

After much investigation and varied pursuits, I have found a sense of purpose and tranquility in philosophy. I am engaged by philosophy's daunting questions and I see the seeming lack of resolution of so many philosophical inquiries as a cause for further investigation. My main interest is in ethics, with additional interests in philosophy of mind and legal philosophy, though I was initially attracted to philosophy by logic and metaphysics.

What appeals to me so strongly about sub-disciplines like metaphysics and logic, is that they exemplify the power of reason in philosophy. Definitions, logic, and arguments alone can provide striking philosophical conclusions. Simply structured arguments question the existence of the external world, undermine justified belief in free will, and purport to prove God's existence. Of course, these arguments are often contested and rarely decisive, but I am riveted by philosophy's unique ability to approach such formidable questions.

I have found the questions of ethics to be especially deep and provoking. The puzzles and dilemmas of ethics fascinate me in the same way as in other branches of philosophy, but ethics has an advantage – the promise of practicality. Ethics offers an opportunity to engage in meaningful philosophical questions whose implications impact not only how we understand the world, but also the all-important question of how we should live our lives.

My main interest in theoretical ethics consists in meeting challenges posed to classical and contemporary ethical theories by uncertainty, disagreement and irrationality. I am fortunate to have had success in this line of analytic ethics. My paper on the evolution of morality has been accepted for publication as a chapter in xxxxxx, which will be published in June 20__, and my paper discussing the problem of partial acceptance for xxxxxxxxxxxx is under review at a peer-reviewed journal. I will present this latter paper at a professional philosophy conference this month.

While I admire the power of theory and logic, I also see a critical role for the empirical in philosophy. I am in my third year at the Rutgers Medical Decision Making Lab, a cognitive science laboratory, where I began researching economic intertemporal choice, delay discounting and preference reversal as Professor *First and Last Name* research assistant. I am currently running an independent study in the lab on the influence that different positive emotions have on moral judgment.

My empirical training makes me what some call an "experimental philosopher." I began working in this experimental tradition as a philosophy research assistant in epistemology with Professor *First and Last Name* at Rutgers. Later I conducted an independent research project investigating the moral intuitions of philosophers and non-philosophers, which uncovered two striking results – philosophers and non-philosophers have different moral intuitions and philosophers' moral intuitions are sometimes unreliable. My paper discussing this research is currently under review at a peer-reviewed philosophy journal, and this paper has already created a buzz in the Experimental Philosophy community. It is ranked in the top ten of all recent papers and number one of

recent ethics papers on the xxxxxxxx. I am excited to present these findings later this fall as a speaker at the annual conference of xxxxxxxx.

I believe that experimental work can and should revolutionize ethics, but it could also reshape law and policy. I will discuss the impact of experimental ethics on law and policy in a presentation this fall at xxxxxxxx, an interdisciplinary conference. I have sought to improve my understanding of government and law, academically as part of xxxxxxxx Undergraduate Program in political science and experientially at the United States Attorney's Office and United States District Court.

I aim to position myself uniquely as an analytic philosopher with the empirical ability and legal knowledge to fill the current gaps among ethics, cognitive science and law. My envisioned project begins with experimental investigation of the mind, then the recasting of ethical theory in light of this research, and finally the application of these results to law and policy. I hope to uncover a new understanding of the mind, make great strides in ethical theory, and ultimately incite changes in law and policy that encourage the pursuit and achievement of more ethical lives.

Studying in the BPhil program at Oxford is the best academic opportunity available to me. There are a number of outstanding ethicists at Oxford, and those I would most like to study with are *Insert Name*, *Insert Name*, *Insert Name*, and *Insert Name*. For my BPhil thesis I would like to investigate the implications of uncertainty and recent work in cognitive science on differing ethical theories and our obligations to future generations.

I share many of my main research interests with Professor *First and Last Name*, who works on a wide range of theoretical and applied ethical issues in relation to mathematics and moral psychology. Professor *Last Name* is also the Director of the xxxxxxxx Institute at Oxford, a research center in which I could develop my work studying the reduction of cognitive biases and evaluating forms of expertise. At the Oxford Uehiro Centre for Practical Ethics I could pursue my interests in Applied Ethics and connect my normative ethics work with contemporary interdisciplinary research. At Oxford I would be able to work with a number of faculty members who pursue moral psychology research, namely, *Insert name*, *Insert Name*, and *Insert Name*.

I am determined to become a professor at a research university with the mission of metamorphosing law into a field learned from ethics and cognitive science. I plan through my research and writing to continue progress in ethics and philosophy of mind, stressing the legal implications of such progress. Oxford's excellent philosophy program is strong in all my areas of interest: ethics, philosophy of mind, and legal philosophy. Studying at Oxford would cultivate my philosophical knowledge, support my aim to unify ethics, cognitive science and law, and allow my continued investigation of meaningful questions.