare Reform” May 2016  
*Brady Tea, Brady Scholars Program in Ethics & Civic Life, Northwestern*

#### **Workshops**

- “Balancing Integrity & Innovation in the Age of AI” Fall 2024  
*Center for the Advancement of Teaching, Wake Forest University*

#### **Interviews**

- “Aristotelian Education and Ethics in Computer Science” Aug. 2022  
*Dialexicon. A platform for youth to engage in philosophy.*  
<https://open.spotify.com/episode/62VmrRk9OANFUJF7rqbgMM>

## Research Fellowships, Grants, Scholarships, & Awards

Social Sciences and Humanities Research Council of Canada Doctoral Fellowship	2013-2017
Classics Cluster Research Grant	2013-2014
Joseph Armand Bombardier Canada Graduate Scholarship	2010-2011
King's University Scholarship	2008-2009
King's President's List	2007-2009

## Teaching Fellowships & Awards

Graduate Fellowship, Brady Scholars Program in Ethics & Civic Life	2019-2020
WCAS/TGS Teaching Fellowship	2017-2018
Graduate Fellowship, Brady Scholars Program in Ethics & Civic Life	2015-2018
Joseph Clyde Murley Prize for Outstanding Performance by a Graduate TA	2015-2016

## Teaching Experience

### INSTRUCTOR

Ethical Computer Science (Wake Forest University)	Fall '23, Spring, Summer, Fall '24, Spring '25
Ethics of Emerging Technologies (Wake Forest University).	Fall '23, Summer, Fall '24, Spring '25
Flourishing in the Future (First Year Seminar, WFU)	Spring 2024
Ethics of Emerging Technologies (Harvard Summer School)	Summer 2022
Ethical Leadership in Computer Science (Wake Forest University)	Spring 2021
Ethics of Emerging Technologies (Wake Forest University)	Fall 2020
Future Tense: The Ethics of What Will Be (First Year Seminar, Northwestern)	Spring 2018
Aristotle and His Successors (University of Illinois at Chicago)	Spring 2018
Introduction to Ancient Civilizations (Saint Mary's University, Halifax, NS)	Summer 2012

### CO-FACILITATOR

Embedded EthiCS Teaching Lab (Harvard University)	2022-2023
Embedded EthiCS Teaching Lab (Harvard University)	2021-2022
The Civically Engaged Life (Brady Senior Seminar, Northwestern)	2019 - 2020
Philosophy and the City (Brady Senior Seminar, Northwestern)	2017 - 2018

### SENIOR THESIS ADVISOR

Sydney Langenhagen, "Mapping Attitudes About Generative AI Across Wake Forest University" (WFU, CS & Communications double major)	2023-2024
Lavanya Singh, "Automating Kantian Ethics" (Harvard, CS/Phil. joint concentration) <i>Recipient of Harvard's Hoopes Prize "on the basis of outstanding scholarly work or research"</i>	2021-2022

### ETHICS MODULES FOR COMPUTER SCIENCE COURSES [At WFU unless otherwise specified]

"Ethics of AI Technologies: The THRIVE Framework" (CSC 371: Artificial Intelligence)	Spring 2025
"Ethics of AI Technologies: The THRIVE Framework" (CSC 374: Machine Learning)	Spring 2025
"Ethics of a 'Smart Forest' System: The THRIVE Framework" (CSC 332: Mobile)	Spring 2025

and Pervasive Computing)

“Trust & Trustworthiness in CS” (CSC 111: Introduction to CS)	Spring 2025
“Programming Languages & Practical Wisdom” (CSC 231: Programming Languages).	Spring 2025
“From Competence to Care” (CSC 201: Data Structures & Algorithms)	Fall 2024
“The Limitations of Optimization” (CSC 301: Algorithm Design & Analysis)	Fall 2024
“Trust & Trustworthiness in CS” (CSC 111: Introduction to CS)	Fall 2024
“Programming Languages & Practical Wisdom” (CSC 231: Programming Languages).	Fall 2024
Ethics modules for CS50: Introduction to Computer Science (Harvard University)	Spring 2023
“Cultivating Moral Imagination with Value Sensitive Design (Week 10)	
“Trust & Trustworthiness in Computer Science” (mini-module, Week 2)	
Ethics modules for CS50: Introduction to Computer Science (Harvard University)	Spring 2022
“Cultivating Moral Imagination with Value-Sensitive Design” (Week 10)	
“Facial Recognition Software and Justice” (mini-module, Week 7)	
“Technical and Ethical Value Trade-offs” (mini-module, Week 5)	
“Trust & Trustworthiness in Computer Science” (mini-module, Week 2)	
“Ethics as the Fourth Axis of Good Code” (mini-module, Week 0)	
“Machine Learning & Justice” (CS 374: Machine Learning, WFU)	Spring 2021
“Programming Languages & Practical Wisdom” (CS 231: Programming Languages, WFU)	Spring 2021

GUEST LECTURER [At Northwestern unless otherwise specified]

Aristotle Unit (6 lectures) (for P. Marechal, History of Ancient Philosophy)	Fall 2019
“Aristotle: Form & Matter; The Four Causes”	
“Aristotle on Knowledge”	
“Aristotelian Psychology”	
“Aristotle on The Goal of Human Life”	
“Aristotle on the Virtues of Character”	
“Aristotle: <i>Akrasia</i> , Self-Control, Virtue, Vice”	
“Four Principles of Bioethics” (for C. Traina, Religion & Bioethics)	Fall 2019
“Three Classic Moral Theories” (for C. Traina, Religion & Bioethics)	Fall 2019
“On Justice as an Aim of Higher Education” (for S. Goldberg, What is College For?)	Fall 2017
“On Aristotle’s <i>Categories</i> ” (for D. Ebrey, History of Philosophy - Ancient)	Winter 2015
“On Plato’s <i>Euthyphro</i> ” (for E. Diamond, Philosophy on Trial, Dalhousie)	Fall 2011

WRITING COACH

Introduction to Environment, Sustainability, and Society (Dalhousie)	Fall 2011
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SECONDARY SCHOOL

Cover Supervisor, TimePlan Education, Kent, UK	2012-2013
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### **Pedagogical Training**

Leadership and Character Course Development Workshop (WFU)	Summer 2020 & 2023
Graduate Digital Humanities Pedagogy Workshop (NU)	Fall 2017
Teaching Certificate Program, Searle Center for Teaching and Learning (NU)	2016-2017
AAPT Seminar on Teaching and Learning	Summer 2016

### **Academic Service**

Member, Honors & Ethics Committee Review Working Group	2025- present
Curriculum Committee Member, CS Department, WFU	2024-present
Library Liaison, CS Department, WFU	2024-present
Member, A.I. Working Group For Academics, WFU (Provost's Office)	2023-present
Curriculum Committee Member, CS Department, WFU	2023-2024
T.A. Coordinator, Philosophy Graduate Student Association, Northwestern	2017-2018
Vice President, Philosophy Graduate Student Association, Northwestern	2017-2018
Coordinator, Philosophical Greek Reading Group, Northwestern	2014-2016
Assistant Organizer, Classical Association of Canada Conference	Spring 2011
Vice President—Internal, Dalhousie Classics Graduate Student Society	2010-2011
Assistant Office Administrator, Dalhousie Classics Department	2010-2011
Department Librarian, Dalhousie Classics Department	2010-2011

### **Languages**

Ancient Greek	reading competency (and teaching competency)
Latin	reading competency (and teaching competency)
French	reading & speaking competency

### **Memberships**

YΠE	Upsilon Pi Epsilon: Honor Society for the Computing and Information Disciplines
ACM	Association for Computing Machinery

## References

### **Richard Kraut**

Charles and Emma Morrison Professor in the Humanities  
Department of Philosophy & Department of Classics  
Northwestern University  
[rkraut1@northwestern.edu](mailto:rkraut1@northwestern.edu)

### **Michael Lamb**

F. M. Kirby Foundation Chair of Leadership and Character  
Executive Director of the Program for Leadership and Character  
Associate Professor of Interdisciplinary Humanities  
Wake Forest University  
[lambkm@wfu.edu](mailto:lambkm@wfu.edu)

### **Alison Simmons**

Samuel H. Wolcott Professor of Philosophy  
Co-Director of Embedded EthiCS @ Harvard  
Harvard University  
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### **Jeff Behrends**

Senior Research Scholar and Associate Senior Lecturer on Philosophy  
Director of Ethics and Technology Initiatives, The Edmond J. Safra Center for Ethics  
Co-Director of Embedded EthiCS @ Harvard  
Harvard University  
[jbehrends@fas.harvard.edu](mailto:jbehrends@fas.harvard.edu)

### **Kyla Ebels-Duggan**

Professor  
Department of Philosophy  
Northwestern University  
[kebelsduggan@northwestern.edu](mailto:kebelsduggan@northwestern.edu)

### **Patricia Marechal**

Assistant Professor  
Department of Philosophy  
University of California, San Diego  
[pmarechal@ucsd.edu](mailto:pmarechal@ucsd.edu)



## Dissertation Abstract

### *Aristotle's Notion of Teaching and Its Role in His Theory of Moral Education*

My dissertation offers a novel interpretation of Aristotle's account of teaching (*didaskalia*). In Part I, I defend my claim that we can find in Aristotle's works a conception of teaching, which is a crucial yet under-explored part of his theory of education. In Part II, I use this interpretation to settle two long-standing debates in Aristotle's ethics concerning the development of the virtues of character and practical wisdom. Finally, in Part III, I show how my reading helps Neo-Aristotelian moral educators respond to the objection that Aristotelian education deprives students of their autonomy.

I begin my interpretation in Part I with Aristotle's clear yet general statements about teaching and 'those who teach.' Chapter 2 establishes that for Aristotle the goal of teaching is to instill scientific knowledge (*episteme*) in students. On my view, scientific knowledge should be interpreted in this context as the possession of true, well-reasoned accounts (*logoi*), which are ultimately grounded in explanatorily basic, subject-specific first principles. Chapter 3 then shows how Aristotle's comments about the pre-conditions for teaching and didactic learning support this reading of teaching's ultimate goal. Teachers must possess the scientific knowledge they intend to teach, and students must both (i) have some prior knowledge of the subject being taught, and (ii) be familiar with the basic rules of logic. Chapter 4 concludes Part I by describing Aristotle's teaching methodology. Teachers use induction, definition, and analogy to generate students' conviction in indemonstrable first principles. Once students grasp these principles, teachers use demonstration and definition to explain what follows from them. When students internalize the whole account such that they can produce it themselves at will, the instillation process is complete.

I turn to Aristotle's moral philosophy in Part II. Chapter 5 contrasts teaching with habituation (*ethismos*)—the method of education primarily responsible for bringing about the virtues of character in the appetitive part of the soul. Some of the most prominent interpretations of Aristotle's theory of moral education contend that habituation must involve some teaching. I argue against this view by showing how Aristotle consistently maintains that teaching is solely devoted to cultivating intellectual virtues in the rational parts of the soul. Chapter 6 takes up a long-standing debate about what Aristotle's practically wise person (*phronimos*) knows. According to the Grand End View, the *phronimos* possesses a philosophical conception of the human good, which he uses as a lodestar in his decision-making. I support the Grand End View against its critics by arguing that since (i) teaching cultivates the intellectual virtues, one of which is practical wisdom, and (ii) teaching instills scientific knowledge, which includes a grasp of the explanatorily basic first principles of a subject, therefore, (iii) a necessary component of practical wisdom involves comprehending the first principle of action—*i.e.*, the human good (*eudaimonia*) as the final goal of *praxis*.

Finally, in Part III, I use my interpretation of teaching to fortify Aristotelian educational theory against the objection—often called 'the paradox of moral education'—that habituation robs students of their autonomy. That would be fair enough, if education only included habituation. But Aristotelian education also includes teaching, which furnishes students with the ability to provide true, well-grounded accounts. This ability, I argue, actually strengthens students' autonomy.